



/AUGUST 2019

MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

A day to forgive; a way to forgive

When we were reminded of a deadline for the August *Lutheran Witness* insert, Judy Otto, our insert editor, suggested one of many possible topics: International Forgiveness Day.



Rev. Dr.
Roger Paavola
District President

Really?! I had to look it up!

International Forgiveness Day is celebrated(?) the first Sunday of every August. But Global Forgiveness Day is held on Aug. 27. On the other hand, National Forgiveness Day comes in October, and World Forgiveness Day is celebrated on Sept. 7. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, dates back to before the time of Christ in Jewish tradition and is celebrated in October. And, according to Wikipedia (allegedly the source of everything that is true), the first Sunday in Lent for Christians is called "Forgiveness Sunday."

Forgive me, but I'm confused. Is a Forgiveness Day a day set aside to forgive and to be forgiven? It must be, because two groups have laid claim to a Forgiveness Day. Because there's enough trouble and strife in the world, one writer suggests, "Two forgiveness days can only help to make things a little better."

Global Forgiveness Day began in 1994 by the Christian Embassy of Christ's Ambassadors from Vancouver, British Columbia. The International Forgiveness Day was created by the World Forgiveness Alliance, a non-denominational, educational foundation that's "dedicated to evoking the healing power of forgiveness worldwide," according to its founder, Robert W. Plath, from Mill Valley, Calif. He urged his followers to "take a few moments to sincerely forgive someone. And make it public. That way forgiveness will spread."

He continues: "A day to forgive and be forgiven, Forgiveness Day is a chance to set things right, to put aside old differences, move beyond grievances and hurts, and start afresh."

Another take is Desmond Tutu's Global Forgiveness Challenge, an online program designed to "help people learn the practical steps to forgiveness so they can live with greater love and joy in their life."

The act of forgiveness is

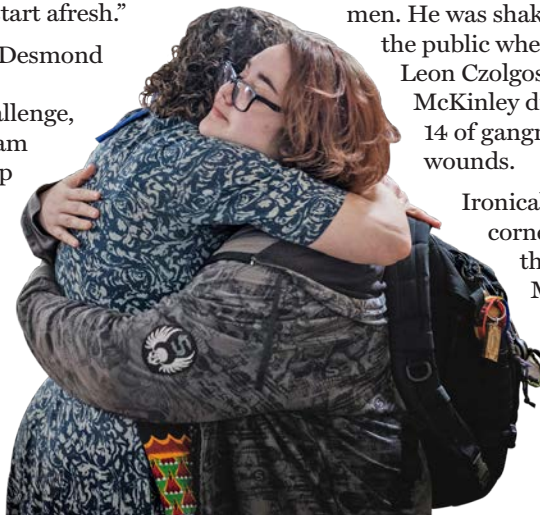
a conscious decision. It makes unconscious or spontaneous actions come to the light. Forgiving others (and ourselves) does not fix the mistakes. But forgiveness releases us from the heavy burden of either holding grudges or carrying bitterness in our heart. Forgiveness allows us to let go of past mistakes while helping to cultivate a deeper sense of compassion for ourselves (and others).

Consider William McKinley. He was elected president of the United States for two terms. He was scheduled to be present at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y. Although his secretary had canceled visiting the Temple of Music, McKinley restored it to his itinerary. For his entrance into the Music Temple, the organ played the *Star Spangled Banner*. As McKinley greeted the large crowd, the organist played a series of Bach compositions.

But on that day, Sept. 5, 1901, McKinley was shot twice in the abdomen. He was shaking hands with the public when an anarchist, Leon Czolgosz, shot him. McKinley died on Sept. 14 of gangrene from his wounds.

Ironically, around the corner from where the wounded McKinley was being treated, a young scientist was displaying

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FORGIVENESS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

his invention in which objects beneath the skin on a human body could be viewed. It was called an X-ray. Had it been used, it might have found the fragments that eventually caused the gangrene that killed the president.

God offers a great means that can save lives eternally. People who dwell in their sin and refuse to seek God's forgiveness are not availing themselves to the means that is "just around the corner" — the means of grace offered through His Church in His mystery of the forgiveness of our sins.

Back in the 1960s, our towns became fitted with little yellow triangular signs — civil defense shelters. We learned how to hide under our desks at school if an air-raid warning siren sounded. People were shown how to build bomb shelters in their basements, in case of tornadoes or an attack from foreign countries. Some people were trained to keep an eye out just in case an enemy decided to attack. These methods of protection were "there" just in case we needed them.

But Christ's promise of forgiveness is always there. When we read His words about how to talk to our brother if he sins against us, however, we wonder, "Why bother?" After all, if the guy sins against us, he deserves whatever punishment he's going to get!

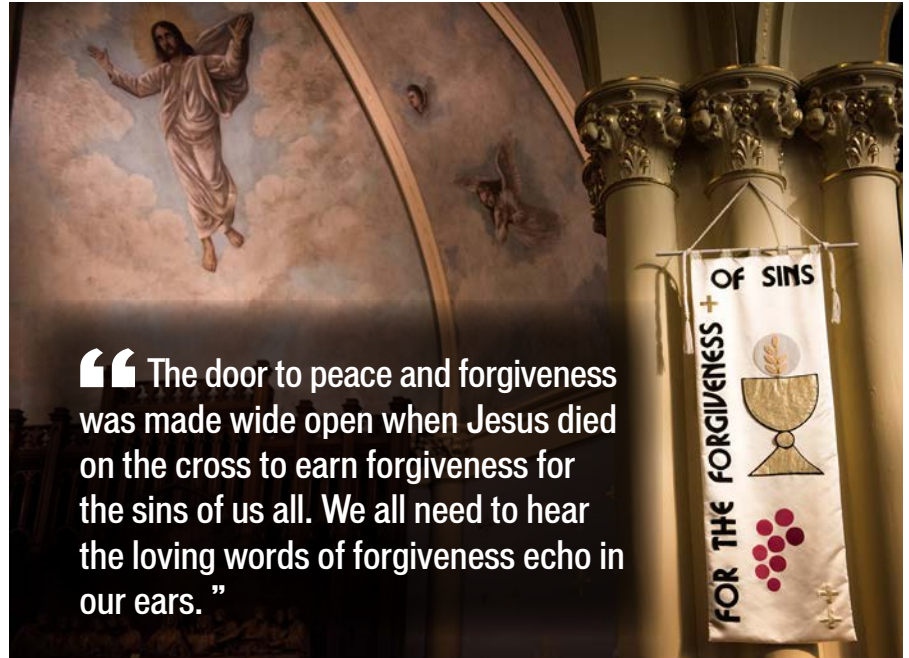
"If he sins against me, then maybe I ought to do some serious confronting!" In our sinful world, this far too often becomes the attitude. Texts even appear to support this: "Jesus said, 'If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault.'" Period!

Pointing out the faults in others is easy. But Jesus taught:

"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" — **Matt. 7:3**

Jesus later says:

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between



“ The door to peace and forgiveness was made wide open when Jesus died on the cross to earn forgiveness for the sins of us all. We all need to hear the loving words of forgiveness echo in our ears. ”

you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother” — **Matt. 18:15**

It's not to castigate. It's not to turn away. It's to turn the person back to God through forgiveness. It's not going after those who sinned with a vengeance, but approaching them in love.

It's not easy to confront someone in their sins. The most strident complaint about the Lutheran Church is the "I a poor miserable sinner..." dialogue we use in our liturgy. People don't like to admit sin, or sit next to someone who just admitted theirs to you. But the door to peace and forgiveness was made wide open when Jesus died on the cross to earn forgiveness for the sins of us all. We all need to hear the loving words of forgiveness echo in our ears. God loves us despite our sin, proving His forgiveness by sending His Son to die in our place.

The biggest mystery in life is trying to understand how this God holds us in the palm of His great and wonderful hand of grace and promises us that we are forgiven. We should fall to our knees in grateful, thankful praise to Him.

Last winter in Tucson, Ariz., I saw a

bumper sticker that stated "*Mi Casa es Su Casa*." It means my house is your house. Wouldn't it be great to have bumper stickers that read "*Mi pardon es Su pardon*" — "My forgiveness is your forgiveness"?

Martin Luther stated it this way in his explanation of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer — "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us":

"We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us."



God freely forgives us. His means of grace can accomplish forgiving others as a sign that we are privileged — and it's not limited to some select days (like International Forgiveness Day). It's forgiveness to use and practice every hour as we live in His forgiveness every day.

Educating servants (and future servants)

For the remainder of this summer and fall, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSFW), continues to offer additional education courses which are open to pastors, church workers and laypeople at LCMS sites across the country. Topics address a variety of theological subjects taught by CTSFW faculty and other theologians.

Making Music for the Lord: The Role of Choral Music in the Divine Service According to Chronicles and the New Testament

► Sept. 17–19 in Carlyle, Ill.

► Sept. 23–25 in Fort Wayne, Ind.

The use of instrumental music in the Divine Service has always been regarded with some suspicion because it was not authorized in the Pentateuch or in the New Testament. This course considers what Chronicles has to say about its divine institution, its liturgical function and its theological significance and how this has influenced the



New Testament and the use of choral music in the Lutheran Church.

For more information about this or other continuing education opportunities, call Kara Mertz at 260-452-2103, email CE@ctsfw.edu, or visit ctsfw.edu/CE.

Fall and spring confirmation retreats

If your congregation has young people preparing for confirmation, here are some great opportunities to expand their experiences and knowledge. CTSFW has developed Christ Academy Confirmation Retreats that offer confessional catechesis, taught by CTSFW faculty. The retreats finish up a three-year catechetical series on

the six chief parts of Luther's Small Catechism:

Confession and Absolution

► Oct. 4–6

The Lord's Supper

► Feb. 21–23, 2020

Confirmants are encouraged to attend these events together with their pastor, as a complement to their ongoing instruction. Each retreat costs \$110 per individual, which includes room and board as well as classes and fun for both students and chaperones. Attendees stay in the dorms and eat on campus, experiencing both the daily life and liturgical worship of seminary, forging friendships with fellow Lutherans their age.

Learn more at ctsfw.edu/confirmation. To register, email ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu or call 260-452-3140 with the number of male and female students, chaperones and T-shirt sizes.

Considering pastoral, deaconess ministry?

The **Prayerfully Consider Visit** invites men and women of all ages to explore the pastoral and diaconal training happening at **Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind.**, and gives a time for contemplation on the vocations of pastor and deaconess. The event will be held Oct. 10–12.

The Prayerfully Consider Visit offers prospective students an occasion to explore the campus, engage the students and faculty, experience the rich fellowship and worship, and consider the vocation of pastor or deaconess.

During this three-day visit, prospective students gather as a group to gain a richer and fuller picture of life as a seminary student and to investigate the options available to them at CTSFW.

For more information and to register, visit ctsfw.edu/ctsfw-events/prayerfully-consider-visit.

Contemplate is an event for college-age or older potential students, providing an opportunity to learn more about life in the **Concordia Seminary, St. Louis**, community and the preparation that leads to service as a pastor, missionary, chaplain or deaconess in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Contemplate encompasses time focused on discerning a vocation, attending classes and interacting with current students. A campus tour takes place on Thursday afternoon followed by a welcome reception and dinner with current students and student leadership. Participants are paired with a student mentor who can discuss and answer questions from a student's perspective.

For more information and to register, visit csl.edu/admissions/visit/contemplate.

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of May 31, 2019 (5 months)

Anticipated amount (25 percent of budget).....	\$638,448
Actual receipts	\$635,023
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$3,425)

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$180,090
Allocated to Tanzania	\$10,417
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70 % of receipts) ..	\$444,516
Total receipts	\$635,023

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of May 31, 2019	\$635,023
Actual receipts as of May 31, 2018	\$619,52
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$15,499

CALL DAY 2019

Call Day was held at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., (CTSFW), on April 30. The night before, deaconess students and second-year seminarians found out where they will serve as an intern or vicar. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), held both events on May 1. **The Mid-South District received one pastor and one vicar from CTSFW.**

Pictured with Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola (center), district president, are, from left, Rachel and Joshua Ralston, who was called as pastor of Zion, London, Ark., and Richard and Martha Owen. Richard was placed as vicar at Faith, Hopkinsville, Ky. (see page 7).



OUR SAVIOR, NASHVILLE

Celebrating missions

On Pentecost Sunday, June 9, at Our Savior, Rev. J.P. Cima and his wife, Aimee, LCMS missionaries to Cambodia, shared in a Bible class how God is reaching the people of Cambodia with the Gospel. This was one of a series of presentations by LCMS missionaries and leaders in overseas missions to inform and inspire Our Savior's members about how our Lord sends us to be His

witnesses in all parts of the world.

Bishop Emmanuel Makala of the Southeast Lake Victoria Diocese of the Tanzanian Evangelical Lutheran Church will be the next guest presenter. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of the Lord is growing rapidly on the continent of Africa. The Tanzanian Evangelical Lutheran Church has more than 6.5 million members!



From left, Rev. Lane Reuter, Our Savior senior pastor, welcomes Rev. J.P. and Aimee Cima, who are serving in Cambodia.

Annual yard sale supports Trinity HOPE

"For I was hungry and you gave me food."

Matt. 25:35a

The huge yard sale in the parking lot of Our Savior is an annual summer event. All proceeds benefit Trinity HOPE, a ministry that physically and spiritually feeds thousands of hungry children, teachers and cooks each day in Christian schools throughout Haiti. Every school that Trinity HOPE feeds is a Christian school, many connected with a

local Christian church actively teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hundreds of people from the community came to this summer's yard sale. Almost \$6,000 was raised to feed children. From a welcome tent, visitors received a "thank you" and information about the ministry of Our Savior Lutheran Church and Academy.

Our Savior is a Trinity HOPE partner along with many other congregations and individuals in the Mid-South District and beyond, to help feed about 24,000 Haitian children daily in more than 128 Christian schools. For 25 cents a meal, each child is fed a bowl of rice or corn, beans and a tasty sauce developed by nutritionists.

CHRIST THE KING, MEMPHIS



Don Carroll

New members welcomed

Christ the King (CTK) welcomed another class of new members in April during a worship service. All new members, as well as those considering membership, are invited to a "Connect" class held on Sunday mornings, during which they learn about service, fellowship and worship opportunities, as well as communicating with the church office staff. If you are interested in membership at Christ the King, please call the church office at 901-682-8404.



CTK honors class of 2019

The Christ the King confirmation class of 2019 was honored at a breakfast on Sunday, May 19, with extended family members, friends and members of the CTK congregation present. The seventh-grade parents and students helped host the breakfast. The class presented thank-you gifts to Rev. Charles Neugebauer, senior pastor, and Mid-South District first vice-president; Rev. Mark Goble, associate pastor; and Genie Swan, CTK community relations coordinator. The beautiful handiwork of Mrs. Willie Garner, who created their confirmation banners, was also acknowledged. The congregation thanks our gracious Father for the opportunity to raise up future Lutheran leaders.

‘Well done, good and faithful servant’

Meins concludes 33 years of service at St. John’s



Now and then: Brenda Meins, above, at her recent retirement ceremony, and, right, pictured during her first year at St. John’s Lutheran School.



After 33 years of faithful service to St. John’s Lutheran School, Stuttgart, Ark., Brenda Meins is retiring. Brenda began her work on Nov. 7, 1986.

“I remember the first day clearly, like it was yesterday” says Brenda, who began as a part-time employee, but after a year or two, it turned into a full-time secretarial position. She has seen a lot during her career, including hundreds of students, numerous faculty, eight

principals and even a tornado in 2008.

“That was the most trying year of all,” Brenda says. “The building was in a terrible mess and we moved offices four times that year while the school building was being repaired.”

On Wednesday, May 15, after the closing chapel, Brenda was recognized

and acknowledged in front of students, friends, staff, teachers, parents, alumni and church members. She was presented with a plaque and a book that the students had compiled wishing her luck.

The school yearbook was also dedicated to Brenda and showcased some pictures of her and various students throughout her 33 years.

“Mrs. Brenda is going to be missed!” said Kristian Dabbs, principal of St. John’s Lutheran School. “Her knowledge is invaluable. She knows what I’m going to ask before I do — she is that good!”

“She loves every one of our students like they were her own.”

Brenda and her husband, Scott, are lifelong Lutherans and have been married for 44 years. They have two children and four grandchildren, daughter Jill (and Rusty) Bulloch and their children, Conrad (17) and Anna Kate (12); and son Kirk (and Monica) Meins and their children, Darla (5) and Raymond (2).

When asked what her plans were for after retiring, Brenda stated that they will be spending more

time in Mountain View, Ark., where they have a cabin. “For weekends, breaks and summers, we have been going to Mountain View to get away. We intend to go up there more, that’s the plan.”

Submitted by Kristian Dabbs with assistance from Bill Shrum, reporter, Stuttgart Daily Leader.

Celebration Lutheran Church, Seymour, Tenn., lived up to its name on May 12 as seven new members were welcomed into the family. This quadrupled Celebration’s membership! From left, Steven Stoeckle, Mary Ann Stoeckle, Rev. Lou Trebus, Patrick and Eileen Spinks, Ralph and Debbie McLeod and Ralph Hamlin.



Back to school!



“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

Prov. 22.6

By Frances Bacic

Media/Marketing, LWML Mid-South District

It's that time a year again! Summer is winding down. Children, parents and teachers are getting ready to go back to school. Parents are ready to say “Tag, you're it! Back to you, teachers.”

Do you know what? Everyone is ready to get back to a schedule! Don't get me wrong. I love my summer vacation. Two months to complete professional development, to visit family, swim and just be restored. But two weeks into vacation, I can say I was already getting stir crazy. I had cleaned most of my house, finished several sewing projects and completed 15 hours of online professional development.

Then we started to travel: Alabama, Michigan and Florida. Yes, I was a glutton for punishment, trying to see all the family that I could visit in my summer, along with attending two conventions.

Yes, I am ready to go back to school. I am restored and relaxed and have forgotten the challenges and woes of teaching the previous year. I am ready to be what my students need me to be.

One thing that I ask of you who are reading this: Pray.



Pray for all the:

- **Students**, preschool through college. Pray that they learn all that God has intended for them to learn. Pray that they can be disciples of Christ. That they be the examples that He would want them to be when situations come up in their lives.
- **Teachers**, public, parochial or private. Pray to give them the skills to lead the students to an understanding of Christ's love for them, even in classrooms where His name may not be proclaimed. May they be examples of Christ's love for their students, that they may support the students in whatever their needs may be.
- **Parents**. Let them know that they are entrusting their babies to people who care. Help them to remember that you are always with their child even when their child might not make the best choices.

Faith welcomes vicar ... and future pastor

Richard Neely Owen was installed as vicar of Faith, Hopkinsville, Ky., on Sunday, June 9, 2019, by the Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Mid-South District president, and the Rev. Larry A. Peters, senior pastor of Grace, Clarksville, Tenn.

Vicar Owen is in the alternate route program of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., and is a delayed vicar, who will remain to be ordained and installed as pastor of Faith.

Vicar Owen and his wife, Martha, have two daughters (who are both church workers) and several grandchildren. The Owens are no strangers to the Mid-South

District, having lived in Paducah, Ky., and been members of St. Paul.

Prior to attending seminary, Vicar Owen was a practicing attorney, prosecuting attorney and federal judge. He is currently serving his second term on the Synod's Commission on Constitutional Matters. He will serve under the supervision of Peters, whose congregation, Grace, birthed Faith Lutheran Church more than 50 years ago.

The congregations of Grace and Faith rejoice that the Church has placed Vicar Owen in Hopkinsville, and they pray God's blessings upon his service there.

— Submitted by Rev. Larry Peters



From left, Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Vicar Richard Owen and Rev. Larry Peters.

WANTED:

Petal Pushers to decorate 2020 float

Lutheran Hour Ministries has shared the theme of the Petal Pushers' float for the 2020 Tournament of Roses Parade: "Anchored in Jesus."

For decades, the volunteers of the Petal Pushers team have worked tirelessly to prepare beautifully adorned floats that participate in the nationally televised parade and proclaim Christ's love for the world.

This project requires not only a monumental volunteer effort, but substantial funds as well. A secure online donation page has been established. For congregations or individuals who would like



In Heb. 6:19, we are reminded that "Jesus is our Hope." So, you could say, as Christians, we are confidently "Anchored In Jesus."

to support or participate with the Petal Pushers as they prepare the float, visit petalpushers.org, or send donations to The Lutheran Hour Float Committee, P.O. Box 20044, Riverside CA 92516-0044.

Please share this opportunity with your congregation — and pray for another great year of sharing Christ through the float ministry. Everyone 13 and older is welcome to help decorate the float. Registration begins in September.

About Lutheran Hour Ministries



Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) began at the grassroots level as the Lutheran Laymen's League, a group of 12 laypeople who came together to support the church in word and deed. What began with 12 has become a movement of tens of thousands of volunteers and supporters around the globe. In 1930, "There is a God" were the first words spoken on The Lutheran Hour® radio program broadcast to thousands of listeners. Today the Gospel reaches over 125 million people on a weekly basis through ministry efforts such as Bible correspondence courses, outreach training, Bible studies, daily devotions and, of course, The Lutheran Hour.

Their first Ministry Center opened its doors in the Philippines in 1940; today they are able to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to over 50 countries through 36 ministry centers on six continents. With a unique missionary model of employing only indigenous staff, LHM is able to work within the

language and culture to communicate the Gospel in the context of the local region. For nearly 100 years, God has used Lutheran Hour Ministries to bring the changeless Christ to a changing world. The communication methods have shifted, but the message has remained the same.

Deadline for the October issue is Aug. 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 or send by postal mail to: Judy Otto • 150 N. Maury St. • Holly Springs, MS 38635