

# Encourager

DECEMBER 2022

Mid-South District LCMS



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

## Mary's Song

Mary's song, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) is magnificent! It is a divinely revealed expression of a deep and highly developed faith. That Mary could sing this canticle of praise to God in the face of the external absurdity of the situation she finds herself in is truly a miracle: "A virgin maiden is pregnant!" Yet the whole of our Christian faith partakes of such impossibilities! How likely is it that a virgin conceives and bears a child? How likely is it that God takes on human flesh? How likely is it that the Child worshiped by the Magi is very God of very God? How likely is it that this one Man's death pays for the sin of the world? How likely is that the Crucified One also rose from the dead? How likely is it that Christ

Jesus, in human flesh, is seated at the right hand of God? How likely is it that He will come to judge the living and the dead? How likely is it that the bread of the Supper is His body and the wine His blood? How likely is it that baptism gives life eternal? How likely is it that mere speech can deliver perfect forgiveness to us?

Once you start sorting through the teachings of the Bible to pick those you like or that you think might be likely or even remotely possible, everything that makes Christianity Christianity will be put in jeopardy. The teachings of the Bible will either hang together or they will hang separately, disintegrated into nothingness. Either God can do what He says, or He is not God.

Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) announces the salvation that belongs to us all. *"And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for God has looked with favor on the lowliness of the Almighty's servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is God's name. God's mercy is for those who fear God from generation to generation. God has shown strength with God's arm; God has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. God has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of God's*

mercy, according to the promise God made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

The Magnificat is a revolutionary song – a song of salvation whose political, economic, and social dimensions can never be diminished. People in need in every society, from every generation, and from every language need to hear the blessings in this canticle. The battered woman and children, the single parent without resources, the homeless thousands, those without food on their table, the young abandoned to their own devices, the old who are discarded – all of us are embraced in God’s grace in the hope of Mary’s proclamation.

The words of Mary’s Magnificat were banned – sung or read – in India under British rule. In the 1980’s, it was banned in Guatemala. In the Mother’s of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, the words of the Magnificat were placed on the capital plaza in commemoration of the thousands of children who all disappeared during the Dirty War between 1976 and 1983. However, the Magnificat’s words on posters in the capital plaza were removed by the military junta of Argentina. Anyone caught with a poster with the words were imprisoned because the junta outlawed any public display of Mary’s song.

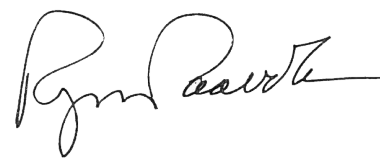
What is so powerful in these words that anti-Christian factions would outlaw these words from

Holy Scripture? It speaks of faith – faith that is the God-given means by which we embrace the hope of God’s promise of life and salvation in His Son, Jesus Christ. We want the faith of this little girl, Mary, who when confronted by the angel of the Lord, trusts what God promised to her, *“You will bear God’s Son and He will save the people from their sins.”* She shows deep faith responding to this impossible promise, *“May it be to me even as You have said.”* This is the only possible attitude of the Christian believer to the speech of God. She does not quiz God about how He might carry out this virginal conception. She is, of course, aware of how humans normally bear children, but the promise of the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit is sufficient for her because it is God’s own explanation of her virgin conception.

Martin Luther wrote, *“Isaiah announced: ‘There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root, and the Holy Spirit shall rest upon Him’* (Isaiah 11:1-2). The stem and root is the generation of Jesse or David, in particular the Virgin Mary; the rod and flower is Christ. Now, as unlikely, indeed as incredible, a thing it is that a fair branch and flower should spring from a dry and withered stem and root, just so unlikely was it that Mary the Virgin should become the mother of such a child. For I take it that she is called a stem and root not only because she

became a mother in a miraculous manner without violation of her virginity—just as it is miraculous to make a branch grow out of a dead tree stump.”

The church sings the Magnificat with her. In that faithful singing the whole Church throughout history partakes of its promises. When we sing it, we share in its faith. Like Mary, the Church wears the virgin’s gown of holiness from God. The Church too confesses that what God makes possible, comes to be, even if it seems impossible to us. The Magnificat highlights God’s willingness to make foolish man’s wisdom in the lowly conception and birth of His Son. Only as we look down in wonderment can we find God’s gaze fixed upon His Son. Over and over again we must go to the Word of God to know what God accomplished hidden under the conception and birth of this little Child of the humble peasant mother. This is God’s Son born for YOU! Have a blessed Advent and Christmas as we all celebrate the precious gift of God’s enduring grace, mercy, and peace through Jesus Christ – the Christ Child born for us all.



Your servant in Christ +  
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola

*May the peace and hope of  
Christ's birth  
be with you now and in the days ahead...*

## 2021 Mid-South District Convention Proceedings

The 2021 Mid-South District Convention Proceedings have been finalized, and were approved by the District's Board of Directors at the August 26 meeting. They are available on the District's Convention webpage for congregations and delegates to download their copy, or by clicking here <https://mid-southlcms.org/wp-content/uploads/MDS-2021-Convention-Proceedings-Final.pdf>. Delegates to the convention or congregations who desire a printed copy may request one from the district office. Rev. Larry Peters, District Secretary

## Join the Petal Pushers

Come and join Petal Pushers® in decorating 2023 Tournament of Rose Parade Floats. The Rose Parade theme for 2023 is: TURNING THE CORNER and Lutheran Hour Ministries float entry is: A NEW DAY WITH JESUS.

The Lutheran Hour Ministries Float has been a continuous participant and this year marks our 72nd! Learn more at: <https://petal-pushers.org/volunteer>



# St. Paul in Wartburg, TN Celebrates 175th Anniversary!

This year saw St. Paul Lutheran Church in Wartburg, Tennessee celebrating its 175th anniversary. Established in 1847—the same year as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod—the congregation marked this very special occasion with a weekend of celebrations on October 1-2, 2022 at their campus in Wartburg. All pastors, teachers, laity and the surrounding community were invited to the weekend homecoming, which included

an inspiring keynote address on Saturday by the Rev. Will Weedon, host of the *Word of the Lord Endures Forever* Bible study podcast and former director of worship for the LCMS.

Hundreds attended the various events held in celebration of St. Paul's very special milestone, including District President Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola and other representatives from the Mid-South District staff. The congregation of St. Paul in Wartburg is the oldest

congregation in the Mid-South District and is one of the historic planting congregations for many of LCMS congregations in East Tennessee. To learn more about the congregation's unique history, please visit the church's website and [special 175th anniversary page](#). Congratulations to Rev. David Graves and the entire congregation of St. Paul Lutheran in Wartburg on this year's special anniversary and its memorable celebration!



As a special gift to the congregation from the Mid-South District, President Roger Paavola (L) presented Rev. David Graves of St. Paul Lutheran a beautiful wooden plaque commemorating the 175th anniversary.



Skies looked threatening for a moment, but the weather held out for St. Paul's outdoor festivities on Saturday, October 1.



St. Paul's 175th Anniversary logo (L) was designed by Dr. Kristina Phillips, wife of Rev. Dr. Eric Phillips of Concordia Lutheran Church, Nashville.



Attendees of the anniversary celebration enjoyed learning about St. Paul's earlier years through various displays of photos and artifacts in the church's well-appointed history room.

## Mid-South District Pastors Attend Rally To End Child Mutilation

On October 21, around 3,000 people gathered in downtown Nashville, TN for the Rally to End Child Mutilation. The event was organized to call attention to the concerning trend of medicalized gender transitions for children. Speakers at the rally included Matt Walsh, Tulsi Gabbard, Landon Starbuck, Colin Wright, and Chloe Cole, all of whom spoke on the dangers of these procedures and the need to protect children from the narratives often used to promote the acceptance of gender change therapies. Four Mid-South District pastors were among the thousands who attended and bravely affirmed Biblical teaching on gender—despite vicious and vulgar protests from many who attended to demonstrate against the rally's cause. Many thanks



to these pastors for attending this important awareness event! Pictured are (L-R) are Pastors Phil Young of Redeemer Lutheran in Nashville, Greg Bauch of Ascension Lutheran in Madison,

David McMinn of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran in McMinnville, and Randy Sakach of Prince of Peace Lutheran in White House.

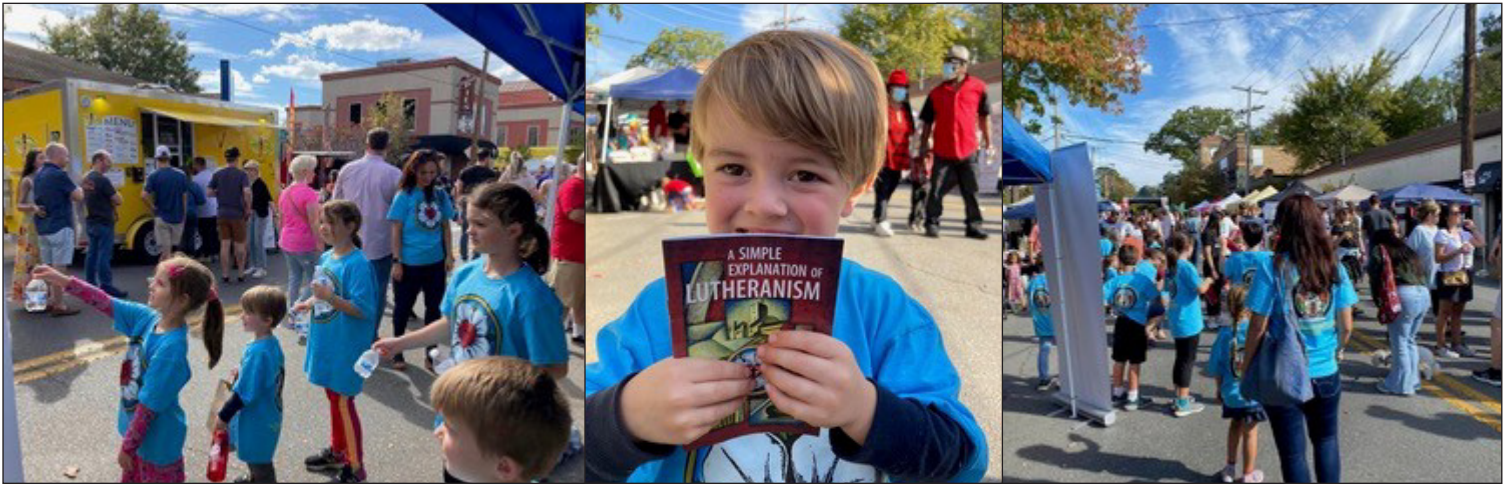
## Welcome Pastor Wagner

**The Rite of Installation was held at Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN, for The Rev. William Wagner on Sunday, November 20, 2022.** Pictured are (Front Row L-R) Rev. Carl Wenck, Emeritus; President Roger Paavola; Rev. Bill Wagner; Rev. Randy Sakack, White House; Rev. Craig Feibeiger, Thompson Station. Back Row (L-R) Rev. Henry Graf; Rev. Curt Hoover, Thompson Station; Rev. David McMinn, McMinnville; Rev. Lane Reuter, Nashville; Rev. Marty Nutter, Tullahoma.



## Grace Lutheran Church Little Rock Outreach Event

Grace Lutheran, Little Rock Arkansas was in full force at the neighborhood Harvestfest in the Hillcrest neighborhood of Little Rock. The church put out two tents and handed out over 800 free bottles of water, candy, information about the church, along with monogrammed reusable water bottles. They also offered a kids craft for all children in attendance. Grace has formed a new youth group with the intentions of getting younger youth involved. The youth came out and gladly handed out water and materials pertaining to Grace's congregation.



## Grace Lutheran Welcomes New Director of Parish Music

On Sunday, October 30th, Grace, Little Rock Arkansas welcomed its new Director of Parish Music, Jacquelyn Magnuson. Jacquelyn comes to Grace after serving previously at Trinity Lutheran in Davenport, Iowa, University Lutheran in Minneapolis Minnesota and St. John's Lutheran in Wheaton, Illinois. Jacquelyn has a Masters in Organ performance from CUW and a Masters in Theology and Philosophy from Cambridge University in England. Grace is thrilled to have her bring her skills and talents to our rich history of liturgy, hymnody and sacred music.



## Sharps Chapel, TN Congregation Dedicates New Road Sign

On Sunday, November 13, following their morning worship service, members of Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Sharps Chapel, Tennessee gathered to dedicate their new road sign to God's service. The sign and church building are located on Sharps Chapel Road and are clearly visible to those who travel in and out of Sharps Chapel.

*"More than just a way to give information about church and Bible study times, this sign helps us to share messages about our faith,"* said the Rev. Paul Kritsch, pastor of the congregation. *"We want passersby to know that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and that He has good news for them, too."*

The dedication of the new road sign is the latest exciting development for this growing ministry. Just last year, the congregation completed construction of a new facility after several years of gathering for worship in community buildings.



## Bread of Life Campaign



**As** we enter this Christmas season, it is glorifying to God for us to remember that **we are truly blessed!** Even in times of trial and tribulation, we know we are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, and ALL will end well, according to His good and perfect will. These words give comfort and hope to millions of Christians throughout Haiti, as they currently struggle to survive from one day to the next. They know they do not have the strength to fight the horrendous gangs on their own. Even when

joining together with other Haitians, they cannot muster enough power to overcome the oppressive corruption of their own government. By faith, they find their hope and strength in God alone. As King David's prayer proclaims in 1 Chronicles 29, ***"In Your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name."*** Together we trust God and praise His name as we continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

We also continue to do the work God has called us to do...bringing Hope to the children of Haiti one bowl of beans and rice at a time. Although the majority of schools were forced to delay the beginning of classes this fall, and the food prices have sky-rocketed to unprecedented levels, we continue to trust God and find ways to reach these children. With your support, we will be reaching

over 60,000 children, teachers, and cooks each school day this year. Many of these children come from homes where their parents do not yet know of the hope and strength that is found in Jesus Christ. Together, we must push forward and help these children become missionaries for their own families and country.

While we still have over 20,000 children on our waiting list, we have also been blessed with incredible opportunities to expand the work we do. Many of these blessings are centered around **Matching Funds** programs established by generous donors that want to help us feed more children each day. During the upcoming holiday season, God has provided multiple ways for your donations to be matched, and even double-matched!

**New Recurring Donations** – Any donor who sets up a new recurring donation before July 31, 2023, will be double matched this year and single matched every year beyond that. This means a \$1,000 annual recurring donation becomes \$3,000 the first year and \$2,000 indefinitely. New recurring donations can be established on a monthly or annual basis, and even if you are already a recurring

donor, an increase in your recurring donations will be matched! Visit our website at [www.trinityhope.org/donate](http://www.trinityhope.org/donate) to set up your online donation, or just give us a call.

**One Time Donations** – Any new, one-time donation greater than \$3,500 will also be matched. There's so many ways your generous donations can be doubled or even tripled, helping us feed thousands more hungry children.

As always, Trinity HOPE is committed to be good stewards with every dollar we receive. We are honored to have received a 100% Perfect Score from Charity Navigator, the nation's leading independent evaluator of non-profits. We are 1 of only 17 U.S. based non-profits that received a perfect score in the international category. For the past three years, over 96% of every dollar received goes directly to the Haitian feeding programs.

These donations are needed now more than ever. Please consider taking advantage of these amazing matching funds opportunities. It really is making a difference! THANK YOU for all your support. May God continue to bless you and your family this Thanksgiving season.



**BREAD OF LIFE**  
*Campaign*



New Recurring Donations  
Qualify for On Going Match

Feeding empty stomachs and nourishing souls with the truth that Jesus is the true Bread of Life.

Platinum Level - \$10,000 or more  
Gold Level - \$5,000  
Silver Level - \$2,500  
Bronze Level - \$1000  
Foundation Level - \$500 - Just \$42 per month!

[www.trinityhope.org/match](http://www.trinityhope.org/match)

Scan Here to Donate





## "Love Being Lutheran" T-Shirts Make Great Stocking Stuffers

"Love Being Lutheran" t-shirts were a hit at the Mid-South District's 2022 Oktoberfest celebration. In addition to the Luther Rose design on the chest, the back imprint notes the 175th anniversary of the LCMS. The super-soft blue shirts are still available for **\$20.00** in several sizes. They are perfect stocking stuffers! Order yours online while they last at: <https://midsouthdistrictlcms.regfox.com/love-being-lutheran-shirts-2022>



## *The Joy of Making Ministry Happen*

The Mid-South District is blessed to have the opportunity to engage in work that positively impacts LCMS ministries and workers across Arkansas, Tennessee and southwestern Kentucky. From church planting to encouraging individual evangelism, and from student financial aid for future church workers to grants for congregations, the Mid-South District continually serves and empowers ministries as they seek to reach more hearts with the love of Christ. It is rewarding work, strengthened by the generous support of many ministry partners—people just like you.

Gifts from individuals help the Mid-South District to serve, support and encourage our existing churches and schools and enable us to start new ministries, reaching even more people with the Gospel. During this time of thanksgiving, celebration and joy, the Mid-South District humbly asks you to help us do more for our ministries by sharing a financial gift. We are grateful for the prayers and support of ministry partners like you. Together, we can do more for ministry in the Mid-South District!

### **WAYS TO GIVE:**

You may share your gift [ONLINE](#); simply designate the amount in the IMPACT box. Gifts can also be mailed to the District Office (1675 Wynne Road / Cordova TN 38016), with IMPACT noted on the memo line.



## Lutheran World Relief CARE-VAN Drive 2022

At this year's Lutheran World Relief CARE-VAN ingathering the Mid-South District once again had seven drop sites where we collected handmade quilts, school kits, personal care kits, baby care kits, and fabric kits. Our drop sites included Grace, Knoxville, TN.; Cross of Christ, Chattanooga, TN.; Our Savior, Nashville, TN.; Immanuel, Memphis, TN.; First, Fort Smith, AR.; Zion of Avilla, Alexander, AR.; and Salem, Springdale, AR.

At the time of this report (11/11/2022), the top three quilt-producing congregations that dropped off their work at an LWR CARE-VAN ingathering site were Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN (114 quilts), First Lutheran Church, Cleveland, TN (96 quilts) and First Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, AR (80 quilts). At this time, a total of 631 quilts have been donated.

To date we had 22 congregations participate (3 ELCA), collecting over \$2,196 for shipping costs. We also collected 754 personal care kits (one congregation donated 350 personal care kits!), 119 fabric kits, 567 school kits, 81 baby care kits, and 50 face masks were also donated. The CARE-VAN trailers were loaded up with 302 boxes (weighing approximately 5,542 pounds!) of offerings from District congregations for Lutheran World Relief. Way to go Mid-South District!

We were blessed to have representatives from Lutheran World Relief, Vicki and Ed Whetstone, join us at two of the drop off locations!

Here is a snippet from one of the circuit coordinators at the Memphis drop off location, Diane Reimold who has been the CARE-Van Coordinator for the Memphis Circuit for 4 years:

*"2022 was one of the best years for donations. COVID certainly was the reason for the lack of donations the past 2 years. Once 2022 got here, we were ready to be together again!! Most of the CARE-Van donations are organized by LWML groups and in 2022, 7 congregations participated and one individual. The total donations amounted to 59 boxes weighing 1222 lbs. and included 69 quilts, 121 personal care kits, 200 school kits, 46 baby care kits, and \$362.88 to help Lutheran World Relief with shipping costs. This was way over the 14 boxes weighing 271 lbs. that were donated in 2021! We had a lady who donated 3 quilts who is not currently affiliated with a Lutheran Church. She located us on the LWR website and read about the gatherings across the country. She worked through Julie Tyler at the district office to get more information and set up a time to deliver her donation at the drop off site. She hopes to make more quilts for next year's event. Knowing there are random people looking for ways to help others is so heart-warming. Thank you to all the congregations in our district who contributed to CARE-Van this year. Our donations WILL make a difference in people's lives."*

Many of the congregations' efforts are coordinated by LWML groups and longstanding quilting groups in the congregations. They participate in this effort to share the love of Christ in a personal way. The tireless efforts of those who share their talents and the generous contributions of many make this a successful ingathering.

Thank you to all who participated in this year's annual LWR CARE-VAN drive! You touched someone in need!

*Julie Tyler*

Mid-South District CARE-VAN Coordinator

# LWR CARE-VAN Drive

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – November 4, 2022



*Lynne Lange and Lois Hobby-Clayton from Faith Lutheran in Collierville, TN delivering 13 boxes containing 100 School Kits.*



*Diane Reimold (CARE-VAN Coordinator, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis) and Julie Tyler from Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Olive Branch, MS delivering 3 boxes of School Kits.*



*Susan Burkey from Christ Lutheran in Paris, TN delivering 23 boxes containing quilts, personal care kits, school kits, and baby care kits.*



*(Above & Rt) Vicki Whetstone and her husband Ed, from Lutheran World Relief visited Diane at Immanuel Lutheran Church on Friday, November 04, 2022. They traveled to Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, in Alexander, AR on Saturday, November 5th. Thank you to Vicki's husband, Ed, for helping to load boxes onto the trailer!*



# PRAYER SUMMARY, NOVEMBER 2022

Following is a list of all the people that have appeared on the Mid-South District website prayer list [www.mid-southlcms.com](http://www.mid-southlcms.com) during the month of November 2022.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

**REV. PAUL DONNER** (Emeritus, Paducah, KY)  
**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)  
**MRS. MARY ANN HERD** (wife of Rev. Clifford Herd, Hixson, TN)  
**MRS. SHIRLEY EIMMERMAN** (ECE Director, First Lutheran Preschool, Knoxville, TN)  
**REV. CHAD PHILIPP** (St. Luke, DeWitt, AR & St. Paul, Gillett, AR)  
**REV. GIL PINGEL** (Emeritus, Chattanooga, TN)

We continue to lift up the Florida-Georgia District and all those affected by the devastating effects of Hurricane Ian.

## CALL UPDATE ORDAINED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED:** **Rev. William (Bill) Wagner**, Emeritus, has accepted the Call to serve as *Pastor to Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, TN. Installation took place Sunday, November 20, 2022.*

**DECLINED:** **Rev. Mark Schulze**, Pastor to Trinity Lutheran Church, Eden, ID, has returned the Call to serve as *Pastor to Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN.*

**Rev. Thomas Boeck**, Pastor to Marco Island Church, Marco Island, FL, has returned the Call to serve as *Pastor to Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, AR.*

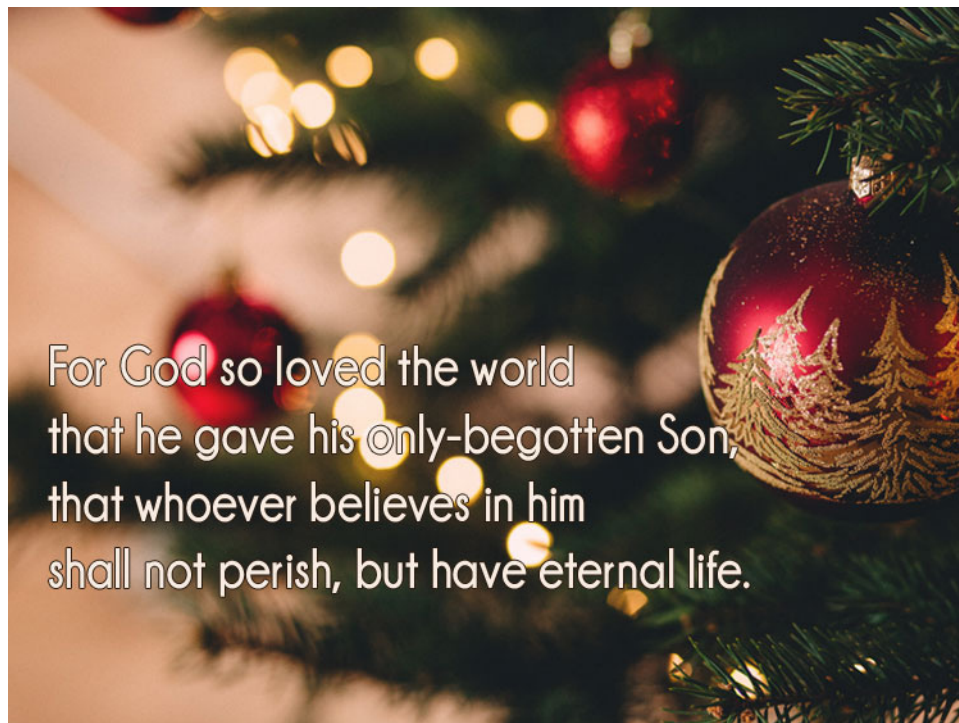
**Rev. Christopher Schneider**, Associate Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Flemington, NJ, has returned the Call to serve as *Associate Pastor to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR.*

## VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

**Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN** – Pastor  
**First Lutheran Church, Blytheville, AR** – Pastor  
**First Lutheran Church, Harrison, AR** – Pastor  
**Messiah Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN** – Pastor  
**Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, AR** – Pastor  
**St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN** – Pastor  
**Immanuel Lutheran Church, Murray, KY** – Pastor

## IN THE CALLING PROCESS- COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

**Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, TN** – Preschool Teachers  
**First Lutheran School, Knoxville, TN** – Teacher for 4th/5th grade  
**Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN** - Teacher



For God so loved the world  
that he gave his only-begotten Son,  
that whoever believes in him  
shall not perish, but have eternal life.



## Congregational Mission Commitments

### Mission Commitment Receipts as of 10/31/2022 (10 Months)

Anticipated Amount (83.33% of budget)..... \$1,264,908  
 Actual Receipts ..... 1,275,045  
 Over (under) anticipated amount ..... \$10,137

### Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (10 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions ..... \$361,680  
 Allocated to Tanzania ..... 20,833  
 Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts)..... 892,532  
 Total Receipts ..... \$1,275,045

### Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (10 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 10/31/2022..... \$1,275,045  
 Actual Receipts as of 10/31/2021 ..... \$1,275,480  
 Over (under) prior year receipts ..... **(\$435)**

## Share your news with us!

### Encourager

#### Topics in 2023

We invite you to share your stories with us please email stories by **16th** to Rhonda, [webmaster@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com). [Here's a look at the upcoming topics for 2023](#)

- January - School Week
- February - Outreach
- March - Youth

### 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](mailto: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

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*Executive Director for Business & Finance*

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**Missy Washburn,**  
*Administrative Assistant to the District President*

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