

# Encourager

LUTHERAN  
SCHOOLS WEEK  
Jan. 22-28

Mid-South District LCMS | January 2017



This month's Encourager features inspiring updates from our wonderful Lutheran schools. Across Arkansas, Tennessee and southern Kentucky, young minds are growing and lives are being touched by Christ through the impact of these amazing ministries.

As 2017 gets underway – and as our education ministries prepare for the upcoming Lutheran Schools Week later this month – please keep our schools, students, teachers and staff in your prayers.

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

When I was in Boy Scouts, I got into an ordeal called “The Order of the Arrow.” It was three days and two nights of living off the wilderness. We were taught how to cook and stay warm on one match. We learned how to find plants and other things to eat, and how to avoid dangers in the outdoors. We learned how to keep a small fire and let the coals start our next fire. I feasted on legumes from plants, healed mosquito bites with jewel weed, and made meals from fern tips, roasted fish and frog legs.

Mark's Gospel gives an account of Christ's ordeal in the wilderness. Unlike the other synoptic Gospels, Mark doesn't begin in a lowly Bethlehem stable. His Gospel skips the detail and jumps right to the point bringing Jesus into the wilderness - a scary backdrop of dry, desolated wilderness that's inhabited by wild animals and blood thirsty beasts. That's his message for today. The promise of salvation begins in a desolate place - a lonely, disorderly, and dangerous place. But, what seems to be a negative place is a means by which positives will ultimately occur. What seems to be an ordeal of ritual is actually a triumph of victory and elation. Today, our Good News begins in the middle of our wilderness.

Anyone can tell you about their wilderness. We can all tell



our story about those moments when we've stood alone, in some kind of wilderness. We've all had that time in our life when we faced unbelievable temptations and ravenous wild beasts no one else can see. We've gone through strange places through deep dark valleys. We've been in places so dreary we didn't know if we were ever going to get out.

They're not always a physical location, but, in our minds. We may still be trying to survive in some kind of wilderness. We don't have to search too far for examples: Look at those stumbling around in financial crisis. How many families have a child who is in trouble; or a child who isn't making it in school? What about those marriages that run on “cruise control,” or some of the others that seem like the wheels have fallen off? These are real wildernesses! Some wildernesses come when we lose a loved one, or cope with major illnesses. It can be an unfaithful spouse, or a parent who's a tyrant with the

children. It's the millions of lonely people trying to make ends meet because they're unemployed or on fixed income. It's homeless people who can't scrounge a morsel of food, or the college student who doesn't know if he'll have a job when he graduates. It may be someone wrestling with health or fighting an addiction no one else can see. It's the person we may know who has no hope in Christ Jesus – an eternal peace – because no one told them about His grace.

These are wildernesses filled with wild beasts our mind can't erase and desolation no one else can understand. But, one thing we can be sure, in our wilderness, desperation and despair are a constant traveling companion. It's been there before, but it's so easy

to get lost. Every path we've tried on our own takes us in circles.

Is there a way out? Jesus has been in our wilderness. He knows what it means to be tempted, and what it means if some people just give up. He knows what it looks like when people cave into temptation. He's seen every possible discouragement and doubt, and what it means to lose faith. He's heard the cries of His people caught in their wilderness, "Why Lord?! Why so long? How long do I have to live this way until You deliver me from this barren, god-forsaken land?"

In Christ, the time of despair is over. Remember this man, John the Baptizer? He knew what it meant to survive in the wilderness. He lived with its dangers and conquered its beasts. He didn't

come through a self-improvement program or have to consult a psychic. All John the Baptizer had at his disposal were three things... things that helped him survive the wilderness: The purpose of his calling, the proclamation of the message, and the promise of a faithful God.

John's purpose was to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ. He knew he was called to make a straight path for the coming of Christ. Likewise, when it comes to our relationship with God, each one of us has a purpose. St. Peter tells us that our purpose is to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous Light (I Peter 2). There's something we are created to receive from Him, do with Him, and for Him: Witness. God gives

## St. Jude Trike-a-thon

It has been an eventful year for First Lutheran School in Knoxville, Tennessee. First Lutheran has been blessed to provide opportunities for our students to help those in need. One of our favorite events each year is the St. Jude Trike-a-thon. This event encourages all students to consider the needs of others, and make the choice to make a difference.

This year our E.C.E raised over \$1,300 for St. Jude's Children's Hospital with their trike-a-thon. We were blessed to partner with the East Tennessee chapter of the Epilepsy Foundation to learn about bike safety and provide all of our three to five year old children bike helmets. To make the event even more special our 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students helped with the trike-a-thon by helping students balance and cheering them on as they rode around the track. The trike-a-thon has been a staple at FLS for years and will remain a great event for years to come! '



us the honor of this purpose for the sake of His kingdom.

Whatever our profession or career, whether we're at work, on our sick bed, standing in an unemployment line, sitting in a classroom, working with a homeless shelter, or doing our daily work and vocations, God's proclamation of salvation in Christ Jesus will reflect from the way we interact with the rest of the world. We're a walking billboard of what a Christian looks like and acts like.

The proclamation of the Good News is our purpose and our part in the kingdom of God as His holy priesthood. We have a faith story... the way God carried us from the wilderness into His grace and peace. We haven't made it to this day without His grace and mercy. We made it through our wildernesses by the hand of almighty God who delivers us by His grace, mercy, and goodness.

It's our proclamation of how God feeds us through His Word and Sacraments to make us and keep us as His child. He's fed each of us with physical food when we're hungry. He gives each of us a place to lie down to rest and provided us with families. He gave us yesterday and today, just like He'll give us tomorrow. He guides and protects us in this life until we draw our last breath. Isn't that a proclamation we can all make? Are there others who need to hear of the greater things of God's gracious deliverance has offered - miracles of hope and mercy?

There's countless thousands of millions of people who need to hear His Promise. The best proclamations of those who followed the path given by Christ Jesus will resonate with those who still live in fear and darkness.

It all comes down to this: That Good News belongs to you! Jesus was baptized by John the Baptizer to accomplish all righteousness (Matthew 3:15) - our restoration of peace with God. He was baptized at the beginning of His earthly ministry so that the salvation He won on Calvary's cross may be given to us in the mystery of simple water poured on us, joined with the Word of God, that crucifies us with Christ to sin, and raises us to new life in Him. It gives the same Holy Spirit and the gift of faith. He offered Himself to be baptized and walk in our wilderness, so that we can follow Him, and see the path to His eternal peace in heaven.

This is our New Year. This is our great privilege and responsibility: Sharing the message of Christ to a world caught in its wilderness. It can start in our homes and in our schools. It can begin in the work place or on a city street. Each One - Reach One: We are called to be God's witnesses that each one of us can reach one of them. May God grant us a blessed and prosperous New Year in and for His Kingdom.



2017 NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK

**NATIONAL LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK** (January 22-28, 2017) provides our network of nearly 2,300 LCMS preschools, elementary schools and high schools with the public opportunity to proclaim and celebrate God's work among us in Lutheran schools. The Mid-South District has 25 preschool or early childhood centers. Of those 25, eleven have an elementary school and two of those schools have a high school.

We thank God for the opportunity to provide excellent academic preparation for the children we serve. We are most grateful for the opportunity to share Jesus' amazing love with children and their families. National Lutheran Schools Week gives us an opportunity to proclaim these great blessings within the communities we serve.

Our schools are amazing incubators for faithful witness of God's love for us through Christ by teachers and students alike. If your congregation is thinking about starting a school, please contact Allen Piepenbrink at the district office for assistance.

upon  
this  
**ROCK**

2016-17 National Lutheran Schools Week

# Immanuel Lutheran School Set to Launch Next Generation of Learning as STEMM/SmartLab™ Construction Begins



About two years ago, Immanuel Lutheran School (Memphis) Principal, Todd Baringer started to explore the possibility of incorporating STEM into the school's curriculum. If the acronym is new to you, STEM stands for "Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics" and represents a formal push to connect students with practical, hands-on learning experiences related to these critical fields. As Baringer researched options for STEM, he found a wide range of possibilities, from schools that incorporated STEM "elements" to those that made a full investment in the concept with the long-term goal of producing students who are better "thinkers." Immediately, Baringer knew what he wanted for Immanuel: the "all in" approach. Fast forward two years later and the school is breaking ground on a facility expansion that will include a 2,000-square foot dedicated STEMM SmartLab™. Yes, there's an extra "M" there, which stands for "ministry." As Baringer explains, "We're a Lutheran school and this new education resource is going to be a blessing to our students and our community. It's a ministry."

The new resource will be significant not only for Immanuel, but for the entire state of Tennessee: it will be the state's first full-blown SmartLab™ for grades K-8. Baringer admits that getting from the concept phase to the ground-breaking hasn't been easy, mostly because "it's hard to make people understand how significant and game-changing this is going to be." With the help of the experienced STEM consultants at Creative Learning Systems, Immanuel has designed a space that will include all the technology resources needed

to engage students in practical, collaborative learning. Imagine a classroom where students build bridges, design homes, work with hydropower or code an app for a smartphone—a classroom where knowledge is used to solve real-world problems. Beginning with the 2017/2018 school year, this dynamic learning environment will be a reality for the 200 students at Immanuel.

"How many times have we heard kids ask, 'When will I ever use geometry or algebra in the real world?'" says Immanuel's STEMM Facilitator, Jason Yates. "In the SmartLab™ setting, you get to answer that question in so many ways," he explains. Yates joined the Immanuel faculty this school year to lead the implementation of the STEMM program. Both his degree in science education and his military background in avionics made him a perfect fit for the school's STEMM Facilitator role. When the SmartLab™ opens next school year, Yates will teach exclusively in the facility, leading both STEMM-specific classes and special projects for the math and science curriculum. But the SmartLab™ will do more than show kids the relevance of algebra and geometry. As Yates explains, "It will be a setting that gets kids interested in engineering disciplines and breaks down gender stereotypes related to these fields. But more importantly, the SmartLab™ will emphasize group collaboration and critical thinking, which are skills that are declining in kids across the nation."

Immanuel's STEMM SmartLab™ is slated for completion this spring, with faculty orientation and training taking place in June



to prepare for the full launch next school year. The project is being funded through a combination of generous donor support and a SMART Loan, which is a school-specific lending program from Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF). The coming months will be very exciting at Immanuel as the

STEMM program transforms from concept to reality. Immanuel's initiative to bring this one-of-a-kind education venture to the Memphis community is an inspiring example of Lutheran schools leading the way!

## CLS Launches New Early Childhood Program



Christ Lutheran School in Little Rock, AR kicked off its 2016-17 school year with a Back-To-School Bash and Ribbon Cutting of three new classrooms. These new classrooms are now home to children 6 weeks of age through 2 years old. CLS is excited to offer this new early childhood program that cares for the children while giving opportunities for play, learning and social interaction.

Enrollment school-wide has increased by over 30% this school year. This is due in large part to the addition of nearly 55 infants and toddlers to the early childhood program. Our youngest students now join the Preschool 3 - 8th graders in a school setting where they can grow in faith and academics.

Christ Lutheran School believes every child is a gift from God with talents to be discovered! We are thrilled to welcome new little ones to the CLS family!

## Our Savior Lutheran Academy is blossoming!



We have doubled our enrollment from the start of last year and for that, we are truly grateful to God for His many blessings! One of our biggest missions here at the Academy is to make a positive impact within our community. This past semester, we collected school supplies for a local school in need, and we were able to deliver all sorts of school supplies from crayons, to notebooks, glue, pencils and much more! The students also started to collect items for blessing bags that will be delivered to those in need within the Nashville community. For Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

# BUILD UP TO SEND OUT



Creating a space for  
Youth and Family Leaders  
to Network, Collaborate,  
Innovate, and Encourage  
for the Next Generation.

*"Therefore encourage  
one another and build one  
another up, just as you  
are doing."  
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

## CONNECT. COLLABORATE. CELEBRATE.

The Youth Board invites you for two  
days of networking,  
discussing, and sharing experiences to  
continue the growth of Youth  
and Family Ministry  
among the Mid-South District.

FEBRUARY 3-4, 2017  
MID-SOUTH DISTRICT



## CCF Family District Initiative-A New Reformation

The Mid-South District Youth Board hosted "Empowering You, a Youth and Family Ministry Workshop in Little Rock in October. "Empowering You" focused on equipping congregations to cast their vision of ministry on reaching the next



generation. We were privileged to welcome Professor Ben Freudenburg - author of *The Family Friendly Church*, creator of Family Friendly Partnership Network, and Director of the Concordia Center for the Family - as facilitator for the event. Following the workshop, Professor Freudenburg invited the Mid-South District to partner with

Concordia Center for the Family to pilot a district initiative to implement family ministry in their congregations. We are excited to welcome this new opportunity! The "CCF Family District Initiative-A New Reformation" will provide the Mid-South District with research, training, resources and family ministry partnerships in family life education and ministry. The ultimate goal is to empower and deliver family ministry training and support to Mid-South District congregations, enabling families to be faith leaders in the home.

## LUTHERAN SCHOOLS



Sharing the life-changing message of Jesus' love with more than **250,000** students, their families and the community



**1,173**

Early  
Childhood  
Centers



**804**

Elementary  
Schools



**91**

High  
Schools

### RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION OF FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES

- Experiencing and celebrating God's lavish gifts of love, grace and mercy
- Sharing those gifts with others
- Being transformed by God's Word
- Clinging to the cross of Jesus

### PROVIDING EXCELLENT ACADEMIC PREPARATION

- Developing love for and excitement about learning
- Excelling at reading, writing and effective communication
- Training minds for success at the next academic level
- Creating a strong work ethic, critical thinking skills and the ability to relate well with others

## St. John's Lutheran School

St. John's Lutheran School is located in Stuttgart, Arkansas, 50 miles southeast of Little Rock, Arkansas. We currently offer a pre-school program which begins with Infants through pre-school four. Our elementary school is Kindergarten through grade six. Total enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year is 180, which is a large increase from the 2015-2016 school year!

Students at St. John's participate in a variety of school and community activities. In the fall, the students collected over 2200 items for the local ICCM Food bank. The school and church also hosted a meeting for The Call, an organization that helps place foster children. For Lutheran Schools Week, a penny war is planned along with other fun activities for the week!



# LIFE AFTER THE ELECTION

The contentious presidential election may have had the unfortunate consequence of narrowing the scope of the pro-life movement too much. Fervent appeals were made to life-issue voters stating that everything rides on the candidates' potential to make multiple Supreme Court appointments, the one for the current vacancy and perhaps up to three more in the future. Christians, especially, were told that if they didn't get this election right they would be responsible for setting the pro-life movement back and losing the court for possibly a quarter of a century (this after forty-four years in the wilderness, so to speak, since *Roe v. Wade*).

While participating in the civil process is a Christian responsibility that should be exercised according to a conscience captive to the Word, and while Christians do pray for the appointment of Supreme Court justices who will uphold the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, yet the curbing action of the law (which is important) is not the final word on God's gift of life. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that any political party and its candidates will actually deliver "good government" and fully uphold the natural law under God as commanded in Romans 13. Recall that the author of the majority opinion in *Roe v. Wade*, Justice Harry Blackmun, was appointed by Republican President Nixon. The rest of the seven with the majority were: Warren Burger (Nixon, R); William Douglas (FDR, D); William Brennan (Eisenhower, R); Potter Stewart (Eisenhower, R); Thurgood Marshall (LBJ, D); and Lewis Powell (Nixon, R). The two who formed the dissent were: Byron White (Kennedy, D); and William Rehnquist (Nixon, R; chief justice under Regan, R). Thus, as Christians, while we do pray for justice and for all leaders and judges in positions of authority (1 Tim. 2:1-2), we do not trust in princes (Ps. 118:9; Ps. 146:3) who disappoint.

I recently received a letter from the Hope Clinic, a local crisis pregnancy center with which our congregation partners. The director said:

Each year between 550-600 come in for pregnancy services alone (another 600 will come in for wellcare medical visits or professional counseling for pregnancy loss and postpartum depression). Nearly half of the women who call us admit to being abortion-minded, but after they come in, over 90% choose life!

Those six hundred women in Nashville will be out there in need of help and instruction regardless of whether their access to abortion has been curbed or ended (for which we pray).

For the pastors of the Mid-South District, you and I who are kingdom-of-the-right men, our mission remains the same whether the civil realm improves or not: first, to proclaim the law "in its full sternness" (Walther, *Law and Gospel*, Thesis VI), to proclaim: God will require a reckoning for the lifeblood of man (Gen. 9:5-6); "You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13); God alone is Lord and architect of the womb (Ps. 139:13-16); Murderers shall have their portion in the lake of fire that is prepared for the devil, the murderer from the beginning (Rev. 21:8; Matt. 25:41; Jn. 8:44). Second, our privilege is to proclaim the Gospel "in its full sweetness" (Walther, *Law and Gospel*, Thesis VI), to proclaim: "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30); "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (Jn. 3:17); "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Rom. 3:23-25); "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1); Your sins are taken from you "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps. 103:12); "Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (*LSB*, DS 1, p. 151).

Please allow me to remind you that the 2017 LCMS Life Conference will be held in Arlington, VA, on Jan. 27-29. If you are unable to attend, you will want to download and listen to the presentations when available. Also, if you choose, Life Sunday may be observed on January 15, or on January 22, the actual anniversary date of the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Lutherans for Life ([lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)) has materials available.

Rev. Philip Young  
Mid-South District Life Coordinator



# ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY

Register by Friday January 27, 2017

**Saturday, February 4, 2017**  
**Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church**  
1161 Sparta Hwy, Crossville TN

Featured Presenters  
Rev. Todd Kolbaum  
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola

If overnight accommodations are desired, make your own reservations in the Crossville area.

Cost per-participant is \$25.00

Online Registration: <http://www.lcms.org/rstm/engaging-rural-communities>

More info at [lcms.org/rstm](http://lcms.org/rstm) or [district website](#)



## New Members Welcomed



On Sunday, December 11th, GracePoint Church in Munford, TN, welcomed 26 new members into the family of faith!

## A Look Ahead at the Encourager in 2017

Throughout the year, the monthly Encourager will feature news from across the Mid-South District on specific topics. If your congregation, school or ministry group has an update that fits with one of the monthly emphasis topics, be sure to share it with us by emailing articles and photos to [webmaster@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com). Here's a look at the upcoming topics for 2017:

- February – Outreach
- March – Youth
- April – Volunteers
- May – Small Town & Rural Ministry
- June – Leadership
- July – Veterans
- August – Stewardship
- September – Church Planting
- October – 500th Anniversary of the Reformation
- November – Thankfulness
- December – Highlights of 2017



# Care-Van 2016

Circuit	Money Donations to help with shipping costs	Number of Quilts	Number of Personal Care Kits (No toothpaste)	Number of Boxes of Fabric Kits	Number of School Kits	Number of Baby Care Kits	Boxes of Soap
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>\$ 4,022.45</b>	<b>2,460</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>1013</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>31</b>
Chattanooga, TN	\$ 100.00	101					
Fayetteville, AR	\$ 85.00	32			50		
Fort Smith, AR	\$ 100.00	330	70		163		1
Johnson City, AR		131			20		
Jonesboro, AR		28					
Knoxville, TN	\$ 819.00	250	76		35	49	1
Little Rock North, AR	\$ 150.00	161	70		60		1
Little Rock South, AR	\$ 475.00	328	162	63	110		6
Memphis, TN	\$ 165.00	30	19		34		
Middle TN		93	72				
Nashville, TN	\$ 466.40	208	70		245		6
Paducah, KY	\$ 1,053.00	116	498	50	197	13	16
Stuttgart, AR	\$ 75.00	304	46		36		
<b>Total of All Circuit Donations</b>	<b>\$ 3,488.40</b>	<b>2112</b>	<b>1083</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>GUEST CHURCH DONATIONS</b>							
<i>United Lutheran Church Bella Vista, AR</i>		144	158				
<i>Christ Lutheran Church Hot Springs, AR</i>	\$ 234.05	81			38		
<i>St. John Lutheran (ELCA) Donalson, TN</i>					25		
<i>St. Lukes Lutheran Church Cordova, TN</i>		2					
<i>Peace Lutheran Church Edgemont, AR</i>	\$ 300.00	121	22				
<b>Total of All Guest Church Donations</b>	<b>\$ 534.05</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<p>Thank you to all the churches and individuals who helped make CARE-VAN a success. You touched someone in need.</p>							

## UPDATE ON THE BOWLS AND SPOONS IN HAITI



We are so overjoyed to receive the generous gift from the Mid-South District based on Pat's sharing her experience of the need that many children didn't have bowls or spoons. The need was in many districts including those Pat visited and in Jeremie which received a direct hit from Hurricane Matthew. We sent money to Haiti at the end of November with instructions to buy bowls in those districts.

We notified the districts that the money was sent with instructions on how to use this unusual donation. Pastor Isaac in Jeremie replied immediately fully trusting God would provide:

*"Greetings to you in the name of Jesus.*

*I give glory to God for this great gesture of love towards children. We were in prayer for God to think of us in this sense.*

*By faith we had already bought 500 bowls credit. I was in contact with a store in Jeremie and who understood the situation, he sold us 500 bowls credit.*

*Thank you for all and a big thank you to our sponsor."*

Pastor Isaac provided an update keeping us posted and accountable for the donation. He also included the following photos.

*"I would like to think you for your effort to us after the hurricane Matthew. I buy for the schools and the receipt of the for bowls. The vendor give us as gift 1500 spoons one for each children and 17 ladles and 17 sieves one for each school.*

*Thank you brother all thing work very well and the construction of the storage go up very well also."*

*Pastor Isaac*

Thank you again for your big hearts and dedication to be sure the children in Haiti are fed physically and spiritually! I am so touched by Pastor Isaac's response and faith. It is a blessing to see how God uses His faithful to accomplish His work.

Merry Christmas!  
Denise Gudlin



## Congregational Mission Commitments

### Mission Commitment Receipts as of 11/30/16 (11 Months)

Anticipated Amount (83.33% of budget) .....	\$1,522,602
Actual Receipts.....	<u>1,413,920</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount .....	(\$108,682)

### Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (11 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions .....	\$401,259
Allocated to Tanzania .....	22,917
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts) .....	<u>989,744</u>
Total Receipts.....	\$1,413,920

### Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (11 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 11/30/16 .....	\$1,413,920
Actual Receipts as of 11/30/15 .....	<u>\$1,508,202</u>
Over (under) prior year receipts .....	(\$94,282)

## Mid-South District LCMS Tanzania Mission Trip 2017

We are making plans to take a mission trip to Tanzania, located in East Africa, below the equator on the Indian Ocean. Tanzania is one of the most stable and peaceful countries in Africa. It is a little larger than Texas with a few more people than California.

This year's trip will be to visit the Sukuma tribe in the Ulowa area of Shinyanga Region in Northwest Tanzania.

We are tentatively planning our trip for a two week period in late May or early June of 2017. The exact date will be determined in coordination with our host from the SELVD. We are making tentative plans with a couple of options: a week of ministry in the villages with a 3 or 4 day wildlife Safari.

**Come join us!** If interested contact Bob Allen, email: [rjallen@prodigy.net](mailto:rjallen@prodigy.net) or call: 615-672-7438 home • 270-535-7370 cell

## East TN Fire Update 12/7/16

The saints of Saint Paul Lutheran Church are well and helping our neighbors.

-Gatlinburg plans to open this Friday at 7 AM.

-The 2 Red Cross shelters are now housing around 150 (135 at Rocky Top & 16 in Pigeon Forge)

-Homes destroyed approximately 1450 (full time residence / vacation rentals it not yet know)

-other structures destroyed or damaged approximately 350

-14 dead and 70 missing. -These #s are all estimates based on various sources

-for locals who want to volunteer the below site has a link for you to sign up.

- and up-to-date list of needs can be found at <http://www.rotarydistrict6780.com/>

- this will be my last update on county information as they have established a website that answers all these questions and others about the 2 resource centers, the 2 shelters, and the volunteer resource center. That site is:

<http://www.mountaintough.org>

1. If you are interested in sending funds to help families in need there are 4 funds on the above site. If you wish to do so through our church here are 3 ways.

a. Send the funds to LCMS disaster relief and designate the funds for Tennessee Fires Attention Rev Michael Meyer. Sevier county fire relief.

b. Send the funds to the Mid-South District office and designate the fund for Sevier county fire relief.

c. Send the funds to St Paul Lutheran Church Sevierville TN and designate the funds for Sevier county fire relief. You can do so online by going to (connect) then (give donation) then follow the instructions. Right now you will have to select "other" and designate it for "Sevier County Fire Relief" until we have a chance to set up a special line item with that title.

Thanks again for the prayers and well wishes.  
In Christ, Pastor Portier

# Prayer Summary, December 2016

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 December 2016.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

**MRS. JUDY BACHERT** (wife of Rev. Alan Bachert, EM, Wildwood, MO)

**APAR NATHANIEL BOL** (infant daughter of Rev. Nathaniel Bol, South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church)

**REV. AL BOYSEN** (Emeritus, Cordova, TN)

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

**MS. SARA FEURESTEIN** (daughter of Rev. Donley Hesse, Mena, AR)

**SARAH GREER** (granddaughter of Rev. Carl Wenck, Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN)

**MS. LISA HAILEY**

**MRS. NANCY HERD** (wife of Rev. Cliff Herd, EM, Chattanooga, TN)

**JACOB KIRKPATRICK** (cousin of the Rev. Carl and Gwen Wenck family, Grace, Murfreesboro, TN)

**REV. HERB KLEPATZ** (Emeritus, LaVergne, TN)

**MR. RICHARD MEYER** (Bella Vista, AR)

**MRS. MEGAN NAVRATH** (daughter of Rev. Carl and Gwen Wenck, Grace Murfreesboro, TN)

**REV. DAVID RUBKE** (Tulahoma, TN)

**DEACONESS CONNIE SOSO-GOINES** (Greenwood, AR)

**MRS. CHLOE SWANSON** (wife of Rev. Herb Swanson, Lamar, AR)

**MRS. SUE ANN TOOPES** (wife of Rev. Andy Toopes, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Bowling Green, KY)

**MRS. MARGARET WENCK** (mother of Rev. Carl R. Wenck, Grace Lutheran Murfreesboro, TN)

**MR. PAUL WILKEN** (father-in-law of Rev. Russell Shewmaker, Pilgrim Lutheran, Jonesboro, AR)

**CH. DAVID WITTE and family as he is deployed** (Grace Lutheran, Little Rock, AR)

**Our deepest sympathies to Rev. Roy Bingenheimer (Emeritus, Cassville, MO) and family** as they mourn the loss of his wife, Mrs. Doris Bingenheimer, who passed away on Tuesday, November 29th.

**Our prayers are with...**

**All those affected by the Gatlinburg area wildfires.**

**Rev. Mark Burger and the members of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Claremore, OK,** as the church was destroyed by fire.

## CALL UPDATE

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED:** **Rev. John Easterling**, Associate Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR, has accept call to serve as **Senior Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran, Mountain Home.**

**Rev. Bruce Hanson**, Grand Bay, AL, has been issued a call to serve as **pastor at First Lutheran Church, Blytheville, AR..**

**Rev. Joshua Hatcher**, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN, has accepted the call to serve as **pastor at Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO.**

**Rev. Ken Krueger**, pastor at Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN, has accepted a **position with Lutheran Federal Credit Union in St. Louis, MO.**

**Rev. Matt Peeples**, pastor of The Point Church, Knoxville, TN, has accepted the call to serve at pastor at **Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Ridgewood, NJ.**

**DECLINED:** **Rev. Jason Zirbel**, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Greenwood, AR, has declined the call to serve as **pastor at St. Peter's Immanuel Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI.**

**PENDING:** **Rev. Paul Bushur**, pastor at First Lutheran Church, Knoxville TN has received a call to serve as **pastor at First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN.**

**IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS**  
**Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR – Pastor**  
**Faith Lutheran Church, Oak Ridge, TN – Pastor**  
**First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN – Pastor**  
**Grace Celebration, Cordova, TN – Pastor**  
**Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Associate Pastor**  
**The Point, Knoxville, TN – Pastor**

### COMMISSIONED MINISTERS IN THE CALLING PROCESS

**PENDING:** **Mr. Jonathan M. Kamin**, Vassar, MI, has been issued a call to serve as principal at **First Lutheran Church and School, Knoxville, TN**

**IN THE CALLING PROCESS**  
**First Lutheran Church and School, Knoxville, TN**  
– Principal

# Staff of the Mid-South District, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod



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*Administrative Assistant  
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## Contribute to The Encourager

The Encourager is a monthly newsletter from the Mid-South District LCMS. If you would like your article or event published in the next Encourager, please email it by the **January 24** to Rhonda, [webmaster@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com)