



Serving with **IMPACT**

Empowering / Supporting / Encouraging

Mid-South District,
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

A Blessing to Serve Our District's Ministries

Dear Friends of the Mid-South District:

Greetings to each of you in the precious name of Jesus! In the pages that follow, you will experience just a few of the exciting, life-changing ministries that are bringing hope to communities throughout our Mid-South District. These ministries are made possible by God continually opening doors of opportunities and by individuals moved by the Holy Spirit to generously support our outreach efforts.

In 2013, the District launched IMPACT, a strategic plan with five critical initiatives which are detailed on the page that follows. With 2015 already underway, IMPACT is now fully implemented. This Annual Report shows a sampling of positive results related to that effort: ministries connecting and engaging their respective communities with the Gospel. Children and adults are being baptized and confirmed, worship attendance in several of our congregations is significantly increasing, and our schools are making great strides in bringing Christ to their students and families each and every day.

The Mid-South District is committed to serving and supporting our congregations and schools, as well as encouraging and empowering these ministries to boldly share Christ's love in winsome ways with a world in desperate need of hearing about the one, true Savior. Our focus remains on following God's command in Acts 1:8 of being his witnesses, "In Jerusalem, in Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

While we celebrate and thank God for His goodness of the past year, we know the work is far from over. An estimated 5 million people within the confines of our Mid-South District do not know Jesus as their Savior.

This is a sobering thought and one we pray will serve as a call to action for each of our congregations and schools and for each of us as members of the body of Christ.

Thank you again for your support and your partnership in the Gospel. May God continue to bless our efforts and encourage each of us to share the wonderful message of Jesus!



Rev. Dr. Roger R. Paavola and Rev. Charles Neugebauer

Rev. Dr. Roger R. Paavola
President, Mid-South District LCMS

Rev. Charles Neugebauer
Chairman, Board of Directors

With Thanks for Our Board of Directors

The Mid-South District is most grateful for the men and women who serve as members of our Board of Directors, generously sharing their time, talent and leadership gifts for the benefit of our District's ministries and in service to God's Kingdom.

2014 BOARD MEMBERS:

- Rev. Dr. Roger R. Paavola, President
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The Mid-South District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod includes **130 congregations, 12 schools and 27 early childhood ministries** in Arkansas, Tennessee and Southern Kentucky.

Guiding Our Service: 5 KEY INITIATIVES

In 2013, the Mid-South District refined its focus for service to its LCMS congregations, schools and workers by identifying five ministry initiatives. Together, these initiatives are known as IMPACT and they guide the work of the Mid-South District Executives, Support Staff and Board of Directors, ensuring the most targeted and efficient use of resources for the benefit of our District's ministries and workers.

INITIATIVE 1 - Assisting congregations, unable to retain an ordained minister, in Word and Sacrament ministry

INITIATIVE 2 - Resourcing, equipping and strengthening existing churches and schools for Kingdom effectiveness

INITIATIVE 3 - Recruiting, supporting and mentoring professional church workers

INITIATIVE 4 - Creating an on-line Congregational Assessment Resource (C.A.R.) for ministry self-assessment

INITIATIVE 5 - Planting new churches

Through these five key initiatives, the Mid-South District serves congregations, schools and workers to support, empower and encourage them for impactful ministry in their local communities.

Empowering Ministries to Examine and Enhance

District's Assessment Tool Promotes Healthy Discussion and Positive Action for Congregations

2014 was an active year for the Mid-South District's Congregational Assessment Resource (C.A.R.) tool. What began as an innovative concept to help congregations evaluate and enhance their ministries has evolved into not only a tangible resource, but a larger program of the District called COMPASS. The broader program helps congregations determine the overall direction of their ministry. As the central mechanism of COMPASS, the C.A.R. tool utilizes survey input to provide hard data as a catalyst for meaningful discussion within a congregation, leading to positive follow-up action. To date, twelve congregations have utilized the C.A.R. tool, eight of which participated in the District's COMPASS program.

"St. John's Lutheran Church supports the COMPASS ministry of the Mid-South District. Our Congregation believes that participation in the COMPASS review truly was an 'opportunity to bring about a new direction' for our ministry in Russellville, Arkansas."

- Rev. Tim Rake, St. John's Lutheran Church (Russellville, AR)
- Walter Zimdars, Congregation President
- David Snellings, St. John's COMPASS Committee Chairman

In 2015, the Mid-South District will expand the COMPASS program by launching the on-line version of the C.A.R. tool, giving congregations direct access to this invaluable resource.



Celebrating Innovative Ministry Programs

Christ Lutheran Church is Building Bridges to Reach the Community of Little Rock, AR

For Pastor Dan Hauser and the faith family of Christ Lutheran Church in Little Rock, a concept called “Bridge Ministries” is a powerful tool for connecting with the community. As Pastor Hauser explains, “A Bridge Ministry is any way that we can meet a need of a person or a family, and in the process, we build a relationship with them in the hope that we will then have an opportunity to share with them the Good News of Jesus!” Some of these great Bridge Ministries include:



Christ Lutheran School

Christ Lutheran sees its school as a key Bridge Ministry. As principal Heidi Jerry explains, “Even as God has grown our school, our true celebration is seeing kids get baptized and families transformed through their involvement in the holistic ministry!”

Little Rock School of the Arts

Christ Lutheran’s newest Bridge Ministry grew from an effort to simply offer music lessons. Now, through the Little Rock School of the Arts, the concept has expanded into a way to connect people to Christ through their mutual interests in the arts -- from music to painting.

Music and Movement

Weekly Music and Movement classes for kids 4 and under have been a great way to build bridges into the community. Many of the families have branched out to join other programs or attend worship at Christ Lutheran.

Community Events

Every few months, Christ Lutheran hosts a large-scale event specifically for the surrounding community. One of their most popular events is the Egg Bash Obstacle Dash, which puts a fun twist on hunting Easter eggs -- and hosts over 300 children!

Through Bridge Ministries,
Christ Lutheran welcomed
33 new members to the
church in November 2014!



“We are known in our community for teaching ‘The Faith Way.’ This involves providing a highly challenging curriculum as well as teaching the children the Fruits of the Spirit character traits.”

- Dina Foshee, Director - Faith Lutheran Preschool (Collierville, TN)

Encouraging Ministry Models That Lead the Way Faith Lutheran Preschool in Collierville, TN Sets a Leadership Example

Early Childhood Centers are an excellent way for Lutheran congregations to serve families by providing Christ-centered, quality care for their children. One of the best examples of how a ministry like this is executed with excellence is Faith Lutheran Preschool in Collierville, Tennessee. The ministry began in 1993 as a modest Parents’ Day Out program, caring for about 30 children. Today, Faith Lutheran Preschool welcomes more than 200 children daily, with enrollment growing every school year. The center’s Director, Dina Foshee, credits this success to a number of factors, including an amazing staff, wonderful volunteers, an excellent relationship with Faith Lutheran Church and its supportive pastors, and the preschool’s completion of the National Lutheran School Association’s accreditation process. Above all, however, she gives God the glory for all the wonderful things happening at Faith Lutheran Preschool. “Throughout all of this,” she emphasizes, “we have seen how God has led us through each new stage of our growth.”

With enrollment of 206 children, Faith’s Preschool is the 8th largest freestanding (not part of a school) Lutheran Early Childhood Center in the country. Faith is also one of about 95 freestanding LCMS Early Childhood Centers with the distinction of being accredited by the National Lutheran Schools Association (NLSA).

Supporting New Ministries As They Grow in Service

Bridge City Community Church Embraces Chattanooga, TN's Inner City

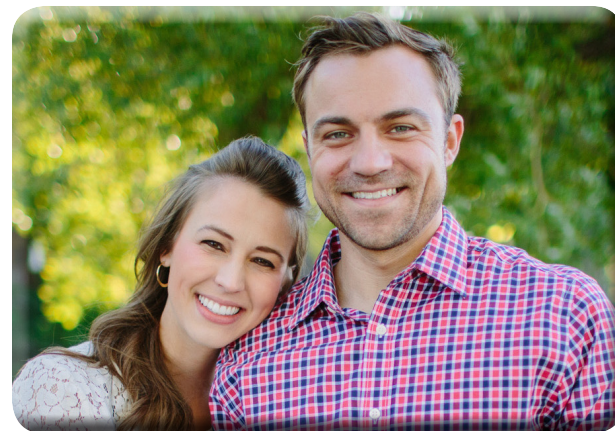
Bridge City Community Church is an intentionally multi-ethnic congregation which boasts a diverse, desegregated membership. Started under the leadership of Pastor Josh Woodrow, through a partnership with Chattanooga's First Lutheran Church, Bridge City launched its first public worship service in the summer of 2014 in an inner city neighborhood's recreation center. Since that first service, Bridge City Community has found many ways to be the hands and feet of Christ to local residents. From operating a bus that transports local kids to church services and activities to partnering with a local elementary school, Bridge City seeks every opportunity it can to connect with its community.

After less than a year of worship, Bridge City Community regularly welcomes over 50 people on Sunday mornings — over half of whom are under the age of 18! Many residents of south Chattanooga are drawn to



Bridge City because of the church's declaration that **the Kingdom of God isn't segregated, so our churches and communities shouldn't be either.**

LaTasha Jones and her son Quentin (QJ) have been attending since Bridge City's first services. QJ only refers to Josh Woodrow as "my pastor" when he sees him at Calvin Donaldson Elementary, the school that Pastor Josh mentors at weekly. LaTasha is always quick to point out that "the community needs a church like Bridge City Community."



"These last few years have been the best of my life, and I have my home district to thank for helping me with my goal to graduate from seminary every step of the way."

- Kirk Neugebauer, Third Year Seminarian
pictured with wife, Stephanie

Encouraging Those Who Accept the Call

Student Financial Aid Is a Rewarding Way to Serve Future Workers

For students who are answering the call to do God's work in their chosen careers, it is the privilege of the Mid-South District to lessen the financial burden of education with monetary aid. Through both budgeted funds and generous grants, the District's financial aid program has provided resources to help many students, like third-year seminarian Kirk Neugebauer. "Stephanie and I have been so blessed by the Mid-South District. Through their financial support, we have been able to have our basic needs met, and avoid taking out additional student loans," Kirk explains. "As newlyweds," he adds, "it is a great comfort to have the burden lightened by such generosity. This support also allows us to focus on getting the most out of the experience of our vicarage year."

In 2014, the Mid-South District provided just over \$79,000 in financial aid to 14 seminary and Concordia undergraduate students.

Welcoming Diverse Cultures to the Mid-South Faith Family

Ethiopian Ministry Is Taking Root and Growing Just Outside of Nashville, TN

Imagine being a newcomer in a foreign land where both the language and customs are unfamiliar to you. Now imagine finding a faith family in that new place that shares the language, worship style and customs of your home country. What a blessing! This is the experience being shared by over 30 people who have connected to the Ethiopian ministry recently started by Pastor Fasil Alemayehu just outside of Nashville.



The journey to launching this new ministry began nearly ten years ago, when Pastor Alemayehu and his family were randomly selected from among millions around the globe to be welcomed to the United States through a Diversity Visa “lottery.” Already ordained through the Lutheran church in Ethiopia, Pastor Alemayehu wanted to continue his work in ministry in America. He completed all necessary Synod requirements and is now an Associate Pastor at Faith Lutheran Church in Thompson’s Station, Tennessee. Under the leadership of Sr. Pastor Curt Hoover, Pastor Alemayehu has worked closely with the congregation to establish the new Ethiopian ministry, which worships at Hope Lutheran Church in Smyrna, just outside of Nashville -- a city that is home to an estimated 10,000-15,000 Ethiopians.

In addition to the friends at Faith Lutheran, Pastor Alemayehu has a wonderful ministry partner in congregation leader Askale Woldearagay. A native of Ethiopia, she also came to America through the Diversity Visa lottery -- an amazing circumstance considering the unlikelihood of being selected from among so many around the world. There’s no doubt that God has been at work. We can’t wait to see what He has in store next for this new ministry!



Belvoir Christian Academy has served families in the greater Chattanooga community for over 125 years. Through a capital campaign undertaken jointly by two congregations, this school ministry is being strengthened to serve for many years to come.

Helping Established Ministries Move Ahead

Belvoir Christian Academy in Chattanooga, TN Looks Toward a Bright Future

The Chattanooga, Tennessee community has been blessed by the Lutheran ministry of Belvoir Christian Academy for over 125 years! But the ministry needed to undergo some significant changes to ensure a continuation of its amazing history. Facility and technology improvements were necessary. Certain curriculum features needed to be enhanced. The school staff was in need of expanded leadership and other resources. Additional scholarship opportunities were needed to make the Belvoir experience accessible to more students. To address these issues, the Chattanooga congregations of First Lutheran Church and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church worked with the Mid-South District Development Office to coordinate a joint capital campaign called “Forward As One In Faith.” Through a coordinated effort, the campaign connected the two congregations, school families and other community partners who value Christian education to raise significant funds for the ministry growth of Belvoir. Thanks to the prayerful support of so many, Belvoir Christian Academy can celebrate not only a strong history, but a bright future.

Thanking the Mid-South District's Generous Supporters

Gifts and Commitments Above \$100,000

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Mr. Ralph Weiser

Gifts and Commitments \$10,000-\$100,000

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AN IMPORTANT NOTE TO OUR DONORS:

The name of every generous donor is important to us. The District's Development Staff makes every effort to recognize our donors with accuracy. If an error or omission has been made, please accept our most sincere apology. Please also alert us of the error by calling our office at 866.373.1343.

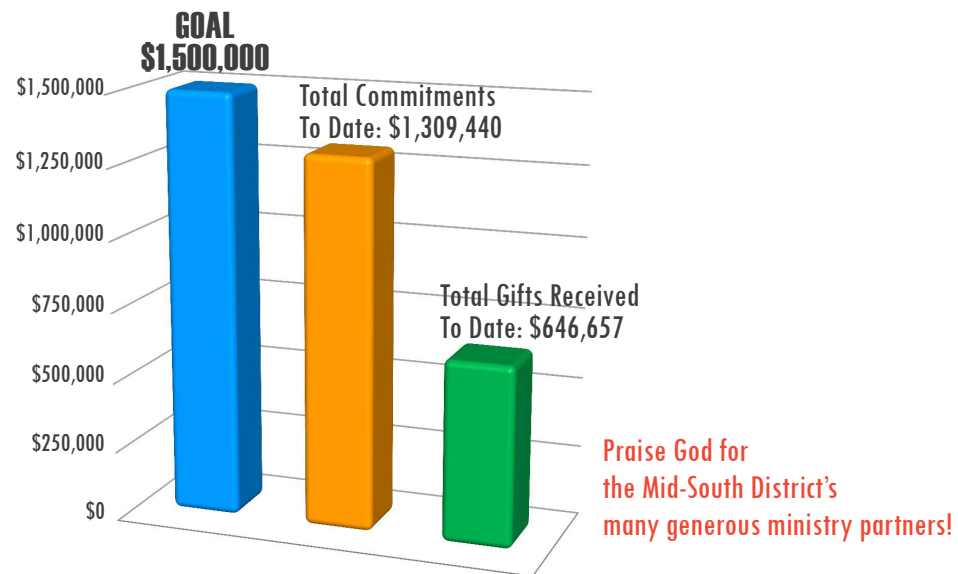
** Gifts made in memory of Mr. Robert Prince

*Sainted in Heaven

Funding the Key Ministry Initiatives

Generous Supporters Are Helping the Mid-South District Achieve a Critical Three-Year Goal

To help fund work toward the Mid-South District's key ministry initiatives of IMPACT, a goal and plan was established to raise \$1,500,000 by the close of 2015. With just under one year remaining in the campaign, we are grateful to have received gifts and commitments representing **87% of the goal**. The Mid-South District is thankful for the individuals, congregations, schools and other organizations who have shared their prayerful support through the IMPACT effort.



The Mid-South District's MISSION

As an alliance of congregations and schools, the Mid-South District provides leadership, resources and encouragement for reaching the lost for Christ's Kingdom and equipping the found for service in our churches, communities and the world.

Our VISION

To witness communities positively impacted and lives changed through the power of the Gospel. This will be evidenced by:

- Increased Worship Attendance
- Increased Baptisms
- Increased Adult Confirmations
- Increased Baptized Membership
- Increased Enrollment in our Lutheran Schools
- Congregations Performing Acts of Service in Their Communities
- Our Schools Reaching Out to Families with the Love of Christ
- Professional workers equipped and inspired for ministry in today's world

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President

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Executive Director for
Business & Finance

Rev. David Hormann,
Executive Director for Missions,
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