

Encourager

Mid-South District LCMS | February 2020

February's Focus: OUTREACH

The Mid-South District is blessed with LCMS ministries that regularly seek ways to reach beyond their own walls to share the love of Christ. This month, the *Encourager* is pleased to celebrate outreach in the Mid-South with stories of ministries and individuals shining Christ's light – both in their communities and beyond.

...

"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.'"

Mark 16:15 ESV



A Message from Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, President

We are entering into the solemn season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday. Interestingly, Lent separates Christianity on what we believe about Jesus. Do we believe in Jesus? What does it *really* mean to believe in Jesus? In the abstract it's easy to answer, "Yes I believe in Jesus" But to bring it from the abstract to the concrete, we separate ourselves from two thirds of the rest of the world when we say, "I believe Jesus is the Son of God. I believe He died and rose, and is coming again. The evidence for His resurrection is clear."

But, what about the other things? The disciples spoke of their faith in Jesus. But how far did their belief go - especially on the week of Christ's Passion? Just before that glorious but awful week, Jesus heard his friend, Lazarus, was sick. Jesus wasn't worried. He

waited two days before telling His disciples they were going to go back Judea. But, they said "Hold it, Jesus! It isn't very safe for You in Judea. We were just there! The Jews tried to kill You, remember?"

How deep was their belief in Him? By the end of Holy Week, their reason almost squashed their faith. As when they heard Lazarus' illness resulted in death. But Jesus told them that Lazarus has fallen asleep. They thought He meant natural sleep. They thought, "Oh good! Lazarus will get better and recover... so there's no need to go back to Judea." But, Jesus meant the sleep of death. But, then He said something very strange, "And for your sake I'm glad I was not there, so that you may believe."

Glad!? Who's glad when a friend dies? Was that all Jesus cares about... just to make a point? No, Jesus DOES care. This moment is another fulfillment of

the prophecies of why Jesus came to earth - to conquer sin and death. St. John records that Jesus was moved to tears when He saw Lazarus' sisters' sorrow. Jesus knew the outcome. He already said this illness wouldn't lead to death. By Lazarus' death, God was glorified and the disciples grew in their faith.

But, even though the disciples spent three years with Jesus, they didn't fully understand who He is. When it was tested, their faith wasn't strong enough to sustain them. Jesus said, *"Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is*

not in them." He means that as one walks by God's direction, the path is always going to be clear. Even though there may be darkness that surrounds us, if we walk in the Light of Christ, we're within His protection. Death is merely a shadow. But, the disciples human reason led them to forget what they saw in Jesus.

Jesus delayed His departure until Lazarus died. Then, Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus to come quickly to heal Lazarus. They waited... and waited... and NO Jesus! Did Jesus even care? Was this case too tough for Him to handle? Would we wonder why God takes so long to answer our prayers? Are there things we've prayed about for weeks,

or months, or maybe even years, and still God seems to be silent? What does that do to our faith? Or, is God's waiting for something for the time to be right, for attitudes to change, for an opportunity to act in a way that will further the Gospel, for someone else who needs Jesus, or maybe even something that's for the greatest glory to God.

God's delay wasn't a sign of indifference. In fact, the whole content of the Bible is the theme of God's plan is ALWAYS completed at the right time. Scripture is filled with names of people who share a common theme: they waited for God to fulfill His plan for them... some with great results... some with a virtual train wreck.

The Apostle Peter writes, *"But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance."* (II Peter 3:8-9) It's hard for us to wait for God to act! Our world seems to be disintegrating. The things we want God to fix don't get fixed!... at least as fast and in the way we want. Evil abounds. But, remember, Jesus promised to be with us, even to the end of the ages.

Martha went out to meet Jesus, wishing He could have healed Lazarus. She adds, *"But even now I know that God will give You whatever You ask of Him."* She seems confused by her request because a little later she objected to the tomb being opened. She reasoned Lazarus' body would

District Now Accepting Applications for Student Financial Aid



To support the education efforts of individuals pursuing a full-time career in church work, the Mid-South District is pleased to once again offer opportunities for student financial aid. To be considered for financial assistance, a student must be a member in good standing in a Mid-South District congregation and be enrolled in a seminary or university to prepare for full-time service to the Church as a rostered worker. Rostered workers are pastors, teachers, deaconesses and Directors of Christian Education.

To be considered for the student financial assistance program, you must first inform the Mid-South District Office that you are or will be a student enrolled at a synodical school. This information may be sent via email to Julie Tyler (jtyler@mid-southlcms.com) or in a written letter (Attn: Julie Tyler / 1675 Wynne Road / Cordova, TN 38016). All related forms, including the financial aid application, are on the District's website. The application deadline is June 15, 2020.

stink. The reality of death leaves surviving loved ones turning in all directions from the pragmatic to the improbable.

Then Jesus said, *"Lazarus will rise again,"* Martha thought He meant the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. But, Jesus said it another way *"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in Me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."* (John 11:1-11:45) This is key! Not just for Martha and Mary, not just the disciples, but for us all. Jesus IS the resurrection and the life. (John 14) Like the disciples, don't miss the full significance of raising Lazarus from the dead. It is about believing in Jesus Christ as OUR resurrection and OUR eternal life. Martha responded with a revelatory statement that Jesus is the Messiah who came to the world to bring us the gift of resurrection and eternal life.

When Jesus ordered the stone from the tomb to be taken away, the crowd must have held their breath in disbelief. Jesus prayed a prayer to demonstrate that the unbelievable and unlikely comes from God gracious power. Jesus called out, the crowd held its breath, and Lazarus came forth breathing living breath and walking.

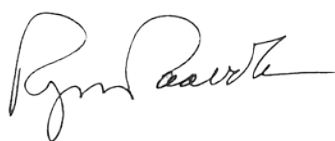
Our text continues, *"Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in Him."* Why not!? Lazarus was dead. Yet there he was standing very much alive! Jesus blew the lid off of disbelief! Lazarus' sickness didn't end in death, it resulted in God's glory! It ended in God's Son being

glorified through it. The disciples, Mary and Martha had their faith grow in Jesus - not just as a great miracle worker, or even as the promised Messiah. Jesus is OUR Resurrection and the Life.

Yet, not everyone was convinced. The Pharisees were upset, *"If we let this Man go on like this, soon everyone will follow Him. And they plotted on ways to have Him killed."* This is the crescendo of the Church year – the day we celebrate the glorious resurrection of Christ from the dead. We're about to hear a symphony of witnesses willing to die for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel of our justification by God's grace. Let the concert of all the heavens and earth proclaiming in joyous refrain, that because He lives, we will also live eternally with Him in paradise.

St. John's Gospel concludes, *"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this Book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him, you may have life in His name."* God's Word is given as a precious gift for our life and salvation in Christ Jesus. He rose bodily to guarantee that all those joined together with Christ by God's means of grace is our Lenten and Easter joy. May God grant this to us all.

Your servant in Christ –
Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola



2 DATES

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2020

10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Our Savior Lutheran Church in
Nashville TN

5110 Franklin Pike / Nashville TN
37220

[Register online now](#)

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2020

10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Christ Little Rock Church in Little Rock
AR

315 S. Hughes St. / Little Rock AR
72205

[Register online now](#)

More info on the [Mid-South District website](#) or contact Tessa Brasher at brashert@csp.edu



Chapel of the Good Shepherd (Sharps Chapel) has broken ground for their new church building.

Lord willing, the church will be completed in about six to eight months. The new building will include a sanctuary, a fellowship hall, and a pastor's office.

Las Posadas + Partnership = Sharing the Gospel Across Cultures



A partnership between two churches is opening doors for cross-cultural outreach.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Rogers, AR partnered with Cristo Para Todos (the Spanish-speaking

congregation of Salem Lutheran Ministries) to host a Las Posadas event in December.

Las Posadas is a traditional Hispanic celebration depicting Mary and Joseph's search for

lodging in Bethlehem. (The word posada means "place of lodging"). The tradition is celebrated with Spanish Christmas carols, food, and fellowship.

This year, members of both churches gathered together with Holy Trinity's ESL students. Pastor Brandon Martin led singing in both English and Spanish and shared a bilingual Gospel message. We then enjoyed delicious Latino foods and laughed together as our children tried to break a piñata.

The event gave us another opportunity to share the Gospel with our Hispanic neighbors and invite them to grow in faith together with us!

Mission Trip Dates Announced for 2020

TrinityHOPE is happy to announce that we're planning a mission trip to Haiti May 23-30th. The mission team is looking forward to visiting several schools, homes, participating in a worship service, and so much more.

One of our former mission team members shared her experience: *"The laughter and giggles from the children we got to jump rope with & teach how to play frisbee will definitely remain vivid. We will keep Lafleur, our driver and translator in our daily thoughts, as we miss his genuine caring heart for each of us. His love for His Lord and Savior was evident in all he said and did. He, like so many Christian Haitians, live out their faith daily as they give thanks for every blessing (many of which we take for granted here in*

the USA). They put their confidence in Jesus for every need, every day, as they trust Him to provide. "Lord, help our faith to be like theirs. Amen."

We would like for you to personally experience the joy of the children and the faith of our Haitian Christian friends. For more information, email Trinity HOPE at admin@trinityhope.org.

Mission Trip!

Blessing the children of Haiti one bowl of beans and rice at a time.

May 23-30, 2020

\$1500-\$1800

Estimated cost based on the team's number (7 spots available)

The team will visit a minimum of 5 schools in the JACMEL & LES CAYES districts, experience a Haitian worship service Sunday morning, participate in two home visits with local families, participate in a meeting with a local food vendor used by Trinity HOPE, and much more!

To reserve your spot, contact
Trinity HOPE at: admin@trinityhope.org or 615-394-4950



Chili Bowl 2019

In November, 2019, Christ the King Lutheran Church held its Sixth Annual Chili Bowl for a Goal and Silent Auction in support of its adopted school of Mandou in Haiti and the feeding program of Trinity HOPE. With the funds raised, the children of this school are fed a nutritious daily meal of beans and rice, along with a good helping of Jesus' love.

In addition to the chili competition, the members of CTK's Faith in Action Committee coordinated a huge silent auction with numerous outstanding donations up for bids. CTK's own "Beatles" – Pastor Chuck Neugebauer, Wes Garner, Hollis Prince, Jillian Acor, and Chris Cardona -- provided the entertainment.

Kudos to Caroline Johnson, coordinator of the Chili Bowl and Auction, who also served as photographer of the event.

The Chili Bowl and Silent Auction raised \$6,078.42 for the Mandou School and Trinity HOPE. Thank you to everyone who participated!



Members of CTK's Faith in Action committee serve up the chili from over 30 different recipes, including beef, chicken, and specialty.



Judges of the Chili Bowl competition were (l to r): Gerald Peralta, Kim Goble, Josh Thompson, Pastor Mark Goble, and Jacob Behnke.



CTK's own "Beatles" provided musical entertainment for the event.



Over 150 items, including handmade items, gift cards, entertainment packages, and baskets galore, made for exciting bidding.

Mortgage Burning Celebration

Emmanuel Lutheran Church (Hermitage, TN) January 12 at 3:33 PM had a Mortgage Burning Celebration - praising God for His many blessings and praying for His continued guidance and grace as we share His light, building relationships in Christ now and into the future...





Each January Lutheran Schools across the country take time to celebrate the unique opportunities that come with Lutheran Education. Even as National Lutheran Schools Week happens year after year, the celebration takes on a different flavor each year as fewer and fewer Lutheran Schools remain open to celebrate. The reason LCMS Lutheran Schools, which remains the largest Protestant parochial school system in the nation, are shrinking is multi-faceted and beyond this article. But what remains the center of Lutheran education is the education of the heart. To put it another way, the heart of Lutheran education is the education of the heart. This is seen clearly in our LCMS history, repeated in congregation after congregation. As German Lutherans settled in new areas often the first community building constructed was a school house then a sanctuary. What the fathers and mothers of those groups knew was the importance of education and education of the heart in the

Gospel truths of Christ's sacrifice for our forgiveness.

In our day the central message remains the same – Christ Crucified and Risen from the grave. Where and how that message is taught is changing. Yes, there are reasons to press on and support distinctively Lutheran Schools of all levels. There are also deeper reasons for fathers and mothers in our congregations today to prioritize the education of the heart in their own homes. You are familiar with what I will call the Education Commission from Deuteronomy 6:7ff “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” The priority is on the parents to teach, and train, and educate their children in the faith. The congregation, the Lutheran school, and Sunday school are aids and encouragements to what is happening at home.

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN THE FAITH!! Can seem like a daunting task – spoken in the voice of God

from Heaven. You might ask – Who am I to teach the eternal truths? What if I get the story wrong? What if my child asks a question I don't know how to answer? What if I don't know? As much as teaching the faith is about head knowledge, it is knowledge of the heart. Show your children where your heart is; where your treasure is. (Matt. 6:21) Impress upon them the importance of weekly worship attendance. (Incidentally, new research shows weekly worship attendance does more to curb 'risky behaviors' than any other intervention with children through their teens while also benefiting emotional and mental health¹.) Make family time a priority – as parents you are the face of God to your children (Ephesians 6:1-4). Through these two things you will begin the education of the heart at home, the place where God first gave the Education Commission.

As congregations there are ways to encourage, equip and empower one another in this vital goal of passing the faith to the next generation. The Mid-South District is pleased to offer such opportunities to families and congregations as well as church workers to consider how the education of the heart happens at home. Please consider joining or following along at Our Savior Nashville on March 21 or Christ Little Rock on April 25 \$10 pp for boxed lunch No registration fee.

¹<https://academic.oup.com/aje/article/187/11/2355/5094534> accessed Jan. 21, 2020



On January 10, the towns of Olive Branch, Hernando, and Lewisburg in DeSoto County experienced two tornadoes in the early morning hours. The first of two reported tornadoes was rated an EF-1 storm by the National Weather Service with an estimated wind peak of 100 miles per hour, was 200 yards wide, and traveled 11.3 miles. The second tornado was rated an EF-2 storm with an estimated peak wind gust of 120 miles per hour, was 300 yards wide and traveled 8.25 miles.

Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) Lutheran Early Response Team (L.E.R.T.) chainsaw teams were invited by Angela Fowler, Congregation President from Beautiful Savior in Olive Branch, Mississippi, to assist with tornado recovery in their community.

On Sunday, January 27, Dr. Rev. Roger Paavola, Mid-South District President, attended worship with the LCC L.E.R.T. members at Beautiful Savior in order to meet and personally thank them for their willingness

to serve in their district and to let them know what a blessing they are for what they do. It was very special that he took the time to come and express his appreciation to all.

The LCC L.E.R.T. team will continue to work through February 1, serving as many as possible during their deployment. Please continue to keep all those affected by disasters in prayer as they begin the arduous recovery process.

— Kathy O'Day,
LCC Disaster Response Director

Read more > <https://www.lutheran-churchcharities.org/articles/category/disaster-response>



SAVE THE DATE!



3L Summit coming to Memphis this Spring

Saturday, May 16
Immanuel Lutheran Church & School
Memphis, TN
Watch for details in the coming weeks

God Continues to Work in Tanzania



On December 8, 2019, Agape Lutheran Church of Kahama in Tanzania ordained eight men into the Office of the Holy Ministry and installed five women as deaconesses. This congregation of 700 is a part of the South East of Lake Victoria diocese of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (SELVD-ELCT). The five hour service also included the funeral of a church elder. The Mid-South District has been privileged to see the fruits of the partnership of the District with SELVD-ELCT with Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW) and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

May the Lord richly bless each of these new pastors and deaconesses.

Dr. Naomichi Masaki, from Fort Wayne brought greetings from CTSFW. He has been actively involved in teaching pastors and deaconesses at the Makala training center in Negizi. Pictured with Dr. Bishop Emmanuel Joseph Makala (left).



Revs. Timotheo Msengi, Jacob Kashinje, Antidius Kabuyanja, Prosper Shao, Ignace Kanamugire, Magnus Matoli, Ibrahim Kipiki, and Nzinyangua Mkiramweni with Bishop Emmanuel Joseph Makala and Dr. Naomichi Masaki.



Five candidates of deaconesses with Elizabeth Nkuba, Josephine Mjwanga, Heavenlight Mshana, Grace Mutabuzi and Rose Mono.

Prayer Summary, January 2020

Following is a list of all the people that have appeared on the Mid-South District website prayer list www.mid-southlcms.com during the month of January.

PRAYER CONCERNS

MS. EVELYN DOUGLAS (friend of Julie Tyler, Mid-South District Office)
MRS. SARA FEUERSTEIN (daughter of Pastor Donley Hesse, Emeritus, Mena, AR)
MR. MARK GUDLIN (wife Denise is with Trinity Hope)
MRS. ALISON HAWKINS (Mid-South District Office)
REV. DR. HERBERT MUELLER (Former 1st Vice President of the Synod)
REV. MERLIN SEPMYER (Crossville, TN)
REV. NEIL VANDERBUSH (Chaplain * U.S. Army with the Board of International Missions * Our Savior, Searcy, AR)
MISS ANASTASIA WILLADSEN (daughter of Rev. Joshua Willadsen, Ft. Smith, AR)

Our deepest sympathies to:

The family and friends of Ron Hoffman (Cookeville, TN) who recently passed away.

The family and friends of Rev. Roy Jacob (Hot Springs, AR) who passed away on December 29, 2019.

Rev. David McMinn on the loss of his mother, Linda Anne McMinn, who recently passed away

The family and friends of Mrs. Harriett Mueller (Olive Branch, MS) who passed away on January 16, 2020

The family and friends of Rev. Chris Powell (Nashville, TN) who passed away on December 21, 2019

Ellis & Cathy Winter on the loss of their son, Jonathan Winter, who recently passed away

JoAnn Wright and Family, on the loss of her brother, Dr. Lawrence E. Creek (Jonesboro, AR) who passed away on January 16, 2020.

CALL UPDATE

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS ORDAINED MINISTERS

ACCEPTED: **Rev. Erik Christensen**, Associate Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN, has been issued a Call to serve as **Associate Pastor at Grace Lutheran Church, Wayne, NE.**

DECLINED: **Rev. Nathaniel Hill**, St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Winchester, TX has returned the Call to serve as **Pastor at First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN.**

Rev. Todd Peperkorn, Senior Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Rocklin, CA has returned the Call to serve as **Pastor at First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN.**

Rev. Jason Zirbel, Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Greenwood, AR, has returned the Call to serve as **Pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Pleasant Prairie, WI.**

COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

PENDING: **Katie Baumann** has been issued a Call as DCE at Good Shepherd, Chattanooga.

Michelle Fischer has been issued a Call as Principle for Immanuel Lutheran, Memphis.

ACCEPTED: **A.J. Vega, DCE, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Memphis, TN** has been issued a Call to serve at Acts Church Leander in Leander, TX as their Director of Discipleship and Family Life/Church Planter in Residence.

IN THE CALLING PROCESS – CONGREGATIONS
First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, TN – Pastor
First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN Mid-South District – Executive Director for Missions and Ministry
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Mountain Home, AR – Pastor

IN THE CALLING PROCESS-COMMISSIONED MINISTERS

Zion Lutheran Church if Avilla, Alexander, AR – Director of Parish Music
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Chattanooga TN – DCE ***A Call has been issued*
Christ Lutheran School, Little Rock, AR – Principal
Immanuel Lutheran School, Memphis, TN – Principal
*** A Call has been issued*

Congregational Mission Commitments

Mission Commitment Receipts as of 12/31/19 (12 Months)

Anticipated Amount (100% of budget)..... \$1,532,274
Actual Receipts..... 1,576,515
Over (under) anticipated amount\$44,241

Use of Mission Commitment Receipts (12 Months)

Allocated to Synod for World Missions \$447,955
Allocated to Tanzania 25,000
Retained for District Mission/Ministry Support
(70% of receipts) 1,103,561
Total Receipts \$1,576,515

Mission Commitment Receipts Prior Year Comparison (12 Months)

Actual Receipts as of 12/31/19 \$1,576,515
Actual Receipts as of 12/31/18 \$1,542,151
Over (under) prior year receipts\$34,364

Lutheran Witness supplement

The 15th is the monthly deadline. Please email your original high resolution digital photo (.pdf or .jpg files only) and a short paragraph, to The Lutheran Witness Supplement editor, Judy Otto. Email: LW@mid-southlcms.com phone: 662-252-1004

Judy will always acknowledge receipt of your submission if it is sent directly to her.

Encourager Topics in 2020

- March – Youth
- April – Volunteers
- May – Small Town & Rural Ministry
- June – Leadership
- July – Veterans
- August – Stewardship
- September – Church Planting
- October – Celebrating Lutheran Heritage
- November – Thankfulness
- December – Highlights of 2020

Mid-South District, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Staff

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Angela Fowler, *Executive Director for Business & Finance*

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

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

Missy Washburn, *Administrative Assistant to the District President*

Rena McElwain, *Communications & Marketing Specialist*

Carolyn Metzger, *Finance Assistant*

Julie Tyler, *Administrative Assistant for Missions and Education*

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Stay Connected With Us

ON THE WEB - "mid-southlcms.org"

ON FACEBOOK - "Mid-South-LCMS"

ON TWITTER - "@midsouthLCMS"

Contribute

The *Encourager* is a monthly newsletter from the Mid-South District LCMS. If you would like your article or event published in the next *Encourager*, please email it by **February 21, 2020** to Rhonda, webmaster@mid-southlcms.com