



# MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

## IDENTITY CRISIS ... **Resolved!**

**B**ack in the 1960s, it was called “finding yourself” — as if you were lost or something. Today, psychologists, social workers and counselors call it “finding your giftedness” or something like that.



**Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola**  
District President

Self-identity is one of mankind's deepest quests. The question “Who am I?” has been a mystery that's been discussed on psychiatrists' couches since before Freud. It's a lifelong struggle for a person trying to discover who it is they see every morning in the mirror.

The Youth Research Center in Minneapolis studied this phenomena for seven decades and came to the conclusion that the underlying problem for youth in every generation is the absence of self-image or low self-esteem — the fundamental malfunction of the younger generation.

### **Adults too**

But the interesting part of their research is that this problem is not isolated to youth. People in their prime of life are haunted by a self-identification issue: It's called a mid-life crisis. People with 15, 20, 30 or more years

in a career are asking “What's my place in this world? Is there a job or something else I can do that'll make a difference?”

A visit to a few nursing homes will generate many conversations that carry the words “I wish I would have had a chance to...”

If you know someone who has struggled with these questions, or have looked at that person in the mirror and wonder who it is — God's Word has an answer for you. Listen:

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” — **1 JOHN 3:1**

It's great to be identified with a prestigious group. Just watch a father's chest puff up when he mentions his child was accepted to Harvard or Stanford. Listen to a mother chirp when her child gets a job with IBM or maybe the White House. It does something to our egos. So imagine the thrill and overflowing self-worth we should exhibit to learn that you and I are children of God!

### **All are His creation, not children**

Popular opinion says that we're all God's children. He created us so in a

sense, we are His children. We talk about God our Father and the brotherhood of mankind. It's a great picture that gives us a lot of warm, fuzzy feelings, but — biblically — is it true?

It is true that we are God's creation. But God saw His intended sons and daughters turn their backs on Him and walk away from their relationship to Him. Despite that, He wants us to move beyond an impersonal relationship and back to having God as our Father.

Contrary to popular opinion, when John writes “We are God's children,” he's referring to a very tiny group. He is referring to only those who confess Jesus Christ as Savior. That isn't everyone in the world.

### **Christ died for all**

But God didn't give up on anyone. He sent Christ to die for us. His death was a payment for our sins, and the sins of all the world. When His work of redemption was complete, Jesus assures us that “whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:16-17).

By grace, through faith, we become the children of God. This explains the difference as to who are God's children and who aren't. Popular opinion would say “*All* people are God's

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## IDENTITY

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children,” while the Bible declares “In Christ, we are God’s children.”

Only in Jesus Christ do we become God’s children. For more than 2,000 years, missionaries have traveled to foreign lands to share that Gospel with those who are outside God’s covenant of grace. Every congregation that is interested in truly bringing lasting peace to a person’s life will also be interested in bringing people of its own community to know the truth and the whole truth about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

St. Luke records these words:

“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

— ACTS 2:38-39

This Gospel is what we may carry to our friends and relatives. If it were not so, Jesus wouldn’t have told us to go seek disciples and teach them about everything He taught.

Accordingly, God’s action makes us God’s children in Holy Baptism. He brings us into His family, not by our own decisions or actions, but by His grace

### The waters of Baptism

The *Book of Concord* says that God offers Baptism, which is necessary for salvation. It is the means by which God makes us His children and that we’re received into His grace. Yet, the Augsburg Confession also says that those who have fallen away from the covenant of Baptism all receive forgiveness of sins, whenever they are converted, and that the Church ought to impart absolution — forgiveness — to those who return in repentance.

One of the most serious problems facing the modern Christian Church

is the back door; not the back door of the building, but the back door where hundreds of people slip away because being inside the church lost its meaning for them.

The Youth Research Center discovered that less than 40 percent of people brought into the church by Baptism or confirmation stay active immediately following the rite. About half of the 60 percent who stray away for a while will come back — if they find a life mate who is willing to be a part of a church.

Once there was a church with a problem of bats in the bell tower. Exterminators from everywhere came to rid the church of its bat problems, but they kept coming back. Finally, the old, retired pastor said he had an answer, but it’d take him a couple of weeks. Sure enough, within a couple of weeks, all the bats were gone and never returned. The congregation asked the retired pastor what he had done. All he said was “I put the bats through catechism, confirmed them and they never came back.”

### Welcoming the wandering

As silly as that old story may be, we’re dealing with the children of God — those whom He has entrusted to our keeping; and those who have fallen into disuse of their privilege to be fed and guided by God. We need to bring them through God’s guidance back to His fatherly arms. Those who are hurting, who are ill and those who are alone — we need to be the hands, feet and lips that show the love and grace of an active God in their lives. Those who don’t feel a part of the church and think about leaving need to become welcomed and embraced as the blessing they are to us from God — cared for, nurtured and embraced in Christian love.

And of course, there are those who already live in a personal relationship with our heavenly Father. They’re not bothered with the question “Who am I?” They know they’re God’s children, and they never forget that their relationship with God is everlasting.

“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” — 1 JOHN 3:2

We know the rest of the story — when He comes to receive us and all who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior into His unending grace in heaven.

Who am I? Whatever else you might answer to this question, be assured of this: You are a child of God, through Jesus Christ. That’s just the way He wants it to be.

## Conference is designed for Lutheran laity

Issues, Etc., a radio talk show and podcast produced by Lutheran Public Radio in St.

Louis, is bringing its one and only 2019

Making the Case

Conference to Concordia University Chicago. The dates are Friday, June 7, and Saturday, June 8.

Speakers include: Ross Douthat, columnist for the New York Times and author; LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison; Wesley Smith, author or co-author of 13 books and whose blog, “Human Exceptionalism” is hosted at *National Review*; LCMS Worship Director Rev. Will Weedon; Aaron Wolf, executive editor of *Chronicles* magazine; and Rev. Hans Fiene, creator of “Lutheran Satire,” and pastor of River of Life Lutheran Church, Channahon, Ill.

Registration is \$125 and includes meals Friday night and Saturday afternoon and evening. Child care is free for children ages 1-12.

For more information, visit [issuesetc.org](http://issuesetc.org) or call 618-223-8385.



Studying to be a church worker?

## APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIP

To support the education efforts of individuals pursuing a full-time career in church work, the Mid-South District is pleased to once again offer opportunities for student financial aid.

The student must be a member in good standing of a Mid-South District congregation and be enrolled in an LCMS seminary or college/university to prepare for full-time church service as a rostered worker.

To be considered for the student financial assistance program, you must first inform the Mid-South District that you are or will be a student enrolled at an LCMS school. This information may be sent to Julie Tyler at [jtyler@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:jtyler@mid-southlcms.com) or Attn: Julie Tyler; 1675 Wynne Road; Cordova, TN 38016.

All related forms, including the financial aid application, are available at [mid-southlcms.org](http://mid-southlcms.org). **The application deadline is June 15.**

## Learn Greek online through CSL

Students may register now for a fall online course on the Greek language, which will be taught during the 2019-20 academic year at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL). Longtime Greek instructor and graduate professor of Exegetical Theology Rev. Dr. James W. Voelz will teach the sessions, which also help prepare students to take the Entrance Level Competency Exam (ELCE) in Greek — an entry-level requirement.

Voelz, a pre-eminent Greek scholar, has taught the language for more than 40 years.

The course is designed primarily for current SMP and prospective incoming students. **However, if space is available, the course will be open to anyone wishing to learn Greek.** While it is a non-credit course with no prerequisites,

a solid understanding of English grammar is essential to success.

The schedule for this course consists of a live online tutoring session which takes place Thursdays from 6-8 p.m. (CT) beginning Aug. 29. Classes meet each week through the academic year for 30 total sessions. Students should plan to commit eight hours in additional study each week.

Registration is now open for the fall semester and will be available through Aug. 9. Registration for Part II of the course, held in the spring semester, will be available in October. The course fee is \$1,200 per semester and the class size will be limited to 15 students.

To request an application or for more information, contact Gina Matzenbacher at 314-505-7107 or [matzenbacher@csl.edu](mailto:matzenbacher@csl.edu).

## JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

REJOICE / PRAY / GIVE THANKS

1 THESS 5:16-18

**The 67th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will be held July 20-25 in Tampa, Fla.**



Complete, up-to-date information for congregations is available on the Synod website at [lcms.org/convention](http://lcms.org/convention). The Synod office is also sending regular notices and reminders to congregations and districts.

Congregations are reminded to watch for important convention information and be mindful of related deadlines.

### YOUR TURN

We are joyfully Lutheran! Jesus has done it all. His life, death and resurrection have reconciled us to God. And the Father's gift of His Son means all good things come from Him. The Holy Spirit calls us through the Gospel and enlightens us with His gifts. All from God, all given to us in His Word and Sacraments.

This is fully Lutheran. This is joy. This is joyfully Lutheran!

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's 2019 convention theme is "Joy:fully Lutheran," and we want to hear your stories of how this joy is reflected in your life. Visit [joyfullylutheran.org/yourturn](http://joyfullylutheran.org/yourturn) to learn how.

Let's share with the world what it means to be joyfully Lutheran. Let's tell the world about the love of God in Christ Jesus.

## Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of Feb. 28, 2019 (12 months)

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Anticipated amount (16.67 percent of budget) ..... | \$255,379 |
| Actual receipts .....                              | \$266,218 |
| Over (under) anticipated amount .....              | \$10,839  |

### Use of mission commitment receipts

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Allocated to Synod for world missions .....                          | \$75,699  |
| Allocated to Tanzania .....  | \$4,167   |
| Retained for district ministry/mission support (70 % of receipts) .. | \$186,353 |
| Total receipts .....   | \$266,218 |

### Mission commitment receipts comparison

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Actual receipts as of Feb. 28, 2019 ..... | \$266,218 |
| Actual receipts as of Feb. 28, 2018 ..... | \$238,540 |
| Over (under) prior year receipts .....    | \$27,678  |



## Sign up for evangelism event



In conjunction with the ongoing *Each One, Reach One* emphasis, the Mid-South District is hosting a dynamic evangelism event for lay people.

### Eastern Region

Celebrate May 9-10 at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville.

### Western Region

Celebrate May 10-11 at Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock.

Choose the event closest to you, as lay people from across the Mid-South District will be encouraged in their personal evangelism efforts by two

LCMS pastors who are powerful speakers on the topic of sharing the Gospel:

► **Rev. Zach Zehnder**, lead pastor of The Cross Church in Mount Dora, Fla.



► **Rev. Chris Paavola**, church planter and pastor of All Nations Church in University City, Mo.



For details, contact Angela Fowler at 901-373-1341 or [afowler@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:afowler@mid-southlcms.com).

## LWML

*Serve the lord with gladness*



## Here and in Mobile!

“He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.”  
Ps. 113:9

**By Frances Bacic**  
Media/Marketing  
LWML Mid-South District

Our mothers, grandmothers, aunts and other women in our lives have molded and shaped us. We all have had many such women in our lives. Most of the women in my life have been strong, positive, and Christian leaders. My stepmother, Linda, has been the rock in my life since she entered it nearly 40 years ago. As an adult, I can say we are great friends.

My grandmothers, two by blood and two by choice, were strong God-fearing women, and free with advice, helping hands and listening ears.

During vicarage, we were blessed by our supervising pastor's family. His wife, Charlotte, was the epitome of hospitality and humility. She blessed me with a fine example to try to follow in my life as a pastor's wife. She became an adopted grandmother of our children and to this day she frequently blesses them.

Many, many, many ladies in the churches we have attended over the years during our ministry have been a blessing to me and others. There is always that special lady that takes you under their wing with special interest. Even if it is to slip you a little,

special treat.

Attending the LWML events, locally and nationally, we will meet many of these ladies. They are in all of our congregations.

You know who they are. Many of them are the “Marys,” quietly listening to God's Word, and many are the “Marthas,” hurrying along, making sure every last detail is done. During this special May, I challenge you to seek the wonderful women in your life and thank them. God's precious ladies are here — guiding the next generation,

that will, in their turn, guide the next.

See you, my precious ladies, in June in Mobile!

### LWML 38th Biennial Convention



• June 20-23  
• Mobile, Ala.

[lwml.org/convention](http://lwml.org/convention)



## New members, and new home!

GracePoint Lutheran Church, Munford, Tenn., received 17 souls into membership in March. Rev. Dan Hawkins also announced to the congregation the purchase of a permanent home for GracePoint that will be ready for occupancy this summer.

## Family grows in Clarksville

The members of Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, Tenn., welcomed 27 new members and children on Sunday, Feb. 24. The congregation celebrates the growth of its family — and God's kingdom!



## Custom quilt honors deacon

Tom McWilliams, former deacon of Faith, Union City, Tenn., was all smiles as he accepted a unique quilt made with love and signed by members of his church to support him during his battle with cancer.

After a career of expanding Christian missionary work around the world, McWilliams and his family retired to their home near Troy, Tenn., where Tom labored long to help keep Faith open and thriving during the hard years that followed the devastating economic crisis of 2008. Please keep Tom and his family in your prayers.



Monica Elling sewed February valentines interspersed with Bible verses into a personal size quilt, perfect for chilly winter days. The all-cotton quilt represents three weeks of design and machine stitching. The reverse contains Bible verses, a world map commemorating the McWilliams family's mission work, and autographs from well-wishers.



**Warmed by the world:** Tom McWilliams rests at Tiny Bakery, his family's Union City confectionary shop, following three weeks of radiation and chemotherapy. Shown with Tom are, from left, Monica Elling, Adolph Pancratz and Michael Elling.



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

## Ordained ministers celebrating anniversaries in 2019



### 70 Years

**Rev. Norman Groteluschen** (em)  
Germantown, Tenn.

### 60 Years

**Rev. Stanley Jones** (em)  
Bella Vista, Ark.

**Rev. Roy Bingenheimer** (em)  
Concordia, Mo.

### 55 Years

**Rev. Marvin Otto** (em)  
Kingsport, Tenn.

### 50 Years

**Rev. Clifford Herd** (em)  
Chattanooga, Tenn.

**Rev. Robert Mader** (em)  
Clarksville, Tenn.

**Rev. Herbert Swanson**  
River Valley Grace, Lamar, Ark.

**Rev. Louis Trebus** (em)  
Sevierville, Tenn.

### 45 Years

**Rev. H. Chris Powell** (em)  
Nashville, Tenn.

**Rev. Albert Quoss** (em)  
Bella Vista, Ark.

### 40 Years

**Rev. Gordon Besel** (em)  
Rogers, Ark.

**Rev. Richard Elseroad**  
Grace, Knoxville, Tenn.

**Rev. Martin Nutter**  
Faith, Tullahoma, Tenn.

**Rev. Paul Wiegert** (em)  
Crossville, Tenn.

### 35 Years

**Rev. Duncan Cox** (candidate)  
Pea Ridge, Ark.

**Rev. James Dunn**  
Immanuel, Murray, Ky.

**Rev. Robert Kellerman** (em)  
Casa Grande, Ariz.

**Rev. David Rubke** (em)  
Tullahoma, Tenn.

### 30 Years

**Rev. Paul Bushur**  
First, Chattanooga, Tenn.

**Rev. Richard Graves**  
LCMS Office of International Mission

**Rev. Mark Kophamer**  
Redeemer, Elizabethton, Tenn.

**Rev. LeRoy Leach** (em)  
Conway, Ark.

**Rev. Michael Miller**  
Redeemer, Harriman, Tenn.

**Rev. Brian Pummill**  
Peace, Cherokee Village, Ark.

### 25 Years

**Rev. Daniel Hawkins**  
GracePoint, Munford, Tenn.

**Rev. David Krause** (em)  
Bella Vista, Ark.

**Rev. Nathan Jansen**  
St. John, Burns, Tenn.

### 20 Years

**Rev. Fasil Alemayehu**  
Faith, Thompson's Station, Tenn.

**Rev. Timothy Henning**  
Trinity, Mena, Ark.

**Rev. Hiram Nunez** (em)  
Granbury, Texas

### 15 Years

**Rev. Joshua Willadsen**  
Bethel, Fort Smith, Ark.

### 10 Years

**Rev. Ronald Bacic**  
First, Little Rock, Ark.



**Rev. John Easterling**  
Redeemer L, Mountain Home, Ark.

**Rev. Timothy Matthew**  
Prince of Peace, Dayton, Tenn.

**Rev. John Merrill**  
First, Fort Smith, Ark.

**Rev. Edward Rosser**  
Good Shepherd, Chattanooga, Tenn.

**Rev. Michael Schleider**  
Zion, Alexander, Ark.

**Rev. Emil Woerner**  
Friends in Christ, Bryant, Ark.

### 5 Years

**Rev. David Appold**  
St. Paul, Paducah, Ky.

**Rev. Eric Phillips**  
Concordia, Nashville, Tenn.

*Well done, good and faithful  
servants!*

## INSTALLATIONS



**Rev. Henry H. Thompson** was ordained and installed as pastor of **St. Luke Lutheran Church, Malvern, Ark., on Sunday, March 10.** Attending were, from left (front row) Revs. Kevin Conger, Thompson, Jon Beyer, Stuart Marshall; (back row) Emil Woerner, Jim Walter, Dr. Roger Paavola and Michael Schleider and Vicar Anthony Johnson.



**Rev. Christopher Gorshe** was installed as associate pastor of **Bella Vista Lutheran Church, Bella Vista, Ark., on Feb. 24.** Attending were, from left, Revs. Rance Settle, Robert Herring, Paul Hass, JD Zischke, Hubert Bernthal, Al Quoss, Gorshe, Richard Mayer, Brian Bibler, Stan Jones, Ken Haydon and John Lindner.



**Rev. Michael Croom** was installed as pastor of **Trinity Lutheran Church, Memphis, on Feb. 10.** Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Don Schmidt, Dan Elkins, Dr. Roger Paavola, Croom, Greg Prauner, Clarence Martin; (middle row) Clayton Sellers, Jim Belles, Jerry Staubaugh; (back row) Mark Goble, Chuck Neugebauer, Jeremy McDonald and Terry Tieman.



# Musicians: Prepare for 'Music on the Mountain'

By David Cox  
Camp Director

Camp Trinity on Petit Jean Mountain will be filled with the sound of music the weekend of Sept. 27-29 as it hosts the second praise music festival. The event has been renamed "Music on the Mountain: Festival of Praise" and expanded from one day to the entire weekend.

Music on the Mountain begins Friday with a best practices workshop on worship music. Musicians who attend the workshop will pay a nominal fee to cover the cost of meals.

On Friday night, musicians will gather around camp — in the historic church, on the dining hall deck, at Firestone outdoor chapel, on cabin porches — to share songs and make music together. The public is invited to come and listen to the music (and sing along).

The main part of the festival is Saturday as bands perform half-hour sets on the lawn in front of Trinity Chapel. Any genre of Christian music is welcome — contemporary Christian, old-time gospel, country, blues, jazz, bluegrass. Every band that takes the stage will be asked to cover a traditional Lutheran

hymn in the style of their choosing.

Barbecue dinners will be available mid-day, and concessions will be open all day. Corn-hole, sand volleyball, horseshoes and other games will be set up for families and friends to enjoy together.

The festival ends with a service of song Sunday morning, with the message given by the Rev. Mark Tooley, pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, and pastoral advisor on the Camp Trinity Board of Directors.

The first festival, in September 2018, was a one-day event called the Battle of the Bands. The camp board decided to eliminate the contest with its panel of judges; however, the audience will still "vote" with cash in jars for their favorite bands to determine the People's Choice Award.

Musicians who are taking the stage on Saturday can stay overnight at camp with their families at no charge, wheth-



Musicians will sing praises to the Triune God in front of historic Trinity Lutheran Church during "Music on the Mountain: Festival of Praise" this September.

er in the bunkhouse cabins, in tents on the campground or in RVs.

Musicians and bands interested in signing up for a time slot on the stage Saturday or to register for the entire weekend, can learn more at [lutherancamp.org](http://lutherancamp.org).

## Summer camp filling up

Registration is still open for summer camp at Camp Trinity. However, due to higher-than-normal early registration numbers, some sessions may be filled or near capacity. Parents who want to register their children can check the camp website for availability ([lutherancamp.org](http://lutherancamp.org)).

IN PHOTO: Summer campers saddle up for a trail ride.



## Deadline for the August issue is June 15

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

Send email submissions to:  
[LW@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:LW@mid-southlcms.com)

or send by postal mail to:  
Judy Otto  
150 N. Maury St.  
Holly Springs, MS 38635