Encourager

NOVEMBER 2026

Mid-South District LCMS



A Message from
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola,
President

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

One of my favorite hymns only gets sung on All Saints Sunday or at a funeral. *"Behold a Host Arrayed in White, Like thousand snowclad mountains bright! With palms they stand; who is this band before the throne of light? These are the saints of glorious fame, who from the great affliction came and in the flood of Jesus' blood are cleansed from guilt and shame."* Do you ever wondered by Martin Luther posted his 95 Thesis on October 31st? It wasn't by accident. He posted the 95 Thesis on the Wittenberg Castle Church door on October 31, 1517.

Luther knew November 1 was All Saints Day. Most people were under "holy obligation" to attend worship on Feast Days. November 1st was a day of "holy obligation" by Papal decree in 1484. Attendance soared, somewhat grudgingly, since they were led to believe each time a person walked through the church doors, there was "divine attendance" being recorded. The celebration of All Saints Day wasn't new. The early Christians, as far back as the Third and Fourth Centuries set aside one day a year to honor our Christian martyrs.

In the Second century, Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna was burned at the stake because he refused to call Caesar "God." Before the fire was lit, his captors said: "Come now, bishop, where is the harm in just saying 'Caesar is Lord' and offering incense, when it will save your life?" Polycarp replied: "For eighty-six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I then blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

Through the centuries countless others have made the same confession. The Apostle Paul was put to death by Nero. Johan Huss was burned at the stake as was one of Martin Luther's fellow monks was captured in the Netherlands and burned at the stake. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was imprisoned and executed in 1945. These and all who have been martyred because of their faith in Jesus. They now rest under the altar of God in Heaven until Jesus returns, as St. John writes in Revelation 6 *"I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God." "They were given a white robe and told to wait a little longer…"*

On All Saints Day the church stops to honor the cloud of witnesses, brothers and sisters in Christ who have died standing firm in the promises of forgiveness and salvation, guaranteed by the death and resurrection

of Jesus. Rich or poor. Famous or forgotten; respected or reviled, our life's status makes no difference. Death doesn't respect a person's title or position. Death will come for everyone you love. It won't select a person according to logic, or love, or hate. This is reality, but too many of us live our days as if we have some special one-of-a-kind immunity from the word "terminal".

William Saroyan was a well-known writer of plays and short stories. In his *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, he wrote, "Through the air on the flying trapeze, his mind hummed. Amusing it was, astonishingly funny. A trapeze to God, or to nothing, a flying trapeze to some sort of eternity; he prayed objectively for strength to make the flight with grace." He thought he had this one-of-a-kind immunity from death. However, while lying on his deathbed he contacted the Associated Press and said, "Everybody has got to die, but I have always believed an exception would be made in my case." Scripture lays it on the line: Every human being of natural means has sinned and the penalty for sin is death. (Rm. 3:26) Because we have broken God's commandments and born in original sin, we will not be untouched.

For the Christian, however, the cemetery is not the dominion of the Grim Reaper. The resting place for Christians is domain of our Soul Keeper, Jesus Christ. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed: *"O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!"* (Is. 26:19) Jesus came to Bethlehem to implement the prophet's words. Jesus said, *"Trust in God, trust in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's house."*(Jn. 14:1–2) *"He who believes in me will live."* (Jn. 11:25)

In Matthew's Gospel, we read of a confrontation Jesus had with the Sadducees about the resurrection. Judaism was divided over the resurrection. The Sadducees were made up of families where the chief priests were chosen. They rejected the traditions of the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection of the dead; a "spiritual resurrection;" and also believed in angels. The Sadducees rejected their teachings.

So, the Sadducees posed a question to Jesus about seven brothers who had the same wife. They tried to trap Jesus with the preposterous anecdote, wondering whose wife this woman would be in heaven. She was widowed seven times. It's a trick question. They didn't believe in the resurrection! They wanted to trap Jesus. But He gave them an answer that confronted the belief of both the Sadducees and Pharisees. His came from the prophecy of Isaiah, *"Your dead will live, their bodies will rise, you who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy."* "Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."* (Jn. 11:25–26)

What guarantee do we have that, what Jesus said is true? The proof is a Jerusalem garden graveyard. Jesus' tomb was empty! He rose from death and left the grave empty proving that God was satisfied Christ's innocent suffering and death gives His justification for all of mankind. Those who receive this gift of God's grace, though they die, they shall live. Here, St Paul wrote to the Corinthians, who lived in a culture that laughed at the possibility of a resurrected physical body: *"Jesus was raised from death on the third day…he presented himself alive to Peter, and to more than 500 hundred followers, James… and finally to me."* (I Cor. 15:4-8) Can we argue with Paul's logic? If only one person to see Jesus after His death on the cross, people might be reasonably suspect. But, if a dozen people offered eyewitness accounts, who could argue with fifty, a hundred, or five hundred? They saw Jesus; they touched Him; they heard Him speaks, walk, eat, and offer His peace.

We know one day death will leave empty. A loved one takes a part of ourselves and our life. We may try to master our grief and cry our tears. Then, out of nowhere, a song will play on the radio, an aroma, some food, or some old clothes will trigger a memory and our feelings of loss come flooding back. Once again we will know what it is to mourn.

But this sadness has a solution. Once, long ago, Jesus declared, "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."* (Matt. 5:4) Christians and Christianity alone can claim, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord."* Every other religion, every other faith, required a person to die for their gods. Because of Jesus Christ's

death and resurrection, as Christians (alone) are offered forgiveness of our sins and given the promise of eternal life. Jesus died the death our sins deserved. He paid the price of our disobedience. He took our place in that joyous exchange when He offered His perfect life on the cross in our place. God exchanged our wretchedness for His righteousness to all who have received faith that Jesus is God's Son and Savior.

This is why St Paul could write: *"I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus."* (Rm. 8:38-39 To the Philippians (3:20-21), Paul wrote. *"Our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await our Savior from there who when He returns in all His glory, He will bring with Him all the angels and all the saints who have gone before. Then as He promised Jesus will give to each believer the same glorified resurrected body fashioned like His glorious body."*

Listen to the promise of Jesus: *"In My Father's house are many rooms and I will prepare them for your arrival… I my self will come and take you to be where I am."* (Jn. 14:2–3) Read God's Word this All Saints Day. Read the hymn (LSB 676). *"Blessed Saints in bright array now safely home in endless day, extol the Lord, with His Word sustained you on the way. The steep and narrow path you trod; You toiled the Word abroad and bring Your fruits and sing before the throne of God. The myriad angels sing with that happy throng! Lift up one voice; Let heaven rejoice in our redeemer's song!"* Have a blessed All Saints Day.

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



Ministry Milestones



At the recent Mid-South District Fall Pastors' Conference, President Paavola had the honor of presenting several pastors with certificates to recognize their ordination anniversaries. Those in attendance included (pictured left to right with District President, Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola):

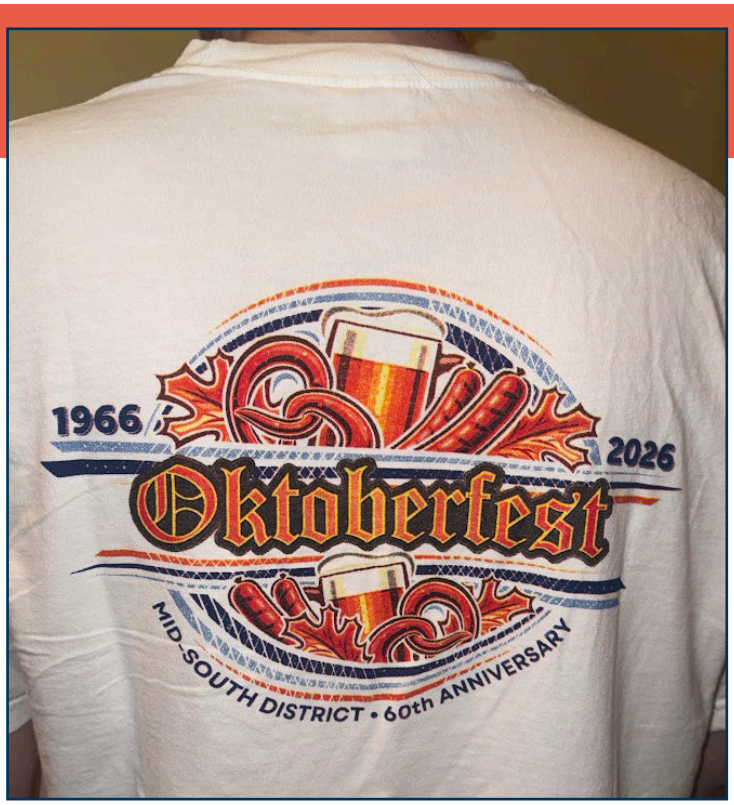
- Rev. Hubert Bernthal, Emeritus (70-Year Anniversary!)
- Rev. Joshua Schooping, St. John's, Russellville (10-year)
- Rev. Thomas Bartzsch, River Valley Grace, Lamar (15-Year)
- Rev. Michel Meyer, Holy Trinity, Rogers (20-Year)
- Rev. Sean Smith, Grace, Clarksville (15-Year)
- Rev. Kevin Conger, Hope, Jacksonville (25-Year)
- Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau, Holy Trinity, Bowling Green (25-Year)
- Rev. Randolph Schnack, Emeritus (45-Year)

Congratulations—and thank you—to these faithful servants!

GET YOUR OKTOBERFEST TEE WHILE THEY LAST...

The Oktoberfest 2026 official tee is a high quality white, Comfort Colors shirt with the District's 60th Anniversary logo in blue on the left chest and a full color Oktoberfest custom design across the back. **The shirt is available in adult sizes SM-3XL for just $15.** Orders can be shipped to you or picked up at the District Office. If several people from one congregation order together, they can ship to your church!

Order Online Today!



CAREVAN 2026 HITS THE ROAD THIS MONTH

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

It's time once again for CareVan with Lutheran World Relief (LWR)! Many congregations in the Mid-South District are long-time participants in CareVan projects, which aid the outreach efforts of LWR. Through CareVan, congregations create, pack and ship "Kits of Care" and quilts to help LWR provide aid to people impacted by disasters and other catastrophic circumstances. LWR kits are specifically designed to help people coping with poverty, disaster, conflict and more. Whether a kit helps someone to maintain good hygiene, care well for a newborn baby, keep education going during a crisis or learn a new vocation, LWR kits provide dignity and hope in the direst situations. **In 2025, Lutheran World Relief shipped 803,181 quilts and kits to 15 countries,** including significant disaster responses within the United States. That's an incredible impact and it's made possible through the collective efforts of Lutheran congregations just like yours!

A number of Mid-South District congregations are currently preparing their bulk shipments of care kits and quilts for the upcoming CareVan collection dates, which will be November 6-7. We look forward to sharing the results of this year's collection in the January 2027 issue of the *Encourager*. If you would like to know more about CareVan, please visit the district website or contact the Mid-South District's CareVan coordinator, Diane Reimold, at **volunteer@mid-southlcms.com.**

OKTOBERFEST CLASSIC Golf Tournament Wins Big for Hope's Family Life Pantry

Hope Lutheran Church in Batesville, AR is grateful to all the sponsors and participants of its first-ever Oktoberfest Classic Golf Tournament, which took place in early October. The great day of golf and fellowship raised approximately **$16,800** for Hope's Family Life Pantry, a key outreach ministry through which the church connects members of the community with both resources and spiritual care. Through the Family Life Pantry, Hope provides diapers, wipes, baby formula, laundry detergent and other essentials to struggling families with children, at no cost to the recipients. The success of the 2026 Oktoberfest Classic will help Hope ensure the continuation and growth of this important outreach ministry! Follow Hope Lutheran Church on Facebook (**https://www.facebook.com/hope.lutheran72501**) for encouraging updates on the Family Life Pantry.

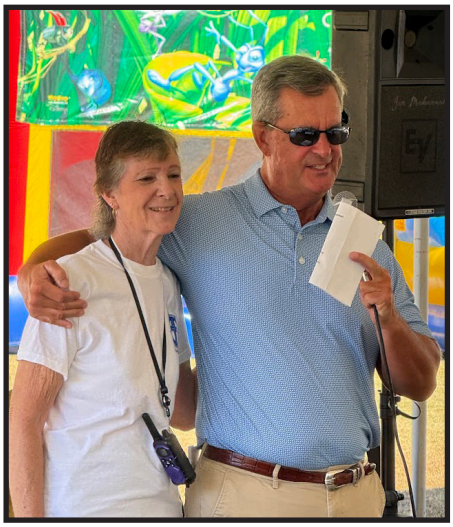








Sunshine & Smiles at the District's 60th Anniversary OKTOBERFEST!



▲ The special day would not have been possible without the leadership and planning of District volunteer (and Immanuel member) Diane Reimold, shown here being thanked by Paul Reaves, Development Advisor for the Mid-South District.



A beautiful autumn day was the perfect backdrop for the Mid-South District's 60th Anniversary Oktoberfest celebration, graciously hosted by Immanuel Lutheran Church in Memphis on Saturday, October 24. Many thanks to the congregation of Immanuel!

Lederhosen and dirndls were a popular choice for the day, including for Mid-South District President, Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola and his wife, Pat. ▶

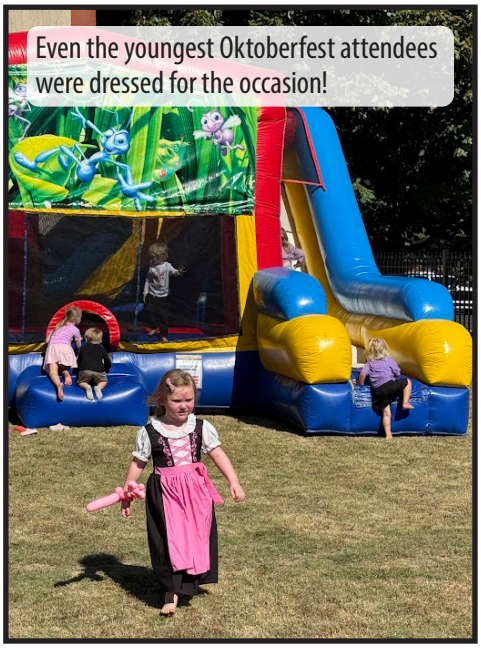




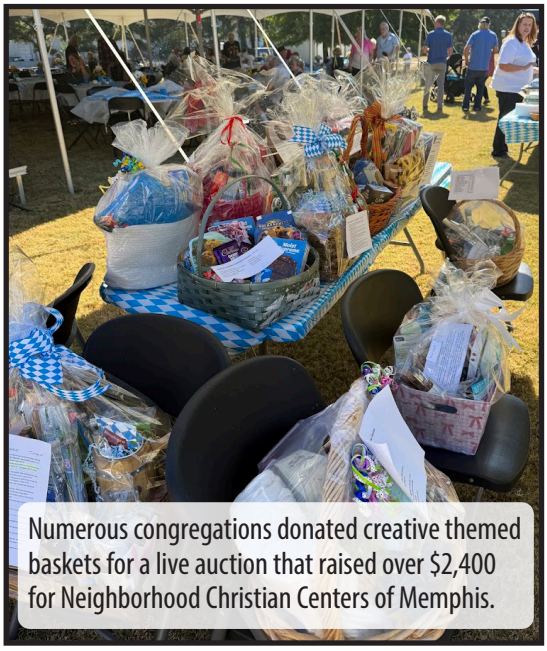
Oktoberfest brings people together—like a former Immanuel Lutheran School student (Jenna Adcock) and her favorite former teacher, April Jones, who is now a member of the Mid-South District's staff.



Colorful centerpieces served as decor and a way to learn interesting facts about District history.



Even the youngest Oktoberfest attendees were dressed for the occasion!



Numerous congregations donated creative themed baskets for a live auction that raised over $2,400 for Neighborhood Christian Centers of Memphis.

"Danke!" to All Who Joined Us for the Celebration

Visit the Mid-South District on **Facebook** for more photos from Oktoberfest!

150 Years of God's Grace!

On October 4, Salem Lutheran Church of Springdale, Arkansas celebrated its 150th anniversary under the theme: *150 Years of God's Grace!* Started as an English-speaking church at a time when most Lutheran congregations spoke German, Salem has a history of reaching out into its community with the gospel. By God's grace, Salem is now a multiethnic family of faith that offers the Divine Service and shares the Good News of Jesus in both English and Spanish. The anniversary celebration included a bilingual worship service, followed by a banquet with live music (classical, bluegrass, and mariachi!) and an outdoor festival with family games.



▲ *Rev. Adam Gless (Senior Pastor of Salem); Rev. Brandon Martin (Associate Pastor of Salem); Rev. Stephen Heimer (Manager of All-Nations Ministry for the LCMS Office of National Mission); Rev. Mike Meyer (Associate Pastor of Holy Trinity, Rogers); Rev. Mark Krause (previous Senior Pastor of Salem).*





◀ *President Paavoal presented the plaque to Rev. Adam Gless and Rev. Brandon Martin. Worship was held in a joint service with Rev. Stephen Heimer, Director of All Nations Ministries, LCMS, preaching on All Nations under the grace of God in Christ Jesus.*

▼ *Brandon Martin (Associate Pastor of Salem); Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola (President of Mid-South District); Rev. Stephen Heimer (Manager of All-Nations Ministry for the LCMS Office of National Mission); Rev. Adam Gless (Senior Pastor of Salem)*







YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO A

Celebration Banquet

Giving Thanks

for 60 Years of Mid-South District Ministry!

The Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is blessed to celebrate 60 years of ministry this year! To mark this blessed milestone, the Mid-South District is hosting Celebration Banquets this fall, in partnership with congregations across the District. The banquets will be an opportunity for us to gather as a faith family, give thanks for 60 years of ministry together, and prayerfully support the mission of the Mid-South District! There is **no cost** to attend these events, which will include:

- Hors d'oeuvres and Fellowship Time
- An Elegant Dinner
- District Greetings and Updates on the "Blueprint for Ministry"
- Inspiring Local Ministry Impact Stories
- An Opportunity to Share Financial Support for District Ministry
- A Keepsake to Commemorate the District's 60th Anniversary

UPCOMING BANQUET DATES & LOCATIONS

- **Sunday, NOVEMBER 8** (5-7:15 PM) in Knoxville, TN (*Reservations Closed*)
  at Grace Lutheran Church
- **Sunday, DECEMBER 6** (4-6:15 PM) in Memphis, TN
  at Immanuel Lutheran Church
- **Monday, DECEMBER 7** (5:45-8 PM) in Nashville, TN
  at Our Savior Lutheran Church
- **Tuesday, DECEMBER 8** (6-8:15 PM) in Chattanooga, TN
  at First Lutheran Church

Please Join Us!

RESERVE YOUR SEATS by clicking the event in your area.

NOTE: Reservations close 9 days prior to each banquet.



FAMILY MINISTRY *Workshop*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2026
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Our Savior Lutheran Church | Nashville, Tennessee

This workshop will be a valuable opportunity for **pastors, teachers, youth leaders, parents,** and anyone passionate about growing family ministry!

NO COST TO ATTEND • LUNCH INCLUDED

FEATURED PRESENTERS



Mr. Larry Yochum

Associate Director of Coaching and Implementation, Concordia Center for the Family

TOPICS:
- **"It Starts with Me!"**
- **Shifting the Paradigm Through Tweaks**
- **Proven Tweaks Toward Family Discipleship**



Rev. Andy Becker

Director of Family Ministry, Office of National Mission

TOPICS:
- **Developing a Culture of Family Discipleship**
- **The Mission Field of the Family**

CLICK HERE!

Presented by the Mid-South District, LCMS

Register Today!



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

Camp Trinity Launches "RENEW, RESTORE, REVIVE" Ministry Expansion Campaign

"Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." — Psalm 127:1

Camp Trinity, the Lutheran camp on Petit Jean Mountain in Arkansas, has launched its **Renew, Restore, Revive Ministry Expansion Campaign**, an effort to strengthen the camp's facilities and prepare its Christ-centered ministry for future generations.

For generations, Camp Trinity has provided a place where children, youth, families, and congregations can step away from everyday life, experience Christian community, and grow together in Christ. The new campaign seeks to preserve that ministry while addressing several important facility needs and We NEED YOU!

The $600,000 campaign will...
• provide on-site **housing for Camp Trinity's Associate Director**
• make significant improvements to the camp's bunkhouse cabins (**replacing aging roofs, renovating bunkhouse bathrooms and installing air conditioning**) to make the cabins more comfortable and useful for campers and retreat guests.

The campaign is planned to run from September 2026 through August 2028, inviting congregations, families, alumni, and friends of Camp Trinity to participate through **prayer and financial gifts**.



The camp invites the wider Church to pray that the Lord would bless this work and use it to serve generations yet to come.

To support the campaign, visit lutherancamp.org or contact Camp Trinity at camptrinityadmin@gmail.com.

For more information and answers to most frequently asked questions, visit www.lutheran-camp.org/mec

Thank you for your support of Camp Trinity!



Nominate Students for Lutheran Summer Music

You're invited to nominate a student for LSM 2027! Lutheran Summer Music (LSM) is a faith-based residential music academy for high school students in grades 8-12. Students come together from across the country to pursue musical excellence and build an intentional, supportive, and fun community.

LSM 2027 takes place at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN, from June 27-July 25. Priority Enrollment is open through December 1, offering a $100 tuition discount and first access to financial aid. Nominate students at LSMacademy.org/nominate, and watch and share the LSM Experience Video to learn more!

WELLNESS REMINDER:

Have You Had a Biometric Screening?

We've all heard the famous Benjamin Franklin quote, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." When it comes to our health, there are so many tools to help us prevent illness and injury—or detect problems early and address them fast. One great tool is an assessment called a biometric screening. It may sound complex, but it's actually a simple collection of tests that can be performed in minutes and deliver valuable information—and peace of mind—regarding your overall health. And if you are enrolled in a Concordia health plan, the screening can earn you valuable points through Vitality! Check the "Prevention" category in the Vitality app to schedule your free biometric screening with Quest Diagnostics. If you participate in a different health plan, see which lab is a partner of your benefits provider to schedule your screening. Set a goal to complete the screening this year!



Do You Know About the Online Autism Caregiver Support Group?

Lutheran Family Service provides a monthly connection and support opportunity for parents and caregivers raising a child with autism. Every first Tuesday of the month at 12 PM Central, this welcoming, Christ-centered community meets online. Together, participants can connect with others who understand the journey, share experiences, find practical guidance and trusted resources, and talk honestly about the challenges and joys of caring for their child. The group explores topics such as navigating school, home, and community supports, strengthening family relationships, caring for yourself as a caregiver, and finding encouragement and hope rooted in Scripture and the promises of Christ. To join the conversation, visit https://lutheranfamilyservice.org/autism-support-group/.





CSP

CONCORDIA ST. PAUL

Concordia University, St. Paul Slashes 2027-2028 Tuition Rates in "Tuition Reset 2.0"

Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP), recently announced it will lower traditional undergraduate tuition by $5,500 for the 2027-28 academic year, reducing its listed price to $21,700. The 20 percent reduction in tuition for traditional undergraduate programs underscores the university's commitment to making a college education affordable and accessible for more students. It also puts tuition at CSP on par with many Minnesota public universities.

When implemented next year, the tuition price will match the university's 2006 rate. When adjusting for inflation, a 2027-28 CSP education will ultimately cost approximately 40 percent less than what it did at that same point in time. The end result helps reduce the amount of debt a student may have upon graduation, keeping more dollars in their pockets. Tuition costs and anticipated debt after graduation are key drivers that keep many prospective students from enrolling in college.

For more on this important news from CSP, please read the full "Tuition Reset 2.0" press release.



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.**

PETAL PUSHERS®



We give thanks and praise to God for the blessings He has bestowed on the promotion and implementation of this outreach ministry in connection with the Tournament of Roses Parade.

Through the Southern California LLL District English and Spanish Witness Booth Ministry, promotions, meetings, and congregational presentations, the Lord brought about incredible results:

- Hundreds of individual conversations regarding the spiritual meaning of the float.
- More than 20 volunteers participating, with half of them serving for the first time.
- Volunteers sharing their joy, describing the experience as "wonderful" and "enjoyable."
- Faithful staffing during December decorating early morning and evening shifts with dedicated English and Spanish-speaking volunteers.
- Distribution of 9,000 English and 1,000 Spanish postcards.
- Mailing of nearly 1,000 postcards addressed by guests to locations across the United States and 10 international destinations.
- Distribution of over 1,000 float brochures and specialized English and Spanish Spiritual Conversation kits.
- Distribution of Project Connect and Kids Project Connect booklets in both English and Spanish.

We pray that the Lord of the harvest blesses the seeds sown, that by the power of His Holy Spirit they may bear fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

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. 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)

All those affect by Hurricane Isaias in the Gulf and those deployed in disaster relief efforts.

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, 3PM.*

Rev. David Reedy, Pastor to Immanual & 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, 2PM.*

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

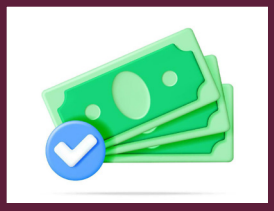
DECLINED: Rev. Gerald Heiencke, Pastor to the dual parish Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, AR & Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend, AR returned the Call to serve as Pastor to St. John's Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, MN & Zion Lutheran Church, Warren, MN

VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

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

IN THE CALLING PROCESS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

First Lutheran School, Fort Smith, AR - Principal



Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 9/30/2026 (9 Months)

Anticipated Amount (75% of budget).....$1,237,591
Actual Receipts 1,200,438
Over (under) anticipated amount .....($37,153)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (9 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions $341,381
Allocated to Tanzania 18,750
Retained for District Mission/ Ministry Support (70% of receipts)..... 840,307
Total Receipts $1,200,438

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (9 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 9/30/2026.....$1,200,438
Actual Receipts as of 9/30/2025..... $1,185,848
Over (under) prior year receipts $14,590

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:

• December — *Highlights of 2026*

Ahead in 2027

January — School week
February — Outreach

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

Staff

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, *President*
Angela Fowler, *Executive Director for Business & Finance*
Missy Washburn, *Executive Assistant to the District President*
April Jones, *Executive Assistant to the District President for Education*
Renae McElwain, *Communications & Marketing Specialist*
Robin Moyer, *Deaconess*
Lisa Pennington, *Finance Assistant*
Scott Roberts, *LCEF Vice President*

Contact

1675 Wynne Road
Cordova, TN 38016
PHONE: 866.373.1343 / 901.373.1343
FAX: 901.373.4826

Stay Connected With Us

WEB - "mid-southlcms.org"

FACEBOOK - "Mid-South-LCMS"

INSTAGRAM - "midsouthlcms"

MID-SOUTH DISTRICT CHARTERED 1966 LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI SYNOD Celebrating 60 Years