

Encourager

DECEMBER 2023

Mid-South District LCMS



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

Mary's song, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) is spectacular! 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 dangers of her situation as she faces becoming the mother of God, is truly a miracle. Imagine the talk around town, "A virgin pregnant! How can she be?" Yet, because of what the angel of the Lord told her, we in the whole Christian faith have our blessed promise of eternal life in such an impossibility!

We're first faced with the question of how likely is it for a virgin to conceive a child? Then, we ponder how is it that God chose to become a Man for the sole purpose to suffer and die for us? Then, how likely is it that this Child born of a virgin mother would pay for the sins of the whole world with His suffering, death, and (equally spectacular) resurrec-

tion from the dead? We wonder why He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God, and will return on the Last Day. Why didn't He just stay here to prove His eternal existence?

His Word tells us that He accomplished our salvation on the cross and gives us His true body and blood in the Holy Supper for the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our faith, and joining us together in the common union of His Church. How does our Baptism in Christ give us life eternal and the gift of faith from the Holy Spirit?

Post-modernists – even in the Christian circles – begin to extract Biblical teachings that defy human reason, logic, and tradition. Yet, if one "dot or tittle of God's Word" is extracted because it defies one's reason or is considered impossible makes our Christian faith like the individual blocks in a Jenga tower. Once one is removed the entire

tower comes tumbling down! The Bible either stands together or it fall completely apart.

The mother of our Savior, Mary was told by the angel Gabriel, "You will bear God's Son and He will save the people from their sins." Her response by faith embraced the impossible promise, "May it be to me even as You have said." Unlike Zachariah a few months earlier, Mary didn't question God how He would complete the conception of a virgin mother. The promise from the Archangel Gabriel foretold how the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit would consummate 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.'*" Mary would become the mother of this Child sent from

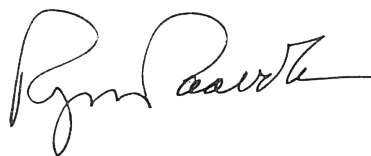
God and dwell among to fulfill all of Holy Scripture perfectly! We sing the Magnificat with Mary throughout the Church year. But, especially during the Advent and Christmas season, the Magnificat is a faithful singing of God's people who partake in His promises.

If it was left up to simple human minds to prepare from the coming of the Messiah, we would hardly have chosen a poor, young virgin to bring Christ to the world. We probably would have arranged for Him to be born in the castle in Jerusalem and created a spectacular fanfare at His birth. But God's Word spelled out the pattern of His coming in flesh – defying logic, discarding reason, and embracing the impossible by faith in God's Word.

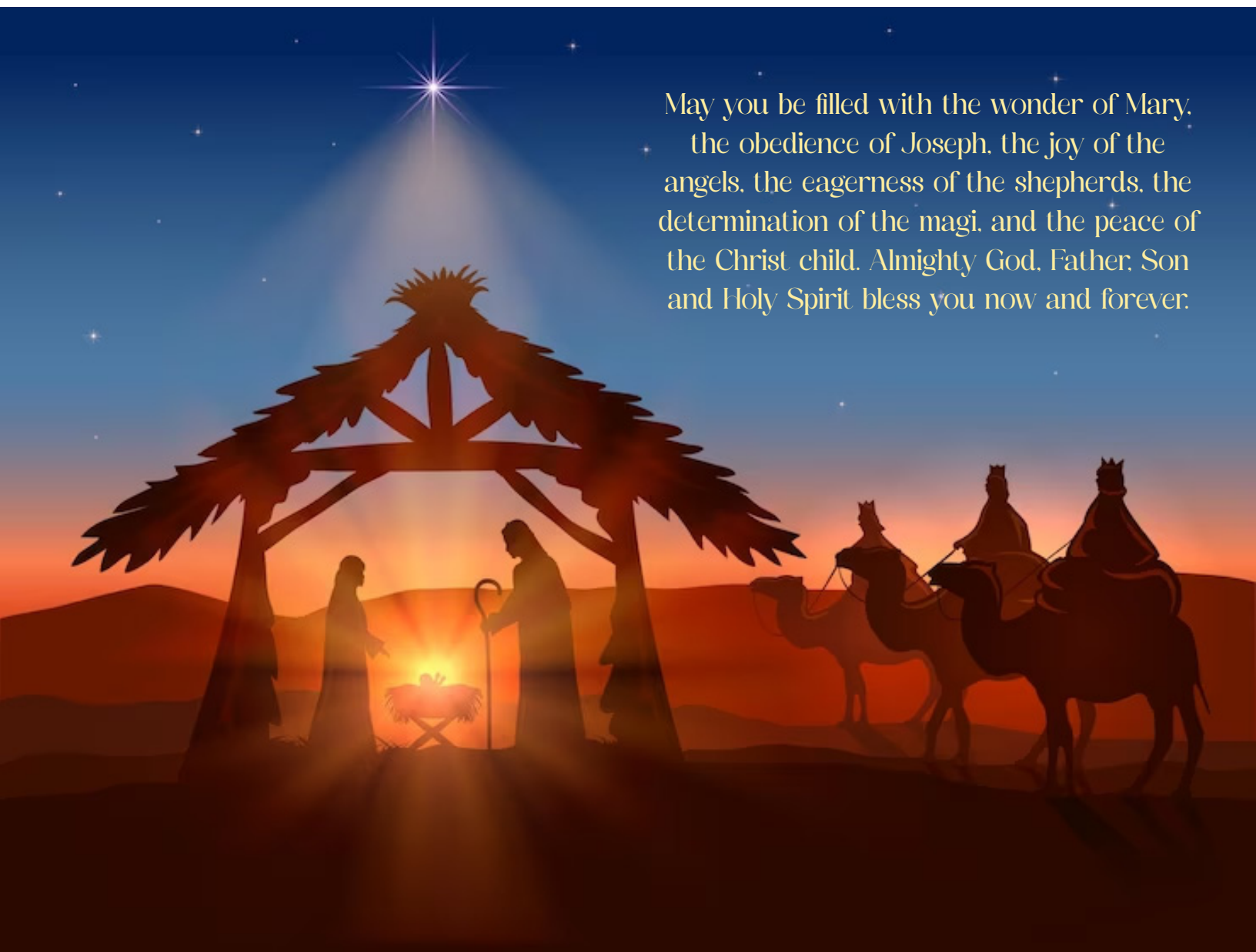
We share in its faith. Mary's Magnificat shines a bright beacon of eternal Light about God's willing-

ness to make man's wisdom foolish. Only as we look down on the crude bed where He lies do we embrace by faith that we are looking at the face of God. The Word of God was made flesh to dwell among us. What God accomplished was hidden in a spectacular essential event that led to birth of this little Child to a humble peasant mother. This is God, Son of the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, who born for you and me!

Your servant in Christ +
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



May you be filled with the wonder of Mary,
the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the
angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the
determination of the magi, and the peace of
the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, Son
and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.





Lutheran World Relief CARE-VAN Drive 2023

At this year's Lutheran World Relief CARE-VAN ingathering the Mid-South District had six 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.; Ascension, Madison, TN.; Immanuel, Memphis, TN.; First, Fort Smith, AR.; and Zion of Avilla, Alexander, AR.

At the time of this report (11/27/2023), the top three quilt-producing congregations that dropped off their work at an LWR CARE-VAN ingathering site were Zion of Avilla Lutheran Church, Alexander, AR (193 quilts), Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN (139 quilts), and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wartburg, TN (133 quilts). At this time, a total of 1,482 quilts have been donated.

To date we had 38 congregations participate, collecting over \$6,645 for shipping costs. We also collected 1,694 personal care kits (one congregation donated 344 personal care kits!), 117 fabric kits, 769 school kits, and 225 baby care kits. The CARE-VAN trailers were loaded up with 534 boxes (weighing approximately 10,850 pounds!) of offerings from District congregations for Lutheran World Relief. Way to go Mid-South District!

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.

The recent closure of Yellow Freight, the shipping contractor for CARE-VAN, created quite a dilemma. The Mid-South District and Lutheran World Relief worked right up to the last minute to secure another shipping contractor. This resulted in fewer drop off locations, which we pray will reduce overall shipping costs.



One of the many blessings of CARE-VAN would have to be the different denominations that come together to provide relief through their talents and hard work. We remain very blessed to be able to coordinate this effort throughout the Mid-South District. 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

*CARE-VAN Drive at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN.
L to R: Mike and Monica Witherby, Larry Zehnder, Tony Pessini, Jo Parham,
Eunice and Bob Timm, and 136 boxes ready to be packed into the truck.*



Blessing of Quilts & Kits at Zion of Avilla Lutheran Church, Alexander, AR. Zion produced 193 quilts and a total of 232 kits for this year's LWR CARE-VAN Drive.

Lutheran World Relief CARE-VAN Drive 2023



**Diane Reimold and Julie Tyler
at the Memphis CareVAN drop-off**



L&R: LWR CARE-VAN Drive at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN

100th Anniversary — 2 Days of Celebration



June 3, 2023, St John's Lutheran Church of Russellville, AR held their 100th Anniversary Dinner Celebration at the Pope County Senior Citizen Activity Center in Russellville, AR. As guests entered the main event room, they had the opportunity to snap some photos in front of the photo wall and were served refreshments before the dinner began. Guests found their seats at tables adorned with framed photos of members throughout the 100 years of St. John's. Justin Drittler, President of St. John's Lutheran Church welcomed everyone, and Reverend William Ringer provided the blessing for the meal. Everyone dined on a meal prepared by Kasper's of Clarksville. Pork Tenderloin, Green

Beans, Potatoes, Green Salad, and Dinner Roll along with cake for dessert was served. The Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola, President of the Mid-South District presented Rev. William Ringer with a certificate of celebration for 100 years from the Mid-South District. Justin recognized our special guest, Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola and his wife Pat, Stephanie Weiser, wife of Reverend Les Weiser (former pastor of St. John's) and their son Shawn Weiser, and Reverend Tim Henning and his wife Janet of Trinity Lutheran Church in Mena, AR. Entertainment consisted of current and former members sharing stories of St. John's. We had special entertainment from our Camp Trinity family, David Cox the Camp Director along



with his daughter Maggie Davis, and granddaughters Gwyneth and Lottie Davis (upper left). Reverend William Ringer closed the evening in prayer.

June 4, 2023, worship service was held at St. John's Lutheran Church at 500 North Cumberland Ave in Russellville. Worship service was led by Reverend William Ringer and Reverend Darrell Kobs, Pastor Emeritus. President Roger Paavola provided the sermon. The St. John's Lutheran Church Choir performed, and our confirmation class served as Acolytes, Torch Bearers, and Crucifer. We then enjoyed a reception by the

ladies of the congregation in the fellowship hall. Pictures were displayed in frames on the tables and posted on bulletin boards throughout the church for people to view. A video created by Justin Drittler with photos curated by Lauren Robertson from the archives of St John's Lutheran Church was shown during the reception. We do want to acknowledge Thrivent Financial and the three action team grants that helped cover some of the expenses of this celebration.



*Thank you for everything you do to support the Trinity HOPE ministry.
May your Christmas season be blessed beyond measure.*



TRINITY HOPE
HAITIAN FEEDING PROGRAM

❖ MERRY ❖ CHRISTMAS FROM TRINITY HOPE

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace among those with whom He is pleased!"
Luke 2:14*

www.trinityhope.org P.O. Box 2910, Lebanon, TN 37088 615-394-4950



Treasurers' Workshops

Mid-South District

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD

Congregational Treasurers please mark your calendar to attend one of the Mid-South District Free Workshops. The Presenter for the Treasurer's manual (Volume 1) session will be Mr. Charlie Rhodes, Executive Director of Synod

Accounting (Retired). Angela Fowler will be the presenter for the afternoon Church Treasurer Best Practices session. *Please respond by December 31, 2023, if possible.*

REGISTER ONLINE NOW

Conferences will be held on the following dates and places.

January 6, 2024

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. Church Treasurer Best Practices
Grace Lutheran Church
9076 Middlebrook Pike
Knoxville, TN

January 13, 2024

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. Church Treasurer Best Practices
Our Savior Lutheran Church
5110 Franklin Road
Nashville, TN

January 20, 2024

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. Church Treasurer Best Practices
Hope Lutheran Church
1904 McArthur Blvd.
Jacksonville, AR

January 27, 2024

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. Church Treasurer Best Practices
Mid-South District Office
1675 Wynne Road
Cordova, TN

February 3, 2024

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

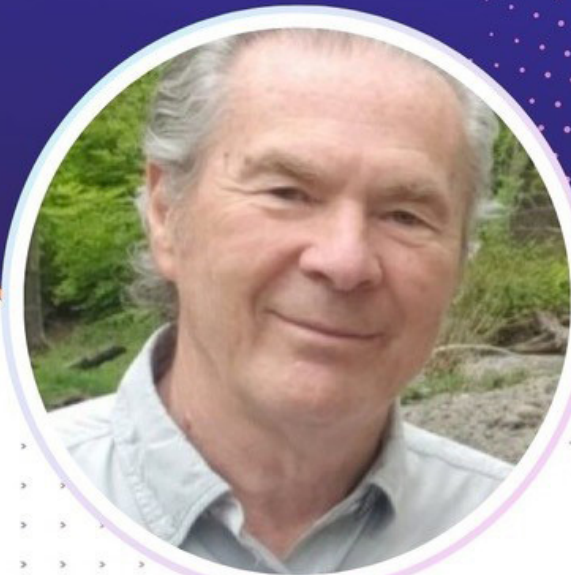
- Additional information found on the [District website](#).
- Contact Angela Fowler by [email](#) or telephone (866-373-1343, ext. 3105)
- [REGISTER ONLINE](#)

Church Outreach Seminar

COMMUNICATING

GOD • Finding Value in Everyone

● Saturday, December 2nd
10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.



Rev. Dr. Leroy Leach- Presenter

Retired Associate Professor
and Instructor
Concordia College,
Bronxville, NY.

**FREE EVENT FOR
ALL CHURCHES**

**LUNCH PROVIDED
BY LCEF**



Grace Lutheran Church
5124 Hillcrest Ave.
Little Rock, AR.
501-663-3631



Please call the church or use
the QR code to register for
this event.

Luther Classical College Comes to Arkansas!



Trinity Lutheran Church in North Little Rock hosted a presentation by Mr. Samuel Preus, Director of Development for Luther Classical College (LCC) on October 28 for Congregations throughout Arkansas. This meeting coincided well with Reformation Day being celebrated as it is 95 weeks before the opening of this new college, sponsored by Mount Hope Lutheran Church in Casper, Wyoming of the Wyoming District.

LCC will be distinctly Lutheran, classical, and conservative for the sole purpose of preparing Lutherans to serve inside and outside of the church. With plans to enroll 60 students in the fall of 2025 (and eventually a total of 300) it will promote Christian marriage, family, and piety while preparing students to think logically and confess boldly the Lutheran faith. To do this it will offer two degrees a Bachelors or an Associates in Classical Liberal Arts. This degree is attractive because it creates students who

think critically in a world that needs critical thinkers.

With its efficient model it will also be able to offer an incredibly affordable tuition at \$8500 a year as well as affordable on-campus housing. To remove the influence of the world upon LCC, the school will also not accept any federal assistance. LCC returns to the grassroots of how our LCMS colleges began, by congregations and their members coming together to support this effort. In just two years they have gained support from over 250 congregations with the goal of 300 at the end of this year. They have also gained over a 1000 monthly individual sponsors giving between \$10 and \$250 a month.

To learn more about or how to support Luther Classical College, go to www.lutherclassical.org or contact Mr. Samuel Preus at s.preus@lutherclassical.org.

Giving Thanks for Ministry Anniversaries!



Pastors recognized at the Fall Pastors Conference for their milestone ministry anniversaries included (L to R) Rev. Kenneth Haydon - 55 YR (Emeritus), Rev. Robert Herring - 45 YR (Emeritus), Rev. Gordon Smith - 15 YR (Our Savior, Morristown TN/Christ of Cumberland, Harrogate TN), Rev. Kevin McReynolds - 15 YR (Redeemer, Mountain Home AR), Rev. Brandon Martin - 15 YR (Salem, Springdale AR), Rev. Charles Neugebauer - 40 YR (Christ the King, Memphis TN), Rev. Danny Anderson - 15 YR (Grace, Knoxville TN), Rev. Alan Thoe - 10 YR (Grace, Murfreesboro TN), Rev. Philip Young - 25 YR (Redeemer, Nashville TN), Rev. David Graves - 10 YR (St. Paul, Wartburg TN), Rev. George Smith - 5 YR (Faith, Oak Ridge TN), and Rev. Mark Rhoads - 15 YR (Christ Our Savior, Loudon TN).

At the Fall Pastors Conference that took place in early October at Pickwick Lake in Tennessee, the Mid-South District recognized several pastors celebrating milestone anniversaries in ministry during the year 2023. In all, over 50 pastors celebrated special ministry anniversaries this year—together, representing over 1,400 years of service in the Church! We give thanks for these wonderful Professional Church Workers and their ministries!

Visit the District website (mid-southlcms.org) for the full list of Ordained Minister anniversaries in 2023.



Limited Time Offer from LCEF —

For a limited time, Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is offering an 2.5-year fixed-rate term note at 6.25% interest. The minimum investment to open an account is \$500 and the offer is for new money only. Visit lcef.org today to learn more!

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. Rates as of December 2023. Balance restrictions apply. Rates subject to change. Visit lcef.org for details.

INVEST TODAY
to earn
6.25% APR
for 2½ years!



Lutheran Church Extension Fund
where investments build ministry

You Can Honor A CHURCH WORKER

Through Your Gift to the Mid-South District!



A Special Opportunity Through the End of 2023

Through the end of this year, your gift to the Mid-South District can be shared in honor or memory of a special LCMS Pastor, Teacher, DCE, Principal or other Church Worker. Honorees are added to the Honored Worker Wall online and in district publications—and notified that a gift has been shared in their name. **And thanks to the support of two generous donors, the first \$50,000 in honored worker gifts will be matched!** What a tremendous way to give thanks for our cherished Professional Church Workers!

READY TO HONOR OR MEMORIALIZE A SPECIAL WORKER?

[CLICK to Give Online](#)

[CLICK to Give By Check](#)

[CLICK to View the Honored Worker Wall](#)



PRAYER SUMMARY, NOVEMBER 2023

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 November 2023.

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. ED MAANUM (First, Knoxville, TN)
REV. TOM SAYRE (Emeritus, St. John's, FL)
REV. TOM MOORE (Emeritus, Cordova, TN)
REV. HENRY THOMPSON (St. Luke, Malvern, AR)
REV. NEIL VANDERBUSH (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN)
MRS. NORMA MOORE (wife of Rev. Tom Moore, Emeritus, Cordova, TN)
MR. ZAC ENKO (son of Rev. Keith Enko, Emeritus, Lebanon, TN)
MR. MARC HIGGINS (MDS Board of Directors, Maumelle, AR)
MS. IRENE LOPEZ (mother of Ann Laury, Principal, Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, TN)
MS. LOIS SCHULTZ (mother of Rhonda Schultz, MDS Webmaster)
MS. LINDA SIMKO (stepdaughter of Jan Simko, MDS Disaster Relief Coordinator)
MRS. AMY YOUNG (wife of Rev. Philip Young, Redeemer, Nashville)
MR. BRUCE THOMPSON (son of Jan Simko, MDS Disaster Relief Coordinator)
MRS. NANCY SHEWMAKER (wife of Rev. Russell Shewmaker, Christ Lutheran Church, Siloam Springs, AR)

Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Mary Dropp (mother of Amy Willadsen; mother-in-law to Rev. Joshua Willadsen of Bethel Lutheran, Fort Smith, AR/Trinity Lutheran, Sallisaw, OK) who recently passed away.

CALL UPDATE

ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. Seth Korte (Candidate)** *Fort Wayne, IN, accepted the Call to serve as Pastor to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sevierville, TN. Installation took place November 5, 2023.*

PENDING: **Rev. Joseph Arthur, IV**, Pastor to Zion Lutheran Church, Bogalusa, LA has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend, AR.*

Rev. Michael Huebner, Pastor to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Lexington, KY has received a Call to serve as an *Associate Pastor to Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN.*

Rev. Peter Burfeind, Pastor to the dual parish of Agnus Dei Lutheran Church, Marshall, MI and Our Savior Lutheran Church, Union City, MI has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Christ Lutheran Church, Paris, TN.*

Rev. Thomas Chryst, Pastor to Messiah Lutheran Church, Keller, TX, has received a Call to serve as *Pastor to Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, TN.*

VACANT CONGREGATIONS & MINISTRIES

Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN- Pastor
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor
Shepherd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend, AR – Pastor
****Pending Call**

Christ Lutheran Church, Paris, TN – Pastor **Pending Call
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Cabot, AR – Pastor
St. John's Lutheran Church, Russellville, TN - Pastor

IN THE CALLING PROCESS- COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR – 7th/8th Grade Math Teacher
Our Savior Lutheran Academy, Nashville, TN – Part time teachers ECC and After Care Program
Holy Trinity Lutheran Preschool, Bowling Green, KY – Teacher
Shepherd's Little Flock Daycare & Early Childhood Learning Center, Crossville, TN – Director



Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 10/31/2023 (10 Months)

Anticipated Amount (75% of budget)	\$1,303,975
Actual Receipts	<u>1,277,275</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$26,700)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (10 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions	\$362,349
Allocated to Tanzania	20,833
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts)	<u>894,093</u>
Total Receipts	\$1,277,275

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison 10 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 10/31/2023	\$1,277,275
Actual Receipts as of 10/31/2022	<u>\$1,275,045</u>
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$2,230

Share your news with us!

Encourager

Topics in 2024

We invite you to share your stories with us please email stories by **20th** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com. Here's a look at the upcoming topics for 2024

- 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

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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Angela Fowler,
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Paul Reaves,
Executive Director for Development & LCEF Vice President

Missy Washburn,
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Renae McElwain,
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Julie Tyler,
Administrative Assistant for Missions and Education

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"@midsouthLCMS"

