



/ JUNE-JULY 2021

MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

The blessing of fathers

Several years ago, I read an article in which the author had surveyed a group of graduating college students about fatherhood, and the answers led to the author putting together the “Top Ten Reasons for Being a Father.” The results were stunning.

Fathers teach you:

10. Things about tanks.
9. How to go to the bathroom without someone having to go with you.
8. How to be a friend with someone even if they forgot to invite you to their party.
7. How you can drop by to see someone without bringing a little gift.
6. How you can be at a party comfortably even if someone else is wearing the same outfit.
5. How to get by with one billfold, one pair of shoes, one color in all seasons.
4. How there's always a game going on somewhere (or it's afternoon somewhere in the world).
3. How buddies never trap you by saying, “Notice anything different about me today?”
2. How if something doesn't work, you can smack it with a hammer and toss it across the room.
1. How you can do your nails with a pocket knife.

Fathers are different, kind of like those strange things kept in an old box in the garage, just sitting there until you need them.

Jesus used parables and real-life experiences to teach us about fathers. If we think about it, we can probably picture ourselves in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. We might see ourselves as the prodigal because we've grown up and moved away, making our own mistakes along the way. Or we might look at ourselves as the ones who stayed at home, taking care of business. Some of us are dads and we've done the best that we know how.



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President



LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

The father of the prodigal son gave his son everything he asked for. He handed over his son's share of an inheritance. (Dads like to do that — give whatever their kids ask for.) He wanted his son to be happy. He wanted him to learn how to live with what he had and learn from the mistakes the son would make.

Dads suffer with their children because, at least as far as the world is concerned, they're supposed to be tougher.

Jesus used images of fathers to let us know what God is like to us. If your father has ever been distant and unaffectionate, you may have the same feeling about God. If your father was loving, giving and merciful, God's picture in your mind will be somewhat similar.

Some people, unfortunately, really fear fathers as punishing and rejecting. (“Just wait until your father gets home!”) Some dads are the ultimate punishing machine.

Or maybe we couldn't be good enough for them! Maybe it's grades or friends or any choice we made in life; we just didn't do enough to satisfy some dads. All too often, we place our personal view of earthly fathers on our picture of God. We take purely human traits about dads and place them over the picture of God. Good or bad, we think of God the same way.

Fortunately, everything bad thing we equate with God on

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LINES OF SERVICE

Veterans meet as church members

By **Randy Sakach**
Prince of Peace,
White House, Tenn.

Ed Kramer was born in February 1926 and Frank Jenks was born in August 1926. Ed was raised in California and Frank in New York — opposite ends of the country.

When America entered World War II, Frank and Ed were only 15 years old. As soon as they were “of age,” they both joined the U.S. Navy. (Truth be told, I don’t think they were actually “of age,” but they wanted to serve their country and they did so honorably.)

After the war, they both went back to their home states and went to work, started families and lived their lives.

In 2009, Ed and his wife, Milma, moved to a small town just outside of Nashville to be closer to their daughter. Ed and Milma started attending Prince of Peace, White House.

In 2014, Frank and his wife, Joy, moved to Tennessee to be closer

Frank Jenks, left, and Ed Kramer served the United States in World War II.

to their daughter and they, too, started attending Prince of Peace.

It was at this time that Ed and Frank first met. They shared stories of their service during World War II and their world travels while in the Navy.

These two men were only about a mile from each other halfway around the world in the Pacific — and never knew it. They never met one another until more than 70 years later, while worshipping together in the same small church in the same small town in the middle of the country.

I share this story as we remember Frank, who went to be with his Lord and was laid to rest in his hometown in New York on March 6.

Ed, at the age of 95, continues to worship and serve his Lord at Prince of Peace. They will meet again one day, for that is the hope we have in Christ our Lord.

We thank both Ed and Frank for their service to our Lord and country.

FATHERS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

this earth isn’t true. In the story, the prodigal son comes running back to his father. The father sees him coming down the road, long before the prodigal had finished making up his story he was going to lay on his father. The father wanted nothing to do with any cock-and-bull story. He was ready to forgive.

Most of us think our fathers can’t measure up to what the father did in the story. I’m afraid most fathers let children grow up to make mistakes and are prepared to give them the old “I told you so” story. I’m afraid some fathers don’t care about what happens to the child, that earthly fathers have become all too human and can’t be enough like God, our heavenly Father.

Earthly fathers are more likely to choose favorites: “Why can’t you be more like your sister ... or brother ... or the neighbor’s kids?” It’s easy to choose one over the other or to compare because we like what we think should be, not what is.

It’s not much of a stretch to think God wants us to be more like the father in the parable than the examples of the world — not be too overprotective and able to accept the wayward child back into the family without a threat of punishment. In our hearts, we want to be more like the father in the parable, but fathering in a sin-filled world isn’t ever perfect.

Are our fathers expecting something special for Father’s Day? Are they expecting a tie perhaps, golf balls or something else that expresses their children’s love and personality? How about a multi-functional remote control that operates everything from the microwave to the TV and DVD player? How about breakfast in bed, some new tool or a *Sports Illustrated* subscription?

What do dads really want? They want children who are safe and not suffering in any way. They want their cars to run, their houses to be secure, their heating and cooling to work right. They want to help children with their needs, and guide children to make the right decisions.

Because that’s what our heavenly Father wants for us. He has the wisdom to let us learn in any way we choose and to love us and welcome us back, even when we’ve fallen in the mud doing things our way.

Earthly fathers who follow the same example of our heavenly Father would love perfectly and know that they are not the perfect example of the perfect father.

Our earthly fathers expect a phone call — probably collect — just to hear from you. The heavenly Father wants the same — reverse the charges and charge everything to His Son.

Brothers reflect on **CHRIST ACADEMY**

By Andrew II and Gabriel Abraham

When our father first told us about a summer opportunity at Concordia Theological Seminary, we weren't even sure that we wanted to go. We were unsure that we wanted to spend some of our summer vacation learning in a classroom.

If you don't already know, the Christ Academy experience means a lot of theology. But because of the pandemic, after being quarantined for so long at home, we were desperate for a change of scenery and were open to ideas. Our dad really encouraged us to go to Christ Academy and so we went.

When we arrived at the seminary, we were welcomed by other people from around the country. We thought we would be roommates, but we each had our own room. The other kids in the dorm were fun and sometimes rowdy (which we liked), but they were also very hardworking and took the program very seriously. It was fun getting to know so many great people.

The theology classes were very deep and educational. They really made us think about our faith and beliefs. The professors were awesome. They were interesting and funny and we enjoyed getting to know them.

We had chapel four times a day! This was one of our favorite parts of the whole experience. The chanting and singing were very joyful and solemn. We had never heard chanting like that before. It was very cool. The pastors who preached during the chapel services were excellent preachers. Their sermons made us do a lot of thinking and questioning (in a good way). It was also quite cool when we had Q&A time with various pastors. They did a great job telling us all about the ministry. And there was time to learn about Lutheran



The Abraham brothers, Andrew II, left, and Gabriel Abraham are pictured at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., during Christ Academy last summer. This year's classes will be held June 20–July 2.

colleges, which we enjoyed.

Sadly, our experience was only one week long because of the pandemic, but we are super excited that this summer the program will return to being two weeks long. We hope to do this every summer as long as we can.

We are so grateful to Pastor Paavola and the Mid-South District for allowing us to participate in Christ Academy. We hope that other high school students from the district will consider being a part of this terrific program.

About Christ Academy

Christ Academy, a theology school for youth, is comprised of two schools: **Timothy School for men** and **Phoebe School for women** and both will be held from June 20 to July 3.

Christ Academy consists of three important elements: confessional catechesis, liturgical worship and a fun life together. This tradition of learning, worship and fun provides an incredible two-week experience for young men and women in high school, especially for those considering a future in church work.

During Timothy School, young men have the opportunity to take eight different classes in theology over the course of the two weeks, taught by the faculty at CTSFW. Learning also takes place informally in the invaluable discussions over the dinner table and in dorm groups every day.

Christ Academy is for those interested

in theology, as well as those interested in becoming a pastor. Spots are limited for this summer session. Send an email to ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu or visit:

- thelc.ms/ctsfw-timothy
- thelc.ms/ctsfw-phoebe

Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of March 31, 2021 (3 months)

Anticipated amount (25% of budget)	\$368,404
Actual receipts	\$358,371
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$10,033)

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$101,261
Allocated to Tanzania	\$6,250
Retained for district ministry/ mission support (70% of receipts)	\$250,860
Total receipts	\$358,371

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of March 31 2021	\$358,371
Actual receipts as of March 31, 2020	\$349,034
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$9,337

Meet the candidates

The 2021 Mid-South District Convention will be held July 1–3 at the Hilton, Memphis. You can stay updated on convention news at mid-southlcms.org/resources/convention. Following are brief biographies of the candidates for district president, **Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola**, incumbent; and **Rev. Lane Reuter**, senior pastor of Our Savior, Nashville.



Rev. Dr. Roger C. Paavola



Educational background: BA, public administration, University of Minnesota–Duluth (1969); MBA, healthcare administration, University of Minnesota (1977); M.Div., Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada (1997); D.Min., Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind. (2009)

Member of Synod congregations: 73 years

Home congregation: Christ the King, Memphis

Synod experience: Council of Presidents (2012–present); Concordia Plan Services Board (2010–present); Board of Regents, CTSFW; Synod Convention Floor Committee (3)

District experience: District President (2012–present); Secretary/Second Vice-President (2009–12); Small and Rural Congregation Committee chair; Mission Action Council chair

Congregational experience: Pastor, Heavenly Host, Cookeville, Tenn. (2000–12); Grace, Beausejour, Manitoba, Canada (1997–2000)

Community and other experience: Hospital CEO (1971–1992); Adjunct Faculty, Bemidji State University; served on numerous civic boards and councils: Regional Health Agency, hospital association legislative council, board for the Communications Services to the Deaf, chairman for a state safety council; Habitat for Humanity; the American Cancer Society; the American Red Cross; lecturer on business, management and small church forums; Boy Scouts (1969–83); published four books and several articles with two more books in process: *Administration in the Parish* for CTSFW and Concordia Publishing House; and *The Jerusalem Temple* for Concordia Theological Seminary, Ontario. He established C.A.R., COMPASS and *IMPACT* and will lead the Family Seminar at the Lutheran Retreat Center in New Hampshire scheduled for this year.

Statement: “Partnering with our congregations and schools, the Mid-South District will continue to seek the lost, establish strengthening of all congregations, recruiting and supporting professional church workers, and offer essential support services to our partner congregations, professional church workers and communities. Our partnership will embrace the sacred doctrine of the church and work together to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to encourage personal witnessing and grow new ministries as we work together in the Kingdom of Christ Jesus.”

Rev. Lane B. Reuter



Educational background: BA, history, University of Alabama—Birmingham, (1991); M.Div., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1996)

Member of Synod congregations: 52 years

Home congregation: Our Savior Lutheran Church and Academy, Nashville

Synod experience: Convention Delegate (2013)

District experience: District Secretary, Board of Directors (2012–15); Elections Committee, Southern District (1996)

Congregational experience: Senior Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church and Academy (2014–present); Senior Pastor, Immanuel, Memphis (2007–14); Associate Pastor, Grace, Knoxville, (2000–07); Pastor, Our Redeemer, Jackson, Miss. (1998–2000); Assistant Pastor, Grace, Destin, Fla. (1996–98)

Community and other experience: Police and Fire outreach; Room In the Inn homeless ministry; Trinity/HOPE outreach; Mission trips to Columbia, Mexico, Peru, Haiti, Guatemala and Bangladesh

Statement: “I want to see our church body and district continue to be the leader in faithfulness to the Scriptures and our Lutheran Confessions. This means everything we do as a missional and confessional church is about Jesus Christ crucified and risen, and sharing that message in our communities and world.

“I would like to see our district be the leader in outreach, evangelism, revitalization of existing congregations and planting of new ones. In addition, I would emphasize the recruitment of pastors to our district that would help further that vision.”



Attend a district Fall Retreat!



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you." — Jer. 29:11-12 NIV

Please join us for our fall retreat at a location near you. The theme, based on the Bible study written by Donna Snow, is "Our Hope & Future." The study is broken into four sections and is inspired by Jer. 29:11-12:

First, we learn how to discern God's plans for us. Next, we focus on God's plans as they relate to prosperity and protection. In the third section we examine where we place our hope. And in the final section we are reminded of the importance of "calling upon the Lord" through prayer.

In addition to Bible study, we will enjoy fellowship, quiet time and the beauty of God's creation.



Theme: "Our Hope & Future"

WEST	MIDDLE	EAST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 10-12 • Mount Eagle Retreat Center 935 Beal Road Clinton, Ark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 17-19 • Camp Garner Creek 700 Sam Hollow Road Dickson, Tenn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 24-26 • Eagle Rock Retreat Center 7143 Flats Road Tallahassee, Tenn.

For more information, including registration, visit midsouthlwml.org and select "District Retreats" from the "News and Events" tab.

Young Women in Mission

Did you know the LWML has an outreach to young women? Most young women from the ages of 22 to 40 are busy starting careers and families.

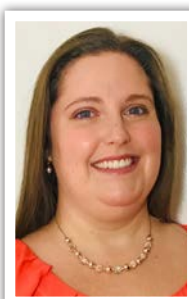
Meet the four Young Woman Representatives (YWR) that our district is sending to the 39th Biennial LWML Convention June 24-27 in Lexington, Ky.



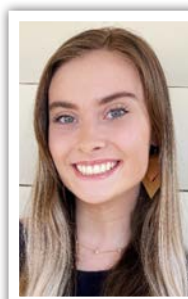
Nikki Holcomb is from the Chattanooga Zone and serves as chairman of the district YWR Committee. She and her husband have a daughter and live in Hixson, Tenn. They attend Cross of Christ, Chattanooga, where Nikki plays in the handbell choir and has served as Education chairman. Nikki works as a court reporter.



Julie Duncan is from the East Tennessee Zone. She and her husband just purchased their first home in Jonesborough. Julie works as an orthodontist assistant. The Duncans attend Concordia, Kingsport, where Julie's father is pastor. Julie serves on the altar guild and plays violin. In 2018, she served as a missionary to Belize.



April Tester is from the East Tennessee Zone. She and her husband live in Kingsport and attend Bethlehem, Johnson City. April has an MBA and is an accounts receivable specialist. She has been active in LWML for several months and helps with serving meals and participating in outreach programs.



Susanna Beeler is from the East Tennessee Zone and lives in Lenoir City. She attends Grace, Knoxville, and is a student at East Tennessee State University. At church, she proposed and implemented a mentoring program in which younger women are paired with more experienced LWML members.

Grace welcomes Deaconess Eileen

Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, Ark., commissioned and installed Deaconess Eileen Esget on March 21. She is the first deaconess to serve at Grace. Her primary duties will be to oversee women's ministries, Bible study, visitation and a new grief support group, and to work with various mercy ministries in the Little Rock metro area. From left, Rev. Christopher Esget, Eileen's son, senior pastor of Immanuel, Alexandria, Va., and LCMS fifth vice-president; Deaconess Rachel Fruge of St. Paul, Fort Worth, Texas; Deaconess Esget; Linda Strubbe, deaconess intern of Salem, Jacksonville, Ill.; and Rev. Kent Schaaf, Grace pastor.



Apply now for student financial aid

To support the education efforts of students who are 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 an LCMS seminary or university and studying for full-time service to the church as a rostered worker.

Rostered workers include pastors, teachers, deaconesses, directors of Christian education, music directors and other vocations.

To be considered, you must first inform the Mid-South District Office that you are or will be a student enrolled at an LCMS school. This information may be sent to Julie Tyler at jtyler@mid-southlcms.com or Attn: Julie Tyler; Mid-South District LCMS; 1675 Wynne Road; Cordova, TN 38016.

All related forms, including the financial aid application, are available at mid-southlcms.org/student-financial-aid. **The application deadline is June 15.**



Photos: LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford



More lodging space coming!

By David Cox
Camp Trinity Director

Camp Trinity, the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean Mountain, has announced plans for a new retreat lodge at camp. The lodge is the culmination of a multi-year process of assessing the camp's needs and determining the best plan for meeting them. It is the first major building project at camp in three decades.

The lodge is expected to accommodate up to 32 guests in six sleeping rooms. It will include a large gathering room, galley kitchen, restrooms and laundry room. The rooms will be more comfortable for adults than the camp's bunk-house cabins.

The new building will increase the camp's lodging capacity by nearly 40 percent. This will allow the camp to house larger groups like those attending the LinkT youth retreats in fall and winter. In previous years, the number of LinkT retreat-goers exceeded the number of beds at camp, requiring organizers to find housing off-site.

The lodge will also allow the camp to host two events at once. It has been difficult to manage two groups on-site simultaneously because the camp has only one climate-controlled meeting space (the dining hall). As a result, the camp

has had to turn away groups seeking a place for their retreats and other events, especially in the spring and fall when the camp is booked well in advance.

The lodge will also allow the camp to house more guests in summer for Family Camps, which are the fastest growing sessions of the summer camp season.

Groundbreaking is slated for Aug. 15 at camp, with worship, site dedication, first fruits offering and a meal. All who have been touched by the camp's ministry are invited to join.

God willing, congregations will be able to reserve the retreat lodge for women's retreats, men's retreats and family retreats as early as spring 2022.

Camp Trinity has set aside almost half the funds needed for the project and started a capital campaign to raise the remainder. Anyone interested in joining the camp in its mission through prayer, financial contributions or volunteer service is invited to contact the camp at director@lutherancamp.org.

For more information, visit lutherancamp.org.

Camp Trinity serves as an extension of LCMS congregations in the Mid-South District as they carry out the Great Commission of making disciples of Jesus Christ.



Youth and adult leaders gathered for a photo at the end of a LinkT junior high retreat in 2019. Over the last five years, Camp Trinity has hosted more than a dozen groups with more campers than the camp has beds, forcing organizers to find extra housing off-site. The new retreat lodge is expected to increase the camp's lodging capacity by nearly 40 percent.

Blessings at CTK

By Genie Swan

CTK Community Relations
Coordinator

At Christ the King Lutheran Church, Memphis, the pandemic did not get in the way of moving forward with construction of an expansion and renovation. CTK is adding a state-of-the-art fellowship hall and multiple adult Bible study classrooms to the campus, as well as space to host Room in the Inn and other community-related

ministries that will spread God's love and compassion to our neighbors.

Under the leadership of Revs. Chuck Neugebauer, CTK senior pastor, and Mark Goble, associate pastor, the congregation is gearing up to fill the new square footage with service, fellowship and worship activities. Occupancy is expected in early summer of 2021.

Soli Deo Gloria!



◀ A modern kitchen will look onto the Fellowship Hall.

▲ The first floor of the expansion will house offices; the second floor contains classrooms and a youth activities center.



August issue deadline is June 15

The Lutheran Witness goes on vacation, too! So please send us your stories and photos by June 15, and we'll see you again in August. Also, the September issue deadline is July 15.

Digital files, sent via e-mail, are preferred. Our submis-

sion deadline is the 15th of each month, two months before publication. Photos must be sent in high resolution.

Send email submissions to LW@mid-southlcms.com or send by postal mail to: Judy Otto; 150 N. Maury St.; Holly Springs, MS 38635