

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | July 2019

July's Focus:

Veterans

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.

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

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



On July 1, 1863, General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia of 75,000 men and the 97,000 men of the Union Army of The Potomac under General George G. Meade met in an unplanned confrontation at a place called Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Neither side was properly prepared for what was about to happen. For 3 days, more men actually fought and died than in any other battle on North American soil. In three days of brutal fighting, 172,000 troops battled with over 634 cannon, firing an estimated 569 tons of ammunition, leaving over 8,000 dead soldiers, 5,000 horses killed, 27,000 wounded soldiers, and over 11,000 captured or missing. Historians believe that, despite two more terrible years of warfare, the

Confederacy never recovered from its losses at Gettysburg.

Four months later, on Nov. 19, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln dedicated the cemetery where the thousands of soldiers were buried. In his dedication speech – the Gettysburg Address – Lincoln started with the words, *"Fourscore and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal..."* He concluded his epic speech, saying, *"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us*

to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

Those veterans who have served in the American Revolution, the War Between the States, two World Wars, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, the Iraqi War, and the continuing War on Terrorism should never be forgotten. It has been said it was veterans, not the preacher, who preserved the freedom of religion. The veteran, not the reporters, preserved the freedom of the press. Veterans, not the poet, preserved our freedom of speech. It is veterans, not politicians, who preserved our right to vote.

Some years ago, a major Protestant denomination struggled with its new version of its hymnal because it failed to include the hymn, “Onward Christian Soldiers.” The reason the people were given was that the words sounded to militaristic and could be construed as a reminder of the Christian Crusades of the 200 years between 1096 and 1291. We should not become too naïve to misunderstand the meaning of this great hymn: *“Onward Christian soldiers! Marching as to*

war, with the cross of Jesus Going on before. Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; forward into battle, see, His banners go! Onward, Christian soldiers! Marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus, Going on before.”

However, this lyric poem, according to Sabine Baring-Gould, its author, was written in about 15 minutes in 1865. His original words are used in most modern hymnals – at least 400 years after the conclusion of the Christian Crusades. His final verse is, *“Onward, then, ye people! Join our happy throng; Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song. Glory, laud, and honor unto Christ, the King; This through countless ages men and angels sing. Onward, Christian soldiers! Marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus, Going on before.”*

It’s clear, in the context of world history at that time Baring-Gould’s intention was not about Crusades, nor was it about the Battle of Gettysburg, Vietnam, Korea, World Wars, or Desert Storm. He wrote about the greatest, largest, and deadliest war of all of human history – Satan’s war against humanity. It is very clear that Baring-Gould’s words pointed to the battle that was won for us when Christ Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, but rose victorious – having defeated our evil foe. It is fairly obvious that we are veterans in this war.

Yet, the history of mankind since the time of Cain and Abel, demonstrates the plight of humanity that led to thousands of years of war and millions

of casualties. St Paul wrote to his young friend, Timothy saying, *“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.”* (II Timothy 2:1-4, ESV)

Let us never forget: We stand in honor and salute our veterans who have battled to keep us a strong and free nation under God. But, we bend our knees and bow before our Captain who has won the ultimate victory for us now and on to life everlasting, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your servant and follower of our Leader, Jesus,
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



Welcome to the Mid-South District

The Mid-South District welcomes the candidates and vicar from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

CALL CANDIDATES

Joshua Ralston, Zion Lutheran Church - London, AR - Pastor
William Zwick, First Lutheran Church - Harrison, AR – Pastor

VICAR

Richard Owen, Faith Lutheran Church - Hopkinsville, KY - Vicar



L-R: Rachel and Joshua Ralston, Rev. Roger Paavola, Neely and Martha Owen



Placing Vicar Neely Owen as convertible vicar at Faith Lutheran Church in Hopkinsville, KY. Pictured with Vicar Neely are President Paavola and Rev. Larry Peters



7th Annual Breakfast Honoring Vets



On May 25, 2019 **Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church** hosted 92 local veterans, including vets from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and all 5 uniformed services for a pancake, sausage, bacon, and scrambled egg breakfast. The program included a color guard to post the colors, pledge of allegiance, presentation of memento pins to veterans, a guest speaker, and singing patriotic music. Sixteen volunteers did setup, decoration, food prep, audio-visual, and cleanup tasks. About half of the vets participating were from outside our church. This was the 7th annual edition of this event.



Memorial Day Action Team

3rd year event



For the third year **Shepherd of the Hills** in Horseshoe Bend, Arkansas, organized a Thrivent Action Team to honor veterans and their families on Memorial Day. The Memorial Day Action team planned, prepared and served free brats, hot dogs, chips and drinks to close to 100 people who stayed after the Memorial Day Service conducted by the local American Legion Post in Veterans Park. The team passed out US flag stickers with the words, "God Bless America," written on them to those attending the service as their free pass for the lunch. This lunch continues to draw people from the community for this special event and encourages people to stay and visit with each other after the Memorial Day service.





Vets & Active Military Saluted

A Year Review



Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN as an acknowledged chapter of Operation Barnabas through the Armed Forces Office of the LCMS, salutes our active and veteran military throughout the year. In November of each year, we honor our military with a choral tribute in worship, as each branch stands to applause, and each veteran is pinned with a red, white, and blue ribbon to signify their sacrifice for our country. Both active and retired military personnel are honored with a listing in the bulletin, and our deceased veterans are included in the roll as well, as they remain dear to our hearts. Our school children also pay tribute to their heroes in a special chapel service.

As an ongoing ministry, CTK's Quilts of Valor team, Sewn to Honor, designs and pieces beautiful patriotic quilts which are then presented to veterans who have been touched by war. A reception is held in their honor.

On seven significant days throughout the year, including Flag Day, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Patriots Day, CTK's Youth Ministry plants American flags at the homes of those who have subscribed to this service. Each flag is placed with a prayer for our country by team members.

Finally, Job Comfort Dog, in his dual-vested role as Kare-9 Job, ministers specifically to veterans, visiting them in assisted living and nursing facilities, and attending community events such as the recent Family Freedom Festival at VFW Post 5066.

Christ the King is thankful for the sacrifice and devotion to duty which characterize our veterans; it is our privilege to honor them, continually praying that God grants them peace in the knowledge of a job well-done.

Contributed by -
Genie Swan



Grab Bags for Officers



After worship on Sunday June 2, 2019, almost 2 dozen members of Concordia Lutheran Church, Kingsport, TN assembled “grab bags” for approximately 120 Kingsport Police Officers.

Using one of his two Thrivent Action Team projects, Pastor Paul Becker spear-headed this community service event.

Action Team funds were used to purchase granola bars, water bottles, and cough drops. The clear plastic bags and hand sanitizers and scripture cards were donated.

In addition, Thrivent choice dollars were approved to purchase scripture booklets from God’s Word to the Nations Mission Society: Encouragement for Law Enforcement – Put on the Full Armor of God. Each booklet has a sticker with contact information from Concordia, so the officers will know who is thinking of and praying for them.

Special thanks to our Outreach Team members Jane Hillhouse and Teri Miller for going above and beyond to make this project a success!

Feed My Sheep!

In late May Trinity HOPE took a team of eight to Haiti so they could visit Christian schools and inspect the feeding programs run by the ministry. The little girl in the pictured enjoys the bowl of rice and beans she receives at school. She attends Grace School in Thomasique, Haiti. This Christian school is new to the Trinity HOPE program, receiving their feeding program just this year. Last year the 175 children that attend this school had nothing to eat. For many of them, the meal they now receive at school is the only food they receive all day.

Thanks be to God for allowing this school to now be fed, and for the other 128 schools (24,000 meals) Trinity HOPE feeds every school day. To learn more about how you can further support the ministry of Trinity HOPE, please visit our website at www.trinityhope.org. Every quarter allows us to feed another child for a day!

— Keith Logan





Christus Victor Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN, recently baptized another beautiful child of God. Pictures are proud parents Derrick and Jessica Moeller and baby Bradley. God is good!

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 5/31/19 (5 Months)

Anticipated Amount
 (25% of budget) \$638,448
 Actual Receipts..... 635,023
 Over (under) anticipated amount **(\$3,425)**

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (5 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions \$180,090
 Allocated to Tanzania 10,417
 Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support
 (70% of receipts) 444,516
 Total Receipts \$635,023

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (5 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 5/31/19..... \$635,023
 Actual Receipts as of 5/31/18..... \$619,524
 Over (under) prior year receipts \$15,499

LWML Biennial Convention, June 20-23, 2019



The LWML Biennial Convention was well attended by 3600 women and some men. It was hot and very humid in Mobile, Alabama.



LWML biennial golf tournament winners with a 67, 5 under par at Robert Trent Jones Magnolia. John and Wendy Arth and Rev. Dr. Roger and Pat Paavola.

Mission Trip 2019 Tanzania

The 2019 mission team from the Mid-South District LCMS made up of members from Our Savior Lutheran in Cabot AR, Prince of Peace Lutheran in White House, TN and a team from Ascension Lutheran Church in Wichita, KS. Bishop Dr. Emmanuel Makala of the South East of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) sent us to the parish of Tinde. This is a small rural agricultural village, a thirty minute drive from the SELVD headquarters in Shinyanga. Jeofry Tenga is the parish pastor. The congregation suffered from a storm that caused the walls of their church to cave in before they were able to roof it. This event led to people getting discouraged and leaving the church. Bishop Makala felt that our visit would encourage the pastor and congregation.

The team from the United States partnered with local pastors, evangelists and church personnel coordinated by Pastor Tenga to go to three locations in the Tinde parish to visit homes. Two days were spent in the village of Shabuluba, where 499 were baptized, land identified and purchased to start a new church. One day was spent in the village of Nshishinhulu where 211 were baptized, and the final two days were spent in the villages of Welezo where 422 were baptized, and land was identified for a church to be built at that site. A total of 1142 souls were baptized during this outreach event.

In our visits to hundreds of homes in the Tinde Parish we visited homes of families a few were Catholic, African Inland Church, or Seventh Day Adventist and many said they were traditional believers. In the homes of the traditional believers, many who heard the Gospel story came to understand that their relationship with God is because of what Jesus Christ did for them. No longer do they have to rely on the charms of the witch doctor to establish a relationship with God. They are united with God through the blood Jesus shed for them.

One of the major problems troubling Sukuma society is superstition and trust in the witch doctors as their source of hope. This has caused and are still causing chaos in Sukuma society such as; the killing of Albinos, and the killings of old women with red eyes who were thought to be witches.

Many sick people have died because they delayed medical treatment in favor of the local witch doctor advice. It is expensive to seek advice from



the witch doctor who charge for their services in money, cows and goats causing an economic drain on the family. The good news is the Gospel that sets them free! Glory to God.

One woman I visited told me that her husband believed in the charms of the witch doctor and he would not become a Christian, but she wanted to hear the Gospel story. When she heard it she said it is so good what Jesus has done for me, I will be a Christian alone and we baptized her in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Before we could leave her home her husband showed up and they talked. He wanted me to tell him the Gospel message also. He gave up his charms and was baptized also.

The team also participated in mercy visits to bring food and supplies to the Albino compound in Shinyanga and to the women in the Deaconess house that trains primarily Albino women in life skills and sewing in order to have a chance at a secure and safe environment once they go out on their own. We also worshipped at the Mwadui Lutheran Secondary School with the 300 plus students. We enjoyed touring the school and seeing the improvements made. We also visited with Eric and Linda Funke, missionaries, who are completing seven years of service to this school.



Please check out pictures and stories at our website <http://elct-selvd.org>
Bob Allen, phone: 270-535-7370

Prayer Summary, June 2019

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 2019.

PRAYER CONCERNS

APAR BOL and NYUK BOL (daughter and son of Nathaniel Bol, South Sudan)

REV. DUNCAN COX (Pea Ridge, AR)

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

MRS. ALISON HAWKINS (Mid-South District Office)

MRS. DOROTHY KRITSCH (Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Sharps Chapel, TN)

REV. PAUL KRITSCH (Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Sharps Chapel, TN)

MR. TOM KYNER (Deacon, Hawkins County Lutheran, Rogersville, TN)

DIONNE MILAM (Secretary to Pastor Toopes, Holy Trinity, Bowling Green, KY)

REV. DR. HERBERT MUELLER (1st Vice President of the Synod)

MRS. MEGAN NAVRATH (daughter of Rev. Carl and Gwen Wenck, Grace Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, TN)

REV. DAVID RUBKE (Tullahoma, TN)

REV. MERLIN SEPMEYER (Crossville, TN)

MRS. LOIS SOHN (Memphis, TN)

MRS. SUE ANN TOOPES (wife of Rev. Andy Toopes, Holy Trinity Lutheran, Bowling Green, KY)

MR. WHITNEY TYLER (Kansas City, MO son of Steve & Julie Tyler, Mid-South District)

REV. NEIL VANDERBUSH (Former Pastor in Bentonville, Arkansas)

MR. RAY VESTER (Deacon, St. John's Lutheran, Stuttgart, AR)

MS. PHYLLIS WALLACE (LCMS Board of Directors, St. Louis, MO)

MR. MATT ZAVADA (son of Ray & Cindy Zavada, Ray is head of development in the Michigan District)

MRS. JEANETTE ZIRBEL (wife of Pastor Jason Zirbel, Grace Lutheran, Greenwood)

Our deepest sympathies to:

The family and friends of **MRS. FLORENCE PROFT** (Trinity Lutheran, Mena, AR) who passed away on June 20, 2019.

CALL UPDATE ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. William Ringer, Pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, New Ipswich, NH and Christ Lutheran Church, Troy, NH** has accepted a call to serve as **Pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church, Russellville, AR.**

Rev. Eric Longman, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Jackson, MO, has accepted a call to serve as **Pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR.**

Rev. Greg Prauner, Associate Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN has accepted a call to serve as **Senior Pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN.**

Rev. David Schmidt, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Royal Oak, MI, has accepted a call to serve as **Pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR.**

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Ms. Heidi Jerry, Principal, Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR,** has been accepted a call to serve as **Principal at St. Mark Lutheran School, Houston, TX.**

DECLINED: **Ms. Jennifer Lutz, teacher, Martin Luther Immanuel School, Joplin, MO,** has returned the call to serve as a Teacher at **First Lutheran Church & School, Fort Smith, AR.**

SPRING PLACEMENTS

CANDIDATES: **Candidate William Zwick** (Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne) to **FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, Harrison, AR as Pastor.**

Candidate Joshua Ralston (Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne) to **ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, London, AR as Pastor.**

Candidate Henry Thompson, Jr., (COY-SMP) to **St. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Malvern, AR as Pastor.**

VICARS: **Mr. Richard Neely Owen (AR FW)** to **FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, Hopkinsville, KY.**

CANDIDATES: Candidate Kara Harbin (Concordia University, Texas) to **CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN and School, Memphis, TN** as Teacher.

SPRING PLACEMENTS continued

Candidate Ashley Myers (Concordia University, Texas) to **GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, Knoxville, TN** as Director of Christian Education.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS

Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR – Pastor

First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN – Pastor

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rogers, AR - Pastor

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Horseshoe Bend, AR – Pastor

St. John’s Lutheran Church, Lafe, AR - Associate Pastor

Mid-South District – Executive Director for Missions and Ministry

IN THE CALLING PROCESS - COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

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

Christ the King Lutheran School, Memphis, TN – Teacher

Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR – Teacher

Heavenly Host Lutheran Church, Cookeville, TN – DCE

Immanuel Lutheran Church & School, Memphis, TN – Principal

St. John’s Lutheran Church, Stuttgart, AR – DCE



Mid-South District, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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Angela Fowler, *Executive Director for Business & Finance*

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

Allen Piepenbrink, *Executive Director for Schools and Early Childhood*

Missy Washburn, *Administrative Assistant to the District President*

Rena McElwain, *Communications & Marketing Specialist*

Carolyn Metzger, *Finance Assistant*

Julie Tyler, *Administrative Assistant for Missions and Education*

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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 **July 22, 2019** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com. The August issue will focus on Stewardship.