

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | July 2018

July's Focus:

Veterans and 2018 Mid-South District Convention

This month we focus on the veterans in our congregations and communities and are excited to share your stories and photos of how the congregations celebrate and appreciate these special people across the Mid-South District.

We also are including the coverage from the 2018 Mid-South District Convention that took place the end of June.

*Thank you to all
of the veterans who
served and their
families.*

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



Real Freedom

One of the most memorable fireworks displays I've ever seen was during a summer vicarage in Thunder Bay, Ontario. For some reason, the residents delayed their usual July 2 Independence Day and had city-wide fireworks on July 4. Thunder Bay is in a large cove on the north shores of Lake Superior, encircled by high rock cliffs and a huge rock island protecting the bay. Thunder, or any loud noise, seems to echo for several minutes as the sound bounces off the water and rocks in the bay.

On this particular Fourth of July, the entire fireworks display was in the harbor off Thunder Bay, amid another festival - The Tall Ships of the World -

huge sailing ships with masts towering high into the night sky. Citizens of Thunder Bay were invited to tune their car radios to one of the local radio stations, where a narration and music syncopated the rhythm of a spectacular display of fireworks. The thundering booms of the fireworks echoed for several seconds afterward. The display's finale was Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," when everyone knew the canon shots were coming from Tchaikovsky's thrilling genius.

Just as Canada celebrated its freedom as an independent sovereignty, and Tchaikovsky celebrated a freedom from distant shores at earlier times; this month our nation celebrates

a freedom declared, won, and fought for over the centuries by our country's veterans. Our nation's Declaration of Independence concludes with the words, "And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Almighty God, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." The signers of the Declaration of Independence drew a line in the sand: We, as a nation, are willing to place everything we have on the line for our freedom.

In 1813, Admiral Perry defended that freedom after our Revolutionary War victory. After that time, through numerous wars and trials against our American Freedom, citizens have always met the call to maintain our sovereignty. President John Kennedy wrote, "The cost of freedom is always high, but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission." Freedom is so desirable and attractive that people from all over the world still come to our shores to enjoy our American freedom.

But: Freedom isn't free! Those veterans who served and survived in our military have physical or emotional reminders of what freedom cost. Anyone who lost a loved one, anyone who bid farewell to a son or daughter, a husband, wife, or a parent as they went to serve our country knows the eruption of emotions - pride, fear, and sadness - accompanying the call to freedom. As a nation, we pay

taxes to support the defense of our freedom; we elect representatives to support and guarantee our freedom. But still... freedom isn't free.

But, lest we forget the seminal foundation of our nation's freedom, we must never lose sight of the principles that brought forth the birth of this great nation. Just as we thank the hundreds of thousands of veterans - men and women who gave their lives for our American liberty - we have a greater nation of freedom that gave us the firm footing upon which our nation was founded - a greater freedom. Freedom isn't free.

St Paul wrote, "*You were bought with a price.*" That "Price" began when Jesus came from His heavenly glory to dwell among us as our Lord and God. When Jesus came as a helpless Child, He came to fight and defeat an enemy that shrouded all humanity in its tyranny. Thousands of years before, God promised our first ancestors that He would send the Messiah, the Seed of a woman, to crush the head of our ancient foe, Satan. The price He paid thundered across the rocky hill as the echoing sounds of a hammer against crude nails, piercing the flesh of True God and True Man. The price came at the cost of Christ's divine blood being spilled for our sake.

Our valiant Warrior fought against evil on the cross and redemption was the Victor's spoils. The fight took place on the enemy's territory. When it appeared the Liberator of all mankind had succumbed to Satan's assault, every observer

must have concluded the battle and the war was lost. Yet, three days later, Satan's ultimate weapon - death - lost its hold on our Savior. Neither the stone covering the grave's entrance, Satan or death itself could hold back the victory won by the Lord of Life. He rose victorious that all human flesh joined with Him may rise to everlasting glory with Him. (Romans 6:3-4) For Christ's sake, we are citizens of an eternal and heavenly nation. Through the means offered by God's Word, He declares us free - free to worship Him without fear. When were we saved from Satan's tyranny and made citizens of an everlasting kingdom. Objectively, we were saved when, from the cross, Jesus declared, "*Tetelista!* - It is finished!" He proved His victory three days later, and won justification for all human flesh joined together with Him by His means of grace.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "*Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw - the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward. If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer loss.*" It has recently been charged that America is no longer a Christian nation. It has been documented (2008 Pew report) that on a given Sunday only 17% of all Americans attend worship! We have to acknowledge that television

and entertainment industries have unraveled traditional family values; legislatures and bureaucrats mandate how we must raise our families and signal new ways they will conform our lives on standards *they* decide is best for us.

What does all this mean in our relationship with Christ? What does it mean about the freedom our Lord won for us in a distant land centuries ago? What does it mean to the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness that our forefathers declared as our inalienable right, and our

veterans have given their lives to save? Is there a tension that exists between our citizenship of heaven and our temporal citizenship in America? The search for religious freedom that founded our great nation and its Bill of Rights is where Freedom **OF** Religion grows. This great American heritage was never assumed to be a Freedom **FROM** Religion (as many in our country insist).

Is our FREEDOM OF RELIGION worth supporting? Is it worth dying for? Our nation's founding fathers thought so, and so have

thousands of veterans. But, more importantly, Jesus Christ offered His pure, holy, and perfectly innocent life for us to remain free forever. Without Christ - and Him alone - is any freedom real? We salute those veterans who have defended our liberties.

Your servant in Christ +
Rev Dr Roger Paavola



★ ★ Shepherd of the Hills (Horseshoe Bend, Ark) ★ ★ Honors Veterans on Memorial Day

For the second year Shepherd of the Hills, in Horseshoe Bend, Arkansas, organized a Thrivent Action Team to honor veterans on Memorial Day. The Memorial Day Action Team planned, prepared and served free brats, hot dogs, chips and drinks to over 125 people who stayed after the Memorial Day Service conducted

by the local American Legion Post in Veterans Park. The team made 200 red, white and blue lapel pins that they handed out to those attending the service as their free pass for the lunch. Again having a free meal kept up the attendance. This year the Action Team had twice the number of people involved than last year.

Besides a tremendous turnout on a beautiful day, the people again stayed and visited in the park for well over an hour after the service, something they would not do if there was no meal after the event. This lunch continues to help bring a real sense of community to Horseshoe Bend.



98 Veterans honored at 6th Annual Breakfast

On May 26, 2018 Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Loudon, TN hosted 98 local veterans, including vets from WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, and representing all of branches of the service for our sixth annual pancake, sausage, bacon, and scrambled egg breakfast. The program included a color guard to post the national, state, and POW colors, pledge of allegiance, slideshow of local vets in uniform (way back when), a guest speaker, and singing patriotic music. Fourteen volunteers did setup, decoration, food prep, audio-visual, support, and cleanup tasks. About half of the veterans participating were from outside our church.



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Celebrating — Baptism and New Members

This is an exciting time here at CVLC (Christus Victor Lutheran Church). We baptized a young girl whose family joined the church and desired to be baptized. After meeting with the parents they joined the church and she was baptized. As well another lady, who transferred her membership to our congregation. Good things are happening here by God's grace

The little girl who was baptized is Isabella Jones (pictured right). The new members are Lisa Leigh Bell, Brett Jones, Kristen Smith, and Isabella Jones.



— Pastor Bill Ondracka

Rev. Tim Hunze Ordination & Installation



The Rite of Ordination and Installation for Rev. Tim Hunze was held on May 26, 2018 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, TN. Pastor Hunze has worked as a deacon with congregations in central Tennessee for 16 years, and was approved for Ordination by the Colloquy Committee for Pastoral Ministry, LCMS this Spring. Those in attendance with Pastor Hunze include, (Front Row L-R) Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Rev. David Callies, Rev. David Rubke, Rev. Tim Hunze, Rev. Andrew Abraham, Rev. John Schulz, Rev. Eric Phillips. Back Row (L to R): Rev. Keith Enko, Rev. Alan Thoe, Rev. Carl Wenck, Rev. Greg Bauch, Rev. Curt Hoover, Rev. Ken Shaw.

Generation to Generation - West Region Progress

Six congregation teams from across Arkansas met on June 2nd to continue training in Generation to Generation Module 2: Assessment.

One of the most engaging parts of G2G is the Family Life Survey. All congregations who participate will take this congregational assessment tool designed by Glenn Gritzon and Congregation Family Services. The Family Needs Survey identifies spiritual needs of each congregation's members, providing over 100 pages of analysis to help pastor and leaders focus on true ministry needs of the congregation, helping its members grow spiritually. This assessment is retaken once more at the completion of all 7 modules with a goal of seeing improvement in each area identified,

reflecting implemented tools from Generation to Generation modules were effective.

Ministry teams created a timeline and plan to implement on-line surveys in their congregations to active membership 18 years old and older. We are excited about the progress, planning and implementing this awesome tool, preparing hearts and minds of congregations to see what God will do through intentional ministry in the home.

Interested in participating? The East Network will begin in January of 2019 in Central Tennessee! For more information or to have a Generation to Generation to visit your congregation, contact Alison Hawkins at the district office.

— In Her Own Words —

One Volunteer's Story from the 2018 Mission Trip

When I told some of my friends and family that I was considering going on a mission trip to Haiti I often got a response like this....“I would never go to Haiti because the countries problems are created by a crooked government.” Many felt that the people just expected other countries to take care of them.

I will admit that I wasn't so sure they were wrong, but I made the trip with the hope that I could see the impact that Trinity Hope was having by feeding children.

I have chosen to write about a specific encounter I had while on this mission trip. It was with someone who I will remember for years to come. The person is Cherubin, one of our translators. He grew up like most Haitians, very poor and in a family that had very little. But his family knew that education was important. They worked hard to see that he went to school. He was the first person to graduate from high school in his little village. He is working very hard to change the course of this country by recruiting like-minded Haitians to work together to solve the problems of their education system, job training, hunger and poverty. They desire for Haitian's to help Haitians. I remember having to hold back tears as he spoke passionately about his belief in God and how he knew that God put him here to help the people of Haiti get on their feet and change the course of their country.

I returned home committed to the impactful work of Trinity Hope. Their mission of feeding children will keep hunger from standing in the way of learning. Haiti's future is in the hands of these children who will have a chance at an education, and just like Cherubin will graduate and become future leaders.



By: Holly Walsh
from Our Savior, Nashville,
May/June 2018 Mission Team

Mission Trip to New Orleans

Mission Trip registration deadline has passed. Those still interested in signing up may do so, but will pay the full price. Adult group leaders of each congregation will receive information email in July 2nd. We look forward to seeing everyone in New Orleans at Camp Restore!!!!

Register Online Today!

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

Agenda [available online](#)

SAVE—the—DATE September 14 & 15, 2018

CALLING ALL Youth Leaders Ministry Teams

We are excited to invite youth leaders-both called and volunteers- from across the Mid-South to "ROOT" where we will relax, connect and dig deep into God's Word.

ROOT

Relax.Connect.DigDeep

ROOT will be held on Friday, September 14 and Saturday, September 15 at Grace Lutheran Church in Murfreesboro, TN.

"Standing Together in Youth Ministry" is the theme, based on Isaiah 41:10: Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with My victorious right hand.

It's a time of reflection, support, encouragement, building community, worship and Bible study, specific resource sharing and preparing for "hot topics." **Registration opening August 1st.**

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 05/31/18 (5 Months)

Anticipated Amount (33.33% of budget)	\$658,921
Actual Receipts.....	<u>\$619,524</u>
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$39,397)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (5 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions	\$175,441
Allocated to Tanzania	\$10,417
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support	
(70% of receipts)	<u>\$433,667</u>
Total Receipts	\$619,524

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (5 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 05/31/18.....	\$619,524
Actual Receipts as of 05/31/17	<u>\$629,981</u>
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$10,457)

2018 National RSTM Conference

The 2018 National Rural & Small Town Mission Conference will be held Nov. 8–10 in Kansas City, Mo., at the Hilton Kansas City Airport.

LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission hopes you'll join us by registering now and reserving your spot! **And did you know you can earn Continuing Education credits by attending the 2018 National RSTM Conference?**

The conference will address blessings and challenges facing rural and small town congregations today. Congregations will be encouraged in becoming healthy churches, eager to bear witness for Christ and able to show mercy to those in need in communities and develop a robust life together with fellow members. This conference is meant for anyone living, serving or interested in rural or small-town areas, with topics and resources specifically suited for this unique mission field.

Online Registration, lodging and more information are available at lcms.org/rstm/conference.

GOD BLESS AMERICA!



Mid-South Pastor to Host Unique European Tour in 2020

Rev. Stewart Marshall of Trinity Lutheran Church (Pine Bluff, AR) is hosting a tour in 2020 to see the historic passion play of Oberammergau, as well as the splendor of several eastern European cities. It is a 12-day tour scheduled from September 21-October 2, with departure from Memphis. The tour is all inclusive except for one meal each day. For a complete itinerary please use the link below to see a day by day description of the complete tour:

<http://www.ittworld.com/tours/imperial-splendor-including-oberammergau/>

A tour description and invitation from Pastor Marshall is also provided. For more information, please contact Pastor Marshall at 870-592-9404 or trinityowr@gmail.com.



For further information, please contact:
Rev. Stewart Marshall
Phone: 870-592-9404
Email: trinityowr@earthlink.net

Imperial Splendor Including Oberammergau Passion play

12-Day Tour of Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria & Germany

Hosted by: Rev. Stewart Marshall
Travel Dates: September 21 - October 2, 2020

\$5199.00 from Memphis, TN

(Price includes: \$590.26 US & Intl. departure taxes/fuel & \$175 gratuities)
Additional departure cities available upon request

Register Online: RegisterNow.ittworld.com
Tour Code: Marshall20



Prayer Summary, June 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 June 2018.

PRAYER CONCERNS

MR. BOB ASLINGER (Dayton, TN)
REV. PETER AVE-LALLEMANT (Fairfield Bay, AR)
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. EDWARD SCHMIDT (Knoxville, TN)
REV. MERLIN SEPMAYER (Crossville, TN)
MRS. STEPHANIE TEWS (daughter-in-law of Rev. David Tews, Shepherd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend, AR)
MRS. SUE ANN TOOPES (wife of Rev. Andy Toopes, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Bowling Green, KY)
MS. AMY WALTERS (sister of Julie Tyler, Mid-South District Office)
MS. DIANE WALTERS (Cookeville, TN)
MRS. BONNIE WHITE (wife of Rev. Don White, St. John's Lutheran Church, Stuttgart, AR)
MRS. JEANNETTE ZIRBEL (wife of Rev. Jason Zirbel, Grace Lutheran Church, Greenwood, AR)
THE MOTHER OF MS. MICHELE LAYNE (ECE Director, St. John's, Fayetteville, AR)

Our deepest sympathies to...

The family and friends of Ms. Sherry Costello (former secretary at Trinity Lutheran Church, Pine Bluff, AR) who passed away on Saturday, June 2, 2018.

Mrs. Pam Hanson (Rev. Bruce Hanson, First Lutheran Blytheville, AR) and family as they mourn the loss of Pam's mother, Loretta Wilkins, who passed away at the age of 100 years old.

Rev. Herb Swanson (Emeritus, Lamar, AR) on the loss of his wife, **Mrs. Chloe Swanson**, who passed away on Sunday, May 27, 2018.

We remember the mission teams traveling to Tanzania in the next few weeks, that God would bless their travel and their time of service.

CALL UPDATE ORDAINED MINISTERS

DECLINED: **Rev. Rob Harbin of Faith Lutheran Church, Collierville, TN**, has declined the call to serve as Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Independence, MO.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS
Bella Vista Lutheran Church, Bella Vista, AR – Associate Pastor
Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Cordova, TN – Pastor
Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN – Pastor
Mid-South District – Executive Director for Missions and Ministry

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Ms. Amy Shudy**, Las Vegas, NV, has accepted the call to serve as teacher at **Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR**.

DECLINED: **Mrs. Angela Schiller**, Yuma, AZ, has declined the call to serve as Principal at **Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Memphis, TN**.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – FOR COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR – Assistant Early Childhood Director
Christ Lutheran Church and School, Little Rock, AR – Science teacher/Athletic Director
First Lutheran Church and School, Knoxville, TN – Principal
Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Memphis, TN – Principal



20th Regular Convention of the Mid-South District, LCMS • June 28-30, 2018 • Memphis, Tennessee

CONVENTION COVERAGE

The 2018 Mid-South District Convention took place June 28-30 at the Hilton Hotel in Memphis. The theme selected for the Convention was, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my salvation!," from Psalm 18:2. Throughout the three-day event, this theme was frequently reflected upon and referenced in devotions and addresses to the delegation. Attendance figures for the Convention included 80 pastoral delegates, 95 lay delegates, 26 advisory delegates and 22 guests. The following highlights provide a glimpse of both the business and fellowship that comprised the 20th Regular Convention of the Mid-South District, LCMS.

THURSDAY • JUNE 28

- Floor Committees, responsible for finalizing resolutions brought before the Convention delegation for consideration, held their final preparatory meetings.
- Registration began just before lunch, with the opening session starting promptly at 3 PM.
- Presidents Emeriti Rev. Norman Groteluschen and Rev. David Callies greeted the delegation with Pastor Callies also sharing a brief address from President Emeritus Rev. Kenneth Lampe.
- District President Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola shared his report with the delegation.
- Christ the King hosted a special dinner (sponsored by Thrivent) and the Convention's Opening Worship Service, with preaching by the Rev. Dr. Herbert Mueller, First Vice President of the LCMS.



Worship Photo by Caroline Johnson

FRIDAY • JUNE 29



- The Second Convention Session included the election for District President. The candidates were current president, Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola and Rev. Andrew Toopes of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Bowling Green, KY. President Roger Paavola was re-elected with 73.1% of the votes.
- LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison shared his report and participated in a brief Q & A session with delegates.
- Bishop Emmanuel Makala of Tanzania (Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese) briefly addressed Convention attendees.

- A number of resolutions were presented to the delegation for consideration. Among the many resolutions adopted by the delegates were a resolution to reaffirm church planting in the Mid-South District, as well as to continue the District's relationships with both the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese in Tanzania and the Confessional Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar. A complete list of the resolutions and voting results will be available on the District website.
- Many attended a President's Reception at the close of the day, enjoying fellowship with fellow delegates and guests.

SATURDAY • JUNE 30

- The Rev. Joseph Randrianasolo from Madagascar addressed the delegation and his wife, Razafindrado, shared her beautiful gift of song.
- All elected officers were installed, concluding the official business and duties of the Convention. The final session ended several hours early, just before lunch.
- A Pastors' Wives luncheon was held at the close of the final session, hosted by Mrs. Roger Paavola (Pat).



Visit the CONVENTION PAGE of the Mid-South District website (mid-southlcms.org) for convention newsletters, photos, election results, resolution summaries and a link to the "Mission Moments" videos.



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
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Carolyn Metzger
Finance Assistant

Renae 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

1675 Wynne Road
Cordova, TN 38016

PHONE: 866.373.1343 / 901.373.1343
FAX: 901.373.4826

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