



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

GOD'S ECONOMY



What is the No. 1 issue facing the American public today? What's going on with the economy?

We all know about gas prices, food prices and, well, you name it and it seems to be out of control. But there's another part of economy we don't often think about: The economy of God.

Is God an economist? Economy? God? As Lutherans we query: "What does this mean?" We're talking about God! Is He like a careful shopper at the supermarket, saving as much money as possible? Well, no. What we mean when we talk about divine economy is that God arranges His revealed life for serving us sinful creatures. He arranges His saving plan for the benefit of those



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President

He came to redeem.

The Nicene Creed puts it this way:

Christ ... who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.

This is a deep mystery of our Christian faith. How can this be that the Lord God willingly became a man so that He might redeem us from our sin? God acted decisively by taking our flesh to redeem the flesh — flesh that He has taken upon Himself for the sole purpose of reconciling sinners to Himself. In this divine economy, God arranged all that is necessary to bring us into His kingdom through the work of His only begotten Son. This is the divine economy.

God does what He sees fit to do for our salvation. He doesn't arrange the divine life in accordance with our own contrivances of behavior or some divine hide-and-seek in which we have to find Him, as if lost sheep could find and rescue their shepherd. If He had

yielded to simple human reason, there would never have been an incarnation. Our deluded thinking traps us in the abyss that we could never climb out of to get right with God by means of our own efforts and works. If we think that our "doings" could ever suffice for us to create a right relationship with God, we don't understand God's economy.

The Queen of Hearts, in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, exclaimed, "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." God does not merely ponder the impossible. He has done it. What we have considered impossible, our Father has long ago accomplished in His Son.

Who can fathom the idea that God became man for us, took away our sin and put death to death in order that by His death, mankind is redeemed and made alive. All this thought is foolishness and a stumbling block because by human

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MESSAGE

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reason it's impossible. Yet in the divine economy of our omnipotent, omniscient, glorious God, He did what was needed — whether or not we think it true, possible or believable.

Jesus Christ took on the servant's form by becoming one with us in our condition. Jesus humbled Himself to be born of a virgin mother and took into Himself the passing into being of His own flesh, in order to become our Savior. But as our Savior, Jesus became sin for us and died the death our sins deserved. According to the Scriptures, we have been buried with Christ through Holy Baptism (Rom. 6:4) and have been raised with Him and will be seated with Him in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6).

God's economy makes no sense to us in our fallen estate. God's plan of salvation included the Virgin Mary becoming the mother of God and Man in one Person.

It seems impossible! How could God eternal be born? Our human reason cannot define what it takes to accomplish our salvation. Yet in God's divine economy Jesus — the Word made flesh — made His dwelling among us (John 1). Why would true God and true Man in the one Person have to humble Himself to suffer and even die a cursed death on the cross?

He is true God and true Man. That makes this specific young Jewish woman none other than the mother of God. Our limited finite minds cannot grasp it. God is willing to go to the extraordinary length of being named the son of Mary so that He might save all the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

God is economical. He expended His greatest and dearest treasure for us poor sinners, pouring out on us an abundance of His grace in an overflowing deluge of peace, hope and life. God has held nothing back. The God we worship and in whom we have our life has gone to the most extraordinary and costly lengths to save us and make us His own children in His blessed Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

He isn't "cheap," He's just a great economist. This is economical abundance. And that's the mission and ministry God has entrusted to our work for His Kingdom.

'Go ... make disciples'

Transforming Churches Network (TCN) will hold its 2022 Discipleship Conference Aug. 19-20 at Grace Celebration Lutheran Church, Memphis.



Jesus started a grassroots Gospel movement that shook the world 2,000 years ago and continues to grow like a tsunami in many parts of the world today. But not so much here in North America ... why? Could it be because we are overlooking the simple but profound kingdom principles that Jesus taught his first disciples?

The principles that Jesus presented in the Gospels constitute the basic job description for making and multiplying disciples in fulfillment of His Great Commission, and they still work today. However, they must be learned and implemented in the context and culture of your church and community.

Find out how you can begin to

make disciples like Jesus did from practitioners who are doing it right here in North America. Learn from Curtis Sergeant, Lee Wood, Rev. Dr. Robert Newton and Rev. Dr. Terry Tieman, as well as other practitioners from across the country.

The event is free. Register by Aug. 18 at transformingchurchesnetwork.org. Click "Upcoming Events" at the top of the page.

TCN is a 501(c)3 religious organization formed in 2005 for the purpose of revitalizing congregations in North America. The mission of TCN is to provide training and resources to empower churches to open new doors into their community for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. TCN has a network that has touched some 1,500 churches in North America.



Bridge City Community is no longer affiliated with First Lutheran Church, Chattanooga, Tenn., or the Mid-South District as it now operates as a non-denominational social service agency.

— Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola,
Mid-South District president

District LLL groups merge

By Ray Musgrave

Tennessee LLL District President

The Tennessee District Board of the Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) unanimously voted on April 29 to merge with the Mid-South LLL District. The merger was formally announced on April 30 during the annual conference at St. Paul, Paducah, Ky.

This merger will help strengthen these two LLL districts and allow us to work with all the congregations within both districts.

Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, speaker of "The Lutheran Hour" was the conference keynote speaker. He explained how we as Christians were brought into the church as a family and tasked to spread the Gospel within our neighborhoods. He reminded us that Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) has many resources to help congregations, families and individuals to start a "spiritual conversation."

The new *Better Together Kit* (shoplhm.org/better-together-kit) with the *Hopeful Neighborhood Field Guide* (hopefulneighborhood.org/fieldguide) are among these resources.

Pastor Zeigler also provided the message in both services on Sunday.

LWML District President Candy Habich shared many of the projects in which LWML members have been involved.

Rev. William F. Zwick, Mid-South



Jan Simko, Mid-South District Disaster Response coordinator; Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler, speaker of "The Lutheran Hour"; and Rev. William F. Zwick, district Missions and Ministry executive, addressed the Tennessee District LLL conference in April.

District Missions and Ministry executive, talked about district plans to help congregations grow in their outreach.

Jan Simko, Mid-South District Disaster Response coordinator, also spoke. Jan continues to provide help to those in our area who suffered through the devastating tornadoes that tore through northwest Tennessee and western Kentucky on Dec. 10, 2021. Her stories were heartbreaking, but yet very heartwarming because of the Christian witnessing the response teams provided.

Please pray for the success of the merger and the growth of all LLL districts, as well as for the continuing work of these dedicated servants for whom we are thankful.

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of
May 31, 2022
(5 months)

Anticipated amount (42% of budget)	\$631,204
Actual receipts	\$610,995
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$20,209)
Use of mission commitment receipts	
Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$172,882
Allocated to Tanzania	\$10,417
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$427,697
Total receipts	\$610,995
Mission commitment receipts comparison	
Actual receipts as of May 31, 2022	\$610,995
Actual receipts as of May 31, 2021	\$612,119
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$1,124)

Celebrate with Faith, Fairfield Bay



Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, Ark., will celebrate its 50th anniversary on Oct. 9.

Rev. Arthur Baisch, former Faith pastor, will preach for the 11 a.m. service and a potluck dinner will follow at Faith (310 Snead Drive). Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Mid-South District president, will be the preacher at the 2 p.m. anniversary service.

Stay tuned for more details.

SEEDS PLANTED

The 27th biennial LWML Mid-South District Convention was held June 10-12 at the Towne-Place Suites in Clarksville, Tenn.

The theme was “Planting Seeds of Faith,” based on 1 Cor. 3:6 (“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”)

The 172 attendees listened to Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, executive director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, who gave the keynote address. Mission moments were presented by representatives from Mara Evangelical Church, Bowling Green, Ky.; Loaves and Fishes, Clarksville, Tenn.; Hope Pregnancy Center, Clarksville, Tenn; and Hope Unlimited Crisis Pregnancy Center, Paducah, Ky.

Bible studies were led by Revs. William Ondracka and Joshua Ralston, district pastoral counselors. A beautiful worship service was held at Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, on Friday night, and song leader Wendysue Fluegge treated attendees to a Saturday evening concert and began convention business sessions with songs.

The convention ingathering was collected for Hope Pregnancy Center and Hope Unlimited Crisis Pregnancy Center. Convention attendees brought 128 packages of diapers, 143 packs of baby wipes, 123 toiletry items, 34 jugs of laundry detergent and 12 miscellaneous baby items, along with \$1,492 in Walmart and Kroger gift cards and cash.

Convention business included the election of officers, and the approval of a \$105,000 mission goal in support of 14 mission grants. The grants can be found at midsouthlwml.org/mission-grants.



From top, LWML members are gathered for convention; and Young Woman Representatives are introduced.

Photos: Vanessa Kifer

Celebrate with St. Paul!

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wartburg, Tenn., joins the LCMS in celebrating its 175th anniversary this year by celebrating its own 175th anniversary, and invites all pastors, teachers and laity to the weekend homecoming celebration, to be held Oct. 1-2.

The keynote speaker for the Saturday (Oct. 1) event will be Rev. Will Weedon, host of *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever* Bible study podcast (thewordendures.org) and former director of LCMS worship.

St. Paul, Wartburg, is the oldest congregation in the Mid-South District and is one of the historic church planters for many of our congregations in East Tennessee. The congregation looks forward to celebrating with their district brothers and sisters in Christ.

Visit splcwartburg.org for more information



Rev. Will Weedon



This 175th anniversary logo for St. Paul, Wartburg, Tenn., was designed by Dr. Kristina Phillips, wife of Rev. Dr. Eric Phillips, pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, Nashville.

Top charity



TRINITY HOPE

HAITIAN FEEDING PROGRAM

Since 1999, Trinity HOPE has had one mission: Feed children in Christian schools in Haiti with a noon meal each schoolday so that their tummies are full and their ears are open to hear the Good News of the Gospel.

In the last 23 years, Trinity HOPE has strived to be careful stewards of every dollar God provides so that the maximum number of students in the schools of all Lutheran and other Christian congregations in Haiti have a meal each day.

Because of its efforts to be transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible, Trinity HOPE has received the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator, one of the top charity rating sites in the United States. For more information, visit charitynavigator.org/ein/202216228.

Trinity HOPE currently provides about 52,000 meals per day, but currently there are over 20,000 hungry souls on the waiting list looking for hope. To learn more about this ministry or to make a donation, visit trinityhope.org. Follow Trinity HOPE at [facebook.com/trinityhopehaiti](https://www.facebook.com/trinityhopehaiti).



PREPARING TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

By Bennett Rolan

Editorial Manager, Bible Study Fellowship

Sitting down for coffee, my heart broke as a dear friend shared about a recent struggle. She talked about her disappointed hopes and her anxiety moving forward. For years, I had prayed that this friend would find freedom in Christ.

During a pause in the conversation, I knew I had an opening. I should say something about Jesus or faith. I should tell her that she didn't have to be afraid or alone. I should ask her about her beliefs or share my own.

Before I could gather my thoughts, she asked about my weekend plans. The moment had passed. How had I missed it?

I wanted to share the Gospel. I knew she needed to know the truth. But I wasn't prepared, and the words didn't come.

Sharing the truth about Jesus sounds simple, but sometimes it can also feel overwhelming.

Maybe you can relate.

We can't predict the day or hour when God will give us an opportunity to share, but we can be ready when it comes. By remembering four simple

truths, we can approach Gospel conversations with confidence. God doesn't require our perfection, but He does call us to be prepared.

1 Peter 3:15 tells us:

But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

Where to start

Think about someone in your own life who desperately needs the Gospel.

What are their interests, their hopes, their fears?

What might be a barrier to sharing God's truth?

How could you turn an everyday conversation toward spiritual matters?

Begin with the four simple truths:

- The truth about God;
- The truth about sin;
- The truth about Jesus; and
- The truth about our response

These essential truths — and how to speak them — will be detailed in Part Two of this article, coming next month.

DISTRICT NEWS

District receives one pastor, one vicar

Call Day and vicarage placement services were held at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in April.

Chase K. Lefort was called to serve as pastor of Faith, Oak Ridge, Tenn. He will be ordained in his home congregation in Raleigh, N.C.

Dakota Monday was assigned as vicar to Faith, Tullahoma, Tenn. He is a deferred vicar, meaning that he will be eligible for a Divine Call following the successful completion of his vicarage.

Praise be to God for His gracious gifts of workers for the Kingdom of Christ in the Mid-South District.



Pictured are, from left, Chase Lefort, Rev. Dr. Roger and Patricia Paavola and Dakota Monday.

Welcome Pastor Janneke!

Rev. Kory Janneke was installed as pastor of St. Matthew, Conway, Ark., on May 15. Participating were, from left, Revs. Kevin Conger, Hope, Jacksonville; Dr. LeRoy Leach, Peace, Conway; Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; William Zwick, district Missions and Ministry executive; Kory Janneke; Peter Ave-Lallemand, Faith, Fairfield Bay; Dr. Alan Janneke, St. Paul's, West Frankfort, and Emmanuel, Percy, Ill. (and Kory's father); Don Hefta, emeritus; and David Vandercook, Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle.



Bishop installed in South Sudan

The consecration and installation of Rev. Nathaniel Bol Nyok Apar as bishop of the South Sudan Evangelical Lutheran Church (SSEL) was held on April 24 in Kakuma, Kenya, where Bishop Bol had served for many years. He was a guest at the Mid-South District Convention in 2015.

A Sudanese immigrant and member of Pilgrim, Jonesboro, approached then-pastor Rev. Russell Shewmaker in 2019 concerning a need in his homeland. As a result, funds donated by the Mid-South District were used to help the widow of Rev. David Alier Makual, an SSEL pastor killed by cattle raiders. Pastor Shewmaker has served as the district's liaison with the SSEL, and has made two trips to South Sudan to help with pastor training.



CONGRATULATIONS!

We share with you the Mid-South District pastors who will celebrate ordination anniversaries in 2022. We rejoice and give thanks to God for the gifts these men provide to His church.

65 YEARS

Rev. Paul Donner (*emeritus*)
Paducah, Ky.

Rev. John Schulz (*emeritus*)
Knoxville, Tenn.

55 YEARS

Rev. James Evers (*emeritus*)
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

50 YEARS

Rev. Peter Ave-Lallemant
Faith, Fairfield Bay, Ark.

Rev. Philip Bohlken (*emeritus*)
Knoxville, Tenn.

Rev. Gary Heckmann (*emeritus*)
Cookeville, Tenn.

Rev. Paul Muench (*emeritus*)
Knoxville, Tenn.

45 YEARS

Rev. Jan Munch (*emeritus*)
Athens, Tenn.

Rev. Dr. Mark Press
Holy Trinity, Bowling Green, Ky.

40 YEARS

Rev. Keith Enko
Emmanuel, Hermitage, Tenn.

Rev. Bradley Heinecke
Shepherd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend, Ark.

Rev. Stewart Marshall
Trinity, Pine Bluff, Ark.

Rev. Richard Mayer
Messiah, Pea Ridge, Ark.



20 YEARS

Rev. Tracy Nelson
Our Savior, Nashville, Tenn.

Rev. M. Chad Philipp
St. Paul, Gillett, Ark.
St. Luke, DeWitt, Ark.

Rev. Kent Schaaf
Grace, Little Rock, Ark.

15 YEARS

Rev. Donald Coulter
Athens Lutheran Church, Athens, Tenn.

Rev. Christopher Gorshe
Bella Vista Lutheran Church,
Bella Vista, Ark.

Rev. Jeffrey King
Our Shepherd, Searcy, Ark.

Rev. David Vandercook
Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle, Ark.
Trinity, North Little Rock, Ark.

10 YEARS

Rev. Dr. Richard Davenport
Our Redeemer, Fort Smith, Ark.

Rev. Donald Welmer
First, Chattanooga, Tenn.

5 YEARS

Rev. Eric Rudsenke
Concordia, Jackson, Tenn.

Rev. Adam Woldt
The Point, Knoxville, Tenn.

Rev. JohnDavid Zischke
Restoration, Fayetteville, Ark.

35 YEARS

Rev. Steve Harmon
Bethlehem, Johnson City, Tenn.

Rev. Paul Leigeber
Faith, Union City, Tenn.
Trinity, Dyersburg, Tenn.

Rev. H. Christopher Sheets
Good Shepherd, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. Russell Shewmaker (*emeritus*)
Gravette, Ark.

30 YEARS

Rev. Jon Bischof
St. Matthew, Corning, Ark.

25 YEARS

Rev. Mark Goble
Christ the King, Memphis, Tenn.

Rev. Clarence Martin (*emeritus*)
Bartlett, Tenn.

Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
Mid-South District president
Cordova, Tenn.

Rev. Andrew Smith
Heavenly Host, Cookeville, Tenn.

WELL DONE,
GOOD AND
FAITHFUL
SERVANTS

Music on the Mountain, open house is Sept. 24

The annual **Music on the Mountain** is set for Sept. 24 at Camp Trinity, the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean Mountain.

This fundraiser for Camp Trinity is held each fall on the last Saturday in September. Admission is free, but donations are welcome.

Music on the Mountain features live music all day from an outdoor stage in front of the historic Trinity Chapel. Guests can relax in the shade while enjoying music performed by talented musicians in several genres — bluegrass, folk, country, Gospel and praise.

Barbecue dinners with all the fixin's will be on sale at a concession stand during the lunch hour, and snacks and sodas will be available all day. Games will be set up for families, including cornhole, giant checkers, spike ball, horseshoes and volleyball.

The event also features a silent auction as guests can bid on items like outdoor games, barbecue packages, garden tools, kitchen gadgets, sports memorabilia, handcrafts and more.

Learn more at lutherancamp.org/battle-of-the-praise-bands.

Friends of Camp Trinity are invited to an open house in the new retreat lodge on Sept. 24. Guests can tour the lodge as well as the rest of camp to see the many improvements. Light refreshments will be served at the lodge.



Although most of the funding for the retreat lodge has been secured, the camp is still seeking contributions to finish and furnish the building. An estimated \$130,000 was still needed as of June 15.

The date for the dedication of the building, along with a worship service, will be announced at a later date.

Church groups are invited to consider booking the lodge for events, including women's retreats, family reunions, church leadership retreats, family camps, writing workshops, men's club service retreats, pastors' retreats and more. Email the camp office to inquire about specific dates at director@lutherancamp.org.



FROM TOP: Construction on the retreat lodge has continued through the summer, with the first events booked for September; the Nix Family Band from First Lutheran Church, Fort Smith, also performed at the 2021 Music on the Mountain.

Share your news with us!

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

Deadline for the October issue is Aug. 15.

