

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | July 2017

July's Focus:

We Salute Our Veterans

This month we focus on the Veterans in our congregations and communities.

We are excited to share your stories and photos of how the congregations celebrate and appreciate these special people across the Mid-South District.

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



Usually, we celebrate "Veterans" in November, but this year, we have chosen to celebrate all veterans in a special way. November's Veterans Day usually reminds us of men and women who have been called to protect our nation in military service for our nation. We're grateful for their willingness to serve and sacrifice for our nation. So, for that service want to say thank you. We also praise God for not only hearing our prayers, but giving protection and care during dangerous times. St. Paul writes: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."* (Ephesians 1:3)

It reminds me of a story I read about a man who was hospitalized and had a young son try visit him during his

confinement. The man made a little wooden truck for his boy. But, since the boy wasn't allowed to go to his father's room, an orderly brought the gift to the son who was waiting in front of the hospital. His father looked on from his window as his son unwrap the truck.

When he opened the gift the boy's eyes got wide with excitement. His father walked back and forth, waving his arms behind the window, trying to get his son's attention. The boy put the truck down and reached up and hugged the orderly and thanked him for the truck. The frustrated father went through every dramatic gesture imaginable to get his son's attention, "It's me, son. I made the truck for you. Look up here!" Finally the mother turned the boy's eyes toward the window to see his father. "Look up son, it's your father!" It was then the boy cried, "Daddy! Oh, thank you! Come home, Daddy. Thank you for my truck!" His father knew his son's real gratitude as he stood in the window with tears pouring down his cheeks.

Are we like that child? Think of the many people we need to thank. All good things in

Thank you to all of the Veterans who served and their families.



this life come from God our Father. Just as a soldier needs to follow orders and training of the commander, if we're going to live as followers of Jesus, it's important we know God leads us by His Spirit for Him and His cause. St. Paul writes, *"We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. Now, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began."* (I Corinthians 2:6-7)

The war we're in as Christians is against principalities of darkness that try to destroy any hope that we might have in this world. Evil has imprisoned humanity from our conception (Psalm 51). When our nation's forefathers struggled under the tyranny of English rule, they

soon discovered that the English expected compliance by their control. The "Americans" had two choices: give in, or fight for freedom. Most settlers chose to take a stand and defend this nation against oppression and tyranny. The consequences were that blood was spilled and lives were lost. But America eventually became a free nation.

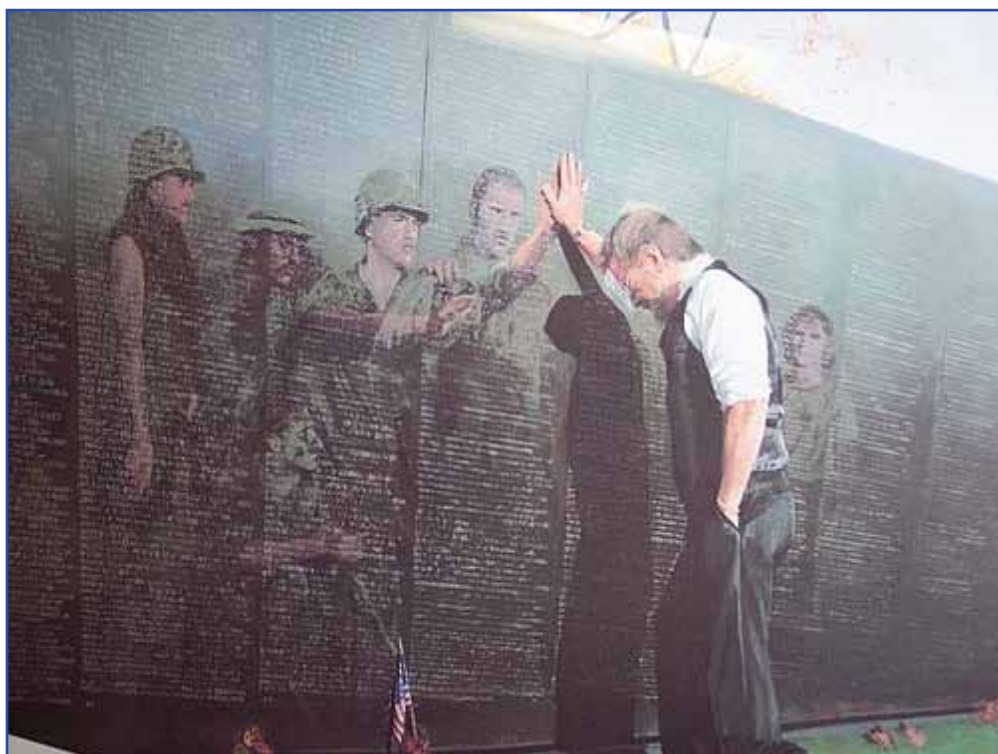
But, in a more important way, God didn't give up on His creation without a fight. God led His church into battle... the church where there is a message of hope found in Jesus Christ our Captain in this fight. We're called into battle to fight for the Kingdom of God. His desire is that all men and women come to know Him as Savior. His people have the privilege and responsibility to share His Gospel with our neighbors throughout the

world. His Gospel is a message of salvation, where people are broken free from the chains of sin and death.

Just as the cost for any military campaign is great, Jesus said: *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:3) Veterans for this fight are called to help. They know the battle. They were called for the fight to take on the enemy. The familiar hymn says, *"Like a mighty army, moves the Church of God; Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod. We are not divided, All one body we, One in hope and doctrine, one in charity. Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before."*

Just as the veterans of American wars have a responsibility to our nation, we also have a responsibility and awesome privilege for the Kingdom of God. We're making a difference in the world through Christ. We have the honor and privilege to point people to Jesus Christ who, alone, can save people from eternal condemnation. But there's a fire-fight before our Champion comes to bring us to His glorious, victorious Kingdom.

We follow the call of Jesus when He calls us to be soldiers of the Gospel. St Paul writes, *"But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs."* (Phil 2:25) Soldiers don't go out to the



Reflections In the Wall By Jerry A. G. Ericsson

battle field without a battle plan or the necessary armament. In the same way, soldiers in God's army will, *"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer."* (II Tim 2:3-4) Our goal - our purpose in battle, equipped by God's armor, is to do those things that are pleasing in His sight and led by His Spirit. Above all, God's Word promises us that He has already won this war.

Our American Commander-in-Chiefs have, for years, sent men and women to places like, Japan, Europe, others to Iraq, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Africa, Korea, and many other foreign lands. We may wonder if we have the perfect country or what may have happened to our veterans who faithfully and fearlessly served our country and sacrificed for our freedoms. Our faith remains in this nation led by faith in our almighty and eternal God. God calls us to go bravely into the world with the Gospel.

A few years ago, I visited Washington, D.C. and toured many of the monuments in our nation's capital. One monument was especially touching to me - the Wall of the Vietnam Memorial. Three close friends have their names carved into the jet black granite wall, indicating the ultimate sacrifice they gave to our country. Along with some 55,000 men and women who served, Johnny Silver (a high school classmate), Roger Maki (a college classmate), and Steve

Peterson (my college roommate) gave all they had for the cause of American freedom.

Yet, there is no memorial on Calvary Hill emblazoned with the name of Jesus. He died for a cause of freedom, but the greater and eternal freedom from sin, death, and evil... forever. Think of the mother's plea to her son who had just unwrapped the toy truck his father made for him, "Look up son, it's your father!" In honor

and thanksgiving, turn our eyes upward. God, our heavenly Father has given us every perfect gift and the special message of salvation in Christ Jesus. Yes, we remember veterans who have served our nation. And, we also remember those veterans of the cross in the Kingdom of God.



MISSIONARY-AT-LARGE FOR NORTHWEST ARKANSAS AREA INSTALLED

Congratulations to Pastor-Elect JD Zischke who was installed as a Missionary-At-Large/Church Planter for the Fayetteville, Arkansas area on Saturday, June 17 at Grace Lutheran Church in Little Rock. We are pleased to welcome JD and his family to the Mid-South District.



Pictured (L-R) Front two) Rev. Paul Jilg, Rev. John Gierke, Rev. Roger Schoolcraft, President Roger Paavola, Rev. JD Zischke, Rev. Mark Barz (father-in-law of Zischke), Rev. Jon Beyer, Rev. Michael Schleider. Back Row. Rev. David Witte, Rev. Paul Hass, Rev. Gordon Besel, Rev. Robert Herring, Rev. Dr. Tim Saleska (Concordia Seminary, St Louis), Rev. Brandon Martin

LOCAL VETS HONORED

On May 20, 2017 Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church (Loudon, TN) hosted 122 local veterans for our fifth annual pancake breakfast. Those who attended included veterans from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and the current Middle East wars. The program included a color guard to post the colors, pledge of allegiance, slideshow of local vets in uniform (way back when), a guest speaker, and singing patriotic music. Our featured speaker was Bill Prince, a twice-wounded Vietnam veteran and Marine Corps sergeant. His subsequent career in both government service and the private sector kept him directly involved in veterans' issues and he is a life member of five veterans' organizations. Eleven volunteers from Christ Our Savior did setup, decoration, food prep, audio-visual, and cleanup tasks. About 2/3 of the vets participating were from outside our church.



JOB AND STEVEN ANDREWS

Job Comfort Dog of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, had the pleasure of attending the Retirement Ceremony of Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Steven Andrews on Friday, June 16, 2017, at the Pat Thompson Center in Millington, TN. Wearing his camouflage vest, which signifies his ministry to veterans, Job, along with his handler, veteran Pete Wasmund, proudly stood by while HMCS Andrews was honored by his commanding officer and fellow U.S. Navy personnel. Reverend Chuck Neugebauer, senior pastor of Christ the King and a Navy veteran himself, was on hand to give the Invocation and Benediction.

Steven Andrews enlisted in the Navy in October 1989, under the delayed entry program and began active duty service in January of 1990. His afloat assignments included service at 2nd Fleet Service Support Group at Camp Lejeune, NC, and aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, Norfolk, VA, Andrews' ashore tours included time in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, New Orleans, LA, and Millington, TN. His personal awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (three awards) and the Navy Achievement Medal (seven awards) along with numerous campaign and unit awards.

Congratulations to HMCS Steven Andrews and his family, including his wife Jennifer, and children Rebekah, Rachel, Caleb, and Abby!



UNEXPECTED BLESSING

For Memorial Day in Horseshoe Bend, Arkansas, Shepherd of the Hills, organized a Thrivent Action Team to honor Veterans. The Memorial Day Action Team planned, prepared and served free brats, hot dogs, chips, drinks, and patriotic red, white and blue Little Debbie treats to over 140 people who stayed after the Memorial Day Service conducted by the local American Legion Post in Veterans Park. The team made 120 red, white and blue lapel pins that they handed out to those attending the service as their free pass for the lunch. Ten minutes before the service they ran out of ribbons. It was more people than anyone expected. For many years there have been no free lunches after the service. Attendance has been as low as 25 when no lunch is served.

Besides a tremendous turnout on a beautiful day, there was the unexpected blessing that people stayed and visited in the park well over an hour after the service. It was great to see so many children with their parents in a time when so much of our past as a nation is being either removed or forgotten. The lunch helped bring a real sense of community to Horseshoe Bend and thank you letters have confirmed this. From the positive sense of service to the community, members of Shepherd of the Hills are planning to have a Memorial Day Action Team for 2018.



The Memorial Day Action Team





(Above) Attendees from the Mid-South District at the 37th Biennial LWML Convention in Albuquerque, NM, which took place June 22-25, 2017.

(L to R) Young Woman Representative (YWR) Angela Lukens, LWML Mid-South District President Diane Reimold (holding banner) and YWR Ashley Tieman represented the Mid-South District in the processional to begin the convention.

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 05/31/17 (5 Months)

Anticipated Amount (41.67% of budget)	\$655,477
Actual Receipts.....	<u>629,981</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$25,496)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (5 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions	\$178,578
Allocated to Tanzania	10,417
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts)	<u>440,987</u>
Total Receipts	\$629,981

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (5 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 05/31/17	\$629,981
Actual Receipts as of 05/31/16.....	<u>\$542,553</u>
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$87,428



ACTSFW
CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

6600 North Clinton Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
www.ctsfw.edu

New Testament Patterns for Pastoral Ministry July 24–28, 2017

This class will study various portions of the New Testament, especially the words and actions of Jesus and Paul, to see and understand the guidance these texts offer for shaping our pastoral theology and practice.

Coordinator is Rev. T. David McMinn III, email pastor@sothlutheran.org or call 931.303.2439

Location
Ascension Lutheran Church
610 W. Old Hickory Blvd.
Madison, TN 37115

For more information about Continuing Education opportunities and/or registration, you may call Kara Mertz at 260.452.2103, email CE@ctsfw.edu or visit www.ctsfw.edu/CE.

MISSION TRIP TO TANZANIA 2017

This year the mission team was sent to the Maswa District of the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD). The Maswa district located north of Shinyanga, has a population of 344,125 people, and is served by five pastors who serve five congregations and 13 sub-congregations.

On our first Sunday in country, we were able to celebrate with members of the Lalago parish and with Bishop Emmanuel Makala, who consecrated the new Ephratha Lutheran Church building. This congregation was started as the result of earlier church plant/mission outreach to the area. On our last Sunday we worshiped at Budekwa, another new church that was planted two years ago after another mission outreach. Two other new church buildings were dedicated and the cornerstone laid in the villages of Mwanundi and Labago. These two sub-congregations were also started as the result of mission outreach activity two years earlier.

Sandwiched between worshiping at new church buildings and congregations we conducted mission/church outreach into the villages of Mwakidiga and Mbalagane, both are church plants of the Lalago parish. Mwakidiga located 45 minute

drive from Maswa, has no other churches. Our local evangelist Fredrick Jeremia and Pastor Tenga had been doing work in the area in preparation for the team visit. Our group of nine Americans partnered with a Tanzania pastor, interpreters, and local congregation members. We walked to homes with a 2 or 3-mile radius of the village to visit all who lived in the area and share the Gospel message.

The Good News that God the Creator sent His Son to earth for them. Paul tells us in Romans 1 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen.

This is certainly true for the Sukuma tribe members we visit in Tanzania. They acknowledge there is a supreme creator they call Mulungu. They know that God created the heavens and the earth and all things in it.

But they believe that God is not accessible by them. The Sukuma people believe in ancestor worship and spirits. This means when someone dies they simply cease living in the flesh but continue in the spirit in a place closer to the creator God. They believe that God is accessible to them only through their ancestors, ghosts and witch doctors. So the

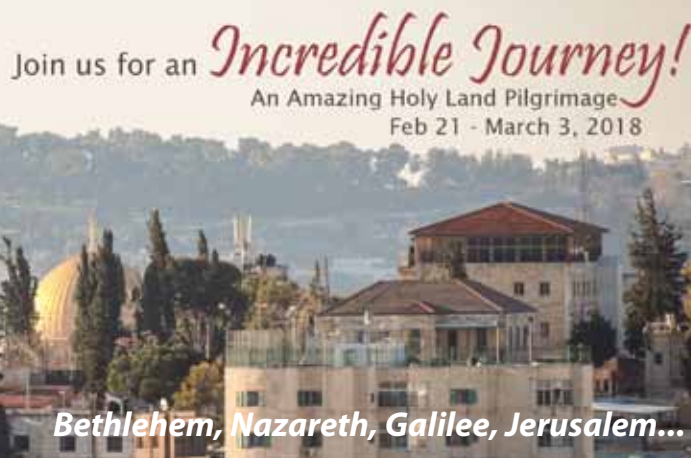


people try to seek power from their dead relatives, but the relationship with ancestors can bring the possibility of blessings and good fortune, but also misfortune, sickness, drought all depending upon how good the relationship they had with their ancestor.

They have no Savior to help them connect with God. Their only hope is for their deceased ancestor to put in a good word for them or purchasing an expensive charm from the witch doctor to help them. We tell them they are separated from God by sin and the Good News that God loves them and sent His one and only Son Jesus Christ to earth. Jesus lived a perfect life, but went to the cross taking the sins of each of us with Him. He died and rose from the grave a victor over death, hell, Satan, sin and all evil spirits. He paid the price so they could have access to God in heaven who reaches out His hand to us through Jesus Christ and says Karibu...welcome, come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden I will give you rest. Jesus paid the price, they don't need to pay the witch doctor for expensive charms. Jesus paid it all.

As the result of church outreach activities during the week, 1263 souls were baptized in the Maswa District. Pastor Tenga, District Pastor Gyunda will have the responsibility for serving them.

We are making plans now for our 2018 trip. Contact Bob Allen at rjallen@prodigy.net with questions or your interest. Check out our website at <http://elct-selvd.org> for more stories and information.



February 21 – March 17, 2018

Limited space available reserve your spot today!
Deadline is August 30, 2017

Experience the Holy Land with all its breadth, beauty and rich biblical history from King David to Jesus. This 11 day Pilgrimage is a once in a lifetime encounter! This tour includes communion at major holy sites with your host Rev. Andrew Abraham, pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Crossville, TN.

Watch video https://youtu.be/4R_DW9SDjUg
Itinerary available on [District website](#)

SHARE YOUR REFORMATION EVENT WITH US

The Mid-South District has established a webpage to serve as "information central" for Reformation-related events and news happening in celebration of the 500th anniversary. If your congregation has an event to be included on the site, please email webmaster@mid-southlcms.com with a link to the event on your church website. Visit the site at www.reformation.mid-southlcms.org to see the great events already listed.



Kids Feeding Kids



VBS Mission Program

By
Trinity/HOPE

VBS Mission Project to share Jesus and food with the hungry students in Haiti!

This Mission Program can be used with any VBS curriculum as the mission project and will enable your children:

- To share the love of Jesus with children in Haiti
- Make a difference in others' lives

Mission Package includes the following:

- Overview video - Click to watch the video or visit our web page (www.trinityhope.org)
- A video for each day of VBS
- Teacher instructions/supply list
- Activities for each day
- Booklets about the children in Haiti
- Customized posters for your church with date and address

The best part is it is all free!

We may even be able to provide a Trinity/HOPE speaker if you are interested.



Reviewed and recommended for consideration by President Paavola and the district staff!



This program was used by several Mid-South District churches last year in a pilot program and it was well received. Read some of the reviews.

*"This is to give you a quick update on how our church received Trinity/HOPE's VBS program. Needless to say it was a **SMASH HIT, HOME RUN**. I had made up my mind to not teach VBS in 2013, but you & God changed my mind.The children were so motivated to give and also the adults. The children still talk about it 6 months later. It was hard for them to understand how some parts of the world lives. How the Haitian children have so little but are happy and love to talk about God, the one and only God and Jesus His Son. Thank you for the GREAT program." — Connie*



"We loved the video and information you provided. It connected our kids to those in Haiti and it was a beautiful thing to see!" — Linda

CONTACT

Denise Gudlin
615.400.4918
trinityhope.dg@gmail.com



"This is all GREAT! I can't think of a time (over 45+ years) that we've had so much great material on a VBS Mission project." — Fredrica

Theme Verse: Matthew 25:35,40 – "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink..." "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

FIRST GRADUATING CLASS FROM LIME

Introducing the first graduating class from the LIME of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. The Mid-South District has been honored to be a support for their efforts to bring college level courses to the Lutheran students in Madagascar – another international mission effort of the Mid-South District. These are the first graduates from the college and will now enter the job market.

The LCMS and Mid-South District were honored in their dedication on the plaque that resides in the school.

The graduation and dedication of LIME was led by their national President, the Rev. Dr Rakotonirina David, the mayor of the city of Fianarantsoa and the vice-President of our Parliament.



The first graduates from Lutheran Institute of Managerial Enterprise (LIME)



Joseph Randrianasolo and Mayor of the city of Fianarantsoa



PETAL PUSHER® OUTREACH BOOTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The 2018 Petal Pushers® Rose Parade Float, entitled *Bringing Christ to the Nations*, provides many opportunities for witness conversations.

Many opportunities to witness one's faith occur in areas where:

- decorating takes place
- floats are staged, the morning of the parade
- floats are viewed by the public, after the parade

For information regarding how to become a Petal Pusher® Outreach Booth Volunteer, contact Ed Stelling kuwaa513@att.net



May trip - Led by Keith Logan. This team visited the northern regions of Haiti. The team was from the Lutheran churches in the Altenburg, MO area. Diane Weber, Pat Vogel, Barbara Wachter, Sally Buerck, Austin Yokley, Kim & Bianca Scholl.



March trip - Led by Keith Logan and Denise Gudlin. The team visited the southern regions of Haiti and saw first hand Hurricane Matthew destruction. This picture was taken at the home of a student that attends a school Trinity HOPE feeds. The team members were Pat Paavola from Christ the King, Ben and Anna Schmunk from Rhythm City, Beckie Rathke from Messiah Lutheran Church in Independence, MO, Dan McEachern and Brenda McAfee from Nashville, TN.

— Meet the three mission teams who recently returned home from Haiti —



June trip - Led by Keith Logan. They visited the west-central region of Haiti and Port-au-Prince. Members of Christ the King in Memphis, TN youth group made up most of the team along with Nell Melgers from Christus Victor in Knoxville, TN. CTK Members - Jonathan and Andrew Welden, Chris Miller, Jasmine Allen, Caleb Andrews, Allison Fowler, Sharon Hyde, Natalie Hyde, Beth Lawrence, and Kendall Laury.



March trip - two District President wives - Pat Paavola and Jean Touloute (Pastor Paul Touloute) in Les Cayes District, Haiti.

Prayer Summary, June 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 June 2017.

PRAYER CONCERNS

MRS. GAYLE BOYSEN (Memphis, TN)
MR. DAVID BRUGGE (Memphis, 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. DONLEY HESSE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)
MR. RICHARD MEYER (Bella Vista, AR)
MRS. MEGAN NAVRATH (daughter of Rev. Carl and Gwen Wenck, Grace, Murfreesboro, TN)
REV. KURT REINHARDT (Stratford, ON)
REV. DAVID RUBKE (Tullahoma, TN)
REV. MERLIN SEPMAYER (Crossville, 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. BILL GERLACH (father-in-law of Rev. Don White, Stuttgart, AR)

Our deepest sympathies to:

The family and friends of Rev. Phil Schmidt (Emeritus, Memphis, TN) who passed away on Thursday, June 1, 2017.

Rev. Nabil and Jean Nour (LCMS 3rd Vice-President) on the loss of Jean's mother on Monday, June 12, 2017.

Rev. Michael Schleider and the congregation at Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla, Alexander, AR after a fire destroyed the original chapel building, their food pantry, and the church/pastor's offices. Continued prayers for strength and support as they rebuild.

CALL UPDATE

ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. Greg Prauner**, Chesterfield, MO, has accepted the call to serve as Associate Pastor at **Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN.**

PENDING: **Rev. Jim Jobst**, Faith Lutheran Church, Magnolia, AR, has been issued a call to serve at Mission Planter and Associate Pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Stuart, FL.

CANDIDATES FROM THE SEMINARY:

Travis Ferguson (STL) – *Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN – Associate Pastor*
Philip Girardin (STL) – *Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Searcy, AR – Pastor*
Thomas Presley (FW) – *Mid-South District (for Jonesboro, AR) – MAL/Church Planter*
Eric Rudsenske (FW) – *Concordia Lutheran Church, Jackson, TN – Pastor*
Adam Woldt (STL) – *The Point Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN – Pastor*
JohnDavid Zischke (STL) – *Mid-South District (for Fayetteville, AR) – MAL/Church Planter*

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS

Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR – Pastor
First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN – Pastor
Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN – Associate Pastor
Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN – Pastor
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR – Associate Pastor
Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Mr. Bret Schroeder**, teacher at **Christ the King Lutheran School**, Memphis, TN has accepted a call to serve as teacher in Houston, TX.

PENDING: **Mr. Charles Russell, Luxemburg, WI**, has been issued a call to serve as Director of Parish Music at **Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, AR.**

Ms. Jennifer Whitely, Hickory, NC, has been issued a call to serve as Director of Parish Music at **Faith Lutheran Church, Collierville, TN.**

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – FOR COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Concordia Christian Academy, Jonesboro, AR – Kindergarten Teacher
First Lutheran Church and School, Fort Smith, AR – Principal
First Lutheran Church and School, Knoxville, TN – Principal and Kindergarten Teacher

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President

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

Angela Fowler
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*District Education Executive for
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Carolyn Metzger
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Julie Tyler
*Administrative Assistant
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Alison Hawkins
*Administrative Assistant
to the District President*

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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 **July 20, 2017** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com