



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN



IN HIS BOOK ON COSMIC ORDER, astrophysicist Carl Sagan wrote about a time when he finished a lecture on the solar system and earth's place in the universe. The point of his lecture was how tiny and insignificant the earth is in relationship to the other cosmos. An elderly lady stopped him afterward and said, "Your talk was interesting, but it was all wrong, you know."

"What do you mean?" Dr. Sagan asked. She replied, "That part about the earth being a tiny ball going around a small sun. You should be able to see for yourself that the earth is really flat, like a dish upside down and resting on the back of a huge turtle."

Sagan said, "Really! And what is the turtle resting on?" She retorted, "Well, that's simple. You should also know that it's standing on top of an even larger turtle."

Sagan continued, "Well, what is that turtle standing on?" Somewhat frustrated but triumphant, the elderly



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President

lady said, "It's no use. If you knew anything at all, you'd know it's just turtles all the way down!"

Science has changed and continues to change ideas about the origin and significance of earth. The earth used to be called the center of the universe. Today, we know the earth is a tiny speck, only light min-

utes away from a tiny, insignificant star we call the sun. We're a tiny dot in a far off, insignificant arm of a hodgepodge galaxy called the Milky Way.

There are black holes — gigantic stars larger than our entire solar system that have imploded — that are huge nuclear reactors in meltdown, that swallow up everything within hundreds of light years from their core. Their mass is so great that they pull everything — even light — inside. The more planets, stars and light that gets inside the imploded star, the more dense it becomes — accelerating its destructive power to its neighboring celestial bodies. But don't worry — the nearest black hole is 167 million light years away.

Our Milky Way is a gigantic dish of billions of stars and trillions of planets, asteroids and comets, circling around a more compact cluster of stars about 64,000 light years away from us. Somehow, scientists have determined that the Milky Way is gradually accelerating outward from an obscure center. They theorize the Milky Way and most of the universe will one day reach its gravitational outward limit, stop and begin to come back together again. They calculate that our sun will have imploded long before that time, swallowing up the earth and all the planets, turning our entire solar system into a giant ice ball — in about 4.5 billion years.

Today's picture of the universe isn't anything like what I learned when I was in grade school. We didn't deal with supernovas, black holes, neutron stars and a whole bunch of other things that will worry people some thousands of generations to come. Our understanding of the universe, compared to what the children are learning today, almost makes it easier to believe the earth is a dish on the back of a turtle than to comprehend the ever-changing vastness of our universe.

The beauty of all this stuff about creation is that we can't really come to any logical conclusion about science without understanding that there is a God. One prominent astrophysicist, looking at the destruction of the elastic harmonic movement of the universe, said to his colleagues, "I wish there was a way for an atheist to say, 'God forbid!'"

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UNIVERSE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

He realized that one of the basic principles of physics is that the grand total of energy in the universe is constant; energy is neither lost nor increased. So there has to be an Energy greater than the universe in order for the universe to exist.

Physicist Stephen Hawking wrote, “If we understood it, we would be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why we exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason, for then, we would know the mind of God.”

Yet for Hawking, his understanding of God was the “Singularity Theorem.” A scientist wrote in *Omni* magazine that he was baffled, overwhelmed by science’s discovery.

He said, “When we finish scaling the summit of everything we have learned in the last decade about the universe, and finally reach the top, won’t we be surprised to find the theologians already sitting up there.”

“For who has known the mind of the Lord,” writes St. Paul in Rom. 11:34,

“or who has been His counselor?”

The answer is, of course, no one.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Later, God’s Word says in Ps. 19:1: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.”

These are statements of undeniable faith. They tell us *Who* but leave out the reason *why*. These statements leave behind the turtles and the Big Bang. They are merely confirmed in the works of Galileo, Copernicus and Michelangelo.

The earth’s core is molten rock and minerals. We only give off reflected light. Yet in the balance of our precise location in the universe, the balance of sunlight, oxygen, temperature and relative distances is perfect to sustain life. It happened by design.

The middle ages placed the earth at the center of the universe, but we’re not. Sagan and Hawking don’t give us much more of a clue, scientifically speaking, where the edges of the universe may be. All knowledge without Christ is a vast unknown, which immediately swallows up all

our thoughts — a veritable black hole in human knowledge, we might say. We cannot fathom any fact about creation without reflecting on our place in creation. We cannot face our place in creation, without eventually coming face-to-face with its Creator.

The Creator God is made known to us through Jesus Christ: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” says John’s Gospel (1:14).

We cannot separate ourselves from our relationship to Jesus Christ. In our God-giv-

en relationship, we understand our purpose — the *why* of our existence. In our relationship to Christ, we understand God’s purpose for the universe and the immense, almighty power of the God who wished to give it all to us. Our destiny is bound to Christ and our purpose is irrevocably linked to God’s own Son, revealed as the Christ.

Science may change the way people look at the universe, where it comes from and how it works, but science will never change the way God looks at us. Our understanding of the universe is not what ultimately counts. Of utmost importance is what God has said and continues to do for us through Jesus Christ ... that’s called grace and life.

Wise men looked at a phenomenon in the forces of nature when the stars configured to show a great King was born. Even though shepherds and Magi saw their way through the stars, their eyes saw the tiny, seemingly insignificant Child in a tiny, insignificant town as the only Way, Truth and Life that comes from God.

Yes, we live in a huge, mysterious universe. We’re on a tiny, insignificant lump of dirt, tucked away in an insignificant corner of the universe. But we’re not alone. God made each of us significant by His grace and mercy. He walks with us day in and day out. He created us out of love. He gives us all things to make for a beautiful creation for us to enjoy. He sent His Son to guarantee we’d be safe in this life, and even during the times when all the stars and black holes and planets have disappeared.

God looked at each day’s work in creation and said, “This is good.” To believe in God and to trust in His Son, means we look at each day and say, “Yes Lord, this *is* good, very good.”

His love, mercy and forgiveness will sustain and bring us eternal life in unending peace. In true thanksgiving, we are bound to respond, “Thanks for making it that way.”

Have a blessed Thanksgiving.



SAVE THE DATES

2019-20 Concordia Seminary Concert Series

The joyful sound of acclaimed musicians and choirs from around the country will stir the senses as the 2019-20 Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Concert Series continues.

After an exciting Aug. 25 opening weekend hymn festival, 13 on-campus performances remain to be enjoyed throughout the 2019-20 academic year. All performances are free and open to the public.

Valparaiso University Chorale Concert

At 7 p.m. Sunday, March 1, the internationally acclaimed Valparaiso University Chorale from Valparaiso, Ind., will present its Spring Tour Concert in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus. This selective ensemble is recognized as one of the premier Lutheran collegiate choirs. Dedicated to performing works that celebrate the university's Lutheran heritage, the choir has been honored with invitations to perform around the world.

Organ and Carillon Concert

The seminary will host a two-part organ and carillon concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 26, featuring Dr. Laura Ellis, professor and associate school director in the School of Music at the University of Florida. This two-part

concert will be split between the outside venue of the seminary campus for the carillon portion of the event and the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus for the organ recital.



After Chapel Concerts

Featuring a variety of artists and instruments, these six performances will be held from 9:55 to 10:15 a.m., directly following morning services, in the balcony of the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus:

- Tuesday, Nov. 19: Christina Schempf, horn
- Tuesday, Feb. 18: Erica Mertz, saxophone
- Tuesday, March 10, 2020: Laudamus, Concordia Seminary's premier touring choir
- Tuesday, April 14, 2020: Ryan Edinger, piano/organ

Summer Carillon Concerts

The concerts will occur at 7 p.m. every Tuesday in June and will frequently feature international artists. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnics and to enjoy the unique concerts in a beautiful setting.

A free-will offering will be taken at each performance.

Learn more at csl.edu/concertseries.

E1HW extends reach with Spanish edition

Every One His Witness™ (E1HW), the Lutheran evangelism program launched in 2017 by LCMS Witness & Outreach Ministry, is now available in Spanish. This new edition expands the program's usefulness to Spanish-speaking congregations, pastors and laypeople in both the U.S. and abroad.

The E1HW program consists of a core module of six lessons as well as a series of online video context modules. The context modules are available to participants who have worked through the core module. The core module has been translated into Spanish.

Every One His Witness is available from Concordia Publishing House at cph.org. For more information, visit everyonehiswitness.org.



Rebates still available

The Mid-South District is pleased to continue to partner with our 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 served basis until budgeted funds have been exhausted, with preference being given to congregations that have not taken previously 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 (afowler@mid-southlcms.com) if your ministry is interested in hosting this class for your congregation.

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of Aug. 31, 2019 (8 months)

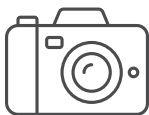
Anticipated amount (66.67% of budget)	\$1,021,516
Actual receipts	\$1,028,278
Over (under) anticipated amount	\$6,762

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$291,817
Allocated to Tanzania	\$16,667
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$719,795
Total receipts	\$1,028,278

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Aug. 31, 2019	\$1,028,278
Actual receipts as of Aug. 31, 2018	\$998,277
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$30,001



Frances, caught on the edge at Mount Eagle Retreat Center during the LWML retreat "Treasured."

By Frances Bacic

Media/Marketing, LWML Mid-South District

Sitting on the edge of a cliff ... does this idea thrill you or does it frighten you?

My house is divided. Me, I love heights and the views that it gives. I love the thrill of being at the edge. I'm the one that is taking one more picture, at one more angle or over the edge. I am joined by my oldest child. My husband? He will be right where I left him when I go to the edge, sometimes still in the car. The youngest son has complete, full-on panic attacks. He stops breathing, he can't move ... the works.

This past summer, my husband was a delegate at our LCMS

convention in Tampa. My youngest and I joined him for the district meal, which was held in an open loft of a restaurant, so you can imagine the freak-out he had at the restaurant and his frame of mind when we left!

We stayed with my aunt, who lives just south of Tampa. To return home, we had to drive on the Sunshine Bridge over Tampa Bay. As we were driving down I-275 heading toward the bridge, my son's fear was mounting. The closer we got, the more upset he became.

At the base he started flailing, and was really making me nervous. I finally had to tell him, "Be still, I can't safely drive us across this bridge if I have to worry about you too."

Isn't this like our relationship with God? We are too busy flailing around trying to be in control of our lives — lives over which we really have no control, at all. God just needs us to be still and trust in Him.

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" — **Ps. 46:10**

For me, the edge of a cliff is my time to be still; time to take in all God has made for us. Time to be surrounded by God's beauty. Time to let a little fear ground me into trusting Him. It is a time to be thankful for all God has done for us.

At this time of Thanksgiving, find your edge and enjoy God's creation and His blessings!



Petal Pushers recruiting volunteers to decorate float

In the public square this Jan. 1, the Lutheran Hour Ministries float, "Anchored in Jesus," will be part of the Tournament of Roses Parade and observe the parade's theme, "The Power of Hope," by once again witnessing the Gospel.

The Petal Pushers need volunteers to serve in a variety of capacities, including decorating, for what will be the 70th entry in the Pasadena parade.

The float is a project of the Southern California District of the International Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL), which relies solely on the generous support of many Christian friends. The costs are not included in any of budgets of the LLL or the LCMS.

Donated funds may be mailed to The Lutheran Hour Float Committee, P.O. Box 20044, Riverside CA 92516-0044.



For more information and to register as a volunteer, visit petalpushers.org.

INSTALLATIONS

Rev. Joshua Ralston was installed as pastor of Zion, Augsburg, Ark., on Sunday, Aug. 25. Pastor Ralston was ordained the previous week at his home congregation, Grace, Little Rock. He is a 2019 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. From left (front row) Revs. Darrel Kobs, James Glowinski, Dr. Roger Paavola (district president), Ralston, Jim Walter, Tim Henning; (middle row) John Treude, Josh Willadsen, LeRoy Leach, William Ringer; (back row) Jason Zirbel, Korey Boster and John Merrill.



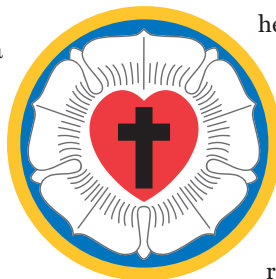
Rev. William Ringer was installed as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Russellville, Ark., on Sunday, June 16. Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. James Glowinski, Ringer, Joshua Willadsen; (back row) Korey Boster, Tim Henning, John Treude and Darrell Kobs.



Martin Luther explains the meaning of his ROSE SEAL

“My original thoughts and reason about why my seal is a symbol of my theology:

“The first should be a black cross in a heart, which retains its natural color, so that I myself would be reminded that faith in the Crucified saves us. ‘For one who believes from the heart will be justified.’ Although it is indeed a black cross, which mortifies and which should also cause pain, it leaves the



heart in its natural color. It does not corrupt nature, that is, it does not kill but keeps alive. ‘The just shall live by faith’ but by faith in the Crucified.

“Such a heart should stand in the middle of a white rose, to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace. In other words, it places the believer into a white, joyous rose, for this faith does not give peace and joy like the world

gives. That is why the rose should be white and not red, for white is the color of the spirits and the angels.

“Such a rose should stand in a sky-blue field, symbolizing that such joy in spirit and faith is a beginning of the heavenly future joy, which begins already, but is grasped in hope, not yet revealed.

“And around this field is a golden ring, symbolizing that such blessedness in Heaven lasts forever and has no end. Such blessedness is exquisite, beyond all joy and goods, just as gold is the most valuable, most precious and best metal.”

Our Savior emphasizes small groups

Our Savior, Nashville, celebrated its annual Family Festival on Sunday, Aug. 18. The festival serves as the kickoff for the fall sessions of Childrens and Small Groups ministries.

It was a day filled with fun, food, fellowship and connecting as a church; from the delicious sandwiches from a food truck caterer to ending the hot summer day by cheering on the watermelon-eating contest.

Children enjoyed bounce houses, face painting, art and games — and learned about their new Sunday school and confirmation classes. Adults had the opportunity to learn about and sign up for a variety of small groups/life groups that meet both at Our Savior and in member homes.

Our Savior offers small groups that meet on Sunday as well as throughout the week. The festival continues to emphasize the importance of small groups and how they serve to promote Christian growth, mutual care, service and relationships at Our Savior and in the community.

Kim Shaw is the Small Groups coordinator at Our Savior and would be happy to share ideas with interested district congregations. Contact her at kim.shaw@oslnashville.org.



▲ Our Savior's August festival included a watermelon-eating contest.

▲ Karen Witthauer talks to fellow members about small-group opportunities.

'Hugabear' brings comfort ... and gratitude!

By Rev. Brian Pummill
Pastor, Peace, Cherokee Village, Ark.

Peace, Cherokee Village, Ark., was blessed with a special visit recently from an out-of-town mother and daughter.

They came to personally share their gratitude for the gift of a "Hugabear" the daughter received from our ladies' Hugabear group when she was in the emergency room with a bad cut.

She found the bear very comforting and encouraging when facing the trauma, and appreciated the reminder that Jesus and His people care.



The Hugabear group prepares hundreds of unique homemade stuffed bears — each with a Christian message attached — and distributes them to hospitals, ambulances and firemen, to be given to children and adults.

A young "Hugabear" recipient visited the ladies of Peace, Cherokee Village, to offer them thanks for creating these handmade reminders of Jesus' love.

Camp Trinity adds a family!

Aaron Davis has accepted the newly created position of operations manager at Camp Trinity, the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean Mountain. Davis joins his father-in-law, Director David Cox, as the only full-time, year-round employees of the camp.

The number of summer campers and overall camp users has more than doubled in the past five years, with 242 summer campers in 2019, and 2,700 camp users in 2018, both records. With the hiring of Davis, the camp board of directors is positioning Camp Trinity for continued growth in fulfillment of the camp mission: "Growing Together in Christ on the Mountain."

"Aaron's energy and enthusiasm for outdoor ministry cannot help but open up new opportunities for ministry and service at Camp Trinity," Cox says. "He loves Jesus and loves to share the Gospel with others."

Davis, his wife, Maggie, and their four children moved to the mountain in September from Paducah, Ky., where they were members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Their children are Gwyneth, 8, Charlotte, 5, Joseph, 2, and Jane, 1 month. The Davises now live at the camp.

Maggie, a singer and choir director, is expected to be involved in music and worship at camp. She is the daughter of David and Heidi

Cox, who have moved to a home about a mile from camp.

Davis's primary responsibilities will be property management and guest services. An outdoor enthusiast, Davis will also be charged with creating outdoor-education programs for schools and home-school groups, as well as expanding adventure excursions off site for both summer campers and year-round camp users.

While Cox will continue as director and be involved in every aspect of the ministry, he will shift part of his focus to development. Heidi will also continue serving retreat guests.

Camp Trinity is available for all types of church events, including retreats for women, men, youth, families, confirmation classes, church councils and leadership teams.

The camp can also accommodate family reunions, sports team retreats and leadership classes. The campground accommodates both tent and RV campers.



Camp Trinity welcomes its new operations manager, Aaron Davis, his wife Maggie (Cox) Davis, and children (from left) Joseph, Gwyneth, Charlotte and Jane.



To learn more, visit

- ▷ lutherancamp.org
- ▷ facebook.com/LutheranCampPetitJean



Contact

- ▷ 501-652-6304
- ▷ director@lutherancamp.org

Deadline for the January issue is Nov. 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



A Prayer for Our Veterans

Please God,
Grant them courage when times are bleak;
Grant them strength when they feel weak.
Grant them comfort when they feel all alone,
And most of all, God, please bring them home.

‘This far by faith’



For the celebratory service, Rev. Mark Goble gave the children's message.

All photos on this page © Caroline Johnson.

Christ the King, Memphis, celebrates a blessed **60 years**

By Genie Swan

Community Relations, Christ the King, Memphis

About 500 people gathered at Christ the King (CTK) Lutheran Church, Memphis, on Sunday, Sept. 15, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the congregation's Charter Sunday.

In June 1959, 60 souls signed the charter to officially organize as a Lutheran congregation in what was then the Western District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. With the purchase of a 7-acre tract of land in what was then considered the “country,” the faithful members planted the seed that would take root and grow into a thriving membership, blossom-

ing and bearing fruit in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the community and beyond.

“We’ve come this far by faith!” was the theme of the day, echoed by the choral anthem directed by Chris Cardona, and emphasized in the message by Rev. Chuck Neugebauer, CTK senior pastor.

Rev. Mark Goble, associate pastor, gave a winsome children's message involving Legos, illustrating the importance of a firm foundation.

A highlight of the service was the welcoming of over 30 new members. CTK is 60 and still growing!

The celebration service was followed by a catered luncheon for 350 people in the gym. The program, emceed by Justin Zagel, included a talk by congregation president Chris

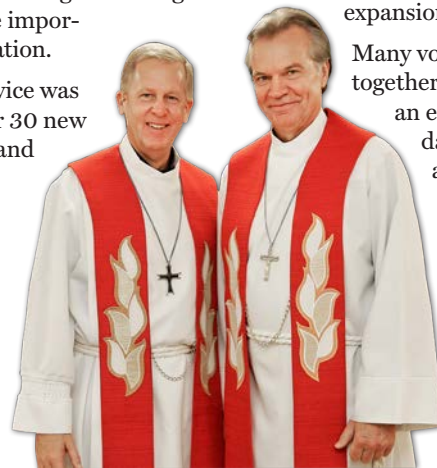
Hugo, an original song performed by Pastor Neugebauer, and a skit featuring a conversation between CTK 1959 (Jeff King) and CTK 2019 (Donovan Smith). The conversation illustrated how many of the characteristics of the early congregation — evangelism, outreach, love of children, family — were the inspiration and foundation of the many ministries carried out by CTK members through the decades.

The charter members were recognized, as well as the members who have joined in the past year. — “1959, meet 2019!”

Another highlight of the day was the reading of a proclamation from Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland, recognizing CTK for its many years of faithfulness and service to the community and proclaiming Sept. 15, 2019, as Christ the King Lutheran Church Day in the City of Memphis.

The morning began with a service of decommissioning of the Schrader Fellowship Hall, the former sanctuary, as the congregation prepares to begin demolition in advance of a major expansion and renovation.

Many volunteers worked together to make this Sunday an especially significant day for CTK's members and friends. *Soli Deo Gloria!*



The CTK pastoral staff includes Revs. Mark Goble, left, associate pastor, and Chuck Neugebauer, senior pastor.

An already blessed day for CTK was made even more so with the welcoming of new members.

