



# MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

## The Cradle, the Cross and the Crown

There was never, nor will there ever be, another person who was a human Child and the Son of God.



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola  
District President

No other man was wounded by Satan, but simultaneously crushed Satan and death. There'll never be another man who was anointed by God to be the Savior of mankind, but was crucified and killed by mankind. Think of God's humility to come from His glorious throne for the sole purpose of suffering and dying in our place. There's no other man who saves others, yet didn't save himself. There's no other who had no sin himself, but became sin for us. There's no other who created the oceans, rivers and seas, and yet under God's just punishment for our sins cried out from the cross, "I thirst."

His mother could hear the cooing of the tiny newborn Boy, with baby-soft skin, but a Child who is God in flesh — Immanuel. The Man, of course, is Jesus Christ; born in a humble stable in uncommon and lowly state. A child's birth usually brings rejoicing. But at His birth, rejoicing was short lived. There He was — the One sent from God for the expiation of our sin. But why was this Child sent as a sacrifice? This is the answer: "For our sins."

Our sin began at conception. Like a small, quiet spring, growing wider and stronger until it becomes a tumultuous sea, sin is the power that reversed the

nature of man — from the image of God to rebellious enemies. Sin destroyed our relationship with God. Sin destroyed a perfect creation — a universe destined to decay and die because of sin's devastatingly evil flood. But in the midst of a sin-filled world came the perfect expiation from sin — the form of a tiny Baby Child, Jesus Christ, in a cradle made of straw meant for animals, but hardly a place for the Son of God.

But this is the truth about this Christ Child. The shadow of the cross never left Him. Because of His willing obedience to carry out His Father's will, the shadow of the cross dominated the quiet scene of the silent night of His birth. As a small infant from the time of evil King Herod, to the Scribes and Pharisees who wanted to get rid of Him, from the agony of His passion and bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane, to an angry crowd that screamed for His blood, Jesus was always faced with a cross, an execution reserved for the worst criminals, when the victim is suspended between heaven and earth, agonizing helplessly for death. No one whispered encouragement to alleviate His pain. No one placed a cloth of cool water on the forehead that steamed in agony.

St. Paul reminds us, "He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). He "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). The wrath of God against every sin of every man, woman and child for all



ages weighed down on Christ's sacred body and wracked pain in His gracious hands. Jesus could have called legions of angels to destroy His executioners. Yet He willingly remained on the cross for our sake. There's only one way to come down from the cross — by the hands of those who carried His body to the grave.

Our sins caused the Son of God to shed His blood and suffer in torment. The debt He paid is one we couldn't pay. Consider the divine, eternal and just wrath against the one sin of disobedience — beginning with Adam and Eve —and we begin to understand the weight of the cross our Savior bore for all the world. Our freedom, our

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# Our rock and salvation



## 25th Biennial LWML Mid-South District Convention

June 22-24  
Chattanooga, Tenn.

For more information, visit:  
[midsouthlwml.org](http://midsouthlwml.org)

Something is in the air! We can feel it in the Mid-South District and it's the sure feeling that "He alone is my Rock and Salvation!" As Christians, we can be confident Jesus will always be there for us, we can count on and trust in Him.

One of the things Chattanooga, our host city, is known for is the nickname, "Rock City." Lookout Mountain is the rock we can see in the distance from just about every vantage point. We count on it being there; it has always been there. But for strength in faith and everlasting salvation, our eyes look upon Jesus Christ, for He truly is our only "Rock and Salvation." He has always been there for us, and will always be there for us!

The convention committees are hard at work preparing for the best convention ever, including acquiring these very exceptional presenters:

**Linda Reiser**, former LWML president (2003-07), Saturday morning keynote speaker

"We have a mission — to be sisters of an all-star team, united in prayer and financial support for missions around the world," Linda said. "LWML is more than a program — we have a purpose. We give when we don't have to. We give because we



Linda Reiser

Jan Struck

want to share that love of Christ with others."

**Jan Struck**, Christian humorist  
Saturday evening banquet entertainment

Jan brings a fresh approach to the journey of faith and uses her sense of humor as she shares her life with fellow travelers and leaves them laughing. Her trust and faith in Christ is her reason to make a joyful noise unto God. An extraordinary talent and humorist, Jan has been known to be "Struck with Laughter!"

We're honored for their presence to share joy, laughter and inspiration. Please join us in Chattanooga for a wonderful weekend with your LWML sisters and brothers in Christ!

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

eternal glory were paid at the Cross of Calvary. Christ's resurrection proved God's satisfaction and our justification in the justice of God's will.

Yet the cross is not the end. St. Paul declares, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). Christ Jesus is the victor! But why? Jesus gives us the answer: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20).

Jesus says there are results that come from His great and joyous exchange. Jesus, true God and yet true Man,

rejoins us to the image of God through the means He entrusted to His Holy Christian Church. In Holy Baptism, we're cleansed from the sins into which we were born and the sins we do. In Holy Absolution, God, through His called ministers, offers His own words of forgiveness for our confessed sins. In the Holy Supper, Christ reaches down to us with His grace to give us His forgiveness, His true body and blood, and the strengthening of our faith unto life everlasting. These are the very means Christ taught His disciples and we celebrate in this generation.

Matthew Bridges' hymn best expresses our certain response: "Crown Him with many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne; Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own. Awake my soul and sing, of Him who died for thee, and hail Him as thy matchless king through all eternity" (LSB #525).

For this new year, don't look in the cradle to find Jesus. It's empty because it served its purpose. Don't look to the

cross on Calvary's ugly hill — salvation's great price is already paid! Don't stoop precariously in the tomb because God's wrath against mankind is already satisfied. Instead, Jesus will be found in the means He gives to us all through His Holy Christian Church.

The cradle brought us the Son of God. The cross gave us the Savior from our sins. But the crown of Christ will give us the final trumpet announcing the glory and majesty of our eternal peace with God in Christ Jesus.

That's why it won't just be a Happy New Year. But rather, it's our joyous and victorious new life with Christ in His eternal Kingdom. "Crown Him the Lord of years, the potentate of time; Creator of the rolling spheres ineffably sublime. All hail Redeemer hail! For Thou has died for me; Thy praise shall never fail throughout all eternity."

So let's celebrate! Celebrate our new year because we truly celebrate our new life in Christ Jesus, our Lord and blessed Savior.

# Faithful support of ministry, LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

## Israel receives district excellence award

By **Rena McElwain**  
LCEF Communications and Marketing Specialist

**T**HE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT is pleased to announce Don Israel as the 2017 Ralph Weiser Excellence in Ministry Award recipient. The award was given to Israel in a surprise presentation on Oct. 29 at his home congregation, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville.

Introduced in 2016, the Ralph Weiser Excellence in Ministry Award recognizes the dedication and ministry-building work of one Mid-South District layperson. The award honors the life and work of the late Ralph Weiser, a long-time

friend of the Mid-South District whose example of leadership, service and faith impacted his congregation and community, as well as ministries across the entire district.

Like the award's namesake, Israel has exemplified service to God's kingdom in numerous ways. Locally, he has been an instrumental leader in Our Savior's efforts to reach more people in the Nashville community with the Gospel, including through a church plant.

At the district level, he shared his business acumen as treasurer of the Board of Directors for nine years and has served as an example of generous support and encouragement for the IMPACT development initiative, further partnering in the ministry-building work of the Mid-South District.



Don Israel is accompanied by his wife, Katherine.

Through his leadership and faithful support of ministry, Israel — with wife, Katherine, by his side — is a layperson who continues to make a lasting impact for the kingdom in his community and across the Mid-South District, and with the Gospel around the world.

Congratulations and many thanks to Don Israel!

# Need help evangelizing?

“If you want to share the love of Christ with the people in your life, *Every One His Witness* is good news for you!” says the Rev. Dr. Mark Wood, director of LCMS Witness and Outreach Ministry. “We talk not only about the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of witnessing but the ‘how to.’”

*Every One His Witness* uses an overall approach to witnessing summarized by the acronym LASSIE, which stands for “Listen, Ask, Seek, Share, Invite and Encourage.” The program teaches witnessing from a Lutheran point of view.

“We don’t burden you with a bunch of scripts and memorization and all those things that make witnessing seem daunting,” Wood said. “Instead, we encourage you to rely on the Holy

Spirit, who guides His witnesses into sharing this Good News with the very people He’s put into their lives.”



The *Every One His Witness* Lutheran evangelism program considers the real-world context in which Lutherans find themselves as witnesses of Jesus Christ. It puts sound doctrine into practical action for sharing the faith with the people whom God has placed alongside His witnesses in their everyday lives.

The *Every One His Witness* core module kit includes one DVD and materials for 12 people. The kit is available from Concordia Publishing House for \$129.99 (plus shipping). Supplemental materials are also available. For more information or to order, visit [lcms.org/witness-and-outreach](http://lcms.org/witness-and-outreach) or call 800-325-3040.

## Congregation mission commitment receipts as of Oct. 31, 2017 (10 months)

Anticipated amount (75% of budget)	\$1,310,953
Actual receipts	\$1,266,192
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$44,761)

### Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$359,024
Allocated to Tanzania	\$20,833
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$886,334
Total receipts	\$1,266,192

### Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Oct. 31, 2017	\$1,266,192
Actual receipts as of Oct. 31, 2016	\$1,293,745
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$27,553)

**OFFICIAL NOTICE**  
**The 20<sup>th</sup> Regular Convention**  
**Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**  
**Memphis, Tennessee**

**Dates:** Thursday, June 28, 2018 (mid-afternoon) to Saturday, June 30, 2018 (mid-afternoon)

**Location:** The Hilton Hotel  
939 Ridgelake Blvd., Memphis, TN 38120; phone: 901-684-6664

**Theme:** "The LORD – Our Rock, Our Fortress, Our Savior" – Psalm 18:2

**Opening Service with Holy Communion:**

Thursday, June 28, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.  
Christ the King Lutheran Church  
5296 Park Avenue, Memphis, TN 38119  
Preacher: *Synodical Representative*

**NOTICE TO ALL CONGREGATIONS**

*Please remember the following deadlines to submit nomination ballots and convention resolutions:*

**NOMINATION BALLOTS FOR DISTRICT PRESIDENT**  
**NOMINATION BALLOTS FOR DISTRICT REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS**  
**NOMINATION BALLOTS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Commissioned and Lay)**

Deadline: **February 28, 2018**

**To be sent to the Mid-South District Secretary**

Rev. John Gierke  
Mid-South District – LCMS  
1675 Wynne Road, Cordova, TN 38016

**NOMINATION BALLOTS FOR DISTRICT SECRETARY**  
**NOMINATION BALLOTS FOR DISTRICT NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**NOMINATION BALLOTS FOR LCMS COMMITTEE FOR CONVENTION NOMINATIONS (Lay)**

Deadline: **February 28, 2018**

**To be sent to the District Nominations Committee c/o Mid-South District President**

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola  
Mid-South District – LCMS  
1675 Wynne Road, Cordova, TN 38016

**REPORTS, MEMORIALS AND OVERTURES TO BE PRESENTED TO THE DISTRICT CONVENTION**

Deadline: **March 31, 2018**

**To be sent to the Mid-South District President**

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola  
Mid-South District – LCMS  
1675 Wynne Road, Cordova, TN 38016

**NOMINATION BALLOTS FOR CIRCUIT VISITORS**

Deadline: **One day before the Circuit Forum**

**To be sent to Each Congregation's Respective Circuit Visitor**

*(Each Circuit Forum will be held at the District Convention or as scheduled by the individual Circuit per Synod Bylaw 5.2.2 [a])*

## Two phases down, one to go!

Built in 1886, Trinity Lutheran Church at the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For several years, the structure has been undergoing restoration that is nearly complete.



The first phase of the restoration, completed in 2016, included major structural repairs, a new roof and a complete restoration of the church interior to its original appearance. The work was made possible through private donations and a grant from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP).

The camp applied for and received a second grant from the AHPP and has completed most of the work on the final phase of restoration — replacing cypress siding and painting the exterior, repairing window sills and frames, and replacing window

screens and screen doors. Work remaining will include installing air conditioning and rebuilding the stone front steps of the church.

When completed, the cost for the two phases of restoration is expected to total about \$58,000. The camp must still raise the final \$3,000 to receive matching funds for the remaining projects.

Donations can be made online at the camp website, [lutherancamp.org](http://lutherancamp.org), or mailed to: Lutheran Camp, 110 Montgomery Trace, Morrilton AR 72110.

## Ready for its first Baptism

### SHARPS CHAPEL RECEIVES FONT

Last October, the Rev. Paul and Dorothy Kritsch presented a pottery bowl to Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Sharps Chapel, Tenn. The bowl serves as a reminder of Holy Baptism as the people come forward for Holy Communion. The rim of the bowl reads: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23).



At that time, Pastor Paul mentioned that it would be great for their new church to someday have a stand which could be combined

with the bowl to make a baptismal font. He explained that baptismal fonts are traditionally eight-sided: Christ died on the sixth day and rose on the eighth. Baptized into Him, we are living the eighth day of a brand-new creation.

On Sunday, Nov. 12, the congregation surprised its pastor with a stand made and donated by a neighbor who is a gifted craftsman.

“I am blessed to pastor a congregation which listens and then also does,” Kritsch said. “Now we are praying for the person whom the Lord is sending to be the first to be baptized in our church.”



## Redeemer, Paragould, has new pastor

Installation of the Rev. Paul Baumann was celebrated at Redeemer, Paragould, Ark., on Oct. 8. Arkansas clergy attending were, from left, the Revs. Brian Pummill, Peace, Cherokee Village; Aaron Neugebauer, St. John's, Lafe; Chuck Neugebauer, regional vice-president; Baumann; Joel Krogen, Hope, Batesville; and Russell Shewmaker, Pilgrim, Jonesboro.

# Lutheran camp schedule in full swing

## Youth: Sign up for senior high retreat

By David Cox  
Camp Director

Kyle Blake, pastor of The Gathering Lutheran Church, Long Beach, Calif., will bring timely messages to the LinkT senior high retreat Feb. 9-11 at the **Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean**. Blake will talk about spiritual warfare based on his work in cross-cultural ministry in Southern California.

The theme of the retreat is “WAR,” based on 2 Cor. 10:3-4: “Though we walk in the flesh we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.”

This will be the second LinkT retreat for the 2017-18 school year.

The LinkT junior high retreat, held Nov. 10-12, brought 100 youth, youth leaders and adult volunteers from 15 congregations in the Mid-South District for a weekend of fun and fellowship, along with music, worship and Bible messages on spiritual warfare.

In keeping with the WAR theme, the junior high retreat included rides in a military carrier truck and a battery of Civil War re-enactors firing a cannon. Special activities for the senior high retreat are still in the works.

Youth leaders from LCMS congregations can learn more and register their youth for the senior high retreat at the LinkT website: [linktyouth.com](http://linktyouth.com). The cost is \$120 per person, but those who register and pay by Jan. 21 receive a \$25 per person discount.

### Crop & Craft Women's Craft Retreat

Women crafters are invited to enjoy a relaxing weekend of fellowship, fun and crafts at the Lutheran Camp Jan. 12-15.

The Crop & Craft weekends are scheduled three times a year. Although



Youth and adult leaders sit in a 5-ton military troop carrier during the November LinkT junior high retreat.

most of the ladies who attend the retreats are scrapbookers, the weekend is for all female artists and crafters, whether it's quilting, jewelry making, painting, photography, knitting, crocheting or any other craft.

The ladies also enjoy fellowship, wine and chick flicks in their pajamas as they work on their craft projects. The camp staff prepares the meals, so there's no cooking or washing dishes.

Informal worship will be held in the historic Trinity Lutheran Church on the camp property Sunday morning.

Some ladies leave on Sunday, while others stay through Monday afternoon. The cost for those who leave on Sunday is \$70. For those staying until Monday, the cost is \$100.

### Summer Camp 2018

Registration is now open for Summer



**LUTHERAN  
CAMP**  
On Petit Jean  
Mountain

To register or for more information about any of the camps, call the camp office at **501-652-6304** or send an email to [director@lutherancamp.org](mailto:director@lutherancamp.org).

Camp 2018 at the Lutheran Camp.

Eight sessions in June and July include camps for children and youth of all ages, from second grade through new high school graduates, with one session for whole families. Other specialty camps include Arts Camp and Voyagers Adventure Camp.

### Volunteers Needed

The camp is also looking for young adults to serve as counselors and general staff. College youth, especially those training for professional church work in the LCMS, are encouraged to apply. Online applications are available at the website of the National Lutheran Outdoors Ministry Association: [nloma.org](http://nloma.org).

The camp is also looking for an experienced cook to lead the kitchen staff during summer camp. Any school cook looking for a summer job is encouraged to apply directly to the camp.

# Our Savior brings events of 1517 to life

The Rev. Lane Reuter, senior pastor of Our Savior, Nashville, is shown beside a replica of the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany, where Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses for academic debate. The door was made by several men in the congregation to commemorate the Reformation's 500th anniversary.

The Oct. 29 celebration also coincided with the 50th anniversary of Our Savior, a daughter mission planted five decades ago by Concordia, the LCMS mother church in Nashville.

Mid-South District President Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola gave the anniversary

message at two morning services on the theme "Living, Serving and Giving," based on Phil. 3:8-14. In the afternoon, Paavola spoke during a Reformation hymn-sing celebration. A video with highlights of Our Savior's 50 years in the ministry of the Gospel was also shared.

A banquet meal for congregation and friends concluded the festive day, with almost 300 in attendance. Each family that attended received a color historical brochure to remember Our Savior's 50 years.

This anniversary event concluded a yearlong celebration of monthly community outreach activities.



# Blessings grow — new members at St. John's!

**By Rev. Duncan Cox**

Pastor, St. John, Fayetteville

The members of St. John, Fayetteville, Ark., celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with a joint worship service with members of Living Savior, Bethel Heights, followed by a German-style potluck.

During the Reformation Day service, two children were baptized and 10 adults were received into membership. After the service, those who had joined St. John in the past 12 months posed for a commemorative photograph.



These new 2017 members at St. John, Fayetteville, celebrated the Reformation's 500th anniversary with other Lutherans in the region.



## Deadline for the March issue is Jan. 15

Digital files, sent via email, are preferred. Email submissions to [lw@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:lw@mid-southlcms.com), or mail via U.S. Postal Service to: **Judy Otto, 150 N. Maury St., Holly Springs, MS 38635**

Our submission deadline is the 15th of each month, two months before publication.



# Reformation Day — in Germany

Hubert L. Dellinger Jr., M.D., a member of Christ the King, Memphis, traveled to Germany to experience the 500th anniversary of the Reformation — which is celebrated as a public holiday in five states in Germany.

He attended an early service presented in English at the famous Castle Church (All Saints' Church, also known as Schlosskirche), where Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses, and where his remains are interred. He also attended a service in German at St. Mary's — a church where Luther often preached, and later enjoyed an evening Fest der Lieder (hymn festival) back at the Castle Church. Dellinger found "standing room only" to be the rule on all occasions.

The many popular events and festivities throughout the day included a medieval fair, tours of Luther's home and a warm welcome with cookies and hot coffee at the International Lutheran Center at the Old Latin School, which was created with funds from the Wittenberg Project, which Dellinger supported.

His German odyssey included several days spent researching his ancestral roots in the vicinity of Oberacker, Germany, where he located the area from which his ancestors emigrated in 1755, read about earlier generations in church records and attended a service in the same church.



▲ The historic Wittenberg town square was *the* place to be during the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

◀ Hubert, left, was joined by cousins Bruce and Holly Dellinger of Jacksonville, Fla., shown here at the Castle Church on Oct. 31 before worship.

**Order Your Free DVD Copy of:**

THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
*The Reformation*

A Celebration Concert

*A performance from October 2017 featuring the Reformation Celebration Orchestra & Choir (including Pastors of the Mid-South District) and the University of Memphis Collegiate Choir*

**To order, email [rmcelwain@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:rmcelwain@mid-southlcms.com) and share your name and address, or call 866.373.1343, ext. 3107. ★ DVD QUANTITY IS LIMITED ★**

