



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN



In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus begins to explain what the Last Days will be like. He said:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President

was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

— **Matt. 25:32-36**

Loneliness is painful. We could be in the middle of the busiest city in the world and be lonely.

Three Dog Night recorded a song called "One (Is the Loneliest Number)." How many of you are humming that tune?

There's a legitimate reason for us to feel this way. The reason for this tremendous feeling is that God said:

"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." — **Gen. 2:18**

God created us as creatures of community. God said:

"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let him have

dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." —

Gen. 1:26

Who was He talking about? The birds, fish, animals, reptiles and bugs all had companions. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit had their distinct personalities in the one God. But Adam was all alone in a buzzing, whirring, busy world.

God said "It's not good..." (Gen. 2:18). As a result, we were designed to have a built-in need for deep, satisfying relationships within the human community. Unfortunately, there are times when we deny that functional need and hide from it.

Dr. Robert Putnam, a political science professor at Harvard, studied more than 29,000 communities to discover the basic needs of fellowship. He found that the vast majority of people today don't volunteer and join clubs, they don't know their neighbors and they don't trust each other.

He found that our nation is becoming more isolated, alienated, crime-ridden and horribly unhappy. People's activity in bowling leagues, clubs, church, social groups and other gathering vehicles have dropped to a dramatic all-time low.

Putnam concludes his study saying that Americans are stockpiling their "social capital" because trust, cooperation and working collegially is going bankrupt.

According to his research, the source

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RELATIONSHIP

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

of the problem is computers, television, longer work hours, two-income families and ethnic diversity. Almost two-thirds of the people said they would take a pet or a computer along with them if they were stranded on a desert island, rather than a family member or a friend!

We need others. Thinking otherwise robs us of the fullness of what God designed within us. But like any good battle, the only way to combat this growing isolation is to go on the offensive. Unless we have an affinity for someone, there's no foundation to build the kind of relationships God wants for us.

What is most interesting is that, according to Putnam's study, a church is the best place for the building of a relationship that lasts. Church is the one social organization where people look for interaction. But unfortunately the disease of isolation has crept into the church as well.

Dr Richard Bliese, a theologian in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America spent 10 years studying the trends of church attendance, trying to figure out the plummeting drop in membership and attendance.

He laments that all the ways the ELCA tried to "modernize" the church

and its doctrines have done just the opposite of what was hoped for. He found that watered down worship crept in, sin and forgiveness are dismissed and the social Gospel left the atonement of Jesus Christ's cross and resurrection far back in what's important in the worship.

The unity of the three Persons in the Holy Trinity is indivisible, unchangeable, immutable, eternal and perfect. Whatever image God gave us looks to this strength of bond to hold our human relationships together.

A survey conducted by Lutheran Hour Ministries revealed that over 30 percent of our neighbors (maybe friends) are unchurched. One out of every three of your friends or neighbors don't have a place where they can begin to build a meaningful relationship.

September is when summer vacations begin to disappear and we get back to our routines. It's an opportunity for us to bring a friend, neighbor or relative to worship and hear the Gospel.

There are a number of reasons we might hear why others won't invite friends to church. "I don't want to!" "I am afraid to talk religion with my friends." "They know where we are." "I'm just too busy." Or, maybe, "I don't want this church to grow."

The Great Commission says: "Go, therefore, and make disciples, teaching them all that I have given you..."

We're not unfamiliar with our Bible, Confessions or Church.

When we read the first chapters of Acts, we find there were 11 men in Jerusalem when this Holy Christian Church was in its infancy.

After the Holy Spirit came to these men on Pentecost; because they were following Christ's instructions, thousands of people became Christians.

They could have been like modern churches and said "We better wait here for awhile because we've got too much to handle here."

But they didn't. From Jerusalem they traveled to Samaria, Judea and all the nations of the world. Why? Because the Church is the means by which God brings His blessings, grace, mercy and promise of eternal life when the people are gathered together in a common union!

Please consider bringing a friend (or a complete stranger!) to church soon. If you don't have a friend, make one. Who benefits when we do *not* go about the work Jesus gave to His Holy Christian Church?

Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

Let it never be said "You never even tried!" But instead, let us all hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Come and enter the kingdom that has been prepared for you."

LHM seeking Petal Pushers

Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) wants you to help prepare its float for the 2020 Tournament of Roses Parade! For decades, the Petal Pushers volunteers 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 to support or participate with the Petal Pushers, 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.



2019 gathering celebrates our 'REAL. PRESENT. GOD'

Emilie Stooksbury and AJ Vega were emcees for the LCMS Youth Gathering in July. Vega attends Immanuel, Memphis, while Stooksbury attends The Point, Knoxville.



The LCMS 2019 LCMS Youth Gathering brought more than 20,000 young people and adults from across the country — and around the world — to Minneapolis July 10-15.

The Mid-South District had a special connection to the Gathering — two of the daily mass-event emcees were from Tennessee congregations! Each night, Emilie Stooksbury from The Point, Knoxville, and AJ Vega from Immanuel, Memphis, took the stage at U.S. Bank Stadium for events that included singing, testimonials, drama and plenty of laughs.



Emilie and AJ were joined by Rev. Jake Allstaedt of St. John's, Williston Park, N.Y., who also served as emcee. All did an amazing job!

If you missed the opportunity to follow the event online, be sure to visit facebook.com/LCMSNYG for pictures, videos and great re-caps from this inspiring event.

Rebates available for Financial Peace

The Mid-South District is pleased to continue partnering with its congregations to bring Financial Peace University (FPU) to its members and guests through a special rebate program.

For those congregations that offer FPU between now and the end of 2019, the district will offer a rebate of the \$93 cost to individuals who complete the 9-week program. The rebate program is on a first-come, first-serve basis until budgeted funds have been exhausted, with preference for congregations that have not previously taken advantage of the rebate.



All materials must be purchased through the Mid-South District prior to the start of any classes. Please contact Angela Fowler at afowler@mid-southlcms.com if your ministry is interested in hosting this class for your congregation.

Thanks for another great ECE conference!

The 2019 Early Childhood Educators (ECE) Conference was held July 15-16 at Faith, Collierville, Tenn. Over 110 educators attended the event, which featured enriching break-out sessions on a variety of education and general-interest topics.

Thank you to Dina Foshee and her team at Faith Lutheran Preschool for

hosting, as well as the many educators and presenters who gathered for the event. Thanks, also, to Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) for sponsoring the grand-prize drawing of a \$250 gift card.

The organizers hope to see everyone again for the 2020 conference at Christ the King Lutheran Church and School, Memphis.

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of June 30, 2019 (6 months)

Anticipated amount (50% of budget)	\$766,137
Actual receipts	\$771,909
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$5,772

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$219,073
Allocated to Tanzania	\$12,500
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts) ...	\$540,336
Total receipts	\$771,909

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of June 30, 2019	\$771,909
Actual receipts as of June 30, 2018	\$757,223
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$14,686

A thank you from the South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church

RE: The use of gift from LCMS Mid-South District

Greetings from Borown, South Sudan, in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It is my pleasure to let you know how the funds you sent me last year to assist Rev. David Alier Makuol's widow was used. The SSELCL leadership weighed several options on how to give the funds to David's widow.

Among the options were whether the funds will be given to the widow in cash or buy her a cow. A cow being highly regarded and of significant value among the Dinka, the idea of buying a cow carried the day and the cow with a calf was bought and handed over to Mary Ateny Tong, the widow of the late Pastor David Alier, on Sunday, 12th of May, 2019.

The \$700 which was donated by LCMS Mid-South district pastors' conference — which was held at the same month David Alier was killed by cattle raiders — was changed to South Sudan Pounds, and it became

192,500 South Sudan Pounds, 1\$ @ 275. The cow and its calf cost SSP 172,500 including transport and the balance of SSP 20,000 was given to David's widow in cash.

The entire SSELCL, the late Pastor David Alier's relatives, and the entire community are very thankful to LCMS Mid-South District for this great assistance given to the widow. The widow and her brother-in-law — holding the money with her in the picture — are so grateful for the gift, and sent you special greetings.

The South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church (SSELCL) members and leadership are also very grateful to LCMS Mid-South District for boosting the name of SSELCL among the relatives of David Alier and the entire community in Bor area.

It has become a very powerful mes-

sage to the community because this is a very unique gift which no Christian Church tradition has ever done in this area.

So we say glory be to God!

Peace
Rev. Bol Nyok





LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

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 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.

The event will be held Oct. 3-5. For more information and to register, visit csl.edu/admissions/visit/contemplate.

Conference, retreat, visitation opportunities at CTSFW

Check out the upcoming events offered by Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (CTSFW). For more information concerning all events, visit ctsfw.edu/events or call 260-452-2100.

What in Heaven Is Going On? Christ and the Angels in the Book of Revelation
Sept. 28–29

This new Good Shepherd Fall Retreat will coincide with the festival of St. Michael and All Angels, which will be observed with a special choral Vespers service in Kramer Chapel. Register at ctsfw.edu/FallRetreat.

\$25, includes lunch on Saturday

Christ Academy: Confirmation Retreat

Oct. 4–6

Theological learning opportunity for any youth confirmation class, plus an appropriate number of chaperones.

Cost: \$110/individual

Christ Academy: College
Oct. 25–27

Free event for college students who are interested in learning more about the vocations of pastor or deaconess. Room and board provided, and spouses and fiancés/fiancées are welcome. Register at ctsfw.edu/college.

Genesis: The Original vs. Revelation: The New Creation
Nov. 6–8

Luther Hostel is a retreat for laity and church workers. Lectures this year will focus on Genesis vs. Revelation, or creation and the new creation. Register at ctsfw.edu/LutherHostel.

Cost: \$200, includes meals

Good Shepherd Institute
Nov. 10–12

The annual GSI conference focuses on pastoral theology and sacred music. Luther Hostel attendees are eligible for a 50-percent discount. For cost information and to register, visit ctsfw.edu/GSI.

Advent Preaching Workshop
Nov. 12

Sermons for the three mid-week services in Advent will examine each article of the Apostles' Creed through the lens of the central themes of the season. Register at ctsfw.edu/PreachingWorkshop.

\$40, includes dinner

RUNNING WITH ENDURANCE:

EYES FIXED ON JESUS

Hebrews 12:1b-2a



2019 National Rural & Small Town Mission Conference

NOV. 14-16 • MINNEAPOLIS | REGISTRATION ENDS SEPT. 15

Join us at the Doubletree by Hilton Bloomington-Minneapolis South, where the blessings and challenges facing rural and small-town congregations today will be addressed. Congregations will be encouraged to cultivate ways to become healthy churches, eager to bear witness for Christ, able to show mercy to those in need in communities and develop a robust life together with fellow members. We hope you'll join us by registering now and reserving your spot!

Speakers and session topics

Keynote speakers will include Rev. Todd Kollbaum, RSTM director, and Dr. Harold L. Senkbeil, executive director for Spiritual Care, DOXOLOGY. Rev. Robert Zagore, executive director, LCMS Office of National Mission, will lead the theme Bible study of the conference, based on Heb. 12:1b-2a.

Breakout topics include dealing with addictions, mental health, young adults in ministry, bi-vocational pastors, stewardship, community engagement, partnering with Lutheran Early Resonse Teams (LERT), online education and many other topics affecting our rural and small-town congregations. There is something planned for everyone ... from layperson to pastor, student to teacher!

We encourage you to bring your whole family to spend a few days together! Enjoy the Mall of America and take advantage of the special family rates that include access to all conference activities.

Don't forget that a special track for Youth Ministry will be returning this year, led by youth peer leaders and specially meant for your youth to join you

as well. This option will have a limited number of seats and require attendance in all six sessions.

Registration ends Sept. 15!

Adult registration for the conference includes all plenary and breakout sessions, materials, Thursday dinner, Friday lunch and dinner and more. See our full registration form for discounted rates for youth, students, families, couples, LWML members, meals only and groups. Contact our office with questions.

Hotel reservations must be made separately from conference registration. The Doubletree is offering a rate of \$100/Single or Double, plus applicable taxes for our group including breakfast buffet per day per occupancy level; complimentary self-parking; complimentary airport and Mall of America shuttle.

More information and online registration can be found at lcms.org/rstm/conference; or contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.

-Contributed by RSTM

Know your Bible

(All about Satan)



1. What king of Israel was tormented by an evil spirit?
2. What does Satan masquerade as in the world today?
3. What woman had Jesus driven seven demons out of?
4. What animal does 1 Peter compare Satan to?
5. What book of the Bible speaks of the demonic fiend Abaddon and Apollyon?

6. What prophet spoke of the fallen Lucifer?
7. What Gospel uses the name Beelzebub?
8. What is Satan the father of?
9. What disciple did Satan enter into?
10. According to the Gospel of John, Satan was from the beginning a liar and a _____?
11. In what Gospel does Jesus call Satan "the prince of this world"?
12. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus refers to seeing the fall of Satan. What does he

compare it to?

13. According to the parable of the sower, what happens when someone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it?
14. Who did Satan provoke to do a census in Israel?
15. According to Jesus, when an evil spirit returns to a person, how many companions does it bring with it?
16. In Revelation, for what reason do the demons perform miracles?

Answers appear on Page 8



Active stewardship in the rural parish

By Rev. Heath Curtis

Coordinator, LCMS Stewardship

Where I serve, people are conservative. I don't mean that they watch Fox News and listen to Rush Limbaugh (although plenty of them do). I'm talking about the deep-down conservatism that always asks the question, "Pastor, if we've been doing it this way for so many years, why would you ask us to change? Is the risk of messing up what's been working just fine really worth whatever little marginal gain you think your new way of doing things will give us?"

That question may not always be put into so many words, but after 13 years in rural ministry I've learned that that's what people are thinking pretty much any time I make a suggestion for doing something new or different in our church. And I've come to appreciate the question. People are most conservative about the things they know best — and for good reason. Human life is short, and we humans are slow learners. The traditions we've been given by previous generations represent the distilled wisdom of the ages. So it's a good question.

But wisdom, alas, is not the only thing handed down by our fathers, nor is it the only thing we are preparing to hand down to our children. If we're not careful, we can also pass on our bad ideas, our laziness and our mistakes.

So, to turn to the topic at hand, how are things in your congregation financially? How's the stewardship of the people? Do you find yourself running short in the summer months? Do you run bulletin announcements asking people to dig a little deeper and put a little more

in the plate to catch up to the budget in October, November and December? Do you worry about closing the school, cutting a staff position, getting the roof fixed, or even being able to afford your own pastor?

I get around the Synod a lot, and I can tell you that I've rarely found a rural parish that doesn't struggle with things like that. Indeed, that's how I got into stewardship ministry in the first place: I had to face those challenges in the parishes I still serve.

So if what we're doing is not working out, maybe it is time to learn and change. Maybe there are deeper, even more conservative traditions to follow when it comes to our stewardship — instructions from God's Word on how to be active, faithful, generous, Gospel-centered stewards of God's good and gracious gifts.

I held a webinar on this topic in July. The archive is available for viewing at lcms.org. Go to the "How We Serve" tab at top, and from the drop-down menu select "National Mission" and "Rural & Small Town Mission" Find the "Education Webinars" box, which has a link to the archives (and schedule). I talked about what really works for stewardship in the rural parish (or any parish): putting the Word of God first, finding stewardship's place in the Christian life and the theological task of the Lutheran pastor, and teaching generosity and the support of the Lord's work in a faithful, authentic, natural way.

— Contributed through the LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission monthly newsletter



First, Harrison, vicar is now pastor

On June 29, Rev. William Zwick was ordained and installed as pastor of First Lutheran Church, Harrison, Ark. Pastor Zwick served the First congregation as vicar from 2018 until his ordination. Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Frank Zirbel (emeritus, Harrison), Roger Schoolcraft, Dr. Roger Paavola (district president), Zwick, David Tews (middle row) Dr. Ryan Tietz, Adrian Piazza (Christ, Noblesville, Ind.), David Gadbaw; (back row) Duane Kirchner, Robert Herring, Joel Krogen and Bill Schutte.

Women praise, serve the Lord in Mobile

By Diane Reimold

LWML Mid-South District President

“In Praise to the LORD” was the theme for the 38th Biennial LWML Convention, held June 20-23 in Mobile, Ala. More than 3,000 people attended, with 691 of those as first timers — and about 91 men and women from the Mid-South District!

Donna Pyle led us in Bible study and Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor led us in singing (and some marching!).

We donated thousands of items and more than \$33,000 to Gifts from the Heart, we participated in six servant events, we voted to fund 21 mission grants after adopting a \$2.1 million mission goal, and we voted for new officers (Debbie Larson is our new president) and junior pastoral counselor (Rev. Brian Noack).

We were generous in our monetary donations also: Tee Up4 Mites brought in \$9,356 and District President Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, his wife, Pat, shared first place. The Mission Walk brought in \$60,048 and the Thursday evening worship service offering was \$43,798 — and both go to the 2019-21 Mission Goal.

The second offering was \$24,723 and the third offering was \$30,153 — and both were split between two recipients; The fourth offering, to LCMS Disaster Response, was \$33,582.

We were truly inspired by the stories from past mission grant recipients on how our funds impacted their ministries, both in the United States and overseas, and we were greeted and thanked by the presidents of LHM (Kurt Buchholz), LCEF (Rev. Bart Day) and LCMS (Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison).

President Harrison showed a “thank you” video and said that the LWML has touched every ministry of the LCMS. He also played his banjo for us!

Entertainment by Joe Castillo, a sand artist, and the Voices of Mobile were wonderful. Castillo is similar to the Jesus Painter, but instead uses sand and light to create images, each picture morphing into another until the final one is revealed.

We were also entertained by Glory Mae (aka Jan Struck), who frequently talked with her friend Marvalee about her experiences as a convention greeter (“I didn’t know I had to wear a uniform and LWML women are everywhere! Everywhere!”). She was a



Molly Lowitzer, Young Woman Representative, and Diane Reimold, LWML Mid-South District president, joyfully display the district banner at the LWML convention in June.

little suspicious though because there were northerners here, too.

After being with the Young Woman Representatives (they have energy that should be bottled!) and seeing all the servant projects, Glory Mae is going to find some service projects her society can do. “I’m no longer Glory Mae, I’m Glory Will!”

She finally decided to form a choir at her church and it would be called the Sing Alleluia Southern Senior Youth choir. She has already ordered shirts with the initials in silver glitter — SASSY. After thinking about the name, she may change it to something that uses less glitter.

Glory Mae and Marvalee agreed that Glory Mae was a great organizer as she hasn’t lost a dessert fork in months!

Jan’s interruptions are always humorous but they also have a Gospel message.

The convention was very inspiring and uplifting and I am sure everyone left Mobile renewed to continue giving Praise to the Lord!

Know your Bible answers

1. Saul (1 Sam. 16:14-23); 2. An angel of light (2 Cor.11:14); 3. Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2); 4. A roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8); 5. Revelation (9:11); 6. Isaiah (14:12); 7. Matthew (12:24); 8. Lies (John 8:44); 9. Judas Iscariot (Luke 22:3-4); 10. Murderer (John 8:44); 11. John (14:30; 16:11); 12. Lightning (Luke 10:18); 13. The wicked one (Satan) snatches from the heart what was sown (Matt. 13:19); 14. David (1 Chron. 21:1); 15. Seven (Matt.12:45); 16. To bring the nations to war (Rev. 16:13-14).

Deadline for the November issue is Sept. 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