



/ AUGUST 2026

MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

‘Very God of Very God’

UPROOTING HERETICAL TEACHING

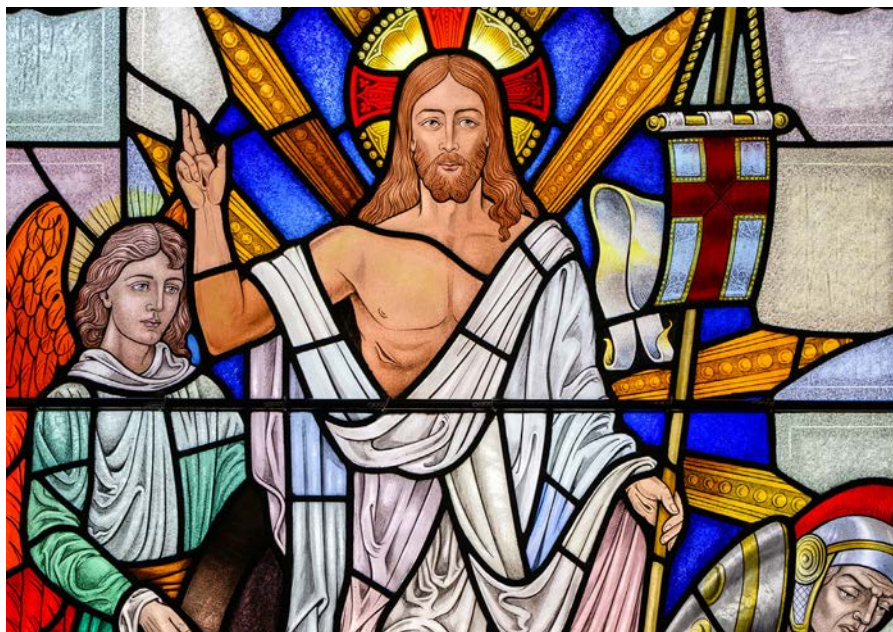
A priest in Libya known as Arius (born 250 or 256) taught an erroneous theological doctrine known as Arianism. Arius affirmed a created, finite nature of Jesus Christ rather than Him having equal divinity with God the Father.



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President

Arius was denounced by the early church as a heretic. He taught that Jesus was created by God; somewhat divine but not fully divine. His proposal in the early fourth century became quite popular throughout much of the eastern and western Roman empires. He and his theology were denounced as heresy by the First Council of Nicaea in 325.

After his death in 336, there were fairly prominent and active pockets of his heretical teaching inside the Christian church. This caused no shortage of trouble for the faithful bishops who were forced continually to defend the truth and contend against the false teachings of various Arian parties. Debates, extensive sermons and treatises from both sides either supported the theory of Arius or defended the faith of



the divinity of Christ, the Word of God in flesh.

Gregory of Nazianzus was invited to Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, to argue the case for Christian orthodoxy. Gregory was given a palace to live in, which he converted into a church. However, in 379, an anti-orthodox mob attacked Gregory and the church on the Vigil of Easter. The mob murdered a fellow bishop and wounded Gregory.

The Constantinopolitans thought little of the carnage since they believed Gregory was too naive for their culture and deserved everything that had happened to him.

Undeterred, Gregory began delivering the theological presentations that eventually elevated his standing inside the orthodox Christian community, gaining the title of “theologian” for his defense

of the Christ of Scripture. As a theologian, Gregory was a steadfast and vocal defender of Christ and the “divinity of the Word.” His presentations of Christ as true God and true Man suppressed the Arians to some degree. His apologetic defense of the Scriptural presentation of the two natures of Christ gave Christian orthodoxy the support it needed in the epicenter of Constantinople’s church. Gregory remained unmoved from his pronouncement of the divinity of Jesus Christ, making him a symbol of orthodoxy to this day.

But Gregory wasn’t a young man when all this happened. His passion for the truth of Christ’s divinity made him to stand in the face of every person who proposed to question or attack the full divinity of Jesus Christ. He wasn’t afraid to point out the errors of those

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who remained unmoved among the Arian and Apollinarian parties.

In opposition to Arius, Alexander of Alexandria presented his case to Alexander of Constantinople and Eusebius of Nicomedia. The emperor sent a legate to resolve the controversy and called on Arius and Alexander to settle their differences. The argument between Arius and his opponents continued, becoming such a divisive force in the empire that Constantine forced a resolution of the matter.

He finally settled the dispute by calling on a council. Delegates drawn from all over the empire came together to develop a statement on what Scripture provides for us to preach and teach about Jesus Christ. The First Council of Nicaea, 325, was to determine what was taught by Jesus Christ and His apostles. In the process, the totality of Arius' confession of faith was cut to shreds. Guided by the emperor, the council developed the Nicene Creed for use in catechetical instruction and worship. Arius was condemned as a heretic.

Today, not only are there modern versions of Arianism; there also seems to be a growing number of people who are reluctant to be critical of any type of false teaching. We've all seen bumper stickers on cars stating: "Coexist" — expressing a desire to have all religions be of equal standing. Legislation and media tend to suppress any discussion of Christianity while not only allowing, but encouraging, man-made religions and unbiblical philosophies.

This is why it's important to note that the church celebrates three feast days in

August that are oftentimes overlooked in the flurry of summer activities and preparations for the return to school.

A minor feast day for **St. Laurence** is recognized by the church on Aug. 10. The feast honors Laurence's enduring legacy as a martyr and patron saint of Rome. St. Laurence was martyred in 258 during the persecution of Christianity under Roman Emperor Valerian. Laurence's role as a deacon was responsible for the church's charitable activities. His martyrdom was a consequence of being thrown alive on a glowing red-hot gridiron by the Roman military.

On Aug. 15, the church celebrates **St. Mary**, the mother of Jesus who is the Christ. The Feast of St. Mary was retained by the Lutheran church after the Reformation. *Lutheran Worship* designates Aug. 15 as a lesser festival called "Mary, Mother of Our Lord," while the current *Lutheran Service Book* formally calls it "St. Mary, Mother of our Lord." The different arms of the Christian church differ on what was Mary's disposition — a sainted death (Lutheran) or an assumption directly into heaven (Roman). But we all agree that as a grieving mother, Mary suffered at her Son's crucifixion. She watched Him die an innocent death, but three days later rejoiced in His resurrection.

On Aug. 24, **St. Bartholemew** is recognized by the church as an apostle whom scholars identify as Nathanael, a man from Cana. He was summoned to Jesus by Philip, and Jesus paid Nathanael a great compliment:

"Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you

were under the fig tree, I saw you."

John 1:47–48

This brought Nathanael to exclaim, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (John 1:49b). But Jesus countered with, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these" (John 1:50b).

Bartholomew was martyred in Albanopolis, Armenia. He was reportedly flayed alive and beheaded for refusing to renounce his Christian faith.

The Resurrection of Christ from the dead is the central doctrine of the Christian church. If the Resurrection of Christ did not happen, Scripture says we remain dead in our sins. What makes up heresies that have crept into the church throughout its history, in one way or another, will spread doubt about Christ's Resurrection to new life. Arians from the fourth century, and those still here today, fail to recognize that if Christ is not fully God who lived the perfect life to become the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God for our sake, we'd all be left in our sin.

If we, unlike Gregory, Bartholomew and Laurence, fail to stand firmly in our faith, would it be to avoid the dangers associated with persecution? So when was the last time any of us was wounded by an Arian mob? When have we been threatened by a hot griddle or flaying knife? In reality, this is God's business, not ours.

May God allow us to show the courage of our faith in Christ as one of His saints — redeemed and forgiven — who are promised our own resurrection to eternal life in His Kingdom by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, accomplished for us all.

SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US!

Send us your stories and photos for the October issue by Aug. 7.

Digital files, sent via e-mail, are preferred. Our submission deadline is the 7th of each month, two months before publication. Photos must be sent in high resolution.

Send email submissions to LW@mid-southlcms.com or mail via U.S. Postal Service to Judy Otto; 150 N. Maury St.; Holly Springs, MS 38635



Educators conference is Oct. 8-10

The 2026 Educators Conference for the Mid-South and Southern districts will be held Oct. 8–10 in Shalimar, Fla.

The featured speaker will be Ted Neitzke, a dynamic educator and leader who has dedicated his career to helping individuals and organizations grow stronger, more compassionate and more effective. Educators are encouraged to check out Ted's podcast, *The Smart Thinking Podcast*.

Learn more and register at mid-southlcms.org (click the link on the page).



Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of May 31, 2026 (5 months)

Anticipated amount (42% of budget)	\$687,550
Actual receipts	\$655,640
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$31,910)

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$186,275
Allocated to Tanzania	\$10,417
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$458,948
Total receipts	\$655,640

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of May 31, 2026	\$655,640
Actual receipts as of May 31, 2025	\$657,084
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$1,444)

Learn Spiritual First Aid

Rev. Chris Singer, president and CEO of Lutheran Church Charities, will lead a training workshop on Spiritual First Aid (SFA) Sept. 18–19 at Christ the King, Memphis.

SFA offers a biblically informed, field-tested structure to guide you in serving those who have been impacted by trauma or grief — aiding and offering your aid and support as a spiritual first responder. SFA training prepares pastors, teachers, lay leaders and others to provide compassionate care to those who are stressed and hurting.

The Friday session begins with a light dinner; the Saturday session includes lunch and refreshments. You must complete both sessions to receive certification in Spiritual First Aid.

The registration fee is \$25. To register, go to <https://lcc.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/1474/responses/new>; or scan the QR code in the ad below.

CTK invites all to services on Sunday, Sept. 20, when Pastor Singer will serve as the preacher.

LCC Training Workshop

Hosted by Christ The King Lutheran Church Memphis, TN

As Lutheran believers, let's prepare to provide care during the chaos of a crisis.



SPIRITUAL FIRST AID™

Sept 18-19

\$25 per registration (\$129 value)

Fri Sept 18 6:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

Sat Sept 19 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Light dinner served Friday.

Lunch and refreshments provided Saturday.

Register today

Select Christ The King LC Memphis, TN

REGISTER



To earn Spiritual First Aid™ certification, you must attend both sessions of the training.

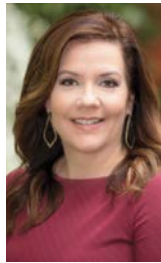
The Henkel Conference

“Mankind thus unacquainted with God cannot love him; neither can they love one another: ‘He that loveth not knoweth not God’”

The Henkel Conference — a presentation and discussion event devoted to Christian theology and cultural engagement — will be held Aug. 17–18 at Ascension Lutheran Church (610 Old Hickory Blvd.), Madison, Tenn.

The speaker line-up includes:

- ▶ Mollie Hemingway, editor-in-chief of *The Federalist*, senior journalism fellow at Hillsdale College, Fox News contributor, and best-selling author;
- ▶ Scott Yenor, chair of the American Citizenship Initiative at The Heritage Foundation and professor of political science at Boise State University;
- ▶ Alex Newman, president of Liberty Sentinel Media; and



Mollie Hemingway

- ▶ Noelle Mering, fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in the Life and Family Initiative and columnist for the *Catholic Herald*.

More speakers will be added to the schedule.

With a slight change to prior years, the 2026 conference will conclude with a panel discussion on free speech.

Registration for this event is \$165 for those who sign up by Aug. 10. Learn more at ascensionmadison.com/henkel.html.

Please note that scholarships to The Henkel Conference are available for high school and college students. For details on this opportunity, please email henkel@ascensionmadison.com.



Joining HIS mission

There will always be a desire to have more workers in the church: more pastors to fill vacancies, more rostered teachers to serve in Lutheran schools, more missionaries to send around the world. At the same time, we trust that the Lord provides.

The Summer 2026 issue of *Lutherans Engage the World* highlights a few of the ways that the Lord does just that, as He calls people into His service from secular careers, during times of transition and through formative experiences like time spent at a Lutheran camp. The issue also looks at a couple of the ways God sends partners — including partner churches and alliance missionaries — from other countries to join us in His mission, and it gives a behind-the-scenes look at what to expect at the upcoming LCMS convention in July.

Thanks be to God that He uses all things — even imperfect people like us — to encourage His children and accomplish His purposes.

The summer issue has arrived in mailboxes. Read it online at engage.lcms.org. If you aren't currently receiving the magazine but would like to, visit engage.lcms.org/subscribe to sign up for a free subscription. Both individual and bulk subscriptions (for congregations) are available.

THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT INVITES YOU TO
SAVE THE DATE FOR
OKTOBERFEST



**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 24
11 AM - 3 PM**

**Immanuel Lutheran Church
in Memphis** (6325 Raleigh LaGrange Rd.)

FOOD • BEER • MUSIC • MORE

A Celebration of the Mid-South District's 60th Anniversary!



Army Reserves has NEW CHAPLAIN

Rev. Andre Frandle was installed as chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserves at Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, Tenn., on May 10. Chaplain Frandle is a member of Grace. Pictured are, from left, Rev. Larry Peters, Grace pastor emeritus; Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; Rev. Andre Frandle; Rev. James Martin, Grace associate pastor; and Rev. Dr. Steven Hokana, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces assistant director.



A joyful partnership

GHANA PASTOR VISITS, THANKS REDEEMER

Rev. Nicholas Salifu is pictured with Rev. Philip Young, pastor of Redeemer, Nashville, before Divine Service on May 10.



Rev. Nicholas Salifu of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana visited Redeemer Lutheran Church, Nashville, on May 10. Redeemer has had a longtime partnership with **Ghana Harvest**, Pastor Salifu's ministry in the upper-east region of Ghana.

Ghana Harvest works in West Africa to train church leaders, plant churches, translate Scripture and other books, teach reading and writing, educate children and provide physical needs such as clean drinking water.

Pastor Salifu preached on Ephesians 2:8–9 and also gave a presentation on the latest developments with the 14 congregations that he oversees and Concordia Preparatory School, which now has over 1,000 students.

Pastor Salifu also offered a citation of appreciation to the Redeemer members for their faithful support and joyful partnership in the Gospel (Phil. 1:5).

For more information on Pastor Salifu and Ghana Harvest, visit ghanaharvest.org.

WELCOME!

We praise God for those who will serve in the Mid-South District following call and vicarage/deaconess intern assignment services at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), held April 28–29.



Ethan Baumbach, a CTSFW student, was assigned as vicar to St. Paul, Paducah, Ky. He is pictured with his wife, Miranda, and their children.



Michael Saxton, a CSL student, was called as associate pastor to Grace, Knoxville. He had been serving Grace the past year as vicar.



John 3:16 is often referred to as the “Gospel in a nutshell.” Since we are all missionaries, we should have in mind what we would say to someone if they asked us about our faith and why we believe in Jesus.

1 Peter 3:15b guides us:

“...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.”

Your statement should be short and to the point — a summary of your salvation. A few examples are:

- “God so loved that He gave His Son.”
- “Jesus’ blood frees us from our sins.”
- “Because of Jesus, we have new life.”

If you haven’t given this any thought

lately, now might be a good time so you will be prepared.

You’ve also heard the saying, “actions speak louder than words,” so our daily actions should also convey that we are Christian. It is said that you may be the only Bible someone will see, so how we act in public is very important since we never know who may be watching us.

Does our Sunday behavior carry over to Monday through Friday? That’s sometimes hard in this broken world of ours, but being kind and respectful to others and showing compassion are some visible actions to show our faith.

**God’s peace,
Diane Reimold**

LWML Mid-South District
Second-Vice President

GIFT PLANNING

New name, same service

LWML’s Gifts of Love ministry is now using a slightly different name and logo to better say who we are and where we fit in the ministries of Lutheran Women in Mission.

We are now Gift Planning Services, but the purpose is the same — working in partnership with the LCMS Foundation to do gift planning for women and their families across the country. Think of Gift Planning Services as your GPS navigation system to go through the process of end-of-life planning before God calls you home to heaven.

Sarah Seying is the gift planning counselor for our Mid-South District and she would be happy to help you review an existing plan or take the first step to share your faith, bless your family and impact ministry with the financial gifts God has blessed you with.



Sarah Seying

You can find more information on our website, lwmlgiftplan.org, or you can contact Sarah directly at sarah.seying@lfnd.org.

Gift Planning Services is a free service of Lutheran Women in Mission and the LCMS Foundation.

42ND BIENNIAL LWML CONVENTION

- July 8–11, 2027
- Oklahoma City Convention Center

Theme verse: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).



Romans 12:2

STAY CONNECTED

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- or president@midsouthlwml.org

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A portrait of a smiling man with a shaved head, wearing a blue t-shirt and a necklace with a cross pendant. He is standing in front of a stone wall.

You can visit our website at trinityhope.org, or call Sarah Cornett at 615-569-0503 or Keith Logan at 615-394-4950.

The circled numbers indicate how many schools Trinity HOPE serves in that particular district of Haiti.

Haiti Districts and School Counts:

District	Number of Schools
Artibonite	24
Centre	25
Grand'Anse	25
Nippes	12
Port-au-Prince	25
Sud	26
Sud-Est	24
Sud-Ouest	24
West	8
North	24
North-East	8
North-West	8
South	8
South-East	8
South-West	8

Gearing up for fall season

At the time of this writing, summer camp season is in full swing at Camp Trinity. The grounds are buzzing with children, families, volunteers and staff from across the Mid-South District. It is always a joy to see young people growing in their faith, making new friends and experiencing God's creation in the beautiful Arkansas mountains.

While summer camps keep us busy, we are already preparing for a full and exciting fall season. Camp Trinity continues to serve as a year-round ministry center, offering opportunities for fellowship, learning, recreation and spiritual growth for people of all ages.

This fall's calendar includes scrapbooking retreats, men's retreats, family reunions, outdoor classroom programs for home-school families and much more. We invite everyone to explore upcoming events by visiting our camp calendar at lutherancamp.org. Go to the "Events" tab at the top of the page and select "Calendar" from the drop-down menu.

The Ninth Annual Music on the Mountain on Sept. 26 will be one of the highlights of our fall season. This beloved community event is free and open to everyone. Guests can enjoy a wide variety of musical styles including gospel, folk, bluegrass, country, blues, pop oldies and contemporary Christian, performed primarily by talented LCMS musicians and friends from around Arkansas.

Attendees can relax in lawn chairs, on blankets or in the chapel lawn seating area while enjoying a full day of fellowship and music performed on a stage set up in front of historic Trinity Chapel.

As a fundraiser supporting Camp Trinity's ministry, the event will also feature concessions, barbecue dinners (available while supplies last), outdoor games for the entire family and a silent auction.

Musicians interested in performing are encouraged to contact Aaron Davis ("Mountain Man"), camp director, at 501-652-6304.

Registration is also open now for Outdoor Classroom, our educational enrichment program designed specifically for homeschool families. Outdoor Classroom complements traditional homeschool studies by providing hands-on learning experiences in subjects that are often difficult to teach at home.

Recent semesters have included field trips, nature studies, guest speakers, storytelling workshops, weather education, forest habitat exploration, and lessons on Arkansas history and early settlement.

Planning is already underway for the Fall 2026 semester, and we look forward to another season of engaging educational opportunities. Homeschool families interested in learning more may visit lutherancamp.org and click the "Outdoor Classroom" tab on the page.



▲ Campers enjoy a rock climbing challenge at Outdoor Classroom.

◀ The Easterday band performs at Music on the Mountain.

Finally, Camp Trinity continues to welcome congregations, schools, organizations and families seeking a place to host retreats, meetings, reunions and special events. We would be honored to partner with you. **If you are interested in hosting an event at camp**, please contact our staff at trinitypetitjean@gmail.com.

As always, we thank God for His continued blessings on this ministry and for the faithful support of congregations and individuals throughout the Mid-South District. We hope to see you on the mountain soon!