



The Hope Herald

Newsletter of the 19th Regular Convention
of the Mid-South District LCMS

JUNE 26-28, 2015 || MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

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Welcome

Welcome to the 19th Convention of the Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod! Our theme for this convention is “O God Our Help in Ages Past Our Hope for Years to Come” (Psalm 90).

We pray for God’s blessing on you and all delegates so your leadership glorifies Him, serves His Church, and gives you joy.

We will have a strong mission tone that places before us the urgency and opportunity for bold witness in our world to Christ’s death and resurrection.

As you attend open hearings, consider overtures, absorb details of reports, engage in circuit forums, elect new servants, sing, pray, praise and give thanks – in everything that you do, say and share over the next few days -- may it be to God’s glory and the building up of His Kingdom.



Comfort Dog, Jewel, is on hand Friday & Saturday (9-1) with her handlers Steven & Judy Schoenherr

The Hope Herald is a place to get the news and SHARE your news. If you have anything from your congregation to share with us – successful outreach news, anniversaries, ordinations, milestones, celebrations-there will be a box on the right side of the ballroom at the entrance. We’ll do our best to share it in our daily convention newsletter, *The Hope Herald*.

Dinner & Opening Worship Service

Friday evening Christ the King Lutheran Church (CTK) will be hosting the dinner and Opening Worship Service. The dinner, provided by LCEF, is from 5:45 until 7:15. Buses (Cline Tours) will depart every 15 minutes from the hotel starting at 5:30, until 6:00. A signup sheet for the bus is at the registration table. The buses will be parked at the main entrance of the Hilton. CTK is located at 5296 Park Avenue, if delegates prefer to drive.

The Worship Service begins at 7:30 p.m. and we are honored to have Reverend Daniel Preus, Third Vice President of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod deliver the sermon. Live streaming through CTK (<http://ctkmemphis.com/live-video-streaming>).



Registration Begins

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#midsouthLCMS2015



“official” hashtag for convention

The Mid-South District President



The last 3 years have passed at an amazing speed for President Reverend Dr. Roger Paavola. Paavola, a second-career Pastor, who left 23 years of hospital administration/CEO background for church ministry. Before leaving the hospital career behind he prayed and asked God to give him as many years in church ministry as he had in the hospital. Serving as a pastor with his own church was special, he loved the pastoral ministry and the personal interaction. He left administrative duties to serve God not realizing God was planning to use all his acquired skills in his future serving as district president.

When reflecting on the past 3 years, President Paavola is surprised how his administrative background has come into play during his present role. *"I never thought I would use those (administrative) skills in church business, but there was a need for some administration. The Lord's wisdom and His graciousness has allowed me to have some experience so we can continue to grow and move forward here in the Mid-South District."*

When asked how he's adjusted to this new role, he smiled and said, "it has been a steep learning curve, there are big shoes to fill from Ken Lampe, David Callies and Norm Groteluschen." He has not been afraid to utilize his predecessor's knowledge when looking to guide the district. He put together the Presidents Council, who come together twice a year and look at what has been done in the past and where the district is going in the future; the men offer tremendous advice and guidance. Another insightful step from the beginning was an "Essential Services Survey" which had a strong 70% response. The town hall meetings also lend insightful information. All this input helped forge a direction for resources that were wanted, gave priorities to the budget and lend a vital look into strategic planning based on the answers and input.

A strong, supportive team surrounds President Paavola, starting with his wife Pat of 45 years. She is a major benefit to him now just as she was in the parish. She frequently attends circuit forums, town hall meetings, and congregation visits and has taken her role as First Lady with grace. Her visits to congregations inspired her to re-start the Pastor's Wives retreat, which was met with great success.

At the district office Paavola is surrounded by a strong, talented executive and administrative staff. Each member of the staff is important and deeply appreciated by President Paavola. Their talents and gifts are key to helping him drive the district forward into a bright future.

Continuing the legacy of the foundation of this district, being built to plant churches and find the lost, there are challenges the district faces today. At the high point in 1996 the district had 35,000 members, 131 congregations, 1.8 million in commitments. Now there are 21,000 members, 128 congregations and commitments of 1.6 million. This means the district must make the right decisions to continue to be the resource needed for congregations, Early Childhood Centers and schools. He compares this to Exodus 5:7 when Pharaoh told the Israelites to make more bricks with less straw. The district has had to do more with less.

Supportive staff and individuals throughout the district; who have either stepped up to help the district directly or through the IMPACT program, have raised 1.3 million in last 3 years. Without all these efforts an impossible job would be faced. He thanks staff, volunteers and supporters throughout the district that see the need for what is being done.

A recurring theme is for the Mid-South District to be a positive resource helping congregations become stronger, grow and reach the lost in their community and ultimately be able to plant another church. New tools have been developed by President Paavola. COMPASS and CAR are vital strategic tools congregations can use to analyze and compare themselves to others and learn what areas need attention. The stronger each congregation is individually the stronger the district is as a whole and the more people can be reached.

Looking forward to this 2015 convention, he doesn't foresee any major controversial issues. Reaffirming the church planting, strengthening and recalibrating the deacon program are two significant items and looking at what resources need to be doing. Conventions are important for the minutia of doing the business, for the vision and mission of the district, learning what the district needs to do to be a better resource to schools and congregations and have interactions with Synod.

"I think everyone will walk away from the convention knowing what the plan and vision of the district is going to be, and most important we will walk away realizing as God has blessed us in the years past He will continue to bless us in the years to come, as we work in accordance to His will and the strengthening of His kingdom."