



/ DECEMBER 2018

MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

History as present; Jesus as present

By Rev. Rev. Paul Hass

Pastor, Bella Vista Lutheran Church, Bella Vista, Ark.
District Fourth Vice-President (Region 2)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As I write to you, I wonder to myself about what might be happening in your life in December. I confess I find it difficult to wrap my head around the subjects of Advent services, children's Christmas programs, Christmas trees and the prospect of snow, tinsel and lights. The reason for my confusing confession is that as I look out my office window today as I write, what I see is green grass and green-leaved trees waving in a 94-degree breeze.



Writing for *The Lutheran Witness* is something that is done two months in advance, in which one is asked to write an appropriate reflection of a future time. Taking pen in hand or sitting down to a computer in the third week of September to write an article for the last month of the year is an interesting proposition. It requires some mental gymnastics to think of oneself in the future place and time. It requires projection of oneself into a future moment to speak appropriately.

As I struggle to write with the incongruity of the green grass and warm breeze, and the fact you will be reading this message in December, I think of how our Heavenly Father, who exists outside of time, sees all of history, as one theologian has put it, as a "permanent present." It was

only by His design that our human life is experienced in a forward linear progression, season by season, at least until time is no more. From that timeless place God creates time — and everything else — out of nothing.

Scripture tells us that in God there is no changing from past, to present or future. For all of humanity we live our lives in time and for us, time only moves forward.

After contemplating time, I have concluded that writing about Christmas in September is a much simpler task than planning the purpose of Christmas, the salvation of mankind from the time before time began.

Our Father decided that, before the foundation of the world, before creation even happened, that He would send His Son into our human flesh for



our salvation. That's what Christmas is all about! Before man was created, before our first parents fell into sin, before you and I were born, God the Father planned that His Son, the eternal second person of the Trinity, would come to this created yet fallen world, take on our humanity and redeem us. The Bible tells us at just the right time, Jesus took on human flesh and became human for our sake.

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

— GAL. 4:4-5

As St. Paul pens these words about God's intentional intervention in history — by sending His Son — he uses a word picture of a vessel being filled, over the course of time, until it

Continued on Page 3

Trinity HOPE

‘More than a feeding program’

By Denise Gudlin

Trinity HOPE Operations Manager

Many times people see our work as just a feeding program to those small bodies who are so hungry.

But I see it as so much more. Yes, Trinity HOPE does provide the necessary food for the children to combat malnourishment, but the food also shows the children compassion and love, which opens their hearts and minds to Jesus. Experiencing this firsthand, I've seen their eyes light up and their faces fill with pure joy when they arrive at school, and I see the fires going, knowing their hunger pains will soon be relieved.

Each time this assures me that Trinity HOPE is more than just a feeding program. It opens the doors and allows us to share God's love with them each day. Once they receive Christ into their lives and begin their Christian walk, those meals continue to witness to them that the One True God does care and love them. This allows the local pastors to use the feeding program as an evangelism tool, reaching the families and neighbors of these children and continue to nurture those relationships with God's Word in church and at home.

Did you know that many of our feeding program directors are pastors? It was our connection with the Haitian Lutheran pastors that fostered the first school being fed by Trinity HOPE and continues to allow the program to grow and expand. Trinity HOPE now provides more than 24,000 meals each day to 120-plus Christian schools throughout Haiti.

Trinity HOPE is a humanitarian project, but with a direct link to the Gospel.



trinityhope.org



Sandra Gean presented a mission grant check for Trinity HOPE from the Mid-South District LWML to Keith Logan, Trinity HOPE executive director, at Our Savior, Nashville, on Oct. 7. Trinity HOPE expressed sincere thanks "for this amazing opportunity to serve the children at Balague with your continued support. Seeing the children grow physically and spiritually is a true gift." Gean serves as Middle Tennessee Zone president.

Mercy for the homeless



Paul Reaves, LCEF Mid-South District vice-president (center), congratulates Rev. Charles Neugebauer, CTK senior pastor, and Clarice Hunt, CTK member and Room in the Inn volunteer, on the church's \$35,000 grant from the LCEF Kaleidoscope Fund.

Christ the King (CTK) Lutheran Church and School, Memphis, was among eight ministries chosen to receive a 2018 grant from the Kaleidoscope Fund, a program established by Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF). Christ the King's \$35,000 grant will be used by Room in the Inn to give shelter, provide meals and share the Gospel at CTK with the homeless.

Room in the Inn is an ecumenical organization that partners with

congregations across the community to serve the homeless.

A total of \$780,000 in grants was awarded through LCEF's 2018 Kaleidoscope Fund program. Consistent with LCEF's mission, the grant committee selected ministries with ideas that are related to the expansion, enrichment and energizing of Christ's Church.

To read more about the other grant recipients, please visit lcef.org/2018-kaleidoscope-fund-recipients.



Accredited!

Congratulations to Zion Lutheran Church and Avilla Christian Academy in Alexander, Ark., on meeting all National Lutheran School Accreditation requirements. Allen Piepenbrink (right), Mid-South District education executive, recently visited the church to present the accreditation certificate to, from left, Rev. Michael Schleider and Richard Meyers, Avilla principal.

TIME

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

is completely full. At just that moment, when the maximum fullness occurred, God acts to accomplish His eternal purposes. While Paul does not mention Mary, the shepherds, or the angels in the text from Galatians, he is focusing our attention on how our Eternal God sends salvation into time, for you. Jesus comes, under the Law, to enter fully into our human lives, to save us.

This is why we celebrate Christmas! We celebrate that

Jesus Christ comes to us and for us, in time and for our eternity, to do for us what we are unable to do for ourselves.

Could it be that writing this message to you has caused me to think on the joy of Christmas in September? Indeed, it has and for that I am blessed! This reminds us that the celebration of Christmas is ours all year long!

Out of the timelessness of God Almighty's eternity, He sent us the one thing needful for our reconciliation, our justification and our invitation into His eternity; Jesus Christ our Savior!

Congregation mission commitment receipts

AS OF SEPT. 30, 2018 (9 MONTHS)

Anticipated amount (75 percent of budget)	\$1,186,058
Actual receipts	\$1,139,424
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$46,634)

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$323,077
Allocated to Tanzania	\$18,750
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70 % of receipts)	\$797,597
Total receipts	\$1,139,424

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Sept. 30, 2018	\$1,139,424
Actual receipts as of Sept. 30, 2017	\$1,163,850
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$24,426)

The Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Ordained ministers celebrating anniversaries in 2018



60 Years

Rev. Henry Behling (em)
Hot Springs, Ark.

55 Years

Rev. William Couch (em)
Knoxville, Tenn.

50 Years

Rev. Kenneth Haydon (em)
Eureka Springs, Ark.

Rev. Arthur Kaufmann (em)
Bristol, Tenn.

Rev. Stephen Skov (em)
Rockwood Tenn.

Rev. David Tews
Shepherd of the Hills,
Horseshoe Bend, Ark.

45 Years

Rev. Barry Hildebrandt
Cross of Christ,
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. Paul Kritsch
Chapel of the Good Shepherd,
Sharps Chapel, Tenn.

40 Years

Rev. Johnny Graham
Our Savior/Zion, Brinkley/Ulm, Ark.

Rev. Gene Henke (em)
Prince of Peace, White House, Tenn.

Rev. Robert Herring
Grace, Holiday Island, Ark.

35 Years

Rev. Thom Lakso
Celebration, Seymour, Tenn.

Rev. Charles Neugebauer
Christ the King, Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Robert Pfaff (em)
Spring City, Tenn.

Rev. Robert Seaton
First, Cleveland, Tenn.

Rev. Larry Seiferth (em)
North Little Rock, Ark.

Rev. Terry Tieman
Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Andrew Toopes

Holy Trinity, Bowling Green, Ky.

Rev. Brian Truog

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church,
Loudon, Tenn.

30 Years

Rev. Russell Belisle

Cross of Calvary, Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Mark Krause

Salem Lutheran Min., Springdale, Ark.

Rev. Randy Loux

Clarksville, Tenn.

Rev. Steven Teske

Immanuel, Alexander, Ark.

Rev. William Wagner

Trinity, Columbia, Tenn.

20 Years

Rev. Robert Harbin

Faith, Collierville, Tenn.

Rev. Philip Young

Redeemer, Nashville, Tenn.

15 Years

Rev. Paul Hass

Bella Vista, Bella Vista, Ark.

Rev. Shawn Hunze

Memphis, Tenn.

10 Years

Rev. Shawn Found

Little Rock, Ark.

Rev. Brandon Martin

Salem Lutheran Min., Springdale, Ark.

Rev. Theodore McMinn

Shepherd of the Hills, McMinnville, Tenn.

Rev. William Miller

Immanuel, Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Aaron Neugebauer

St. John Lutheran Church, Lafe, Ark.



Rev. Gregory Prauner

Immanuel, Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Mark Rhoads

Christ Our Savior, Loudon, Tenn.

Rev. Gordon Smith

Christ of the Cumberland,
Harrogate, Tenn.

Our Savior Lutheran Church,
Morristown, Tenn.

Rev. Jason Zirbel

Grace, Greenwood, Ark.

5 Years

Rev. David Graves

St. Paul, Wartburg, Tenn.

Rev. Joseph Jacks

St. Philip, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. David Mohr

St. Matthew, Conway, Ark.

Rev. Clayton Sellers

Faith, Collierville, Tenn.

Rev. Alan Thoe

Grace, Murfreesboro, Tenn.

*Well done, good and faithful
servants!*



Great place for a church!

On Sept. 30, **Chapel of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Sharps Chapel, Tenn.**, voted to purchase land on which to build its first building. Located on Sharps Chapel Road near the Post Master Road intersection, the land is located only three minutes from Route 33.

"I am very thankful for the leadership of our congregation's president, Jeff Landis," said Rev. Paul Kritsch, Chapel of the Good Shepherd pastor. "I am also proud of the way our members searched out three possibilities and the way they prayed and discussed and then decided."

More work lies ahead as the congregation moves toward groundbreaking and construction.

Meanwhile, worship at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays and neighborhood Bible breakfasts at 9 a.m. on Tuesdays continue at the Sharps Chapel Community Center, 1542 Sharps Chapel Road. For more information, call 865-279-1279.



Well met in St. Louis!

Chuck Ransdell, left, and Dr. Hubert Dellinger, members of Christ the King, Memphis, enjoyed the 29th annual Theological Symposium at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, as two laymen in an otherwise sea of pastors and professors. The theme was "The Cross Alone Is Our Theology." Dellinger, who has attended 26 of the 29 symposiums, found it "both spiritually uplifting and a great source of knowledge and fellowship."

Trinity aids cancer patients



A Thrivent Action Team of six women from Trinity, Dyersburg, Tenn., recently made helpful items for the Dyersburg office of the American Cancer Society to give to local cancer patients. They made 85 seat-belt protectors, which prevent seat belts from irritating the users' necks. They also made 85 turbans. The cancer center volunteer, Peggy, left accepted the donation with great appreciation, stating that the patients would be delighted with their gifts. She is pictured with Barbara Behnke, center, and Ramona Stevenson.

— Submitted by Ramona Stevenson



Start planning for summer 2019!

By David Cox

Camp Trinity Director

Camp Trinity opens registration Jan. 1 for Summer Camp 2019.

Children and youth at camp enjoy hiking, swimming, canoeing, archery and large-group games. All campers take trips to the petting zoo, and older campers have the option of trail rides on horseback. Older campers also learn problem-solving skills in the group initiative course.

All campers participate in Bible studies, morning devotions and nightly campfires with lots of singing, skits and a message pointing to God's mercy and grace in Jesus Christ.

In addition to four traditional camp sessions for campers from second grade through high school, the camp is also planning four special sessions:

► **Arts Camp** is a joint project of Camp Trinity and the Little Rock

School of the Arts, a ministry of Christ, Little Rock. Professional musicians, artists and writers, along with dance and theater instructors, will lead sessions in music, theater, dance, art, photography, poetry and story writing.

► **Adventure Camp** takes high school students and new graduates off the mountain for adventure activities such as canoeing, rock climbing and camping overnight in tents.

► **Overcomers Camp**, the newest camp session, is for young people with disabilities and their families. The session includes traditional camp activities — trail walking, swimming, canoeing, fishing, games and campfires — with help as needed from staff.

► **Family Camp** is for entire families. Although it is open to any family, most activities are designed especially for children too young for regular camp sessions. The short session includes a sampling of traditional camp activities.

Parents can register their children online at the Camp Trinity website: lutherancamp.org, or send an email to director@lutherancamp.org or call the camp office at 501-652-6304.



Staff needed!

College students who love the outdoors and want to serve God by serving others are encouraged to apply for a summer staff position. The salaried positions require service in June and July.

Continued next page

CHURCH HISTORY

'For everything there is a season'

John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg was the son of a Lutheran missionary. Born in 1746 in Pennsylvania and sent to Germany to be educated, Peter, as he was called, became a minister. In 1774, he not only was pastor of a church in Woodstock, Va., he was elected to the House of Burgesses, where he became associated with several of the colony's Revolutionary leaders.

The story goes that one Sunday in 1775, Rev. Muhlenberg took as his Scripture of the day Eccl. 3:1: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."



Rev. Muhlenberg was also a colonel in the militia, and he added, "There is a time for all things, a time to preach and a time to pray; but there is also a time to fight and that time has now come." He tossed aside his robes and revealed his militia uniform.

Leaving the pulpit, Reverend, now Colonel, Peter Muhlenberg walked to the church door, where he had a drummer boy waiting. He ordered him to beat the call for recruits and almost 300 members of his congregation joined up to become the 8th Virginia, better known as the "German Regiment."

Muhlenberg fought in the battles of Charleston and Brandywine Creek. A brigadier general, he was at Monmouth Court House and, when Benedict Arnold invaded Virginia, the fighting parson was there.

After the war he returned briefly to Woodstock, Va., then moved to Pennsylvania, where he was instrumental in having the state approve the U.S. Constitution. Twice Muhlenberg was elected to the new House of Representatives and, in 1801, became a U.S. senator, resigning to become supervisor of revenue in Philadelphia.

John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg was tall, courtly and strikingly handsome. Today his likeness stands in the Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C.

"A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war; and a time of peace."

From "What They Didn't Teach You About the American Revolution," by Mike Wright, ©1999, published by Presidio Press, Novato, Calif.

Positions include cabin counselor, cook, program director and general staff (assisting the head cook and the program director). Applications are available now at nloma.org/employment/summer.

Camp Trinity is also looking for nurses or other medical professionals willing to donate their time as medical officers during summer camp. Sessions range from two nights to five nights. The position is not paid, but nurses will have their own apartment while at camp.

Contact director@lutherancamp.org or call the camp office at 501-652-6304 to volunteer.



Tune in to Sent Radio online!

Access inspirational messaging any time you need it by listening to Sent Radio, the online radio stream from Lutheran Hour Ministries.

Sent Radio broadcasts the Gospel of Jesus Christ worldwide 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Discover uplifting Scripture, devotions, music and relevant sermons from The Lutheran Hour at lhm.org/sentradio.

Band contest raises funds for Camp Trinity



By David Cox
Camp Trinity Director

Musicians from Lutheran congregations around Arkansas offered praises to the living God at the first praise band music festival Sept. 29 at Camp Trinity, the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean Mountain.

The festival featured six church praise bands from Cabot, Conway, Fayetteville and Little Rock. As part of their sets, the bands each performed an original cover of the traditional Lutheran hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

This first music festival was billed as the Battle of the Praise Bands, with a panel of judges awarding plaques for the best overall band and the best version of "A Mighty Fortress." A third plaque, the People's Choice Award, was selected by the audience based on the amount of money collected in jars for the band.

The stage stood directly in front of historic Trinity Lutheran Church, which provided a beautiful backdrop for the musical performances. The building at Camp Trinity is newly restored and is being used again for special worship services.

The music festival drew 140 people, who enjoyed a day of music and worship, games, fellowship and pulled pork barbecue dinners.



Families enjoyed games and barbecue dinners during the Camp Trinity music festival.

Above: the Peace Praise Team from Peace, Conway, Ark., performs at the music festival, with Trinity Lutheran Church as the backdrop.

The Camp Trinity board plans to make the music festival an annual event, keeping the People's Choice Award but eliminating the other contests; the judges agreed that all the bands did well and deserved to win. The board is also discussing expanding the contest to make it a weekend music festival.

The event raised just over \$3,000 for the camp, which was matched by an anonymous donor.

Keeping **CHRIST** in Christmas

By Rev. Richard Behnke

Trinity, Dyersburg

The trend continues in our society to take Christ out of Christmas. This was tried in Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union tried for 70 years. The Arab countries, where Islam predominates, have very little, if any, public declaration of Christmas. In fact, in many Arab countries, the celebra-

tion of Christmas is forbidden, even though the Koran recognizes the virgin birth of Jesus!

But what if the birth of Christ had never happened? We would not have a birth year as we do now. The last 2,000 years would not be known as they are today. We would not have any identity with God. We would have no relationship with Him. We would not be His children and heirs to the blessings of eternal life. We would be stuck in the pangs of death. There would be no hope beyond this life. As St. Paul tells us, we would be the most miserable of all people. Our existence would have no purpose.

But — thank God — there is a Christ

in Christmas! He not only gives us a year with which to identify our birth, but also identity and purpose for our existence. Jesus is 100 percent God and 100 percent man. In Christ, God took on human flesh and became true man so that He could bleed and die for our sins to fulfill God's plan of redemption for all humanity. By His blood, our sins are washed away!

Without Christ in Christmas, there would be no way for us to be reclaimed as God's children and heirs to His kingdom. In Christ, we have a common goal and purpose as God's children, redeemed for eternity. Thank God that He put Christ into Christmas!

A time of expectation...

By Frances Bacic

Media/Marketing,
LWML Mid-South District

As a child I loved Christmas. I could say I loved the time with family, the presents, the decorations, the music and the time off from school. It all would be true.

Most of all, I could not wait to sing the Quemapas Carol during the 11 p.m. Christmas Eve service. It was an honor and a rite of passage in our church in southern Michigan.

Everyone got to be in the children's program and dress up, and recite and sing all the carols year after year. But on Christmas Eve, the children's choir would line up downstairs while the adult choir sang from the balcony. The music would start and we would process to our places in the corners. One by one each corner sang its line, then the adults sang the four-part chorus while we changed corners, all the while trying not to drop or extinguish our candles. Then we did it over and over again until we finished the song.

The song I loved is "He Whom Shepherds Once Came Praising," (#54 in *Lutheran Worship*). The song was sweet and simple and tells the Christmas story.

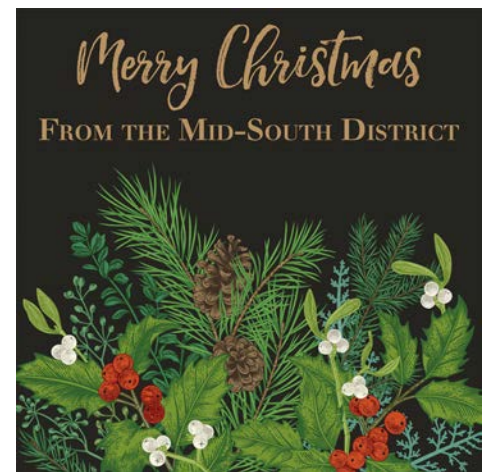
LWML

Over the years and with many different choirs, I have celebrated Christmas and shared the Christmas message through song.

May we, like the shepherds, sages and Mary, always sing and praise Christ, our newborn King.

How is your LWML society helping to add to the expectation of Christmas for others? Do you sing carols to your shut-ins or at nursing homes? Do you bake cookies or collect cereal for a local pantry? Do you make and give out quilts for different organizations? Do you buy gifts for needy families in your community?

One project we are working on this month is making fleece scarves for the St. Francis House in Little Rock, which serves veterans and others in need. Whatever you may do, do it all to the glory of our newborn King.



Deadline for the February issue is Dec. 15

Digital files, sent via e-mail, are preferred. Our submission deadline is the 15th of each month, two months before publication.

E-mail submissions to
LW@mid-southlcms.com
or send by postal mail to:

Judy Otto
150 N. Maury St.
Holly Springs, MS 38635