



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

‘Whom Shall I Send?’

Synod embarks on initiative to raise up church workers

“God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

So spoke a humble tax collector in our Lord’s parable (Luke 18:9-14). Meanwhile a Pharisee busily voiced his self-impressive resume, but it was the humble tax man, not the proud Pharisee, who went down to his house justified.

“Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

So have each of us spoken. Perhaps you’ve said this prayer verbatim. In this particular formulation it’s known as the “Jesus prayer,” and has a rich history of usage. But if not verbatim, it is part and parcel of the faith. And we have it on the very highest authority that “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

How does that calling happen? The words which pour forth from our lips are first formed by the tongue; but that only occurs once our breath passes through our vocal chords. One step further back takes us to the source of the breath in our lungs. Above it all is the brain sending its signals to the body to form these words and not some others.

Where then did our brain ever get the desire to do this? There is a wonderful mystery involved here. I am neither up to the challenge nor does space allow the unraveling of the interaction between the human soul, mind and body.



Rev. David R. Appold
Pastor, St. Paul,
Paducah, Ky.

My interest is to trace a similar sort of path. How does one call on the name of the Lord? What is the spiritual chain of events, so to speak, that lead to this? Thankfully I can turn to the Holy Spirit and His apostle Paul for guidance in unraveling this wonderful mystery.

In Romans 10, St. Paul traces a series of causes and effects that lead to calling on the Lord’s name. He reasons backward, as we just did, from effects back to causes. How can people call on the Lord? They must believe. Where does belief come from? They must hear the Gospel. Where does this hearing come from? Someone has to preach. Where do these preachers come from? They must be sent.

That’s where the apostle stops. It’s all of one piece. The sending-preaching-hearing-believing-calling on the name of the Lord all goes together.

But what if we ask one more question in the train? Where did these sent preachers come from? In fact, we find that Isaiah overheard the Lord asking just this sort of thing when Isaiah was commissioned for his life’s work: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

This is no ivory-tower question. We’re not after empty speculation. Neither is it chiefly a bureaucrat’s concern. The point is not perpetuating institutions for the sake of institutions. Remember where we started: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” That’s the goal.

So ... where do these sent ones come from? Jesus found His apostles in fishing boats and

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Photos: LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

tax booths. Another was known as “the zealot.” Though they each had their own story, the apostles were all found from among God’s own people.

Jesus didn’t hire outside consultants. He didn’t import apostles from somewhere else. He didn’t even entrust the task to His holy angels. His men came from within the great congregation of Israel.

To this day our Lord calls men *from* His great congregation. He sets them apart to serve in the Office of the Holy Ministry. He calls some from within the flock to care *for* the flock, that they and many more may call on the Lord. In addition to pastors, the church has established a number of auxiliary offices that aid and assist our pastors in this charge — Lutheran school teachers, deaconesses, and directors of Christian education, outreach, family life ministry and parish music.

Where are we to find our fishermen and tax collectors? Where are our zealots? Perhaps some of them are literally fishermen right now. I hear there are many recent additions to the IRS payroll. And maybe the Lord will take hold of a zealot or two who will urge His kingdom forward.

Whoever they may be, those who are being sent and will be sent are our own. They are among us. They are baptized at our fonts. They are in our families. They are taught in our classrooms. They worship in our pews. They are fed at our altars. We hear their voices and see their faces already now.

The LCMS’s *Set Apart to Serve* initiative is aimed at getting congregations to ask themselves this question. But just like St. Paul to the Romans, the real point is not just to ask the question or to arrive at an answer. The point is to discover the answer and take up our place in living it out. Our servants are set apart *through* the church.

We need parents and congregations who love and pray for those who serve them. We need parents and fellow members who encourage their children

and fellow members to consider a life of service for the kingdom of God. We need pastors and fellow church workers who serve their Lord by caring diligently for the flock among them. We need pastors and church workers who display the noble, sacred and joyful work of their callings. We need a district that supports our workers and helps them to bear the unique crosses that come with ministry in the church.

In our own Mid-South District there is a *Set Apart to Serve* committee to encourage these conversations. We promote pastors and church workers fostering a culture of church work within their congregations. Last October we asked congregations to set apart one Sunday to preach and teach on this aspect of common life in Christ’s body. We are ready and willing to connect you or anyone in your congregation who wants to be put in touch with someone currently serving in a particular church-work vocation that may not

be part of your congregation’s ministry. Our hope is not to replace what is happening on the local level, but to help it along.

We’ve come rather a long way here. Lest we lose sight of the goal, let’s remember where we started: “Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Our Lord sets apart servants *from* His church *for* His church *through* His church. Each of us has some part to play in this noble, sacred and joyful work, with all of it redounding to more and more calling on His name and receiving His salvation.

For more information about the *Set Apart to Serve* initiative and resources, visit lcms.org/sas.

Pastor Appold serves as Chair of the Mid-South District Set Apart to Serve ad hoc committee.

Please plan to attend the 2024 LCMS Institute on Liturgy, Preaching and Church Music, to be held July 9-12 at Concordia University, Nebraska.

The institute returns under the theme “Songs of Deliverance: Psalms in the Great Congregation.” With the psalter as its focal point, this conference will feature fresh and perennial topics on music, leadership, preaching, pastoral care, art and spiritual growth in Lutheran worship.

Participants will be able to choose from a variety of instructive and interactive sessions addressing practical topics of interest to musicians, pastors, teachers, interested laypersons and many others.

Attendees will also take up a challenge together: pray all 150 psalms.

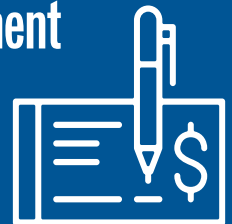
More information and registration is available at t.



1. Take a 10- to 30-minute walk every day. And while you walk, smile. It is the ultimate anti-depressant.
2. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day. Buy a lock if you have to.
3. When you wake up in the morning, complete the following statement, "My purpose is to _____ today."
4. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less food that is manufactured in plants.
5. Try to make at least three people smile each day.
6. Don't waste your precious energy on gossip, energy vampires, issues of the past, negative thoughts or things you cannot control. Instead, invest your energy in the positive present moment.
7. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a college kid with a maxed-out charge card.
8. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
9. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
10. Remember that you are too blessed to be stressed.
11. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
12. Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
15. Frame every so-called disaster with these words: "In five years, will this matter?"
16. Forgive everyone for everything.
17. Don't worry about what other people think of you.
18. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
19. Remember that God heals everything.
20. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.
21. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
22. Each night before you go to bed, count your blessings and thank God for them.

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of
Oct. 31, 2023
(10 months)



Anticipated amount (75% of budget)	\$1,303,975
Actual receipts	\$1,277,275
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$26,700)

Use of mission commitment receipts

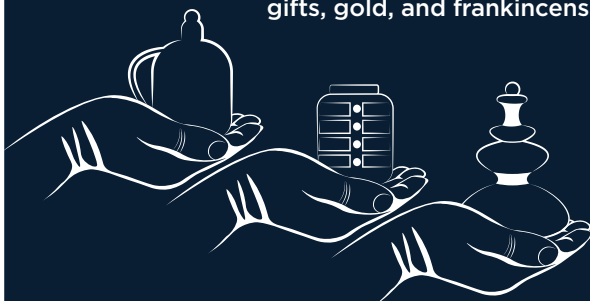
Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$362,349
Allocated to Tanzania	\$20,833
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$894,093
Total receipts	\$1,277,275

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Oct. 31, 2023	\$1,277,275
Actual receipts as of Oct. 31, 2022	\$1,275,045
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$2,230

NOW AFTER JESUS WAS BORN in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ... They went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11



Happy Epiphany



Time with GOD

The most important thing we can do in our lives is to spend time with our Lord. If we don't spend time with the Lord in His Word and prayer (where our minds become transformed), in worship and in fellowship with other believers, we will have nothing special or supernatural to share with others. We will be like a dry well that has no living water.

Here are five suggestions to help:

1. Have a special time and place where you spend time with the Lord in His Word each day — your secret place of the Most High (Psalm 91:1).
2. Start with prayer, repenting of your sins, casting your burdens upon Him and asking Him to join you in this special time. He is already knocking on your door; you just need to invite Him in (Rev. 3:20).
He knows us better than we know ourselves. He loves us more than we can imagine. He invites us to spend time with Him, just as parents desire to spend time with their children.
3. Be expectant. This is a divine appoint-

ment with the sovereign, living God of the universe, and we are entering into His presence. Don't you think the sovereign, living God of the universe might have something special to impart to give you comfort, guidance, peace, strength and courage?

4. Take notes in a journal, writing down the flow of thoughts that come to you. Just write and you can reflect on your notes later.
5. Go out to share with others. The Lord will reveal insights to us that apply in our lives and the lives of those around us. When we share these with others, we bless them and become rivers of living water (John 7:38).

Every person we meet is broken and needs the Lord. So let us go forth with the love and truth of Jesus to all He brings across our path; for the time is short, eternity is a very long time and we are not guaranteed tomorrow.

**To God be the glory
The Board of Evangelism,
First Lutheran, Little Rock**

SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US!

Digital files, sent via e-mail, are preferred. Send email submissions to LW@mid-southlcms.com or send by postal mail to:

Judy Otto; 150 N. Maury St.; Holly Springs, MS 38635

Send us your stories and photos for our **March 2024** issue by **Jan. 15**.

Synod will cover **MinistrySafe** member costs



The LCMS Office of National Mission recommends Synod congregations and schools strongly emphasize awareness and prevention of child sexual abuse. To help with these efforts, National Mission is pleased to announce fully funded memberships with MinistrySafe, a national organization that equips congregations and ministries to better protect children from sexual abuse.

All LCMS congregations and schools have access to the online MinistrySafe resources at no cost through 2024.

For more information about the training, contact Missy Washburn at mwashburn@mid-southlcms.com or 901-373-1341, ext. 3101.

Visit ministrysafes.com/lcms to activate your ministry's membership under this special offer. After selecting "Start Your MinistrySafe Membership," select "Organization Membership \$250." The billing page will allow you to enter the access code LCMS2023, which covers the cost of the membership.

Rev. Adam Gless was installed as senior pastor of Salem Lutheran Ministries, Springdale, Ark., on Oct. 22. Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Richard Mayer, Messiah, Pea Ridge; Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; Adam Gless; JD Zischke, Restoration, Fayetteville; Hubert Bernthal, emeritus; (back row) Marlin Rempfer, St. James, Quincy, Ill.; Eric Longman, Holy Trinity, Rogers; Brandon Martin, Salem associate pastor; and Thomas Bartzsch, River Valley Grace, Lamar.



Ideas for the NEW YEAR

By Lauren Robertson
Media and Marketing Chair,
LWML Mid-South District

This year, consider creating your new year's resolutions based on the heart of LWML, applying the four primary focuses of the LWML 2023-2025 biennium:

PROCLAIMING CHRIST

Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all peoples!

PSALM 96:3

- Share Bible passages or posts from the LWML Facebook page on your social media page.

- Invite your neighbor or friend to church.
- Leave a Mustard Seed Devotion or memory verse card with your tip at a restaurant.

SUPPORTING MISSIONS

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." MARK 16:15

- Put a little extra in your mite box.
- Pray for mission projects.
- Volunteer to serve on the Mission Grants Committee.

EQUIPPING WOMEN

Now may the God of peace ... equip you with everything good that you may do his will.

HEB. 13:20-21

- Leave a note for a woman in your congregation saying you

are praying for her.

- Invite a friend to your next LWML meeting or women's event.
- Invite a woman from church to coffee or brunch.

SERVING OTHERS

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another. 1 PETER 4:10A

- Volunteer your time to help with a project in your church or community.
- Bring a meal to someone, just because.
- Call the person you sit next to in church when they miss a Sunday.

In 2024, make sure to add something to the list of things you want to accomplish that serves our Lord by serving others.

LWML Mid-South District Convention

June 7-9

Hilton Memphis and
Christ the King Lutheran
Church, Memphis

Visit midsouthlwml.org/district-convention for more information

MISSIONS

Thank you for your support!



A recent LIME graduate is pictured second from left. Third from left is Rev. Joseph Randrianasolo.

As the 2022–2023 academic year ended at the Lime Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship (LIME) in Madagascar, five additional students were able to complete their theses and oral defenses. LIME is a mission of the Mid-South District.

Rev. Joseph Randrianasolo, LIME president, shares the news that since the new academic year began in late November, upgrading the students' proficiency in French has been a priority.

"Our objective is to upgrade the professional capacities of our students to make them ready for their eventual jobs," Randrianasolo said. "LIME is a professional school that provides training for jobs either in management, entrepreneurship or tourism. Therefore, our strategies and efforts are directed toward that goal."

He extends gratitude for the support of the Mid-South District.

"We are always very much thankful to Jesus Christ our Lord for giving you as our steady and faithful partner. Thank you for doing mission through education among us. By your partnership, you are our right hand to open and to promise a better future for Malagasy young people."

Henkel Conference returns to Ascension

The third Henkel Conference will be held Aug. 19–20 at Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison (Nashville). The following speaker lineup has been confirmed:

- **Mary Eberstadt**, Panula chair in Christian Culture at the Catholic Information Center, and senior research fellow at the Faith and Reason Institute.
- **Paul Kengor**, editor of *The American Spectator* and Professor of political science at Grove City College.
- **Dr. Gene Veith**, professor of literature emeritus at Patrick Henry College, Purcellville, Va.
- **Donna Harrison**, scholar at the Charlotte Lozier Institute and former chief executive officer of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians.
- **Rev. Hans Fiene**, pastor of Prince of Peace, Crestwood, Mo., and creator of the *LutheranSatire* channel on YouTube.
- **Rev. Sean Daenzer**, LCMS director of worship.
- **Rev. Dr. Christian Preus**, senior pastor of Mount Hope, Casper, Wyo., and chairman, Luther Classical College Board of Regents.



Rev. Dr. Jordan Cooper, president of American Lutheran Theological Seminary, presents "A Case for the Christian Gentleman," at the 2023 Henkel Conference.

- **Noah Hahn**, philosophy instructor at Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y.

Presentations from the 2023 conference are available on YouTube. Due to censorship issues, the presentation by Dr. Aaron Kheriaty, fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, Bioethics and American Democracy, is available on X (formerly Twitter).

Watch for more information and registration details, coming soon. You may also visit ascensionmadison.com/henkel.html

Educational debt relief available

*Ministry*FOCUS, a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) that provides student loan relief to LCMS workers, is accepting applications for 2024 grants. Since 2015, *Ministry*FOCUS has awarded grants to LCMS pastors, missionaries,

schoolteachers and other rostered LCMS workers to help relieve the burden of educational debt and empower workers to focus on their ministry.

Applications for 2024 grants are now open and will be accepted until the end of the year. Rostered LCMS church workers with \$20,000 or more in student loan debt are invited to apply online at ministryfocus.org/apply.

"*Ministry*FOCUS recognizes that

individuals often assume educational loans in order to serve the Lord and that, for some, such loans often distract from or even undermine their very purpose," states the organization's website. "As such, *Ministry*FOCUS has established a loan repayment assistance program so that these servants of the Lord can focus more on ministry, and less on money."

Learn more at ministryfocus.org.

Congratulations!

We share with you the Mid-South District pastors who have celebrated ordination anniversaries in 2023. We rejoice and give thanks to God for the gifts these men provide to His church.

65 YEARS

Rev. Stanley Jones (*emeritus*)
Bella Vista, Ark.

60 YEARS

Rev. Marvin Otto (*emeritus*)
Kingsport, Tenn.

55 YEARS

Rev. Clifford Herd (*emeritus*)
Hixson, Tenn.

Rev. Robert Mader (*emeritus*)
Clarksville, Tenn.

Rev. Louis Trebus (*emeritus*)
Maryville, Tenn.

50 YEARS

Rev. Albert Quoss (*emeritus*)
Bella Vista, Ark.

45 YEARS

Rev. Richard Elseroad (*emeritus*)
Knoxville, Tenn.

Rev. Martin Nutter
Tulahoma, Tenn.

40 YEARS

Rev. Dennis Bennett (*emeritus*)
New Market, Tenn.

Rev. Duncan Cox (*emeritus*)
Pea Ridge, Ark.

Rev. James Dunn (*emeritus*)
Kansas City, Mo.

Rev. Donald Hefta
Faith, Fairfield Bay, Ark.

Rev. Robert Kellerman (*emeritus*)
Topeka, Kan.

Rev. Andrew Toopes (*emeritus*)
Bowling Green, Ky.

35 YEARS

Rev. Richard Graves
U.S. Navy Chaplain, Sigonella, Sicily

Rev. Mark Kophamer
Redeemer, Elizabethton, Tenn.

Rev. Dr. LeRoy Leach (*emeritus*)
Conway, Ark.

Rev. Michael Miller
Redeemer, Harriman, Tenn.

Rev. Brian Pummill
Peace, Cherokee Village, Ark.

30 YEARS

Rev. Daniel Hawkins
Redeeming Grace/GracePoint,
Atoka, Tenn.

Rev. Nathan Jensen
St. John, Burns, Tenn.

25 YEARS

Rev. Fasil Alemayehu
Faith, Thompson's Station, Tenn.

Rev. Timothy Henning
Trinity, Mena, Ark.

Rev. Hiram Nunez (*emeritus*)
Grandbury, Texas

20 YEARS

Rev. Joshua Willadsen
Bethel, Fort Smith, Ark.
Trinity, Sallisaw, Okla.

15 YEARS

Rev. Ronald Bacic
First, Little Rock, Ark.

Rev. Richard Dockery (*emeritus*)
Maryville, Tenn.

Rev. Timothy Matthew (*candidate*)
Dayton, Tenn.

Rev. John Merrill
First, Fort Smith, Ark.

Rev. Edward Rosser
Good Shepherd, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. Emil Woerner
Friends in Christ, Bryant, Ark.



10 YEARS

Rev. David Appold
St. Paul, Paducah, Ky.

Rev. Amos Gray (*candidate*)
Hot Springs, Ark.

Rev. Andrew Lehman
All Saints Church and School,
Jonesboro, Ark.

Rev. Eric Phillips
Concordia, Nashville, Tenn.
Hope, Smyrna, Tenn.

5 YEARS

Rev. Matthew Albright
Christ, Little Rock, Ark.

Rev. Craig Fiebiger
Faith, Thompson's Station, Tenn.

Rev. Raymond Krieg
Celebration, Seymour, Tenn.

Rev. John Mathis
Christ, Little Rock, Ark.

Rev. Joshua Ralston
Zion, Augsburg, Ark.

Well done,
good and
faithful
servants

Register now for summer camp

Summer Camp

Registration for Summer Camp 2024 is now open. Parents can register online at lutherancamp.org (link is at the top of the page).

The camp schedule will again include three family camp sessions, two on weekends and one on weekdays. All three family camps are in late July.

The weekday session, July 22-25, is designed to accommodate families of pastors and church workers who cannot get away on weekends because of Sunday responsibilities. The weekend sessions are July 19-21 and July 26-28.

The youth camp sessions will be the same as in 2023:

- **Trailblazers** (for students entering grades 5-8 in the fall), June 9-14
- **Adventure** (high school), June 16-21
- **Explorers** (grades 4-6), June 23-28
- **Pathfinders** (grades 2-4), June 30-July 3
- **Voyagers** (grades 7-9, 10-12), July 7-12
- **Wilderness** (grades 6-9), July 14-18

The camp is now hiring summer staff. Lutheran young adults, ages 18-25, looking for summer jobs in which they can make a difference in the lives of children, youth and families are encouraged to email the Camp Trinity office to request an application: director@lutherancamp.org

High school students who want to serve one or two weeks as counselors-in-training can also request an application by emailing the camp office.

Linkt Senior High Retreat

The Linkt retreat for senior high youth is Feb. 23-25.

Revs. (and brothers) Aaron Neugebauer of St. John's, Lafe, and Kirk Neugebauer of Redeemer, Paragould, will be the main presenters, preaching and teaching on the retreat theme, "Love & Serve."

The theme is based on Phil. 2:1-11, in which the apostle Paul admonishes followers of Christ to humbly put others first, following the example of Jesus



Youth at the fall Linkt junior high retreat helped clean up the Petit Jean Mountain Cemetery for the service project.

who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant: and 'humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.'"

Pastors and youth leaders can learn more about Linkt retreats at lutherancamp.org. Click the "Linkt Youth Retreat" tab at the top of the page.

Registration is by congregation, and church offices in the district have received registration forms and other information via email. If your congregation did not receive the email, please email the camp office at director@lutherancamp.org

The early registration discount deadline is Feb. 1. Churches can sign up after Feb. 1, but late applicants won't receive the \$30 per person discount.

The junior high Linkt retreat in October drew 76 youth and adult leaders from 11 Mid-South District congregations.

This is the 17th Linkt youth retreat at Camp Trinity. The twice-annual retreats began in winter 2015, replacing the former Mid-Winter Youth Gatherings after a hiatus of retreats for several years.

Manager's Home

Friends of Camp Trinity had donated more than one-third of the cost of a new manufactured home for Aaron Davis, camp operations manager, by the end of November. The old home has been removed and the new home is on site. Aarons and his family have moved into the new home after three months of living off site.

The capital campaign to eliminate the mortgage continues, with a goal of paying it off by the end of 2024. To learn more about the circumstances that necessitated replacing the old mobile home, visit lutherancamp.org and click the link.