

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | April 2018

Volunteers from around the Mid-South District

April is National Volunteer Month, making it the perfect time to recognize the men, women and young people across our District — and beyond — who regularly give their time and talent in support of ministry.

Thank you volunteers! You may not always be seen but your presence, time and hard work always shines the light of Christ.

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
Acts 20:35 (NIV)

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



Never Forget! We cannot and will not forget to honor volunteers. I'm reminded of volunteers we can relate to in tangible ways. We could not be a church without the dedicated volunteers to do so much for the church. Volunteers are the ones that make our congregations, schools, and ECC's efficient and pertinent for our communities and the sharing of the message of God's grace. One of the States we serve in the Mid-South District is called "The Volunteer State" - Tennessee. Some suggest the nickname refers to the number of volunteers in the War of 1812. Others disagree and point to Tennessean President Polk, who called for 2,500 volunteers to defend Texas against Mexico. Within a week, 30,000 volunteers signed on to defend

the legacy of Davy Crocket, Sam Houston, and Jim Bowie's volunteering at the Alamo. They were all "Volunteers" lest we ever forget.

"Never Forget" was given another boost in our American history, when on March 1, 2008, our nation witnessed another great event in modern US military history. The US Navy launched an amphibious assault ship - the USS New York: 684 feet long, a crew of 360 sailors and 700 Marines, capable of carrying assault craft and helicopters able to penetrate enemy lines up to 600 miles away. Impressive! But what makes the USS New York so different is her superstructure. Her entire skeleton and shell is made from 7400 tons of the steel salvaged from the destruction of the Twin Towers

on 9-11. Fittingly, her motto is: "Never Forget."

"Never Forget" in the Viet Nam era, three of my closest friends volunteered for a belief in our country's cause of freedom. They volunteered, even if the war was unpopular. Their names are now etched on a black granite wall in Washington, DC

because they chose dedication over dissension. Freedom to worship, freedom to strive, freedom to live, and even the freedom to express oneself is what America's all about. We stand strong because we can stand today to worship God without someone shutting down our services. We can stand

because we're led to understand the meaning of sacrifice.

"Never Forget" in Scripture, when God spoke to Moses, telling him to have all of Israel sacrifice a lamb, spread its blood on the doorpost and lintel of their homes, roast and eat the lamb, along with preparing unleavened bread, wine, and bitters. God promised that on the night of this feast, He would send the angel of death over Egypt to kill the first born males of every household and barns that were not covered in the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

God will "Never Forget." That was the first Passover that ultimately led Pharaoh to free the Israelites from slavery. The Eucharist is a demonstration of His great mercy, kindness and grace, where He provides the means by which we are delivered from sin and death. The sacrifice of lambs foreshadowed of the willing sacrifice of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world - Jesus Christ. God's wrath against sin is satisfied. An ancient promise is fulfilled. By Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection we're justified.. A living Christ proved God's acceptance of us all who are joined together in Christ Jesus by the means of grace God offers.

There's an old man who, for over 34 years, would "Never Forget." He faithfully visited a broken down pier on Florida's east coast every Friday night to feed the sea gulls. Every Friday people watched him volunteer to carry a shrimp filled-bucket to the pier. Sea gulls flocked

District's First Pastor Installation Through Specific Ministry Colloquy



On Saturday, March 10, the **Ordination and Installation of Rev. Jerry Stobaugh** was held at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, Oakland, TN. Rev. Stobaugh is the first of several men who completed the requirements for Specific Ministry Colloquy in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Congratulations to Rev. Stobaugh and the members of Holy Spirit Lutheran Church!

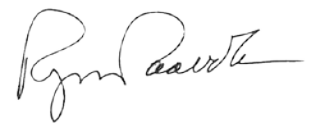
Pictured are (front, L-R) Rev. Josh Willadsen; Rev. Jerry Stobaugh; Deacon and SMP Candidate Jeremy McDonald; (back, L-R) President Roger Paavola; Rev. Mark Goble; and Deacon, SMP Candidate Jim Belles.

around him as he tossed shrimp one-by-one for the gulls to eat. He would Never Forget: In October, 1942, he piloted a B-17 on its way to New Guinea. Somewhere over the South Pacific, he lost radio contact with the base. He ran out of fuel and had to ditch the plane. The pilot and his crew endured bad weather, scorching heat and shark-infested waters. But, within 8 days, they ran out of water and rations. By the 10th day - a Friday - things looked bleak. But a miracle happened: something landed on the pilot's hat - a sea gull. It was an answer to prayers. They grabbed the bird. It meant food! The scraps were used as bait for fishing. The entire crew survived for over a month from

the appearance of that single sea gull - uncharacteristically hundreds of miles away from land - that saved a bunch of grateful men. Until the old pilot died in 1973, he never forgot to feed the sea gulls every Friday night. Regardless of the weather, he made his way on a pier in gratitude to the sea gull. The old man was the former B-17 pilot - Captain Eddie Rickenbacker.

We also must "Never Forget," Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price and offers us the joy and freedom of life everlasting in God's eternal kingdom. Holy Scripture says, *"If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."* Lest we forget the sweetness of freedom in our nation, lest we forget to thank the thousands

of volunteers who make mission and ministry possible in the Mid-South District, and lest we forget the glory of the promise of salvation in life everlasting, today, let us "Never Forget." We honor our volunteers this month, remembering that they serve Christ who lets us live in a nation where we can worship Him without fear. Christians in less-tolerant countries still worship and witness of God's love in Christ Jesus at the risk of their lives. So, what's our risk at volunteering to give witness to Christ? Let us "Never Forget." Thank you Volunteers for your work for the Kingdom of Christ.



Volunteers from Chapel of the Good Shepherd



In a new church which meets in borrowed space, everyone is a volunteer doing what is necessary: cleaning and setting up the worship space; carrying in hymnals, altar paraments, communion ware, processional cross, baptismal font and bowl, keyboard, items for the visitors' welcome table, Good Shepherd picture, coffee fellowship supplies, and coat hangers. After each service, volunteers

carry everything home to store until the next weekend. We also are blessed to have volunteers who play the keyboard and a guitar and another volunteer who heads the prayer ministry. The Good Shepherd has truly blessed our church with people who love to work together!

— Paul Kritsch, Pastor

Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Sharps Chapel, TN

Volunteer Gives Praise Lutheran a Spirit-filled Gift



Dick Mohr, an elder at Praise Lutheran Church in Maryville, TN appears with Pastor Derek Roberts on Feb 11, 2018, the day of dedication of a new, baptismal font that Mohr volunteered to build for the church. Mr. Mohr researched, designed, and built the eight-sided font. He decorated the panels with 8 Christian symbols he carved of out of wood, including a dove, Noah's ark, IHS, a butterfly, Chi Rho, the Trinity symbol, an 8-sided cross, and a shell with a cross and 3 water drops. He also made it possible for the water in the font to appear as "living waters" (John 7:38) using a quiet pump and hidden energy source within the font. On the day of dedication, children gathered around the font to pray that the new font be used to usher more children and adults into Christ's eternal Kingdom. It will be used weekly during the time of Confession and Absolution to help all worshipers remember what God has worked powerfully and graciously for them, namely, forgiveness of sins through Holy Baptism into Christ. It is a priceless gift appearing in the center of the Sanctuary that will be remembered in the hearts and minds of all who enter into the courts of Praise and especially as one passes by to receive the Lord's Supper.

—Pastor Derek Roberts



Dick Nohr and Pastor Roberts (top, left). Font and alter (above). Dedicatation day with children around the font (left)

Mother's Day at Christ the King, Memphis

In the spring of 2011, CTK's chair of the Board of Fellowship, in an effort to encourage inter-generational contact and expressions of faith, approached CTK member Caroline Johnson – known for her fabulous photography – and asked if she would be willing to take photos of members and their moms on Mother's Day. Caroline readily agreed, and the now semi-famous and much-anticipated Mother's Day Photos tradition was born. Often, sons and daughters accompany their mothers to church on that special day, creating the perfect opportunity to record in pictures CTK's families across generations. Caroline, sometimes in concert with her equally talented son Ryan, pose and capture children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren with their beloved mothers and grandmothers. For those who have been availing themselves of this opportunity over the years, it has afforded them a yearly record of happy additions to the family trees, as evidenced by the photos at right.

Caroline lovingly coaxes the subjects to give their best, and then works her magic in the darkroom to produce classic portraiture, free of charge. She emails the finished product to the families so that they can print them, use them as computer wallpaper, or display them in other cherished ways. We are blessed at Christ the King to have talented volunteers willing to give of their time and skills to encourage family bonds.

—Genie Swan



Volunteers - The True Power Behind God's Kingdom

Where would the global Church and all the parachurch ministries be without volunteers? That's a scary thought. More than any other entity in the world, the global Church relies on volunteers to accomplish its objectives...sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout God's Kingdom.

So to all of you volunteers, and as a leader of a mission ministry that relies almost exclusively on volunteers, I want to say THANK YOU.

God has created each of us to serve others out of love. We are His "Plan A" and He has gifted each of us in a unique way so when we come together, we are the full Body of Christ. He relies on each of us. Trinity HOPE feeds over 4,000,000 meals each year to children in Christian schools throughout Haiti. We are blessed to have some of the most dedicated and passionate volunteers that truly believe in what God has called us to do. Very simply, if it wasn't for our volunteers, it is safe to say that literally thousands of children would go hungry every day. More importantly, while these children are being fed a nutritious noon meal for their bodies, they are also receiving a spiritual meal for their souls. Our volunteers are making a difference in the world!

Although the immediate financial rewards for volunteering may be negligible, when we dedicate our time and talents to serve God in His Kingdom, the eternal rewards are great and we will hear the Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!...Come and share your Master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21). What better reward can we hope for?

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..." (Colossians 3:23)

Serving Christ Together –
Keith Logan
Executive Director
Trinity HOPE
615-394-4950



Beckie Rathke, a Lutheran school teacher and volunteer for Trinity HOPE, sharing a story with two young boys at Carrefour school in Les Cayes, Haiti.



"Volunteering to go on a mission trip to Haiti is a life-changing, eternity-lasting experience. The faith of Haitians is beyond explanation to an American. Experiencing it first-hand impacts one's own faith in ways only the Holy Spirit can inspire. Forever grateful I'll be for Trinity/HOPE & I cannot wait to be singing in heaven together with my Haitian Brothers & Sisters-in-Christ! Until then, let's keep sharing Jesus in whatever ways God leads us. Thank You , Father. Amen."
– Beckie Rathke

Associate Pastor Installed at First Lutheran Church

At Sunday's Divine Service (March 18th) Senior Pastor Edward Schmidt **installed Pastor Floyd Smithey as Associate Pastor.** He came out of retirement to serve on a part time basis helping to carry out the mission of First Lutheran Church & School in Knoxville, TN. The members thank God for this faithful servant and pray every blessing upon Him as he serves the Lord among us. May God's richest blessings abide with both Pastor Floyd and Sherrill Smithey.

Here is a link of the installation part of the service; <https://youtu.be/r9WSQ79KxDo>

— Albert B. Collver Jr.



Welcome Rev. James Edward Belles



The **ordination and installation of Rev. James Edward Belles** took place on Sunday, March 18, 2018, at Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN. Taking part in the Divine Service included:

(L-R Front Row) Rev. Mark Goble, Rev. Don Schmidt, President Roger Paavola, Rev. Jim Belles, President-Emeritus Norm Groteluschen, and Acolyte Kerry Weiser. (L-R Back) Deacon Jeremy McDonald, Rev. Clayton Seller, Rev. Shawn Hunze, Rev. Russell Belisle, Rev. Jerry Stobaugh, Deacon Gary Kinne, Rev. Robb Harbin, and Rev. Dan Hawkins

Student Financial Aid Apply Now!

Students who plan to attend an LCMS seminary or university during the 2018-19 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, 2018.

This information may be sent via email to Julie Tyler or by regular mail to: Mid-South District LCMS, 1675 Wynne Road, Cordova, TN 38016

All related forms, including financial aid application, are on the [District's website](#).



Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 02/28/18 (2 Months)

Anticipated Amount (8.3% of budget) \$263,568

Actual Receipts 238,540

Over (under) anticipated amount..... **(\$25,028)**

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (2 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions \$67,395

Allocated to Tanzania 4,167

Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support
(70% of receipts)..... 166,978

Total Receipts \$238,540

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (2 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 02/28/18 \$238,540

Actual Receipts as of 02/28/17..... \$246,585

Over (under) prior year receipts..... **(\$8,045)**

Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean

The early registration discount deadline for summer camp is just around the corner. Parents can deduct \$50 from camp fees by registering their children and paying the fees by April 15. Other discounts are available for siblings, bringing-a-friend and attending more than one session of camp.

In addition to four traditional camp sessions for children and youth, the Lutheran Camp has scheduled four specialty camps:

- Family Camp for whole families.
- Adventure Camp for high school youth and new graduates.
- Arts Camps (one session for grades 5-8, another session for grades 9-12 and new graduates)

Learn more about camp and register at the camp website: lutherancamp.org.



Summer camp is a great way to meet new friends.

MLK 50th Year Remembrances

Dear fellow redeemed, it was 50 years ago this month that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr was in our district to speak up for the striking Memphis sanitation workers. As the nation prepares for a national remembrance of the assassination of Dr. King, I would like to share with you a Lutheran connection to the sanitation workers strike.

Recently, I sat down and visited with William Stewart, Jesse Moore, and Woodley Hunt. In addition to being deaf, and members of Cross of Calvary Lutheran Church, they were Memphis sanitation workers in April of 1968 during the strike. They have shared with me that, unlike today, each home had trash pick- up three times a week. When William Stewart began working as a sanitation worker in 1959, he was paid 95cents per hour. In 1968, all three were earning \$1.75 per hour and had no pension or health plan. All three have shared memories of marching with Dr. King, the signs that read "I AM A MAN," and the assassination. All three are active members of Cross of Calvary Lutheran Church in Memphis.

Recently, all three men were honored with the NAACP Vanguard Award, and a one-time financial gift from the city of Memphis. We thank God for the living history of these men in our congregation.

— Pastor Russell Belisle
Cross of Calvary Lutheran Church
Memphis, TN



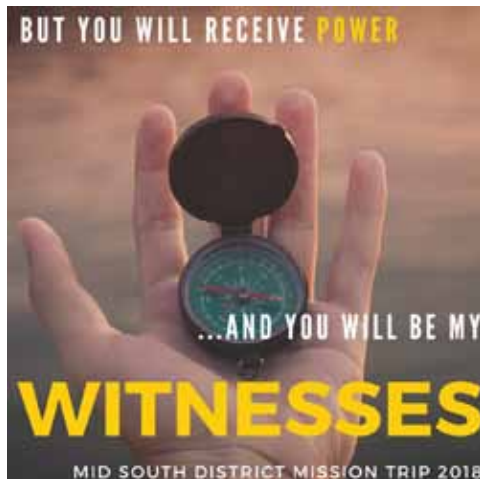
Left to right: Pastor Russell Belisle. Woodly Hunt, William Stewart, Jesse Reid.

Have you registered for our Mid-South Mission Trip to New Orleans yet?

All High School Youth are invited as well as their adult chaperones! Dates are July 22nd-25th and the cost is \$95 for the first 50 people to register, \$120 for everyone after. Bring a few or your whole youth group to New Orleans, joining youth groups from across the district for a mission trip opportunity! This includes food and lodging! Transportation is not included. The theme for this year comes from Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my WITNESSES in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

Register Online Today!

<https://mid-southlcms.org/youth-mid-south-missiontrip/>



LUTHERAN HOUR
MINISTRIES
www.lhm.org

Tennessee District LLL Conference May 5, 2018

Christus Victor Lutheran Church
4110 Central Avenue Pike,
Knoxville, Tennessee 37912

FREE Registration @ 9:30 a.m.
Conference begins @ 10:00 a.m.
*Registration includes lunch,
dinner and child care (under the
age of 12)*

For reservations call before
Friday, April 20, 2018
phone: 865-689-1011

Guest Speaker is Rev. Dr.
Gregory Seltz, *Executive Director,*
*Lutheran Center for Religious
Liberty*

Highlights include: Outreach in
a Digital Age, Rachel Legoute,
LHM-Liberia Update



[Flyer and registration
information available on
district website](#)

Lutheran Children's Camp June 18-22

Camp Clark Williamson in Humboldt, TN is the site for Lutheran Children's Camp, which is coming up June 18-22 (Mon.-Fri.). The camp is open to kids in grades 3-7.

Camp details and the application are coming soon! For now, please make a note on your calendar and start spreading the news in your congregation or school.

For more information on Lutheran Children's Camp, feel free to contact Ellis Winter at ellis_winter@yahoo.com or (901) 373-4486.



Get Ready for a Great Early Childhood Educators' Conference This Summer!

This year's Early Childhood Conference will take place July 16-17th. Many great activities and workshops are planned around the theme "Real. Present. God" (from Psalm 46:10-11). Early Childhood Educators should expect to receive their registration materials in mid-April.

Prayer Summary, March 2018

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 March 2018.

PRAYER CONCERNS

REV. PETER AVE-LALLEMANT (Fairfield Bay, AR)
MS. SHERRY COSTELLO (secretary at Trinity, Pine Bluff, AR)
REV. JOHN EASTERLING (Mountain Home, AR)
MRS. PAT ELLIS (Memphis, TN)
REV. KEITH ENKO (Hermitage, TN)
MS. SARA FEURESTEIN (daughter of Rev. Donley Hesse, Mena, AR)
MRS. NANCY HERD (wife of Rev. Cliff Herd, EM, Chattanooga, TN)
REV. DONLEY HESSE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)
MRS. VALERIA MARCH (mother-in-law of Rev. John Gierke, Conway, AR)
MR. RICHARD MEYER (Bella Vista, AR)
MRS. MEGAN NAVRATH (daughter of Rev. Carl and Gwen Wenck, Grace, Murfreesboro, TN)
REV. DAVID RUBKE (Tullahoma, TN)
REV. MERLIN SEPMEYER (Crossville, TN)
REV. GORDON SMITH (Morristown, 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)
THE MOTHER OF MS. MICHELE LAYNE (ECE Director, St. John's, Fayetteville, AR)

Our deepest sympathies to:

The family and friends of Marcia Coates (Secretary at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Olive Branch, MS) at her passing on Sunday, March 25, 2018.

The family & friends of Mr. Glen Goeres (former Education Exec. For Central Illinois District) at his passing on March 21, 2018.

The family & friends of Mr. William March (father-in-law of Rev. John Gierke, Conway, AR) who passed away on March 27, 2018.

CALL UPDATE

ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. Philip Girardin, Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Searcy, AR**, has accepted the call to serve as Pastor at St. Paul's, Reedlyn, IA and Immanuel, Klinger, IA.

DECLINED: **Rev. Clayton Sellers, Faith Lutheran Church, Collierville, TN**, has declined the call to serve as pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Cortez, CO.

PENDING: **Rev. Andrew Smith, Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN**, has received a call to serve as pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Enid, OK.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor
Mid-South District – Executive Director for Missions and Ministry

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Mr. Todd Baringer, Principal at Immanuel Lutheran School, Memphis, TN**, has accepted the call to serve as Principal at Prince of Peace Lutheran School, Carrollton, TX.

PENDING: **First Lutheran Church and School, Knoxville, TN**, has issued a call to **Mr. Joel Rachow, North Branch, MI**, to serve as Principal.

Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN, has issued a call to **Mr. David Topp, Houston, TX**, to serve as Principal.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – FOR COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Belvoir Christian Academy, Chattanooga, TN
– Principal

First Lutheran Church and School, Knoxville, TN
– Principal

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



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
President

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

Angela Fowler
*Executive Director for
Business and Finance*

Allen Piepenbrink
*District Education Executive for
Education and Preschools*

Carolyn Metzger
Finance Assistant

Renaë McElwain
LCEF Communications & Marketing Specialist

Julie Tyler
*Administrative Assistant
for Missions and Education*

Alison Hawkins
*Administrative Assistant
to the District President*

Contact the Mid-South District

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Cordova, TN 38016

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FAX: 901.373.4826

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"@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 April 23, 2018 to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com.