



/ MAY 2020

# MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

## Why celebrate the Ascension?

If we were coaching Jesus, wouldn't it make more sense to have Him stick around in Jerusalem after His Resurrection to prove He was alive? If we wanted to grow His Church, wouldn't it make more sense to have Him stay rather than levitate into Heaven?



Rev. Dr.  
Roger Paavola  
District President

Don't you think everyone would become believers in the risen Christ if they saw the wounds He suffered on the cross? Wouldn't He be more effective as Savior and Lord if He continued to heal the sick, turn water into wine and even raise the dead instead of being lifted up into heaven, leaving us with a bunch of Apostles — fishermen, tax collectors and other misfits? Wouldn't everyone believe in Him if He walked dusty roads among us?

It would be wonderful if Jesus was standing here with us. History tells us that a living, risen Savior didn't guarantee a conversion of everyone to Christianity. Even though He was seen by hundreds of people after His glorious resurrection, for the last 2,100 years people still have been trying to kill Him and His followers.

But this is the same Christ who sent us the gift of faith by the Holy Spirit to receive the results and effects of His incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection for our justification and

His promise of our eternal hope of life everlasting.

**Facts and reason** don't always add to the foundation of our Christian faith. Remember? When the Pharisees heard about Jesus raising His friend Lazarus from the dead, they wanted to kill Jesus! They were afraid that if Jesus went on raising the dead and doing all those miracles and prove His divine ministry, eventually everyone would believe in Him.

In Luke's Gospel, the rich man in hell pleaded with Abraham to send Lazarus from the dead so the rich man's brothers would believe ("If someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent"). But Abraham's reply was, "If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead."

So what about the Ascension of Christ? I'm still bummed out that Jesus left. But there's an underlying beauty of this celebration of Christ's Ascension. That's the beauty of a life of Christian faith. Christ sent us the Holy Spirit to go beyond reason, beyond the ways we might understand building and strengthening His Holy Christian Church in order to let us know *why* it's an essential privilege for us to celebrate this day.

**Here's why:** Doesn't His Ascension focus on the same Christ that allows us in faith to embrace the idea of Almighty God taking on human flesh, just for the very purpose of



becoming our Savior? Didn't He leave His heavenly throne to join Himself with our humanity, to be born to a virgin mother, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, not of the will of a man, but the will of God, so God could be enfleshed in our humanity? Borrowing the virgin womb, born in her original sinful estate, was so that He — God with us — became true God and true Man for the sole purpose of becoming our Savior and Lord.

He was born in earthly poverty and humility. His family had to run to Egypt to get away from an evil king who wanted to kill Him. He lived the perfect human life, as none of us born by natural means could do, so that He would offer His perfect life to God the Father for the ransom of the whole world.

He later called common, ordinary

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## ASCENSION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

men to become His followers — men He trained to carry on the mission and ministry of His Church. A hated tax collector; crusty, impetuous fishermen and others who were not the kind of men any one of us would choose. But that's the way Jesus did it.

So after those men spent three tumultuous and confusing years, Jesus repeated His message: **He will die on the cross but rise again on the third day.** For three years those men continued to hear, see and witness God-in-flesh show His ability to have power over nature, death and human afflictions. But those unlikely, fragile, confused disciples thought they were on the advent of a new, powerful earthly Kingdom of Israel as God's will for His people.

Their confusion reached a crescendo when Jesus demonstrated His power over death, raising His friend Lazarus from the dead.

**The Scribes and Pharisees wanted Jesus gone.** The evidence showed things began to fall apart. One by one, Jesus' circle of friends began to abandon their Teacher, leaving Him to stand alone on trial. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, heard trumped up charges, leaving Jesus betrayed by His closest friends.

In those few hours, Jesus was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. Yet He did not defend Himself against His accusers, but rather willingly offered Himself, taking our sin's punishment and the sins of all the world upon His sinless, perfect life. He became sin for us, to die in our place.

We know how that awful day ended. He died a horrible, excruciating, bloody death. The earth shook in terror when her Creator died. The sun hid its light at the death of the Light of the world. With His followers all gone, a couple of brave and maybe misinformed men took His body and placed Him in a borrowed tomb.

Thanks be to God, death couldn't hold Christ inside. The powers of sin, Satan, the grave and death were killed. Christ rose — living, breathing, eating, walking in human flesh — as a pure and precious sign for us from God that just as Christ rose in human flesh, so will all those who are joined together with Him by His means of grace.

For the next 40 days, Jesus showed Himself as risen Savior to hundreds of people. He showed His wounds, His divine powers. He proved God's wrath against sinful human flesh was reconciled. We were forgiven and justified before God.

**Which brings us to His Ascension.** As St. Luke records in Acts:

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." And when He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."

And, as St. Luke says in His Gospel, "And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

**With great Joy? Yes!** The disciples knew Christ would return to bring us to be with Him. They knew He was going to the Father to prepare a place for all believers in Christ. They knew the promise of God was sure and secure. They knew, once and for all, that we have an advocate, an intercessor on our behalf before the throne of God. They knew Christ will come again to take us to God's mansions.

A few years ago, I stood at my father's bedside as he was dying. We said prayers, sang hymns and quietly

talked. We read Bible verses with each other and shared communion. At one point, as I was praying, my voice cracked and I broke into tears. It startled Dad. He looked at me and said, "Roger... why are you crying?"

I struggled to reply, "Dad, I don't want to lose you. I love you."

Without hesitation, he said, "Roger. All my life I've wanted to be with Jesus — face-to-face — and now He's giving me that promise."

It's that promise! This Son of God, Christ Jesus, was chosen before the foundation of the world to leave His glory in heaven to be our Savior, to suffer and die in our place in God's justice. In order to fulfill Scripture, faithful men placed His lifeless body in a borrowed tomb.

Fulfilling Scripture, Christ broke the bonds of death for all human flesh, rising from the dead, proving God's satisfaction of His Son's sacrifice for our sake. Christ's Ascension celebrates this victorious, glorious and coming-again Lord because of God's wisdom that passes our human understanding, giving my Dad, our loved ones and all of us joined together in Christ the same promise.

The virgin womb, our sin's gloom, the borrowed tomb and His glorious resurrection from the grave now assure us His promise.

Jesus gives us His explanation for our celebration of ascension:

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ... I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also."

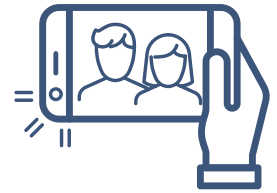
— **John 14:1-3**

Jesus completely fulfilled His promise! We will inherit that glorious mansion of God's eternal Kingdom. That's why we celebrate! That's why we pray, "Come again Lord Jesus ... grant this to us all, in Your name and for Your sake."



Got a smartphone?

# Show us what your church life looks like!



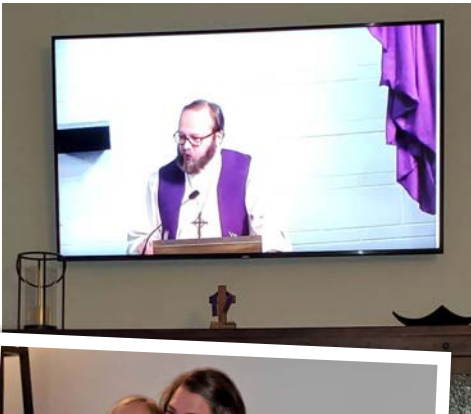
As we navigate our present normal, we are thankful that we still have opportunities, at home via the internet, to hear God's Word preached to us by our pastors. And our Lutheran school students can also be in class, albeit on a computer screen.

So, what does this look like for you? Please snap a quick photo or two ... it could be of you and/or your family seated in your living room or a table watching the worship service on your computer or big screen TV; or your student (or a teacher) at her desk, working or looking into a screen of her classmates in rows of rectangles. Or if you are one of the few souls in church helping with the livestream, capture a scene. Be creative!

Send your photos to Judy Otto at [LW@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:LW@mid-southlcms.com). Let us know who and where you are and where you worship, and we'll use them to show that while we're physically apart, we're still together as the Body of Christ.



Student joins her class for online lessons.



Third-grade teacher leading her online class in song, with help from her son.



▲ Family watching Sunday service from the comforts of their sofa.

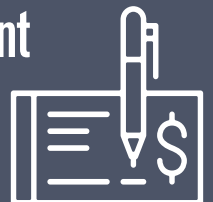
◀ Following along with worship on the radio.



Praising God outside, either through music or a chalk drawing.

## Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of Feb. 29, 2020 (2 months)



Anticipated amount (16.67% of budget)	\$256,495
Actual receipts	\$239,870
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$16,625)

### Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$67,794
Allocated to Tanzania	\$4,167
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$167,909
Total receipts	\$239,870

### Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Dec. 31, 2019	\$239,870
Actual receipts as of Dec. 31, 2018	\$266,218
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$26,348)



# LCC sends team to Hermitage

By Sarah Baker

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage

Shortly before 1 a.m. on March 3, an EF-3 tornado struck Nashville. It was on the ground for over 60 miles, traveling for almost an hour to Cookeville.

The tornado destroyed homes, churches, schools and businesses along its path. The path of the tornado came within half a mile of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hermitage, Tenn.

Thankfully there was little damage to the church building and no loss of life of our members, but there was considerable damage throughout the communities of Donelson, Hermitage, Mount Juliet and Lebanon. The homes of two families with children who attend our school were destroyed and several members had property damage from fallen trees.

At the request of Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Mid-South District president, Lutheran Church Charities sent a Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) to assist us. The team had 50 members, including those trained to use chainsaws. The crew slept each night and ate dinner and breakfast at Emmanuel before going out to cut down and clear trees at members' homes and throughout the community.

Through Lutheran Church Charities, Emmanuel was able to offer help, care, comfort and hope to our community. God turned this disaster into a way to be a witness of the love of Christ to our neighbors. God is good!



Photos © Lutheran Church Charities



Rev. Keith Enko, pastor of Emmanuel, Hermitage, prays for the LCC volunteers before they begin the work of clearing tornado damage.





## Owen ordained in Clarksville

**A**mid the COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainty of the times, the church acted in bold faith to ordain Vicar Richard Neely Owen to the Office of the Holy Ministry and install him as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Hopkinsville, Ky.

The ordination had been planned for several months — long before the changes to our life together and the challenges to the church were pressed upon us by the coronavirus.

An executive order in Kentucky prohibiting mass gatherings prevented Faith from hosting the ordination, so the service was moved to Grace Lutheran Church, Clarksville, Tenn. A little more than 50 years ago, Grace had daughtered Faith Lutheran Church and the two parishes have had a long and close history.

Rev. Larry A. Peters, senior pastor of Grace, was the vacancy pastor of Faith and the supervising pastor for Vicar Owen; he served as ordinator in place of Rev. Dr., Roger Paavola, Mid-South District president, who could not be there.

Participating in the ordination and installation were Rev. Daniel Ulrich, associate pastor of Grace; Rev. David Appold, pastor of St. Paul, Paducah, Ky., and Rev. Gregory Bauch, pastor of Ascension, Madison, Tenn. Dr. Jonathan Rudy, Grace cantor, was the organist and Rachel Crook was the flutist.

Forty souls, most of them from Faith, Hopkinsville, braved the fearful times to be part of this ordination and installation, and both congregations rejoiced that the Lord provided a pastor to shepherd the people of Faith through the uncertainties and changing circumstances unfolding for all of us.

Pastor Peters also served as preacher and presented Rev. Owen with a staff as sign and symbol of the ministry conferred upon him and the call of God to faithfully shepherd the flock entrusted to his care. The service was recorded by Gene Wilken, who also made it available on his YouTube channel, *FlaneurRecord*.



**Present to celebrate the ordination and installation of Rev. Richard Neely Owen (center) as pastor of Faith, Hopkinsville, Ky., were (from left) Revs. Daniel Ulrich, Gregory Bauch, David Appold and Larry Peters.**

## Apologetics class scheduled for Madison, Tenn.

**C**oncordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), again has scheduled summer classes that are available to lay people as well as church workers — and coordinated by local pastors.

Ascension Lutheran Church, Madison, Tenn., will host “Apologetics for the 21st Century,” July 27-29. The class will be taught by Dr. Adam Francisco, professor of History and Political Thought at Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.

Scripture enjoins us to always be prepared to make a defense when non-Christians ask us why we believe what we believe and, sometimes, why they, too, should consider Christian belief. This course is an introduction to this particular aspect of the apologetic task. It covers the historical Christian apologetic tradition, assesses the various methods employed by apologists, and especially focuses on the various charges made against and challenges posed to Christian belief today.

For registration and more information about the course, visit [ctsfiw.edu/ce](https://ctsfiw.edu/ce) and scroll down to the “Nashville, Tennessee” link, or contact Rev. Gregory Bauch at 904-553-7066 or [pastorgregbauch@gmail.com](mailto:pastorgregbauch@gmail.com).



# Trinity Chapel fills again with worshipers!

**T**he historic Trinity Chapel at Camp Trinity on Petit Jean Mountain is open for worship.

A century after the charter of Trinity Evangelical German Lutheran Church was signed and the building was constructed in 1886, the congregation disbanded and the property was developed as the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean (now Camp Trinity). The camp is used year-round for retreats and is especially busy in June and July with summer camp sessions, but for three decades the old chapel was used only a few times a year by retreat groups.

Now, after the building's recent restoration, the chapel is being used more frequently. The chapel was open for Advent services in 2019 and again for Lenten services in 2020. With area LCMS pastors leading, the services have drawn about 20 people each time.

The services are held on Saturday afternoons to avoid conflicts with other churches and to provide worship opportunities for campers at Petit Jean State Park, most of whom pull out of camp Sunday morning.


Worship leaders, all from LCMS con-




gregations in central Arkansas, have included Revs. Mark Tooley, Peace, Conway; John Mathis, Christ, Little Rock; Darrell Kobs; Dr. LeRoy Leach; Dr. Wes Toncre, St. John's, Russellville;

and Ron Bacic, First, Little Rock.

The camp hopes to expand worship opportunities in the chapel in the months ahead, with the goal of eventually holding services every week.





## MEMORIAL DAY PRAYER

**Sacrificing Savior,**

At the end of the first World War, people gave thanks for the peace which had been won in the "war to end all wars." They knew that humanity had learned its lesson; they thought we would remember the terrible cost. They were wrong. People forget. We forgot the sacrifice. We forgot the cost. Since then, nations have engaged in global conflicts and regional feuds. Memorial Day, set aside to remember, is being used to grab an extra hour of sleep and cut the grass. Dear Lord, help us gratefully remember the ongoing sacrifices being made by our military. Let us remember them for what they are doing. Most of all, let us remember Your sacrifice and the battle You won to secure our salvation. You fulfilled the laws we had broken, resisted the temptations that tripped us up, and died the death we deserved. Lord, for the only true victory over death may we always be grateful. Amen. *(From LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces)*



# Finding a place of peace



Sunrise on Lake Bailey at Camp Trinity, the Lutheran Camp at Petit Jean, as experienced in February during the Youth Linkt retreat.

**By Frances Bacic**  
Media/Marketing,  
LWML Mid-South District

“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” Jesus said this to His disciples when they were being hassled by the many demands of the people they were serving (Mark 6:31 NIV).

Do you ever feel the demands on you are overwhelming? If we are honest with ourselves, the answer would be yes. We have demands from our family, our work, our community and yes — even our church. There always seems to be something that fills ever hour of every day.

We need our time of rest. We need to find the time to be restored and refreshed.

Heb. 6:19 says: “We have this

hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”

We need to find our anchor in this crazy world we live in. We need to remember that God created us in His image. He liked what He saw and said that it is good. We are perfect in His eyes, through Christ. We need to take care of His creation. We are His creation.

We have that opportunity when we attend church and Bible studies, listen to podcasts, read His Word and participate in retreats.

In June, we have the chance to attend the LWML Convention in Paragould. (For more information, visit [midsouthlwml.org](http://midsouthlwml.org).)

Find your quiet place. Spend time with your Lord and Savior. Find your anchor.

# Helping feed children in Haiti

The annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper at Concordia, Nashville — organized by Jim and Shirley Robert — received over \$600 in donations, thanks to help from a Thrivent Financial Action Team and a Thrivent grant of \$250, used for ingredients and supplies.

The donations, which were given to Trinity HOPE, will provide 2,492 meals for school children in Haiti. Trinity HOPE was founded by the late John Hall in 1999 and Concordia Lutheran Church has supported the feeding program for 19 years.

The word “shrove” is a form of the English word shrive, which means to obtain absolution for one’s sins by way of confession and doing penance. Thus Shrove Tuesday was named after the custom of Christians to be “shriven” before the start of Lent.

Pancakes were traditionally eaten



on the day before Ash Wednesday because they were a way to use up eggs, milk and sugar before the fasting season of the 40 days of Lent.

Similarly, many people continue to “give something up” during the 40 days of Lent as a way to prepare for Easter.

Flapjacking up a storm at Concordia were the Shrove Tuesday crew of, from left, (front row) Cleo Gillespie, Celia Gulbenk, Jim and Shirley Robert; (back row) Michael Noyes, Paul Doster, Keith Logan (Trinity HOPE), Rev. Eric Phillips (Concordia pastor), Jack Ficken (Thrivent) and Jim Brown. Missing from the photo are Carrie Coon and Kristina Phillips.



Calling all counselors back to Camp Trinity's superb natural vistas to share a staff reunion. (Counselors are shown here stretching while taking in a scenic view at the camp.)

## Camp staff reunion planned

Camp Trinity, the Lutheran Camp on Petit Jean, has planned a summer staff reunion for Saturday, May 30, during staff training for the 2020 camp season. All former staff, whether summer or year-round, are invited to come reminisce with old friends and make new ones.

The gathering will include a cook-out, games, a panel where incoming staff can ask former staff about the challenges and rewards of serving, a worship service and a campfire with lots of singing.

Food and lodging are free for former staff and their families, but those who plan to attend are asked to email the camp office at [director@lutherancamp.org](mailto:director@lutherancamp.org).

## Adventurers celebrate 63rd anniversary at River Valley Grace

The congregation of River Valley Grace, Lamar, Ark., shared in the joy with pizza and punch on Feb. 9 when Robert "Bob" and Evelyn Harmes Battershell celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary with a party after worship.

Bob and Evelyn were married Feb 10, 1957, at Evelyn's home church — Grace, McPherson, Kan. Bob lived in Lyons, Kan., 20 minutes away. Since then, they have lived in Oklahoma; Galveston, Texas; and London, Ark.

Bob's fascination with sailboats drew them to Galveston. Their subsequent move to London was made on a 35-foot sailboat, and that voyage took a year and a half — via coastal waters to Florida, then inland waterways to Tennessee, where they sailed the Mississippi River south before following the Arkansas River to Dardanelle, where they built their home.

The couple's varied interests have ranged from Indy, go-cart and drag racing (in a 1937 Willys dragster) to flying. Both are licensed pilots. Their stable of six antique and collectible cars includes an original 1965 Chevrolet Corvette convertible and the 1924 Ford Model T they drive to auto club rallies.

Bob's skill in building an electric car was even featured by Peter Van Sant in a segment on CBS's "48 Hours."

It wasn't until they moved to the London area, enticed by the beautiful Ozark rivers and mountains, that they learned that Evelyn's grandmother had been a member of Zion Lutheran Church, Augsburg, where her name appears in church records from the late 1800s.

They are the proud parents of a daughter, Debra Battershell, and a son, Ronald "Ron" Battershell.



Bob and Evelyn Battershell celebrated a landmark 63rd anniversary at River Valley Grace, Lamar, Ark.

## Deadline for the August issue is June 15

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](mailto:LW@mid-southlcms.com) or send by postal mail to: Judy Otto • 150 N. Maury St. • Holly Springs, MS 38635.