



OCTOBER 2019

# MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

## More from the REFORMATION



October is the continuation of our celebration of the Reformation. In the beginning, Martin Luther became aware that “selling paper certificates” (indulgences) perverted the atoning sacrifice of Christ for the sins of all the world.



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

That myth was quickly dismissed, but spread weeds among the harvest field of God’s free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus. There remains a dynamic tension of the Roman Catholic and some Evangelical understandings of a necessary connection between faith and good works. It remains a Christian debate.

There is a continuous tension of the Law-Gospel distinction of “living the Christian life.” The conundrum remains that, according to our Lutheran doctrine, justification and righteousness come purely by Christ’s work on our behalf. Some Christian doctrines suggest that sanctification — living a holy life — does not follow justification, but that sanctification is somehow irrevocably linked with justification. The difficulty arises when pietistic and evangelistic tendencies modernize this Pharisaic tendency and lose God’s pure grace, and lose

it to human obedience and actions. Part of this stems from the unfortunate statement in the Roman-Lutheran 1999 “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” that blurred the distinction. By faith, the Christian is no longer strapped to a successful (and perfect!) completion of the acts of righteousness to demonstrate personal obedience. The only obedience acceptable and required for our justification is the obedience of God’s own Son.



One Christian author, Oswald Bayer, posed the question as to whether justification is simply a forensic act on the part of God or whether there are effective (objective) changes that make the life of the regenerate something new. Faith, as a divine work within us, changes the person’s life from the old sinful nature into new creatures, joined together in Christ. New life happens because of Him. The passive righteousness of faith becomes active in Christian love — vertically to God and horizontally to all other people.

Justification and sanctification comes through hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17). Proclamation of the Word is the means by which God gives the Holy Spirit, who produces faith through the Gospel. Luther and the Confessions identify the deeds of God as He joins His Word to deed. Preaching the living voice of God’s Word delivers the Gospel to all who hear and believe. Everything accomplished by Christ’s work and merit is offered and given by the Holy Spirit, who works faith in those who hear the Gospel.

There can be no other understanding that the Gospel is the undivided presence of God. The means of grace — Baptism, the Eucharist and Absolution — are examples of a promise delivered in a spoken Word from God. These promises are not simply announcements of future concepts, but powerful words which carry immediate and present effects.

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## REFORMATION

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In order to keep what was so valiantly won, Luther rejected the idea that good works were necessarily added to faith. Luther stressed the Holy Spirit thereby sanctifies them. While the modern enlightenment proclaims good works to be necessary, Luther argued that:

"The Word of God always comes first. After it follows faith; after faith, love; then love does every good work, for ... it is the fulfilling of the law."

According to Scripture, all good gifts come from God. Sanctification, therefore, does not focus on the Christian person, but on the Word of God acting through the Christian in the horizontal plane. We return our thanks and honor to God (vertically) by sharing His gifts with others (horizontally). Everyone belongs to the basic estate of God's creation. Corruption and rebellion caused many to fall from the safety of the Church. Bayer states:

"Since sin radically corrupted everything, the deliverance accomplished by Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. Even the institutions sanctified by God can therefore never be the path to salvation, and even though they are and remain holy, in them we may either be lost or we may find deliverance — by faith alone."

The problem we face in a philosophical environment is that our concept of "creation" is obscured by our tendency to repair the corrupted world, irrespective of the restorative nature in God's presence. Salvation, received by faith, offers what Christ accomplished on the cross. The key to salvation does not reside with a succession of numbers of human effort. Rather, in the Promise of God, good works may demonstrate progress of Christian living. But good works' "wing flaps" do not merit the kingdom of God. Objective justification happens at the cross and empty tomb



— outside of the mere man. Subjective justification happens within the man by the operation of the Holy Spirit, who, in turn, allows sanctification. Where there is justification, there will also be sanctification. But sanctification cannot precede justification or both would be gone.

Our Baptism is the crossroads between an old Adam and Christian life. The sanctified life of the baptized returns to the foundation of our baptismal grace. In a uniquely Lutheran way, sanctification is not confused as a means by which a person demonstrates their worthiness to receive salvation. To do so simply confuses the two great doctrines of the Church — Law and Gospel. Our Old Adam clings to self-justification, so the Law must be preached to all Christians. The Law condemns and does not convert, but shows our need for a Savior. Luther writes:

"In it (Romans 1:17) the righteousness of God is revealed, that had stood in my way. For I hated that word 'righteousness of God,' which, according to the use

and custom of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal and active righteousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner."

Righteousness is never our own. It is a free gift (imputed) from the works of Christ. Any claim, hope or demonstration of righteousness having anything to do with human nature or works is a contradiction to the essence of the Gospel. No one can claim righteousness as originating within us without emptying the cross of its power.

Luther's Reformation theology does not dismiss the world in its fullest sense, but grasps the Promise and assurance of a restored *Tov Me'oth* (all is very good!) in God's promise.

God's righteousness contradicts creation! The gate to heaven has swung wide open at an empty grave. Faith does not avoid the world, but endures the world by the power of God. The kingdom of God is fully realized in power and grace when Christ accomplished God's salvation plan at the cross. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians makes special note that eternal glory in the cross "...is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:18).

Paul further writes that the kingdom of glory is a certain reality, but:

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ... I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

— Phil 3:12, 14

The inseparable union of sanctification and justification is universally accepted in Christianity when the Word guides, comforts and enlivens the Christian's life. Justification, therefore, becomes the chief doctrine which the Church of the Reformation must embrace.



# God's church grows in TANZANIA

By Bob Allen

Church planting in the Southeast of Lake Victoria Diocese (SELVD) — of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania — is such an amazing experience.

Each year since 2004, mission teams from the Mid-South District partner with pastors and lay people from the SELVD for outreach in areas of the diocese that have had little or no exposure to the Gospel. We form into teams and go out on pathways and trails and into homes to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. We return to a meeting area and share the stories of our visits with the rest of the team. We then go home, feeling blessed to have been part of this experience.

Thousands have been baptized during these trips and sub-congregations are started in these areas. A few months after each trip, we receive reports and pictures of what these new Christians have done in these sub-parishes.

In May, we evangelized in the Welezo and Shalbuluba areas of the Tinde parish of Rev. Jeofrey Tenga. We were notified that a church had been built in each of



Rev. Jeofrey Tenga (below) conducts worship at a SELVD church in Tanzania.

these villages. The new congregation members dug the foundation by hand, and made the bricks and constructed the walls themselves. We have had similar experiences during other mission trips.

In 2017, in the Lalago parish, new churches were built in Mwakidiga and Mbalagane in just four months by the newly baptized Christians.

In 2018, in the Ushetu district, a new church was built in the sub-congregation of Saba Sabini; and in Itilima district, churches were constructed in Muhunze, Mwadiliama and Ikindiro.

Mission trips in Tanzania have been a blessing to all who attend. We are making plans for another mission trip in 2020, so come join us!

Contact me for more information: [rjallen@prodigy.net](mailto:rjallen@prodigy.net) or 270-535-7370.



Considering pastoral ministry?

## Get 'Taste of the Sem'

Is there a young man in your high school youth group who has gifts that would be well served in pastoral ministry? Do you have a high school student who has expressed an interest in the pastoral ministry? If so, please consider encouraging him to check out "Taste of the Sem," being held Feb. 15-17, 2020, at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

During this on-campus event, young men considering the ministry will be connected with a current student to see what life is like at the seminary.

To register, please go to [csl.edu/admissions/visit/taste-of-the-sem](http://csl.edu/admissions/visit/taste-of-the-sem).

For more information, contact Rev. Dr. Scott Holder in the Admissions Office at 314-505-7225.



## Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of July 31, 2019 (7 months)

Anticipated amount (58.33% of budget)	\$893,827
Actual receipts	\$887,080
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$6,747)

### Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$251,541
Allocated to Tanzania	\$14,583
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$620,956
Total receipts	\$887,080

### Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of July 31, 2019	\$887,080
Actual receipts as of July 31, 2018	\$868,806
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$18,274

## CARE-VAN arrives Nov. 1-2

Stretch your hearts and hands to help people in need! Today and every day, **Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Quilts and Kits of Care** give families around the world some of life's essentials, as well as a reminder that they are not alone. Because of chronic poverty and conflict to drought and typhoon, the intensity of humanitarian needs continues to increase. **Your quilts and kits are urgently needed!**

Anyone can work on a quilt or kit project. It strengthens fellowship within your congregation, serves as a faith witness to your community and brings you closer to your global neighbors. The gifts you give through these projects are an immeasurable blessing to families around the world.

### What you can do

We can't control when disasters strike and we can't end poverty overnight. But there are things we can do now to help people around the world reach their full potential. Learn how simple items can transform lives and how you can too:

1. **CHOOSE** a type of kit:
  - Personal Care Kits • School Kits
  - Baby Care Kits • Fabric Kits
2. **COLLECT** items for the kits and money to help ship kits overseas.

3. **PACK** the items and send to the warehouse; or find a local collection site
4. **TRACK** your kits as they travel the world to people in need
5. **SHARE** photos and videos of your work on your social media pages with *#KitsofCare*. Your posts can encourage others to get involved too!

LWR quilts and kits convey a priceless message of love and commitment to people in desperate need. First and foremost, recipients use their LWR quilts to shield against the cold and rain and for warm bedding. But their versatility also makes quilts useful as simple tents, floor coverings or a wrap to hold a baby on a mother's back.

In 2018, LWR delivered more than \$13.4 million worth of quilts and kits to

601,144 beneficiaries in 25 countries. Shipping costs LWR about \$2.25 per quilt. Please give to the Quilt & Kit Shipping Fund, which pays for the shipping of donated quilts and kits.

For assembly instructions for quilts and kits, request the pamphlets by calling 800-597-5972 or visiting [lwr.org/get-involved/build-kits-of-care](http://lwr.org/get-involved/build-kits-of-care).

**The Care-Van will pick up completed quilts and kits Friday, Nov. 1, and Saturday, Nov. 2.** If you have a question or need labels, contact Julie Tyler at [jtyler@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:jtyler@mid-southlcms.com) or 1-866-373-1343 (toll free).

### CARE-VAN location sites:

- First Lutheran School, Fort Smith, Ark.
- Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, Ark.
- Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, Tenn.
- Christus Victor Lutheran Church, Knoxville, Tenn.
- Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis

A Nashville-area site will be established at a later date.

## Move mountains!

By Frances Bacic

Media/Marketing, LWML Mid-South District

Matt. 17:20 says:

"For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

At LWML, we are moving mountains one mite at a time. At the 38 Biennial Convention June 20-23 in Mobile, Ala., we as a collective body voted for a \$2.1 million mission grant goal for the 2019-21 biennium. We met and put faces to the grants we elected. We met this goal once and are prepared to do it again.

We are using our mites that each one of us gives and combining them with those from our societies, zones, districts and national LWML. Our mites are making a difference in the lives of others.

Together we are moving mountains every day.

For a list of the grants, which also includes links for a description of each, go to [lwml.org/mission-grants](http://lwml.org/mission-grants).



Among the 2019-21 mission grants selected by LWML delegates were Water and the Word for Rural Schools in Kenya and LCMS Deaconess Ministry.



# Our servants in Tampa



## JOY:FULLY LUTHERAN

The 67th Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was held July 20-25 in Tampa, Fla. Thank you to those who traveled to Tampa to serve as delegates. For more information about the convention, go to [lcms.org/convention](http://lcms.org/convention) or visit the *Reporter* website at [blogs.lcms.org/category/convention](http://blogs.lcms.org/category/convention). *Reporter* is the official newspaper of the LCMS.



From left, delegates Rev. Robert Benke, pastor, Faith, Hot Springs, Ark.; Rhoda Reilly, Florida-Georgia District; and Rev. Brian Truog, senior pastor, Christ Our Savior, Loudon, Tenn., prepare to vote with their electronic voting devices.

### FROM LEFT:

#### Front row

Rev. David Graves, St. Paul, Wartburg, Tenn.; Rev. John David Zischke, Restoration, Fayetteville, Ark.; Robert Morri, Peace, Conway, Ark.; Robert Rahe, Faith, Thompsons Station, Tenn.; Rev. Stewart Marshall, Trinity, Pine Bluff, Ark.; Connie Soso-Goines, Grace, Greenwood, Ark.; Angela Fowler, Mid-South District executive director for Business and Finance; Rev. David Appold, St. Paul, Paducah, Ky.; Rev. Neely Owen, Faith, Hopkinsville, Ky., and Commission on Constitutional Matters; Rev. Larry Peters, Grace, Clarksville, Tenn., and Commission on Constitutional Matters

#### Middle row

Randy Bueckman, Grace, Knoxville, Tenn.; Rev. Ron Bacic, First, Little Rock, Ark.; Ed Mell, Immanuel, Memphis, Tenn.; Bryan Mattes, Pilgrim, Jonesboro, Ark.; Tim Hanusa, Ascension, Madison, Tenn.; Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Mid-South District president; Rev. Russell Belisle, Cross of Calvary, Memphis, Tenn.; Rev. Andrew Abraham, Shepherd of the Hills, Crossville, Tenn.; Rev. Eric Phillips, Concordia, Nashville, Tenn.; Keith Brummett, Faith, Bentonville, Ark.

#### Back row

Rev. Robert Benke, Faith, Hot Springs Village, Ark.; Rev. Robert Herring, Grace, Holiday Island, Ark.; Dan Jacobs, Good Shepherd, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Rev. John Gierke, Mid-South District secretary; Rev. Joel Krogen, Hope, Batesville, Ark., and Zion, Waldenburg, Ark.; Rev. Brian Truog, Our Savior, Loudon, Tenn.; Larry Vickers, Mid-South District treasurer; Shawn Barnett, Grace, Clarksville, Tenn.

Missing from the photo are Jeffrey Schlittenhart, Zion, London, Ark.; and James Sieving, Zion, Alexander, Ark.

# Welcome, new pastors!

**Rev. David Schmidt was installed as pastor of Faith, Bentonville, Ark.,** on July 14. Clergy present were, from left (front row) Revs. JD Zischke, John Schmidt (David's father), Schmidt, Robert Herring, William Zwick; (back row) Mark Krause, David Hudak, Hubert Bernthal, Brian Bibler, Paul Hass and Chris Gorshe.



**Rev. Gregory Prauner was installed as senior pastor of Immanuel, Memphis,** on Aug. 4. Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Clayton Sellers, Dr. Roger Paavola, Prauner, Jesus Granado, Jim Belles, Michael Croom; (back row) Terry Tieman, Clarence Martin, Russell Belisle, and Chaplain Michael Sneath.



**Rev. Eric Longman was installed as pastor of Holy Trinity, Rogers, Ark.,** on July 29. Joining in the celebration were, from left (front row) Revs. Jeff Jordan, JD Zischke, Dr. Roger Paavola, Longman, David Schmidt, Brandon Martin, Roger Schoolcraft; (middle row) Christopher Gorshe, Hubert Bernthal, Paul Hass, Larry Spencer; (back row) Richard Mayer and Albert Quoss.





**Rev. Mark Kophamer** was installed as pastor of Redeemer, Elizabethton, Tenn., on Aug. 11. Rev. Kophamer had been serving as vacancy pastor. From left, Rev. Steve Harmon, Deacon Tim Carter, Deacon Steve Meier, Kophamer, Rev. Gil Pingel, Rev. Gordon Smith and Rev. Erv Lueker.



## Early Christmas

The LWML members of Bethlehem, Johnson City, Tenn., and Concordia, Kingsport, Tenn., celebrated Christmas in July. The evening activities included a potluck dinner hosted by the Bethlehem ladies, tree decorating, Christmas games and crafts. This event marked the third time that the ladies from both congregations gathered for food and fellowship this past year.



## Leaders in training

**By Rev. Brandon Martin**

Associate Pastor, Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, Ark.

Five teenagers participated in our summer internship program at Salem Lutheran Ministries. The purpose of the internship is to equip and motivate our youth to follow Jesus, serve others and become leaders in our community.

Our theme this year was "It All Points to Christ" (How the Entire Old Testament Leads us to Jesus). We explored how the characters, events and promises of the Old Testament all point forward to their fulfillment in Jesus. We also spent time every day serving the needs of our church or community. These youth were key leaders in our vacation Bible school!

The teenagers also participated in leadership development



activities that equipped them to stand firm in God's Word and lead their peers in God's ways. Several participated in the LCMS National Youth Gathering and the others enjoyed an awesome week at Camp Trinity (Petit Jean Mountain). I look forward to how our God will continue to work in and through these youth!



# Zion Fall Fest offers fun for everyone



By Ed Schrock

Zion, Augsburg, Ark., invites you to its 12th Annual Fall Fest on Saturday, Oct. 12. The festival begins at 10 a.m. and lasts all day. Admission is free.

The first festival was held in the fall of 2008, organized by a congregation looking for ways to reach out to the community as it celebrated the 125th anniversary of its founding in 1883. A little intimidated at first by such a large undertaking, the members were surprised at how successful that first festival was. Each year since, it has continued to grow beyond anything that we had imagined.

One of the reasons for its phenomenal growth has been the investment that the community has made, both in time and money. We have a committee that begins meeting each year in March or April to prepare for that year's festival.

About 60 volunteers are on hand the week of the festival for preparation and set-up, and they are assigned to work wherever they are needed the day of the

festival. We even have volunteers that come each year from as far away as Iowa, Oklahoma, California and Hawaii.

This year's festival will feature a bike ride, free kids' games, bump and jumps, pony rides, a petting zoo, cake walk, climbing wall, bingo, silent auction and BB gun shoot. Guests can also shop in our country store, enjoy an antique farm-equipment display, crafts and educational booths and participate in drawings for a locally grown, farm-raised hog (processed and ready to be picked up the day of the festival), and for a 40-gun Cannon safe.

Throughout the day, there will be continuous musical entertainment and delicious

German food, featuring hand-made bratwurst with sauerkraut or grilled peppers and onions (served on a home-made roll), and delicious homemade desserts.

All proceeds will be equally divided between Zion's two social outreach ministries — the River Valley Christian Clinic in Dardanelle, which provides free health care (medical, dental and optical) and spiritual guidance to anyone in the River Valley who cannot afford to access traditional medical care; and the Augsburg Food Pantry, which provides food to over 650 people each month.

In 2018, the Augsburg Food Pantry helped over 7,000 people, distributing over 100,000 pounds of food. More than 70 volunteers willingly gave their time to help with the food distribution.

Last year, Augsburg Fall Fest raised \$24,378 for these two mission efforts, and we hope to exceed that this year.

Zion is located at the intersection of Arkansas Highway 333 and Augsburg Road, north of London and northwest of Dover. Come and see what this little congregation atop Augsburg Mountain has done to reach out with Christian love and compassion to its neighbors in need.



## Deadline for the December issue is Oct. 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