

*Each candidate was asked to describe the challenges, opportunities and priorities that face the Mid-South District over the next five years and to limit their answers to 300 words or less.*

Rev. Andrew W. Toopes response —

“The challenges I see for our district are the same ones for our church body. Shrinking church attendance, shrinking dollars to carry out ministry and an ageing church that is focused on the past. All three of these challenges can be met with churches that bring a positive Gospel message and that are focused on the communities around them. You can have the best message in town but if you don't take it to the people it really makes no difference. In the place of praying for God to bless what we are doing maybe it is time to pray that God lead us to what He is blessing in our neighborhoods.

The opportunities around us are endless. With ever increasing numbers of immigrant populations around us we have the opportunity to show and tell of the love of Christ. We need to meet the needs of young families with affordable Christian child care. We need to take advantage of the skill and wisdom of our senior adults to offer programming that appeals to the senior population across our district. We have the opportunity to support our Lutheran Schools as they reach out to families who would not normally be able to afford Christian education.

Finally, I see my top two priorities as District president, the financial health of the district and its congregations. This is where I see the need to change the District President position to a part time position. Second, the serious effort to encourage all the churches of the district to be the very best at the ministry they do in their community. From the pastor to the oldest and youngest in the church to get out into the community and be a light to a very dark world.”