

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | March 2017

March's Focus: YOUTH

Have you heard about "Godly Acts of Kindness" or "Youth Take Over Sunday"? Read these stories and more this month as we focus on the amazing young people and youth ministries of our Mid-South District.

If your ministry has a story (or picture with a caption) related to youth, please share it with readers across the Mi-South District through the Encourager. Simply email your article and photo submissions to webmaster@mid-southlcms.com.



Message from

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola,
President

Youth & Church

It happens in almost every congregation at one time or the other, "What can we do about our kids?" Today's children (under 18 years of age) are raised in homes and in churches who have walked away from Christianity. Despite the youth program, mission trips, and youth gatherings, the youth, in increasing numbers, don't want anything to do with church anymore. The daunting statistics about church-going youth keep rolling in. Congregations plead for more young people. What's wrong? Of course, we continue to pray our children will find a "faithful" mate, but realize there's no easy solution for bringing them back to the church. What sets apart a church that keeps young people? Why can't every congregation have a robust youth ministry? St. Paul gives us a clue, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (II Cor. 5:17) Salvation comes from the power of Gospel,

through the working of the Holy Spirit. (Luther's Small Catechism, Third Article of the Apostles' Creed). God's Spirit works in the hearts to convert and sustain us in our faith. Scripture teaches us, "[Christ] gave...the teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-12) Christ gives teachers to the church. It's not for entertainment (which is perhaps a good gathering tool), but, that the church can equip the saints for the Gospel ministry, and to build up the body of Christ. If our youth eventually leave high school without Bible-reading habits, study skills, and see strong examples of discipleship and prayer, they'll likely never return to regular worship.

Where do they "find" those skills? A pastor can't do it all. He has an hour or two a week at the most with the youth. He doesn't have that kind of influence, and cannot bring about conversion or take up residence in every

home where a young person resides and is growing life skills. The common thread that binds together the spiritual life of the youth is abundantly clear: their home. Letting the child decide whether to pray, read the Bible, or go to church forces them into the parental role. Parents who make their children go to church, teach them right from wrong, and hold them accountable, are parents who have operated under the framework of Biblical parenting and God-given grace.

Children led in their faith by parents who love Jesus, eventually serve their church actively. Proverbs 22:6 isn't a formula that's true 100% of the time! But, it provides a principle

that comes from the gracious plan of God for families: *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."* Simply put, we do our youth ministries a disservice when we segregate them from the life of the church. If youth and children ministries aren't folded into the life of the congregation, the unintended consequence is a future of empty pews. We must engage our youth in the entire life of our congregations. Rev. David Wright speculates, "In other words, maybe young adults aren't actually leaving the church. Maybe they were never there to begin with."

In 1994, a group of Swiss researches conducted a 20-year

survey that wished to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation; and if so, why, or if not, why not. The results blew up our understanding of faithful church attendance. The one critical factor is this: The religious practice of the father of the family, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children for the next generation.

The results were staggering. If both father and mother attend regularly, 33% of their children will end up as regular churchgoers, and 41% will end up attending irregularly. Another 25% of their children will end up not being church-goers at all. If the father is irregular in worship, and mother



GATLINBURG FIRES - UPDATE

wonderful thing to see in the light of such grief. We, as a congregation, have found a number of ways to plug into the relief effort. In addition to volunteering some time, we established a fund so that caring, concerned Lutherans from all over the country could send funds to us and have us pass them on to fire affected families. We received over \$12,000 from more than 50 individuals, groups and congregations across a

dozen states and decided Smoky Mountain Area Rescue Ministry (SMARM), a local ministry we have a long standing relationship with, was the best place for the funds to reach the most people in need. I

recently delivered the first check from that fund, \$10,237, to Dick Wellons their executive director. Those funds were used to help 32 families with shelter expenses, 44 with rental expenses and 87 with utility expenses. These families were assisted in their great hour of need through the love and generosity of our brothers and sisters in Christ, near and far. We continue to pray for all 884 families who lost their homes. We are honored and blessed to be a part of this loving caring community and look forward to continuing this mercy work as we love and serve our neighbors as volunteers and messengers of kindness.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Portier
Saint Paul Lutheran Church
Sevierville, TN

In the weeks following the Gatlinburg fires, I was regularly answering the questions "What can I do?" "How can I help?" The care and concern for neighbors in need was a

regularly worships, only 3% of the children will become regular church-goers, while a further 59% will be irregular. The last 38% will never return to the church.

When the father is non-practicing and mother regularly worships, only 2% of the children became regular worshippers. Another 37% attended irregularly. But, over 60% of the second generation children left the church completely. Remarkably, if the father was regular in church attendance, but the mother was irregular or non-practicing, the percentage of children who became regular in worship went up from 33% to 38% with the irregular mother, and to 44% with the non-practicing mother, as if the loyalty to father's commitment grows in proportion to mother's laxity, indifference, or hostility.

Even when the father is an irregular worshiper, there were some amazing results. An irregular worshipping father and a non-practicing mother yielded 25% of their children as regular

worshippers in future life; and 22% in irregular worship. This means, where the father is even nominally involved in faith development, his children will have *twelve times* the yield of faithful future worship practice, than when the parental roles were reversed!

As we might anticipate, where neither parent practices any sort of worship, only 4% of the children became regular worshippers, and 15% irregulars. In other words, without taking the parental responsibility to bring a child up in the nurture and admonition of a Christian household, 80% will be lost to the faith. In short, if a father doesn't go to church, no matter how faithful his wife, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshiper! If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between 67% and 75% of the children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular)! (*Touchstone Magazine*, May, 2016)

The Mid-South District has embarked on an exciting and somewhat difficult task: Returning

to the Biblical and Catechetical understanding of engaging our children and youth into the life of the Church. With the cooperation of Concordia University - Ann Arbor and The Concordia Center for Family Ministry, we have engaged ourselves to become a pilot initiative to engage, equip, and encourage our congregants to reverse the trend of eroding church participation, and build strong congregations for the life of the next generation.

In 3 – 5 years, "Beta-study" sites across the Mid-South District will implement and evaluate ways to bring meaningful continuation of our ministries to the Mid-South District, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and American Christianity. Please pray that the Lord of the Church will lead and guide this effort that we may become a leader for sharing life we have in our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.



Installation of Rev. David Appold



The installation of Rev. David Appold as pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Paducah, KY on February 5, 2017. Pastor Appold was formerly the Associate Pastor at St. Paul. Pictured, (L-R) include Rev. Paul Donner, former pastor at St. Paul; President Roger Paavola, Pastor Appold; Rev. Daniel Ulrich, Rev. Larry Peters; Rev. Jim Dunn.

Godly Acts of Kindness

This group of Sunday school youth from Faith Lutheran Church (Oak Ridge, TN) uses some of their Sunday school offerings and share it locally and internationally. Recently; they went to their local Walmart to hand out Godly Acts of Kindness.

When you give someone a gift card, they usually say, "Why are you doing this?" That opens the door for you to say, "we just wanted to bless your day," or "we wanted to share Jesus' love." Being a good witness isn't hard when you practice. This gives the youth the opportunity to practice and to learn the words to say. This time, they passed out 15 twenty dollar gift cards as well as a business card with the church contact on it if the recipient wanted more information about the group.



Engaging Your Community Event (EYC)

LCMS Rural & Small Town Missions (RSTM) exists to support and encourage congregations in rural and small town settings in their work to engage their communities with the love of Christ. On February 4th, an Engaging Your Community Event (EYC) was held at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Crossville, TN. Members from congregations across Tennessee spent the day in

training with President Roger Paavola (*Mid-South District*) and Rev. Todd Kollbaum (*Director of LCMS - RSTM*). The participants received personalized demographics for their congregations and practical resources for touching their communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A special "Thank You" to Shepherd of the Hills for hosting this event.



The next EYC event is scheduled for Saturday, December 2, 2017 at Bethel Lutheran Church in Fort Smith, AR. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend!

Mt. Petit Jean Hosts LinkT Mid-Winter Youth Gathering



From Friday, February 10-Sunday, February 12, 106 teens representing 16 congregations across the Mid-South District gathered at Mt. Petit Jean Lutheran Camp in Arkansas for the LinkT Mid-Winter Retreat for senior youth. The weekend's activities were built around the theme "Create," culminating with a moving talk by David Youman from Concordia University in Austin, Texas. It was a great weekend of worship and fellowship, punctuated by unseasonably warm and beautiful weather! Many thanks go to all who attended and those who worked to put it all together.

Sharing Faith in the Home: A Special Day at St. John's Lutheran

Sunday, February 19 was a very moving day at St. John's Lutheran Church in Lafa, Arkansas. The day was all about love: specifically, God's love for us and how parents share that love within their families. The church hosted a "Love Letter Celebration" that began with a special Sunday school hour instruction with parents, focusing on sharing faith in the home, the church's part in equipping parents to be faith leaders and the critical role of faith in the daily lives of families—beyond the Sunday morning worship experience. At the end of the class, parents were given Bibles and asked to share a "love letter" to their children on the inside cover. Once the notes were completed, parents presented the Bibles to their children during worship, as the congregation looked on



and shared in the special moment. The "Love Letter Celebration" marked an important milestone in the faith journey of each of the families, and especially the children. If this event sounds like something that your congregation would like to host, contact St. John's Director of Christian Education, Tessa Brasher (mailto:brashert@csp.edu) to learn more about how the special day came together.

Teens Lead Worship at Immanuel Lutheran's "Youth Takeover Sunday"

As members and guests arrived for services at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Memphis on February 26, they immediately noticed something a little different from most Sundays. From the moment they entered the church building, they were greeted by members of Immanuel's Senior Youth. Once seated in the sanctuary, a choir of young voices sang praise songs, setting the tone for worship. Prayers, readings and the Children's Message were all shared by enthusiastic teens; youth were even at the helm of the soundboard and worship slides. It was as if the teens of the church had taken over—because they had. In fact, the Senior Youth of Immanuel, under the leadership of its Director of Christian Education, A.J. Vega, had worked for several months to coordinate every detail of what it called "Youth Takeover Sunday." By the end of the day, nearly 20 teens had led three separate worship services for around 300 attendees, with Vega sharing the message at each service. It was a moving day for both the youth and those in the congregation. "Youth Takeover Sunday" was definitely a success—possibly even a new tradition for Immanuel!



Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 01/31/17 (1 Month)

Anticipated Amount (8.3% of budget)	\$131,033
Actual Receipts	<u>96,534</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$34,499)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (1 Month)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions	\$26,877
Allocated to Tanzania	2,083
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts)	<u>67,574</u>
Total Receipts	\$96,534

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (1 Month)

Actual Receipts as of 01/31/17	\$96,534
Actual Receipts as of 01/31/16	<u>\$94,680</u>
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$1,854

Share photos of your amazing youth

Would you like to showcase the youth in your school or church? Stop by the Mid-South District's Facebook page (Mid-South-LCMS) and share pictures and updates with us.



The April Encourager will be focusing on Volunteers. Please share your stories, photos and captions of the volunteers that are involved in your school, church and ministries to Rhonda by **March 23** (webmaster@mid-southlcms.com)

Teaching the Faith to Our Youth

When Paul wrote to young Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5), he talked about the faith instilled in him by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. Timothy's faith was developed in the home which is still the primary institution for faith development. But Paul also talks about the "household of faith" in Galatians 6:10 which is the gathering of believers.

Let's face it, times are changing. Within the next 15 years or so about 20% of the people living in the United States will be 65 or older. But the fact of the matter is that worldwide about one third of the population is age 15 or younger and many of these younger individuals are moving back with their parents. That presents an interesting dynamic, but also an opportunity to help generation Z stay connected or to reconnect with their Lord and Savior.

My point here is that family life and faith life is extremely important to all generations. Our country seems to be headed away from its roots as a Christian nation. Postmodernism has seen the deterioration of authority, especially institutional authority. And the idea that "knowledge is power" leads to an interesting discussion about where we get that knowledge. Do we look to individuals who know and understand or do we turn to the internet and trust the opinion of someone whom we don't even know?

Jill Hasstedt's article in *The Pedagogy of Faith* has helped me flesh out this issue of *Teaching the Faith in a Post-Christian Context*. Our youth need us to point out those forms of communication that can be harmful, whereas God's word is always true. We should teach our youth to welcome diversity, but not necessarily embrace it. The Gospel points us in the direction of love and forgiveness, and we know that Jesus is the one to follow rather than trusting one's own understanding of what is truth. The Bible warns us of false teaching so stick to the Bible on a daily basis and learn the truth from it.

Having faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior is an individual thing. Parents, pastors, and teachers need to first build a strong relationship with the young. Then we show how we care about our faith by participating in worship on a regular basis, studying God's word, praying with each other, and serving others as Jesus came to serve. The journey of faith development is not necessarily easy, but it is necessary. Parents must take the lead and rely on pastors and other Christians to supply a support role. If we truly care about the future, we will take the time to build a strong relationship with our youth so that they may love and care for others as they grow in their own relationship with Jesus.

Allen Piepenbrink
Education Exec. Mid-South LCMS



Brighter Future

A Bible verses that always leaps out to me and stays on my heart is Matthew 19:14 when Jesus is telling the disciples to "let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." We have a large responsibility to be sure all children have the opportunity to learn about their Heavenly Father and His unconditional love for them. This makes the work Trinity/HOPE does in Haiti even more special.

In a country where many outsiders see no progress and say it is hopeless, I see a brighter future in the eyes of each child we serve. I see a life no longer controlled by the devil but instead HOPE for a better tomorrow. By providing a noon meal each school day the children are able to focus and retain what the teachers share, increasing their chances to be productive members of society. Today in Haiti 48% of Haitians over the age of 15 are illiterate. The children help their parents

by reading aloud to them from the Bible and witnessing to them. They are the future for a better Haiti!



At Trinity/HOPE we are often asked "Do you know if the programs really work, and what happens to the kids when they get older?". The young man in these two pictures is VonsKeeper Orelus...graduating from Kindergarten and then graduating from secondary school. He is now a freshman at a Haitian university; an opportunity that is available to very few Haitians. VonsKeeper is studying Engineering and looks forward to continuing his educa-

tion. VonsKeeper was in our feeding program at Bon Berger in Port au Prince his entire school career. He is a very bright young man that loves his country and wants to impact Haiti's future. He credits the Trinity/HOPE feeding program for helping him be able stay focused on his studies. He was one of 22,000+ Trinity/HOPE feeds every school day, giving each child an opportunity for a better future. Thank YOU for helping make this possible.



www.trinityhope.org



The LCEF Summer Internship Program Is Back!

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) announces its Summer Internship Program for summer 2017. The program will provide an opportunity for college students to explore career paths and gain valuable work experience in many areas of LCEF.

An internship at LCEF will give the student real-world experience in an environment that is intellectually challenging and rewarding. The interns will gain valuable on-the-job experience and develop professional skills while learning about career opportunities at LCEF. Interns will benefit from a supportive, ministry-oriented environment. For this summer opportunity, one intern position will be available for each of these departments:

- **Lending & Real Estate Management**
- **Marketing & Customer Support**

Applicant qualifications for LCEF's summer internships include*:

- Completing sophomore or junior year in college
- Pursuing a degree in business, communications, marketing, computer science or related field
- Additional qualifications for each internship area as listed on the job description

**The paid internships are approximately nine weeks in length. Interns must provide their own housing and transportation.*

Please visit <http://lcef.org/internship> for complete details and to apply.

The application deadline is April 12, 2017.





(L-R) Cindy Garretson, Tom McCaffery, Margo McCaffery, Jeff Garretson, David Mobley, Karen Kitts, Kevin Kitts, Bob Bruns, Jane Bruns, Pastor Paul Kritsch. *Photo by Dorothy Kritsch who organized the event.*

Lutherans Hold Diaper Derby

Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Sharps Chapel, TN recently completed its second annual diaper derby. Their goal was to gather more than last year's total of 726. The final tally of 1414 diapers was almost double that number. The diapers were given to the Union County Food Pantry for distribution to area families.

The congregation began gathering the diapers on January 15, Sanctity of Human Life Sunday to demonstrate their belief that all of life is sacred from conception to natural death, and is to be nurtured and cherished. "Sometimes people think the church is only against everything which it deems wrong according to its beliefs," stated Rev. Paul Kritsch, pastor of the church. *"But the church is also called upon to help where there is need, and not just condemn others from the sidelines. I am always encouraged by how our church*

enjoys working together to demonstrate Christ's love."

Chapel of the Good Shepherd is the only Lutheran church in Union County. Its first worship service was in May, 2015, less than two years ago. Since then it has continued to grow in both numbers and in its desire to be a blessing to the community. Other service projects this year include helping with the monthly food distribution at Upper Room Ministries in New Tazewell, the third annual Patriot Day Dinner in September to honor the first responders in Sharps Chapel, and the year-long gathering of paper products to be given away at the Union County Christmas Charity in December.

Apply Now for Student Financial Aid

Students who plan to attend an LCMS seminary or university during the 2017-18 academic year in order to prepare for full-time church work may apply for financial aid through the Mid-South District office. Financial aid amounts are granted for a period of one year, and a new application must be

made each year. **Applications for the coming school year must be postmarked by June 15, 2017.**

For forms, please contact the district office by phone (toll-free) at 866-373-1343, by email to jtyler@mid-southlcms.com, or by regular mail 1675 Wynne Road, Cordova, TN 38016.



A Great Opportunity from Lutheran Church Extension Fund

As young people across the country begin the next phase of their education journey by entering college, Lutheran Church Extension Fund's Young Investors (Y.I.) Club wants to help by offering financial support through the **Take Heart Scholarship**, with up to three awards of \$3,000, \$1,000 and \$500.

There are only a few eligibility requirements for the Take Heart Scholarship:

- Applicants must be an LCEF investor. (Students under the age of 19 can invest in LCEF's [Young Investors Club](#). Those who are age 19 can invest in LCEF's [StewardAccount](#)®.)

- Applicants must be a high school graduating senior.
- Applicants must intend to be enrolled in or be accepted by a vocational/technical school, community college or four-year college/university as a full-time student.

For complete details on the Take Heart Scholarship opportunity—including how to submit application materials—visit the program website at <https://lcef.org/take-heart-scholarship/>. You may also speak with an LCEF representative about the program by calling 800.843.5233.

The Take Heart Scholarship application deadline is April 5, 2017.

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. Neither LCEF nor its representatives give legal, accounting or tax advice. Consult a tax advisor as to the applicability of this information to your own situation. UMB Bank n.a. serves as the custodian of the LCEF IRA program. *Contact your tax advisor for more information.

Madagascar Update

Lutheran Institute of Managerial Enterprise (LIME)



Rev. Joseph Randianasolo, a pastor with the Lutheran Church in Madagascar, has an established relationship with the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The Mid-South District has helped with the Lutheran Institute of Managerial Enterprise (LIME) in Madagascar of the past four years. Prior to that time, there has been support for building churches, gaining transportation for the ministers, securing computers for teaching at LIME, securing internet access for the college students at LIME, helping with room renovation, and this most recent project to upgrade their building. LIME is an upper division education facility that teaches college level courses for Lutheran students that they may compete in a very limited job market, and become church workers for the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Their Lutheran presence in Madagascar is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Lutheran Church this year, 2017. They have grown from a handful of a few families 150 years ago, to over 3 million members in one of the fastest growing Lutheran bodies in the world.

The actual Malagasy Lutheran Church (in Malagasy it is known as FLM: *Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy*), under the leadership of its newly elected President, Rev. Dr. David Rakotonirina, is a Lutheran denomination established in 1950 by the unification of 1,800 Lutheran congregations in central and southern Madagascar. The oldest of these congregations was founded in the early 19th Century, leading to this year's celebration of that Lutheran presence on the island nation. The growth of FLM is due in large part to an indigenous revival movement, known as *Fifohazana*, that has worked through the church since the early twentieth century. Most of the church leaders are members of the *Fifohazana* movement. In addition to serving over 5000 member congregations with only 1,200 pastors, the FLM also boasts a health care program of nine hospitals and thirteen dispensaries. SALFA, as it is known, is a community-based primary health project with special initiatives that cover child survival, family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention and, providing missionaries who serve in Cameroon and Papua New Guinea.



English Bible Camp in Poland

LCMS is seeking Lutheran Educators —

We are currently seeking out people who love Jesus and can help teach an English Bible Camp (similar to a VBS) in Poland this summer. Does that sound like you?

There are ten congregations ready to reach out to the children of their neighborhoods with the Gospel. Most of these children do not know the Good News of Jesus, and through these camps, they learn about Jesus and in turn tell their parents. And the local Lutheran congregation can follow up with these families after the camp is done. These camps make a lasting difference in these communities!

We are looking for teams of 5 to serve July 18-31 or August 1-14, 2017. Teams can come from one congregation or school, or individuals can apply and be placed on a team. Team members raise support to cover the cost of the trip, which is about \$1100 and includes all costs while in Poland.

You can learn more or apply here: <http://servenow.lcms.org/opp/vacation-bible-school-poland/>



Read more about this opportunity from those who have served here: <https://blogs.lcms.org/2017/english-camps-in-poland>

This opportunity is not limited to those who have formal teaching experience, so please invite a friend!

2017 Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music



LCMS Worship, a ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is hosting the institute for pastors, musicians and laity who are passionate about worship. This triennial event offers pastors, church musicians, and all who are passionate about the Church's worship an opportunity to be refreshed in Word, song, and prayer together with opportunities to grow in skills that enhance the joy of the people of God in the reception of His gifts.

This year's Institute takes its cue from the upcoming Reformation anniversary with the theme: The Just Live by Faith—Make This Plain in Sermon, Service, Song, to be held at Concordia University Chicago in River Forest, Ill.

In addition to three keynote addresses, we'll have opportunity for daily study of the Word (featuring CUC President Dr. Daniel Gard), daily prayer services, two Divine Services (with new arrangements of Setting Five by Jacob Weber and Jonathan Kohrs with LCMS President Matthew Harrison preaching the opening service and Dr. Gard the final one), a concert by the National Lutheran Choir from Minneapolis, a hymn festival featuring the hymns of Martin Luther, numerous breakout sessions for pastors and church musicians plus many others on general worship topics, and exhibitors with all kinds of wares and services.

Registration will open mid-March via the Synod's [website](http://www.lcms.org). For more information, contact the LCMS at 888.the.lcms (843-5267) or infocenter@lcms.org.

Heartfelt Giving

A unique Shopping & Travel Website

In Exodus Chapter 16, we read of the fascinating account of God literally raining down bread from heaven! This is a tremendous reminder for us today of how our great God provides “daily bread” for His people.

Well, I have never found any manna on my lawn in the morning, but I still constantly marvel at how God continues to provide for His people and for His church. A great example of that is an awesome new resource called <http://heartfeltgiving.net>.

Heartfelt Giving has given over \$52,000 to Lutheran churches and charities, including the Mid-South District, over the last 3 years. **Now your church has the opportunity to receive cash back from Heartfeltgiving!**

Here’s how it works! You and your members are already shopping online at name-brand stores and travel centers and receiving nothing back for doing so. Now, with <http://heartfeltgiving.net>, you can get cash for your church with every online purchase you make!

Since the average family spends enough online to bring back to their church about \$102 per year, a church with 100 families would generate over \$10,000 for ministries in their church every year! Larger churches (and those with schools or preschools) would generate even more. **And each church will get its own online shopping mall and travel center for FREE!!!**

What can you buy on this website? Just about anything and everything! Here are just a few items:

- Office supplies, including paper, ink cartridges, toner, and envelopes
- Altar Flowers
- Travel items, including plane tickets, hotel rooms, and rental cars
- Smart phones & Service Contracts
- Clothes & Household items
- Sports equipment
- Books
- Pet Supplies
- Brand Name Items
- Much, much more!

The prices are the same on the Heartfelt Giving website as they are on the website of whatever store or company you are buying from. The only difference is that cash goes back to your church!

To get started, go to the <http://heartfeltgiving.net/> website, click on the Create a New Mall button, and follow the prompts. That’s it! Within a few days, your church will get its own Heartfelt Giving website that anyone can use to earn cash back for your church. All you have to do is publicize that website address in your bulletin, newsletter, and your church’s own website.

Before you know it, you will begin to see modern day “manna” begin to rain down on your church!

Prayer Summary, February 2017

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 February 2017.

PRAYER CONCERNS

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

APAR NATHANIEL BOL (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)

MR. GLENN GOERES (Former Education Executive, Central Illinois District – LCMS)

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

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 Wenck, Grace, 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. David Hudak (Christ Lutheran, Siloam Springs, AR) on the **loss of his father, Mr. Paul Hudak.**

Our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Rev. Augusto Riss (pastor in Brazil, friend of President Paavola) who passed away on Thursday, February 16, 2017.

CALL UPDATE

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: Rev. Jace Detrie, pastor of Athens Lutheran Church, Athens, TN, has accepted a call to serve a congregation in New Jersey.

Rev. Greg Truwe, pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, Jackson, TN, has accepted the call to serve as Senior Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Cole Camp, MO.

PENDING: Rev. Kirk Abatelli, Millington, MI, has been issued a call to serve as pastor at **Faith Lutheran Church, Oak Ridge, TN.**

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS

Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR – Pastor

Faith Lutheran Church, Oak Ridge, TN – Pastor

First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN – Pastor

Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN – Associate Pastor

Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN – Pastor

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Associate Pastor

Mid-South District, Cordova, TN – Missionary-At-Large/Church Planter

Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Searcy, AR – Pastor

The Point, Knoxville, TN – Pastor

Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

PENDING: Mr. David Kaiser of Sebeawing and Unionville, MI, has been issued a call to serve as principal at **First Lutheran School in Knoxville, TN.**

Mrs. Erika Kaiser of Sebeawing and Unionville, MI, has been issued a call to serve as **teacher at First Lutheran School in Knoxville, TN.**

DECLINED: Mrs. Becky Bernau, teacher at Concordia Christian Academy, Jonesboro, AR, has declined the call to serve as teacher at Our Savior Lutheran School in Hutchinson, MN.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – FOR COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

First Lutheran Church and School, Fort Smith, AR – Principal

First Lutheran Church and School, Knoxville, TN – Principal

Heavenly Host Lutheran School, Cookeville, TN – Principal

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



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President

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*Executive Director for LCEF Vice President
and Executive Director for Development*

Angela Fowler
*Executive Director for
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*District Education Executive for
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LCEF Communications & Marketing Specialist

Julie Tyler
*Administrative Assistant
for Missions and Education*

Alison Hawkins
*Administrative Assistant
to the District President*

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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 **March 23** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com