

# Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | August 2017

## Focus for August

### Stewardship

This month we celebrate Stewardship and the unique ministries across the district that congregations use to share their time and talents. If you have stories and photos we invite you to share them with us.

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*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*  
(II Cor 5:20-21)

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



“Okay Pastor, how much does God want me to give?” This question or some variation of it comes up every time a pastor is asked to talk about stewardship. However, it’s the wrong question! Stewardship is NOT about giving money... at least not in the total sense of the word in Christian parlance. Stewardship also includes concepts of traditional Christian missions and ministries that manage the resources of treasure, time and talents God gives to us out of His grace and mercy.

Christian stewardship follows a belief that human beings are created by the same God who created the entire cosmos. A broad concept of stewardship is illustrated in Jesus’ parable of the “talents.” He refers to an amount of money, but by implication uses the word as “abilities” and “time” as well.

Unfortunately most Christians only associate “stewardship” with church budgets and building programs. It’s not unusual, but not completely correct.

In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis writes, “Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given to you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service, you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already.” We really have nothing to give to God that doesn’t already belong to and has been entrusted to us by God. We, on our own, give only one thing to God – our sin and wretchedness; and even this is a work of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 24 begins, “*The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*” This is the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship. We’re simply managers acting on His behalf. What is this – Law or Gospel? Our stewardship relationship regarding the management of everything God has placed under our care defines the connection between us as a person, a family, and a congregation with God.

Stewardship commits one's self and possessions to God (for some). But, more realistically, stewardship, more properly understood, is our privilege to bring our service, giftedness, and treasures to Him and His Household.

St Paul writes: *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."* (Col. 3:23-24) We do, work, and give, not out of obligation, but because of our eternal inheritance and because

Christ Jesus has given it to us out of His grace. Ordering our decision process ("Okay Pastor, how much does God want me to give?") in this way recognizes that God is responsible for the results of His servants. But, He also ensures that the resources necessary for His work will be given where He needs them. Those visible results of faithful ministry, however, may not be evident for years or even generations.

Christian stewardship responds in a particular way to the call to be a disciple of Christ. It shapes and molds our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live.

It allows us to give to the Lord in gratitude for all He has given and done for us. It frees us from being concerned about what we think we need for tomorrow, because God has already provided for that day.

The Bible contains a profound message about the stewardship of the material creation. But our stewardship is much more. It would include a joyful appreciation for our God-given beauty and wonder of nature. It celebrates the respect for human life—shielding life from threat and assault, and making life flourish. It embraces our physical labor, the trades and professions, the arts and sciences in fulfilling our human vocation. Yet, our stewardship of God's gifts aren't passive. We celebrate our own redemption and in the redemption of others. We're also called to be stewards of the Church in being witnesses of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church's essential mission — proclaiming, teaching, and serving as our task. All members of the Church are "living stones" to participate in carrying out the Church's mission. Parents are entrusted with the responsibility to nurture their children in the faith. The universal Church assumes its high calling to be served and equipped by God's means of grace and to "... *proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous Light.*" (1 Pt 2:9)

In the New Testament, two Greek words embody the meaning of our English word



## **Prince of Peace members use their time and talents to benefit others through Apostles Build- Habitat for Humanity**

Recently members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in White House, TN used their time and talents to help finish a Habitat for Humanity House in Gallatin, TN. Members participated in the final clean up of the home in preparation for the dedication and occupancy of the new owner. The church has participated in Habitat for Humanity builds for four years.

“stewardship.” The first word is *epitropos* which means “manager, foreman, or steward.” The second word is *oikonomos*. It also means “steward, manager, or administrator” and occurs more frequently in the New Testament. We get our English word, “economy” from it. St Paul uses the word *oikonomos* in its fullest significance where he sees his responsibility for preaching the Gospel as a divine trust (I Cor. 9:17). He refers to his call from God as the administration (stewardship) of the grace of God for a ministry and of the divine mysteries revealed in Christ (Eph 3:2). Paul portrays God as the master of a great household, wisely administering it through Paul himself as the obedient servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What Paul means is that once we’re called and become part of the body of Christ, the stewardship required of us is not a result of our power or ability. The strength, inspiration, and growth in the stewardship of our lives come from God through the Holy Spirit. This sanctification in us is God’s doing, otherwise our labor is in vain and the growth in stewardship is a self-righteous, human act.

St Paul wrote to the Corinthian congregation, *“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* (II Cor 5:20-21) God’s

favor toward mankind came out of love, that none should be lost. He spared nothing, but gave His Son for us that Christ Jesus may pay for our redemption. That’s stewardship of the mysteries of God.

In response, the grateful Christian hears the words of Jesus say, *“Freely you have received, freely give.”* (Matt. 10:8) But, further, we hear Paul say, *“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”* (II Cor. 9:7) The older gentleman who asked me, “Okay Pastor, how much does God want me to give?,” received the answer from Scripture and a strong suggestion. “Pray. Pray that God would enlighten you as to what He would have you give for the work of His Church.” The older gentleman merely snorted as he spun himself around and walked out the door, “Well, I know what He’s going to say, but I thought He’d cut me some slack!”

God has cut us some slack. Even though the culture seems to be changing, God’s Word does not change. Today’s pastors and congregations are deluged with

the clamour of dealing with a colossal egocentricity, a ‘fantastic me,’ a ‘you-owe-it-to-yourself’ attitude, and ‘must continue to be entertained. The fact that there are some values that are external; yet there are some things we must hold on to for a certain hope for the future. God has not counted our sins against us and promised us a place in His eternal Kingdom. As a person redeemed in Christ, why would we burden ourselves with worry about how we will provide for ourselves... outside of God’s provision? Why would we hold on to the Gospel as our own private possession when we know God means it to be proclaimed for all the world? We are and will remain His stewards of all His manifest gifts in this time, that we may delight in the joy of everlasting life in His household forever.

Your servant in Christ +  
Rev. Roger Paavola




FELLOW LCMS CONGREGATIONS & MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO JOIN ST. PHILIP LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CELEBRATING

*70 Years of Ministry*

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20 AT 3:00 PM  
WORSHIP & RECEPTION  
ST. PHILIP LUTHERAN CHURCH  
51 W. 25TH STREET ~ CHATTANOOGA 37408

RSVP to Jennifer  
(423) 903-6217  
or (423) 267-4475



## FIND A SCREENING NEAR YOU!

Martin Luther The Idea that Changed the World. The rousing adventure story of Martin Luther’s life, following his bold quest for truth—a journey that would reshape the church, and the world.

Two showings are planned within our district. Purchase your tickets now or find the details of each viewing by clicking on their links below. More information can be found on the district website or at <http://reformation.mid-southlcms.org>.

Are you planning a screening or upcoming Reformation event? Please submit to Rhonda at [webmaster@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com).

DATE	PRESENTED BY	VIEWING	TIME
October 4	Peace Lutheran	<u><a href="#">Cinemark Towne Center in Conway, AR</a></u>	6:30pm
October 11	Christ the King Lutheran Church	<u><a href="#">Malco Paradiso in Memphis, TN</a></u> <i>If you are attending the District Pastors Conference in Memphis the week of Oct. 11, you may contact Angela Fowler at the District Office to arrange for the purchase of tickets.</i>	7:30pm

## SHARE YOUR REFORMATION EVENT WITH US

### Have you visited the reformation website?

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](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com) with a link to the event on your church website. Visit the site at [www.reformation.mid-southlcms.org](http://www.reformation.mid-southlcms.org) to see the great events already listed.



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



**The Point, Knoxville joyfully celebrated the installation of Pastor Adam Woldt** on July 9th. This church planted by Pastor Matt Peoples seven years ago, meets in a movie theater and seeks "to connect with the disconnected." Pastor Greg Bearss preached at the service with over 200 in attendance, and Pastor Stephen Skov officiated in the Rite of Installation.

The **Ordination and Installation of Pastor Eric Rudsenske, at Concordia Lutheran Church**, Jackson, TN took place on Sunday, July 23. Those pictured include: *Front Row (L-R)* Rev. Mark Goble, Circuit Visitor; Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola; Rev. Rudsenske; Rev. Chuck Neugebauer, Regional Vice-President; Rev. Bill Stevenson. *Back Row (L-R)* Deacon Jeremy McDonald, representing Grace Lutheran Church, Munford, TN; Rev. Dr. Jim Holowach, Jackson, Mississippi (Rudsenske's home congregation); Rev. Dr. Terry Tieman, TCN; Rev. Rob Harbin, Faith Lutheran, Collierville; and Deacon Jerry Stobaugh, representing Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Oakland, TN.



## PETAL PUSHER® TOURNAMENT OF ROSES PARADE



Imagine being a Petal Pusher® during December 2017, decorating Tournament of Roses Parade floats in Southern California! Participants include youths 13 years and seniors well into their nineties. Many volunteers "urban camp" on floors of local Lutheran churches.

The theme for the 2018 parade is *Making a Difference* and the Lutheran Hour Ministries float, the only Christian float in the parade, is entitled: Bringing Christ to the Nations. Please sign up now to decorate Rose Parade floats: <http://volunteer.petalpushers.org/>.



# REFORMATION 500TH

## Reformation Choral Concert Friday, October 13, 2017 • 7 pm

**University of Memphis Rose Theater**  
(470 University • Memphis, TN 38111)

- Featuring a Choir of Over 75 Voices & Instrumentalists, including Members of the U of M Collegiate Choir, Memphis Chorale Arts & Memphis Symphony Orchestra
- Performances of Both Lutheran Hymns & Bach Classics
- A Stirring Musical Tribute Marking the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation Led by Martin Luther

*Jeremy Warner, Conductor*

**FREE and Open to the Public**

A WEEKEND OF SPECIAL EVENTS WITH THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT, LCMS

## Oktoberfest

Saturday, October 14, 2017

10 AM-2 PM, Immanuel Lutheran Church & School

(6325 Raleigh LaGrange • Memphis, TN 38134)



### A Traditional German Festival Featuring...

- Oompah music from Bob Westbrook & The Edelweiss Band
- German food favorites & beer from Ghost River Brewery
- Martin & Katie Luther costume contest and photo booth
- Live auction of unique themed baskets
- Great activities for kids!

- Bounce House   - Face Painting   - Games
- Magician & Balloon Man   - Chicken Dance Contest

A portion of proceeds from this event will support International Missions of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

**Adult Tickets • \$10**

Includes German meal & 2 craft beers/beverages

**Ages 4-12 • \$5**

Includes meal & beverage

Free admission under age 4

Purchase your tickets ONLINE at:

<http://reformation.mid-southlcms.org/>

Tickets also available on event day at the gate

# CELEBRATING TOGETHER

## DEACONESS HOUSE (NYUMBA YA WADIAKONIA)



Deaconess House (Nyumba ya Wadiakonia) is a mission started by the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese of the Lutheran Church of Tanzania. This home provides shelter, security and a vocational training program for young women with albinism. This is known in the Diocese as Right to Live with Albinism. This specific ministry teaches the young women sewing and life skills. Two deaconesses, Stella Matary and Matrida Sanga care for them in this modest dwelling without electricity or plumbing. Security and shelter is needed for these women because of the threat against the lives of all albinos. Witchdoctors have taught that body parts of albinos are needed to bring good luck. They are at risk of dismemberment or death due to these beliefs.

The women have trundle sewing machines and learn to sew to prepare them to eventually become self-supporting. On our visit at the Deaconess House, each woman introduced herself, giving her name, age, and home village. Some were unaware of their exact age. This is not unusual. Many could have been abandoned at birth. They were proud to prepare and serve

a meal for us and sang a song expressing their sorrow. Their words tell their plight...*"We don't know the fate of our lives. We live in persecution. We live in doubts/worries. We live in difficulties and doubts. We ask the government to help us."*

Mid-South District Mission teams have been supportive of helping the albinos in the Shinyanga who are in a struggle for survival. If you are interested in further information or how to help this ministry, contact Bob Allen at [rjallen@prodigy.net](mailto:rjallen@prodigy.net).

**(Right) Matrida and Stella at the graduation from the Deaconess program and sewing classes**



# LIVING INTENTIONALLY

by Denise Gudlin

In this world of "me, me, me" it is unpopular to acknowledge that God owns everything and He has asked us to be His administrators acting on His behalf. God desires us to be good stewards of all our resources, abilities and opportunities He has entrusted to us. This is hard to do but some-



times in life we will cross paths with others who are great examples living out God's will.

I am reminded of many things John Hall, our ministry's late founder, taught me over the years and all the steps necessary to prepare for a new year. First, go to God in prayer! Use the spiritual gifts God has given you and seek guidance from those with different spiritual gifts.

John was a loving husband to his wife Carol and together they raised two amazing young women. Their daily walk with the Lord was an example to follow. Many times during our work in Haiti when we were faced with a difficult situation or when a decision had to be made, John would always look to Carol because she had the spiritual gift of discernment. We at Trinity/HOPE still look to Carol for her discernment and are confident John is looking down on us from heaven and helping guide our paths to follow God's will.



Back in 1999 John followed God's will to feed one school of 42 children. This past school year God has provided Trinity/HOPE and each of us the opportunity to provide almost 4,000,000 meals that was used to share Gospel of Jesus Christ!!

John always used his resources and abilities to share his personal story and the desperate needs of the children in Haiti. He never missed an opportunity to ask others to help feed them spiritually and physically through Trinity/HOPE. John would say, "God has asked us to feed and FEED them and hasn't told us to stop!"



I can imagine what God said to John when he entered heaven, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." Matthew 25:21



# Prayer Summary, July 2017

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 July 2017.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

**MRS. MYRTLE ARVIDSON** (Mother of Pat Paavola, Mid-South District)

**MR. DAVID BRUGGE** (Memphis, TN)

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

**MRS. TONYA GIERKE** (wife of Rev. John Gierke, Peace, Conway, 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 SEPMeyer** (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)

**REV. CARL WENCK** (Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN)

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

## Our deepest sympathies to:

**President Ken Hennings** (Texas District) and family upon the loss of Ken's father on Thursday, June 29th.

**Rev. Don White** (Stuttgart, AR) and family on the loss of his father-in-law, Mr. Bill Gerlach on Friday, June 30th.

## CALL UPDATE

### ORDAINED MINISTERS

**ACCEPTED:** **Rev. Jim Jobst, Faith Lutheran Church, Magnolia, AR**, has accepted the call to serve as pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Prior Lake, MN.

**Rev. David Riley, Intentional Interim Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Westfield, MA**, has accepted the call to serve as Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Westfield, MA.

**DECLINED:** **Rev. Benjamin Dose, Arcadia, IA**, has declined the call to serve as Associate Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR.

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS

**Athens Lutheran Church, Athens, TN – Pastor**

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

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

### IN THE CALLING PROCESS – FOR COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

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

**First Lutheran Church and School, Knoxville, TN – Principal and Kindergarten Teacher**

# Congregational Mission Commitments

## Mission Commitment Receipts as of 06/30/17 (6 Months)

Anticipated Amount (50% of budget) .....	\$786,572
Actual Receipts .....	<u>799,506</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount.....	\$12,934

## Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (6 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions .....	\$227,352
Allocated to Tanzania .....	12,500
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts) ..	<u>559,654</u>
Total Receipts .....	\$799,506

## Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (6 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 06/30/17 .....	\$799,506
Actual Receipts as of 06/30/16 .....	<u>\$788,177</u>
Over (under) prior year receipts.....	\$11,329



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

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola  
*President*

Angela Fowler  
*Executive Director for  
Business and Finance*

Carolyn Metzger  
*Finance Assistant*

Julie Tyler  
*Administrative Assistant  
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Paul Reaves  
*Executive Director for LCEF Vice President  
and Executive Director for Development*

Allen Piepenbrink  
*District Education Executive for  
Education and Preschools*

Rena McElwain  
*LCEF Communications & Marketing Specialist*

Alison Hawkins  
*Administrative Assistant  
to the District President*

## Contact the Mid-South District

1675 Wynne Road  
Cordova, TN 38016

PHONE: 866.373.1343 / 901.373.1343  
FAX: 901.373.4826

## Stay Connected With Us

ON THE WEB -  
"mid-southlcms.org"

ON FACEBOOK -  
"Mid-South-LCMS"

ON TWITTER -  
"@midsouthLCMS"

## 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 **August 23, 2017** to Rhonda, [webmaster@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:webmaster@mid-southlcms.com)