



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN



and recount the deeds of the LORD.”

That belongs to us!

Let’s face it. The words are from a man who isn’t facing reality. The world, the devil and even our own sinful flesh say, “You fools! Everyone’s going to die! How dumb. No one — zero, nada, zippo, zilch — gets out of here alive! You can read the psalm all you want, you fool, but you’re going to die.”

We as Christians cannot disagree. We know human history is filled with the evidence: not many have made it out alive.

Satan the tempter, who lied to Adam and Eve, now stands ready to persuade us, “You foolish sinner! Sinners *all* die. Go ahead, quote the psalm all you want, but you know you’ll breathe your last someday.”

So doubt comes from Satan, the world and our own weak flesh. This is a real part of our human existence. But God’s Word says, “I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.” Is the psalmist on something? Is this one of those smiley faced cartoons of hyper-optimistic words of a fool?

Actually, none of those accusations are true. The psalmist knows real doctrine and Scriptural truths. The Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, teaches that there are two deaths. One is the separation of body and soul in physical death. Everyone will experience it. Jesus, Abel, the thief on the cross and lots of our loved ones all did.

By Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President



Next month, throughout Christianity people will thrill at the sounds of victory! You will be greeted with the familiar sound, “He is risen!” We reply, “He has risen indeed!”

Like a wave of the sun rising over a new day, on April 1, country after country, congregation after congregation — we’ll celebrate Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God who died on the cross after paying the eternal price for the sins of the world, and rising on the third day for our justification before God!

Easter is the pivotal point of history. No other religion claims a crucified and risen Savior. But while we

proclaim it with joy, this year’s Easter falls on April Fools’ Day, and skeptics will say, “You fools! Coming back to life is impossible.”

But faithful pastors and the whole company of believers will proclaim the resurrection of the crucified Christ. He gives us the foundation of our Church’s doctrines. He’s the One who alone could generate the response, “He is risen indeed!”

So now what? What’s next? What will be the next Easter response from the next person you greet, after we say, “He is Risen!”?

There is a new response — one that comes from Holy Scripture. It’s a declaration we can use today and every day hereafter. It’s what Christianity is all about. It comes from Ps. 118:7:

“I shall not die, but I shall live,

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FOOLS

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The other death is — simply put — Hell: everlasting condemnation, eternal separation from God. Anyone whose name is not recorded in the Book of Life faces eternal torment.

“Be faithful unto death,” Jesus said, “and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death” (Rev. 2:10-11).

Jesus asked sorrowing friends, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26).

“Yes I do,” says the psalmist. “Yes I do!”

By the gift of faith, the “fools of God” can assuredly declare, “I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.”

Think about the deeds of the Lord. The Great I AM said, “Let there be light,” and there was light! God spoke and the universe was created at his Word. Stars in their patterns, planets that wander around the sun, gravity, momentous mass: quantum astrophysics declare it, but God did it. Waves of water or waves of grain;

grapes that cluster or turn into wine; wheat that’s ground and made into bread; beasts on the land and all things visible and invisible. The Word spoke and man is. Because of all of God’s grace, you and I exist. We live and move and have our being.

These are just some of the beautiful deeds of the Lord! But on top of that, think of His redemptive deeds. The psalmist tells how He came down from heaven and became flesh to dwell among us. The Lamb of God shed His blood to take away our sins. The great high priest, Jesus Christ, opened the Holy of Holies, covered with His own blood to atone for our unrighteousness. But God Almighty raised His Son from the dead in flesh so that all human flesh that is joined together with Him by God’s means of grace will most certainly be raised to life everlasting. Jesus said, “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19).

Yet even today, the same God who led His ancient people to the Promised Land and fed them on their journey also leads, guides and feeds us on our pilgrim journey. He feeds us on the Bread of Life and gives us drink from



I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord.”

Ps. 118:7

the cup of Thanksgiving to gladden our hearts in His divine peace. Unlike all the world’s religions, Christianity today is alive and well because we are founded on a living God, a faithful and loving God, a gracious God who is not dead. The tomb couldn’t hold Him. Sin and death couldn’t keep Him wrapped up. Jesus Christ is no longer dead. He is alive. He is risen.

Just as for all of the faithful who have gone before us, the deeds of our Almighty Lord accomplished the undeserved and incomprehensible act of mercy that we may be His own forever. We tell this mystery to our family and friends in the Good News: Our sins are forgiven. We

shall live forever.

We don’t worship a created idol or a sacrificed beast. We can declare in confidence, “I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.” We worship the Lord Jesus Christ who was made to suffer and die, but is no longer dead.

He is alive! He is risen!

Have a blessed and joyous Easter and join me as a fool for the Lord.

Shortened Luther movie now on Netflix

A one-hour version of “Martin Luther: The Idea that Changed the World” is now available on Netflix ([netflix.com](https://www.netflix.com)), the popular streaming service, and will be offered for two years. The full-length film premiered last year.

“We worked hard to retain the theological core of the film in the Netflix edition,” said Mike Trinklein, the film’s producer.

“Netflix is very selective, adding just 50 new programs in January,” he noted. “‘Martin Luther’ is one of just two documentaries to be added.”



Funded by Thrivent Financial, the film dramatizes the events that shaped Luther and examines the questions he wrestled with. Included are insights and commentary from LCMS theologians and historians.

Because Netflix “watches viewership levels closely ... if ‘Martin Luther’ does well, it could lead to similarly themed productions going forward,” Trinklein said. The streaming service also reaches audiences worldwide, providing programs with subtitles in a range of languages.



A DVD of the full version is available for \$17.92 from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and \$19.99 from [shop.pbs.org](https://www.shop.pbs.org). Shipping charges may apply.



Also available is a **six-week Bible-study package** with discussion topics, handouts, related readings and leader guides — as well as a DVD of the full-length film — for \$75 from [NewLutherMovie.com](https://www.NewLutherMovie.com).



For more information about “Martin Luther: The Idea that Changed the World,” visit [NewLutherMovie.com](https://www.NewLutherMovie.com).

God does not change

By Julie Keck

Media/Marketing
LWML Mid-South District

MARCH is such an unpredictable time for weather: ice storms can blanket the area or warm temperatures can make the tulips come up. Spring weather changes day to day, week to week. But no matter what happens with the weather, we know that God does not change.

In my children's Bible class, each week we learn about an attribute of God. A recent attribute we learned is that God is immutable. According to the *Zondervan Bible Dictionary*, "Immutability" is "the perfection of God by which He is devoid of

all change in essence, attributes, consciousness, will, and promises."

God does not change! Malachi 3:6a (NIV) says "I the LORD do not change."

I really like this additional sentence in the Bible dictionary that says "No change is possible in God, because all change must be to better or worse, and God is absolute perfection."

In this constantly changing world, it is awesome to know that God does not change — He is our rock!

25th Biennial Mid-South District Convention notes

Speaking of our rock, the district board is looking forward to seeing



you at convention under the theme: "He alone is my rock and salvation." Ps. 62:2 (NIV).

The weather should be delightful in Chattanooga June 22-24! Register by April 16 and take advantage of the early registration discount. The registration form can be found at midsouthlwml.org and in the January 2018 issue of *League Letter*.

Come join other Lutheran women in mission and see what our changeless God has for us to do!

DMin program grows at CTSFW

Improvements to the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSFW), continue to bear fruit. The change to a hybrid format of online learning and traditional classroom teaching led to eight pastors earning the degree in 2017, which is more than in any year in recent memory.

"Students are able to work effectively on their coursework with minimal interruption to their ministry commitments," explained the Rev. Dr. Gifford A. Grobien, director of the DMin program. "Having a concrete project in the works from the start allows them to make steady progress. Because of this we're seeing timely graduations."

Students in the DMin program can expect courses to last 10 weeks, with one residential week every quarter in which they come to campus to learn. Each course meets for three hours a day during that week, allowing students to take one or two courses and still only attend classes on campus for one week per term. Participation in online assignments includes discussion boards



and video lectures, occurring either before or after the residential week.

Concentrations in the DMin program are practical and applicable to the Office of Holy Ministry. Students choose between Pastoral Care and Leadership, Teaching and Preaching, or Mission and Culture. There is no annual deadline as the program has rolling application reviews, and enrollment that makes it possible for pastors to balance their studies with their ministerial duties.

For more information about the program, visit ctsfw.edu/D-min. If you have additional questions, email DMin@ctsfw.edu or call 260-452-2143.

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of Dec. 31, 2017 (12 months)

Anticipated amount (100% of budget).....	\$1,573,144
Actual receipts	\$1,558,963
Over (under) anticipated amount..	(\$14,181)

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$442,689
Allocated to Tanzania	\$25,000
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$1,091,274
Total receipts	\$1,558,963

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Dec. 31, 2017	\$1,558,963
Actual receipts as of Dec. 31, 2016	\$1,607,925
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$48,962)

Breaking out of the box

(An Easter recommendation)

By Rev. Charles Neugebauer
First Vice-President, Region 2

Once heard a preacher give what I thought was a very cool illustration. He said that a crocodile will only grow as big as the container or box it finds itself in. Small box, small crocodile; move the same crocodile to a bigger container and you get a bigger crocodile, but keep him in the small box and he will stay small.



I googled a question about that illustration just to make sure it was true, and sure enough it turns out it isn't at all true. The preacher was misinformed. Put a little crocodile in a too-small box and yeah, after a while he won't grow bigger than the box. He will die because he won't eat, because he can't move. That's not cool, that's cruel ... sigh.

It would have made a great illustration for this Easter message if it had been true. Maybe it still is.

Many people I meet are dying inside because they are living in too small a box; and that's not cool, it's cruel. Is

that you? Perhaps the box that has been imposed upon you by yourself or others over the years is really way too tight, too small, too confining. You can't move so you are spiritually starving to death, boxed in by guilt, fear, broken promises, past mistakes, bad decisions, a bad family upbringing, harmful habits, painful memories.

Imprisoned within your labeled box, you stay small because you think small and feel small, because that's all you know.

But no April fooling: in contrast, Easter shouts to every one of us, no matter who we are and what we've been through: "Alleluia! Christ is risen."

To sin, death and the devil's attempts to box us in, our Lutheran churches laugh and sing: "See you later alligator; after awhile crocodile!"

Easter proclaims the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, and His rising from the grave changes everything. The box that could not hold Jesus confounds your labels, expands your expectations and knocks down the walls of every too-small box of those who trust in Him for life and salvation.

Jesus burst forth from the tomb He was boxed in on Easter Sunday and proclaims to all of us who celebrate that fact:

"I am the resurrection and the life.



Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die." **John 11:25-26**

Jesus proclaimed that he came to bring you life; abundant life, not just someday when you die, but everyday while you live.

So no more small-box living! Now — today — is the time to stop hiding who you really are; stuck in whatever restrictive little box you have been living within. Hide yourself instead within the circle of the unlimited, unconditional, unmerited, overwhelming mercy and grace of God.

Burst out of your box! Jesus has risen! He has risen indeed! And by His grace — read this carefully now — you, by faith, have also already risen indeed.



Families in Carmelia, Guatemala, harvest, sort and package Eco-Palms.

As Palm Sunday approaches, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) reminds congregations of its Season of Hope campaign for Lent, which features the annual offering of EcoPalms for use on Palm Sunday.

On Palm Sunday, wave Eco-Palms and deliver hope for the hands that harvested them! LWR has partnered with the University of Minnesota Center for Integrated Natural Resources & Agricultural Management to gather and sell palms sourced from farmers in Mexico and Guatemala who grow them in a

socially and environmentally just way.

The farmers who harvest, sort and package Eco-Palms are paid fairly for their work and use harvesting methods that protect the environment — and their future livelihoods — so they can escape the cycle of poverty.

Visit lwr.org/palms or call 651-487-7189 to place your order! You can also download a bulletin insert and children's activity sheet to share with your congregation.

Eco-Palms are delivered the week before Palm Sunday.

The Holy Bible on finding peace

- ▶ “Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.” **Ps. 119:165**
- ▶ “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
Phil. 4:6-7
- ▶ “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” **Matt. 11:29**



- ▶ “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” **John 14:27**
- ▶ “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”
Col. 3:15
- ▶ “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”
Rom. 15:13
- ▶ “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”
1 Peter 5:6-7

THE GOSPEL IS SIMPLE, BUT THE WORLD IS COMPLEX.

How do we share the Good News of Jesus in today's world?

Every One His Witness™
equips Lutherans to witness.

1 Complete the core module kit available through CPH.

2 Visit the website: everyonehiswitness.org to explore the vast array of resources available.



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod
Witness & Outreach Ministry

lcms.org/witness-outreach
LCMSE1HW

Deadline for the May issue is March 15

Digital files, sent via email, are preferred. Email submissions to 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.



How will **YOUth** serve this summer?

Find upcoming Servant Event opportunities and resources for youth at lcms.org/servantevents.

LCMSServantEvents

Foundations of the Reformation

The Crusades were a series of nine military expeditions which sought to recapture Jerusalem and other sacred Christian places from the Muslims. They were formally launched by Pope Urban II in the late 11th century to help the Byzantine Empire against the Seljuk Turks. Soon, however, the Holy Land became the primary objective of the crusaders, many of which weren't led only by noble motives, but economic, political and social as well. Listed here are nine crusades to the Holy Land between the 11th and 13th centuries.

The information for these pages was reprinted with permission from historylists.org.

First Crusade (1096-99)

The First Crusade was launched after Pope Urban's call to help the fellow Eastern Christians against the Muslims. Conquered lands were supposed to be returned to the Byzantine Empire but after capturing Jerusalem in 1099, the leaders of the crusade divided the territories among themselves. They created the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Principality of Antioch, County of Tripoli and County of Edessa, and established themselves as the rulers of the newly formed crusader states in the Holy Land.



Second Crusade (1147-49)

The second military expedition to the Holy Land was called for by the Church to recapture the County of Edessa that fell to the Muslims in 1144. Two kings, Louis VII of France and Conrad III (in portrait above) of Germany, decided to lead the crusade. One year later, they laid siege to Damascus, but after failing to capture the city, the German king decided he had enough and left the Holy Land. His French counterpart soon followed his example and the Second Crusade came to an end, failing to achieve anything.



Third Crusade (1189-92)

Also known as the Kings' Crusade because as many as three European kings participated, the Third Crusade was launched after the fall of Jerusalem to the Muslim leader Saladin in 1187. However, Frederick I (Barbarossa) of Germany died on the way to the Holy Land, while Philip II soon departed for France due to conflicts with Richard I of England. The latter won several notable battles but failed to recapture Jerusalem. Before returning to Europe, however, the English king managed to negotiate a free access to Jerusalem for Christian pilgrims.

Fourth Crusade (1202-04)

Unable to cope with the loss of Jerusalem, Pope Innocent III energetically preached for crusade. He succeeded in raising an army of crusaders who, however, never made it to the Holy Land. On their way to Jerusalem, they captured the Adriatic city of Zara for Venice and shortly thereafter got involved in the struggle for the Byzantine throne. Instead of recapturing Jerusalem as the Pope hoped, the Fourth Crusade ended with the Sack of Constantinople and formation of the short-lived Latin Empire on the conquered Byzantine territories.



Fifth Crusade (1217-21)

Despite the infamous failure of the Fourth Crusade, the Popes continued to preach for military expeditions to the Holy Land. Pope Innocent's successor Honorius III managed to convince Andrew II of Hungary and Leopold VI, Duke of Austria, to take up the cross and lead the expedition. However, they chose to start their campaign in

Egypt. In 1219, they captured the port of Damietta and were offered all the holy cities in return for withdrawing from Egypt. Encouraged by the success, the crusaders refused, which proved to be a mistake. The march to Cairo failed and the crusaders were forced to return home without capturing either Egypt or the holy cities.

Ninth Crusade (1271-1272)

The last in the series of military expeditions that sought to recapture the Holy Land from the Muslims was launched by Prince Edward of England, who also took part in the Eighth Crusade. After the French king's death and the departure of the French crusaders, the English prince decided to launch his own expedition. In 1271, he landed in Acre and tried to win support for his cause; but lack of interest and news from England about his father's illness prompted him to return home. With Prince Edward's departure, the attempts of the Christian Europe to capture the Holy Land finally came to an end.

The People's and Children's Crusades

In 1096 a People's army, consisting mainly of inexperienced and poorly equipped peasants, preceded the First Crusade. However, it didn't stand a chance against the Muslim forces and was destroyed before the main army arrived to the Middle East.

In the early 12th century, several thousand children also set out for the Holy Land. The idea was that the knightly army failed to capture Jerusalem and other holy places due to impurity, and that children would succeed with their innocence. Many, however, perished from disease and hunger before reaching the Italian ports, while others were sold into slavery. Only a few managed to return home.

From Rev. Robert Portier, pastor St. Paul, Sevierville, Tenn.; Smoky Mountain Bible Institute:

This is a very brief summary of some 200 years of church-related history that has a very bad reputation these days. But what's missing from the narrative is the fact that many Christians were misguided into sacrificing much — even, in many cases, their lives — for at best dubious and mixed motives of church and political leaders. This in no way diminishes the dedication and service of the saints of that era.



Sixth Crusade (1228-29)

The Sixth Crusade was a major success for the crusaders despite having saw little action. At the same time, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederic II, who led the campaign, was at the time under excommunication. Shortly after arriving to the Holy Land, Frederick II entered into negotiations with the Egyptian sultan, who agreed to cede Jerusalem, Nazareth, Bethlehem and other holy cities to the Christians.

Seventh Crusade (1248-54)

The Seventh Crusade was launched by the French king Louis IX (in portrait below) who decided to recapture the Holy Land by conquering Egypt first. Just like the leaders of the Fifth Crusade, Louis IX succeeded in capturing Damietta, but he failed to capture Cairo. In addition, he was taken captive while trying to return to the port of Damietta. A ransom was paid and the French king was released. But as he prepared for a campaign to the Holy Land, he received a letter that his mother died and returned to France.

Eighth Crusade (1270)

In 1270, the French king Louis IX decided to give it another try and launched his second crusade. But rather than the Holy Land or Egypt, this time he chose to start his campaign in Tunis. However, disease broke out among the troops shortly after landing and the French king, who got ill himself, died shortly thereafter. His brother, Charles of Anjou, who arrived one day before his death, immediately entered into negotiations with the Caliph of Tunis to ensure safe departure of the crusader army.



Gear up for arts and action at Lutheran camp

By David Cox

Director, Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean

“Hooked!” is the theme for summer camp 2018 at the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean.

The theme is taken from Matt 4:19:

“And he (Jesus) said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”

At daily Bible studies, campers will learn more about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Most of the camp sessions are the same as last year, but the camp is adding one new session to the schedule. Building on the success of the first Arts Camp in 2017, the camp is adding a second Arts Camp for older campers.

The first Arts Camp, for campers entering grades 5-8 in the fall of 2018, is July 15-20. The second Arts Camp, for those entering grades 9 and above, is July 22-27.

The Arts camps are a joint venture of the Lutheran Camp and the Little Rock School of the Arts, a ministry of Christ, Little Rock.

The classes will be divided into three broad areas: visual arts, performing arts and literary arts. Most of the instructors are professional artists, musicians and writers. Although the specific courses have yet to be set, they are expected to be similar to last year.

For visual arts, the projected schedule includes pottery, drawing, painting, printmaking and found-object sculpture. Performing arts includes voice, guitar, percussion, drama, dance; and literary arts includes poetry, story writing, journaling.

The Arts camps will also include traditional camp activities including hiking, swimming, large-group games, daily Bible studies and nightly campfires.

Six other summer camp sessions are scheduled, with traditional camps for students entering grades 2-10. But younger and older students aren't being left out.



2018 Camp Schedule

- ▶ June 10-15 Trailblazers (grades 5-8)
- ▶ June 17-22 Explorers (grades 2-4)
- ▶ June 24-29 Adventure (grades 9 & above)
- ▶ July 1-4 Pathfinders (grades 2-4)
- ▶ July 8-13 Voyagers (grades 7-10)
- ▶ July 15-20 Junior Arts Camp (grades 5-8)
- ▶ July 22-27 Senior Arts Camp (grades 9 & above)
- ▶ July 29-31 Family Camp

Grades are for the 2018-19 school year



▲ High school campers prepare to rappel off Dardanelle Rock during Adventure Camp 2017.

◀ Daniel Bodemann, singer, songwriter, and instructor at the Little Rock School of the Arts (and a pretty funny guy) leads a music session at Arts Camp 2017.

Adventure Camp is for high school students and new graduates. Family Camp is for whole families, with most activities geared toward children too young for regular camp sessions.

More details, a fee schedule and on-line registration information can be found at lutherancamp.org. Parents can save on fees by taking advantage of early registration and sibling, bring-a-friend and multi-session discounts.

High school students are invited to apply to become counselors-in-training, who can serve one or two weeks, working alongside full-time staff to assist at camps for younger children. Students entering grades 9 and above can request an application by emailing the camp office: director@lutherancamp.org.

To register or for more information, call the camp office at 501-652-6304 or email director@lutherancamp.org