

Focus for September

Stewardship

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 4:10-11)

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



Sneaking IN THROUGH THE DOGGIE DOOR

We have always had an alarm system in our home since one of our neighbors had a break-in a few years ago. The alarm system was controlled and monitored by people miles away. But if the alarms detected one of our doors or windows opening when we weren't home, the alarm signaled the people who monitored the system to notify us and the authorities. It worked well -- at least until one Sunday afternoon, we discovered the alarm didn't tell us someone had broken into the house, but that there was motion in the kitchen and living room. The dogs were too low to the ground to set off the alarm, so the company informed us that someone was in the house. Confused? So were we.

By the time we (and the sheriff) got to the house, we saw nothing missing, and the alarm was re-set. The alarm system said there was movement in the living room. Our walkout basement door was ajar, but was not detected. What was the conclusion? The kids from next door had come in through the doggie door in the sunroom and decided to leave via the basement door and left before causing any trouble.

That alarm system is a kind of stewardship. It is a safeguard against anyone taking our possessions without permission - unless of course they gain entry through the doggie door. Stewardship is our subject for this month. "Oh, no! He's going to talk about money again!" No

- stewardship is not only about money. Silver and gold and US Script is only a small part of that, but God's Word has a larger meaning of stewardship that isn't limited to money.

In the Old Testament, the title of "Asher" was given to a person who was in charge of safeguarding the possessions of the kings and princes. It wasn't just silver and gold, but all possessions that belonged to the kingdom (I Chronicles 28:1). Their sole responsibility (at the risk of their own life) was the safekeeping of everything that was the king's possessions.

Jesus, St. Paul and St. Peter spoke about this concept of stewardship calling every Christian to be entrusted with the safekeeping of the possessions of the Kingdom and everything that belongs to the King. St. Peter explains, "Therefore be self-controlled and

sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (I Peter 4:8b-11, ESV)

In I Corinthians, St. Paul makes it clear what responsibility the stewards of God's mysteries must have: *So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ's, and*

Christ is God's. This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." (I Corinthians 4:1ff, ESV)

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus explained the idea of stewardship (perhaps with a little of a jaded example of the unfaithful steward) that applies to all possessions. "Give an accounting of your stewardship," the unfaithful servant was told. It was his management of all the goods entrusted to his management that was being questioned. The Greek word used in the New Testament makes this clear: we are the *oikonomos* - the keeper of the things that belong to the house of the Lord.

Within this concept, we have to acknowledge that every good thing comes from God.

Job Comfort Dog and the Shelby County Board of Commissioners

On July 23, 2018, Job Comfort Dog made an appearance before the Shelby County Board of Commissioners to receive a special resolution from the Commission acknowledging and thanking Job and Christ the King Lutheran Church and School for their community outreach and compassionate ministry. County Commission Chair Heidi Shafer presented the resolution and invited handler Genie Swan to speak to the assembly about the many facets of Job's ministry. Job behaved in his customary gentlemanly manner and made many friends. The handsome resolution is on display in CTK's narthex.

Good job, Job!



Our money, house, home, family, friends, neighbors, and the like are all gifts from God. How we deal with them is part of our responsibility of being *oikonomou theou* - keepers of the things of God. Everything we have – including our life – is a gift from God. When we begin to understand this biblical truth, our concerns for our fiscal security become less burdensome because we know God cares for us more than He cares for the birds of the air.

The Christian Church is meant to function with the proper use of the manifold gifts of God that flow from His grace. But, it's not just money! Our very existence within the body of Christ - the Church - is a gift (according to St. Peter) that is meant to serve others with the mysteries and possessions of His House - the Holy Christian Church. Foremost in these gifts is the Word and blessed Sacraments of God (as mysteries) that offer the forgiveness of sins, the promise of life everlasting, and the joining of us together in the unity of Christ by faith. Who can explain these things? That's why they're called mysteries, because they surpass our human understanding. We can only begin to understand these by the gift of faith that's offered through the Holy Spirit through His means and in the Word.

Each congregation functions because the servants of Christ - His people - are enabled to gather their gifts for the preservation and protection of the possessions of the Church.

That may come in the form of money, but also includes our time and the talents God has given to us by His grace to do the work of His Kingdom. None of Christ's people is without specific gifts God envisioned that would bring about the purpose of our communion of faith.

The District and the Synod cannot function without the manifold gifts of God being extended from the faithful people of God and the support of the local congregations. Local congregations are enabled to grow and flourish because of the time, talents, and treasures His faithful people offer in service to the Church. Our very presence in worship is a stewardship in mutual support of the body of Christ. By the same token, God has richly blessed our District with generous and faithful people. We have never been more fiscally blessed than we are today. But, as Jesus reminds us (Luke 16:1 ff), *using all the gifts* He gives for the good of His kingdom is of a paramount importance.

This is why we continue to support church planting and world mission. This is why we support students studying to become servants in the Church. This is why we want to assure every generation will have the Gospel message of Christ's saving grace for decades and generations to come. This is why we boast in the Lord by being faithful stewards of the Gospel of Christ when we embrace the change in our

DNA with "Each 1 - Reach 1." This is why the Mid-South District offers a stewardship program like Financial Peace University, that we might gain a deeper understanding of God's gracious provision, and our stewardship of all He gives. The most precious "possession" we have isn't money, silver, or gold. God has entrusted us with being *oikonomou theou* - "keepers of the things of the household of God" for all the world as our mission field. The greatest gift we have is the Gospel of Christ. It's not meant to be buried, but to be proclaimed in every corner of the world, that those who are still living in darkness may come to the marvelous Light of our Savior, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:9). It's a stewardship that belongs to everyone joined to Christ by His means of grace.

Having an unsecured doggie door made our possessions vulnerable to outside intruders. Protecting the possessions of the Kingdom of God needs security as well. We are charged with the responsibility to protect the sacred doctrines of the Church and Her people. Keep the intruders away, and be about the privilege of being "Keepers of the possessions of the House of God."

Your servant in Christ,
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



CHAPEL OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD LOOKING FOR LAND

Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Sharps Chapel, TN is looking for land on which to build their first church building, preferably on Sharps Chapel Road, about 2-3 acres in size. When the congregation recently discovered that their first site was no longer viable, they unanimously decided to look for another option.

“Although our ‘Future Home’ sign has come down, it hasn’t been discarded, only put into storage,” noted Paul Kritsch, pastor of the congregation. “Meanwhile we continue to hold weekly Sunday worship services at 10:30 AM and the weekly Tuesday Neighborhood Bible Breakfast at 9:00 AM, both in the Community Center, 1542 Sharps Chapel Road. And we continue to show our faith in Christ and our love for our neighbors through many servant events and projects. We are confident that Christ leads the way, so we stay close to Him.”

If you have any leads concerning a building site for the church, please call the office at 865-279-1279.



(L-R Kevin Kitts, Mike Foley, President Jeff Landis, Jeff Garretson; Not pictured Vice President Tom McCaffery and Pastor Paul Kritsch)



Pastor Bill announced his son-in-law as a new member of CVLC as a membership transfer, and on the same day baptized his grand daughter, Clara Christine Oetting.



Exciting news from Christus Victor Lutheran Church – Knoxville



CVLC recently installed Kevin Scott as an elder.

UPCOMING CARE-VAN DATES ANNOUNCED

The Mid-South District's fall 2018 CARE-VAN dates will be November 2-3. Many congregations in our district are long-time participants in CARE-VAN projects, which aid the outreach efforts of Lutheran World Relief. If you plan to participate in CARE-VAN this fall, please mark your calendar and [click here for planning details](#).

If you'd like to know more about CARE-VAN, please contact Julie Tyler (jtyler@mid-southlcms.com) at the District Office.



—REMINDER—

Youth Leader Conference



September 14 & 15, 2018
@ Grace Lutheran Church
in Murfreesboro, TN.

[Registration and schedule
are both available online](#)

TANZANIA MISSION TRIP 2019

Plans are in the works for 2019



Worship time in the shade

The 2019 trip will again focus on outreach to the Sukuma tribe, in a group of villages, located in the South East Of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD).

Bishop Makala will determine an area that we will work best. The Sukuma are the nation's largest tribe, comprised of 6 million people. Most of the people believe in superstitions, magic, ancestor worship and traditional religions. They are comprised mostly of farmers, merchants, builders and traditional doctors living in the countryside.

Mission teams from the Mid-South District LCMS have been going to the Northwest region of Tanzania for over 16 years. Tentative plans are for a trip in late May but the the time of the trip could depend on those who are interested in going. For more information contact Bob Allen, phone 270-535-7370 or email rjallen@prodigy.net.

Back to School IN HAITI

On September 3rd thousands of Haitian children will go back to school with great anticipation. They know a new school year not only means furthering their education, it also means receiving a nutritious noon meal again each day. This year Trinity HOPE is expanding the feeding programs by adding 6 new schools and expanding the number of meals we serve by 950 each day. That means we will now be serving over 24,000 meals daily to the children, teachers and cooks in over 120+ Christian schools. God is truly good! While at school, the children are not only being fed physically, they are also being fed spiritually through the teaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

However, while the Haitian children have been working in the fields this summer and helping their families around the house, here at Trinity HOPE we've been working equally hard wrapping up our previous fiscal year and getting ready to launch the 2018/2019 school year. In addition to finalizing our new budget, holding our annual board meeting and making decisions on new schools, a big portion of our summer is spent on the annual training workshop we hold in Haiti each August with our local



Feeding Program Directors. We bring all 16 of them together to train them on new procedures, discuss how to improve the feeding programs and administer their annual performance reviews.

This year a big topic during the workshop was the significant progress they have made with Shared Support...a program where the schools financially contribute to the cost of the feeding program each month, allowing Trinity HOPE to redirect some of our funds to add more children to the feeding programs. For the 2017/2018 school year, those in Haiti paid over \$110,000 in Shared Support, allowing an additional 446,825 meals to be served. The idea of Shared Support is very counter-cultural in Haiti, but we believe strongly that we need to help Haiti move closer towards self-sufficiency one small step at a time. Often times a school may push back on having to pay their monthly Shared Support payment, stating how

difficult life in Haiti can be. Our Feeding Program Directors hold firm and explain why this program is crucial for the well-being of all the children in Haiti and how it is ultimately good for the country. Shared Support is working and we're very proud of the difference our guys are making. Each of our feeding program directors are strong Christian leaders that have a passion to serve their Lord and their country. We are blessed to be able to serve God alongside them.

As this new school year begins, please keep the students and all the workers in the U.S. and Haiti in your prayers. We look to Him for wisdom, strength and protection. If you are interested in learning more about the mission ministry of Trinity HOPE, please visit our website at www.trinityhope.org.



Engaging Your Community Event

Saturday, September 29th, 2018

Engaging Your Community Event at Heavenly Host Lutheran Church
777 S Willow Ave., Cookeville, TN, 38501-3800
8am-3pm

Featured Presenters:

Rev. Todd Kollbaum

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



If overnight accommodations are desired,
make your own reservations in the
Cookeville, TN area

REACHING RURAL AMERICA *for Christ*

*Let's go...to the small towns.
Mark 1:38 (God's Word ®)*

www.lcms.org/rstm

rstm@lcms.org

What will you get out of an EYC Event:

- Bible Studies
- Community Demographic Studies
- Identifying Congregational Strengths
- Community Outreach Ideas
- Table Discussions
- Fellowship

Cost: \$25/participant or \$100/congregation

Register by Friday, September 21st

Online <https://lcms.regfox.com/rstm-engaging-your-community-cookeville-tennessee-september-29-2018>

Call 888-463-5127 or
email rstm@lcms.org



Reaching Rural
America for Christ

RURAL & SMALL TOWN
MISSION

888-463-5127 or 660-463-9400

Prayer Summary, August 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 August 2018.

PRAYER CONCERNS

MS. SARA FEURESTEIN (daughter of Rev. Donley Hesse, Mena, AR)

MR. STEPHEN GREGOR (Mena, AR)

REV. NORM GROTELUSCHEN (Germantown, TN, MDS President – Emeritus)

REV. BRUCE HANSON (Blytheville, AR)

MRS. NANCY HERD (wife of Rev. Cliff Herd, EM, Chattanooga, TN)

REV. DONLEY HESSE (Emeritus, Mena, AR)

REV. RICHARD MAYER (Pea Ridge, AR)

MR. RICHARD MEYER (Bella Vista, AR)

REV. DAVID RUBKE (Tullahoma, TN)

REV. ERIC AND KATIE RUDSENSKE (Concordia Lutheran Church, Jackson, TN)

REV. MERLIN SEPMEYER (Crossville, TN)

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)

THE MOTHER OF MS. MICHELE LAYNE (ECE Director, St. John's, Fayetteville, AR)

Our deepest sympathy to President Matthew and Kathy Harrison (Synodical President) on the loss of Kathy's mother, Doris Schimm.

CALL UPDATE ORDAINED MINISTERS

DECLINED: **Rev. Craig Boehlke** (Slidell, LA) has declined the call to serve as **Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN.**

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

IN THE CALLING PROCESS

Avilla Christian Academy, Alexander, AR - Director of Parish Music

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

CONGREGATIONAL MISSION COMMITMENTS

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 07/31/18 (7 Months)

Anticipated Amount (58.33% of budget)	\$922,490
Actual Receipts.....	868,806
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$53,684)

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (7 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions	\$246,058
Allocated to Tanzania	14,583
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support (70% of receipts).....	608,164
Total Receipts.....	\$868,806

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year

Comparison (7 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 07/31/18	\$868,806
Actual Receipts as of 07/31/17	\$904,494
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$35,688)



Mid-South District, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Staff

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, *President*

Angela Fowler, *Executive Director for Business & Finance*

Paul Reaves, *Executive Director for Development & Executive Director for LCEF Vice President*

Allen Piepenbrink, *District Education Executive for Education and Preschools*

Alison Hawkins, *Executive Assistant to the District President*

Renaë McElwain, *Communications & Marketing Specialist*

Carolyn Metzger, *Finance Assistant*

Julie Tyler, *Administrative Assistant for Missions and Education*

Contact the Mid-South District

1675 Wynne Road

Cordova, TN 38016

PHONE: 866.373.1343 / 901.373.1343

FAX: 901.373.4826

Stay Connected With Us

ON THE WEB - "mid-southlcms.org"

ON FACEBOOK - "Mid-South-LCMS"

ON TWITTER - "@midsouthLCMS"

Contribute

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 **September 21, 2018** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com