



MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

ALMIGHTY HEAVENLY POWER

Remember when Mount St. Helens (Washington) erupted back in May 1980? A cubic mile of rock, earth and forests were thrown 11 miles into the air. The eruption spread debris and ashes for over 1,000 miles — as far away as North Dakota.



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola
District President

At that time my sister was attending a church in Olympia, Wash. She tells a story about a little old lady in the congregation who approached her after a service and said, “You know, this is just like the federal government. Everyone knew that mountain was going to blow up. They just didn’t bother going up there with a bulldozer to plug up the hole.” Of course, the unbelievable power unleashed from inside that mountain defied everyone’s imagination. Nothing on earth was capable of capping its immense power.

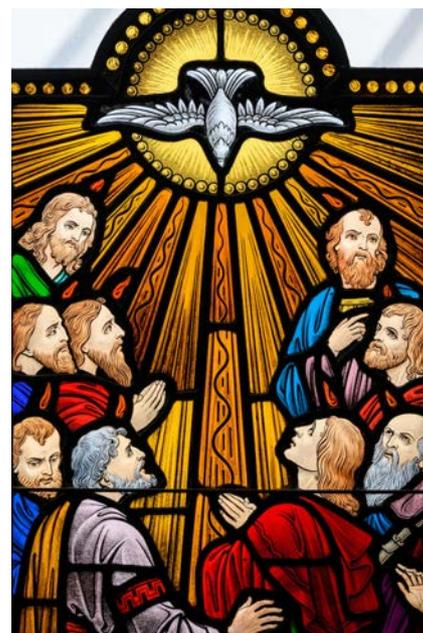
But that’s precisely what we celebrate on Pentecost (May 19 this year) — unbridled power from God! On the first Pentecost, God unleashed power by His Spirit that exploded into life, spreading His Gospel message into the hearts and lives of His people. The Pentecost power of forgiveness, the power of eternal life, and God’s mighty work for each day was unleashed with all the magnificent majesty that can only come from almighty God. Imagine: He delivered power over

sin and death; power over Satan; power for new life through Christ; and the power of faith, given by the Holy Spirit to grasp God’s grace.

What happened on Pentecost? That first Pentecost was the beginning of new life, a birthday for the new Christian church. For 40 days the resurrected Christ had walked with, talked with, ate with, and taught His disciples about the significance of His atoning death and glorious resurrection. He showed Himself to hundreds of witnesses and proclaimed the mystery of God’s salvation through His sacrifice and perfect righteousness. He shared a meal of thanksgiving. He preached the wonders of God’s immense power that restores us to God’s favor.

On that first Pentecost, the power of God Almighty — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — erupted to instruct, empower and enliven the Christian church to spread the Word of the Gospel throughout the whole world. By the power of the Holy Spirit, lives were changed, people were healed and disciples of Jesus were brought into a new beginning, a completely new life that belongs to all members of the body of Christ.

Until that day no one fully understood the immense power of the Gospel. No one could completely fathom what it was that God did for mankind through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But on Pentecost, hundreds of people — simple, sinful human beings — were empowered by the Holy Spirit to hear and live in the magnificence of God’s grace in Jesus Christ.



Pentecost was formerly a Jewish celebration, a day of Thanksgiving coinciding with the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai hundreds of year before. The Jews would have been gathering in Jerusalem to celebrate, expecting just another festival just like they had celebrated before. But what happened was nothing they could have ever expected.

Suddenly there was the noise of a rushing wind. There were the tongues of fire on the heads of the disciples. God’s Spirit poured over that place and showed Himself in sights and sounds like no one had ever experienced before. All the power, majesty and glory of heaven was unleashed for every eye to see and ear to hear. The people were shocked, taken aback by this most unexplainable phenomenon. “What’s happening?” they must have asked.

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MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

St. Peter said in words that everyone was able to simultaneously hear in their own language:

“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” ACTS 2:36

Everyone heard the message of salvation in their own language. People could understand because the Spirit of God was acting to drive home the point of grace — that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior. Nothing could hide the truth. There is no way to life and salvation other than through Jesus Christ, who reigns triumphant in majesty and everlasting glory. There’s no way anything will ever hide nor separate us from the Gospel truth for our eager ears and eyes.

That’s the point of Pentecost: Everything humanity had ever done in trying to cover up its sin or take away from God’s divine powers erupted on the New Testament Day of Pentecost. Anything that would try to take away a person’s attention from God, everything that had separated mankind from God’s grace was blown away at Pentecost.

God’s plan of salvation included this same Jesus as the Christ who brings salvation in His arms. He is the God-Man anointed and appointed by God to bring the miracles, signs and wonders of God to His people to show His grace, mercy and peace. Jesus was handed over to evil men who put Him to death by nailing Him to a cross. Though he suffered and died, Christ’s perfect life and willing atoning sacrifice washes away our sins so we could have life with God forever.

But He didn’t remain dead. Even though Jesus just wasn’t the kind of king some people wanted or expected, He served. He washed the disciples’ feet, touched the unclean and healed the unworthy. He ate with sinners and was even kind to those who mistreated Him. He was God in Man sent from God to be our Savior.



The people of the Old Covenant wanted a fearful ruler and king. But God’s plan wasn’t their plan. The people in the first New Testament church on Pentecost repented of their sins and returned to their God through the Savior Jesus Christ. He is the same Savior we need not only on a Pentecost Sunday, but for every other day God gives us as well. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, we will also rise in glory everlasting, justified by God’s grace that we receive by His gift of faith.

The people asked Peter, “What shall we do?” Peter replied:

“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Did you notice that no one is excluded? Every man, woman and child is INCLUDED because God’s plan of salvation is for everyone. Christ Jesus died for the sins of the *whole* world. God’s salvation plan includes offering every living soul His grace.

His plan is *not* exclusive, but inclusive — everyone who needs a Savior is given a Savior. He’s the One and only lifeline between our wretched fallen estate and the blessedness in the kingdom of God. His plan brings the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit for us to receive the grace and mercy that overflows in our life each day.

It was an awful and unsettled day when Jesus hung on the cross to pay for all this grace. There were earthquakes, storms and a covering over the noonday

sun. The whole foundation of the earth shook when our God in agonizing pain died on the cross — for my sin, your sin and the sins of all the world. This is all because God loves us and wants us to live with Him face-to-face in glory everlasting. I can’t understand it, but I can live in it because it is ours by faith.

This is the divine power that goes beyond the limitations of this life. It all fits together in our Pentecost. The apostles traveled with Jesus for three

years and saw His miracles, heard His teaching, and witnessed His resurrection, but they didn’t fully understand what power came into their midst. But at Pentecost, those dull minds were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to preach and teach everything concerning God’s salvation plan, beginning in Jerusalem and moving to every corner of the world. The disciples finally understood after receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and they gave witness that Christ’s death and resurrection could never be covered up. God’s work through Jesus Christ gives new life.

Jesus is our Lord of life. He is exactly the Savior that this dying, groaning world needs. There’s power in knowing that God became one with us, through His incarnation, so that we may return to be one of God’s own through our renewal of life in Him. His plan is that in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, we have the only Savior we will ever need. Those who will enter into His eternal kingdom are received on the merits of our beautiful Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by the gift of faith from the Holy Spirit, giving us this blessed hope.

God’s power is with us every day in such an overwhelming flood that we can scarcely take it all in. His power cannot be covered by dirt or paint, or even by all the dirt Satan and this world can throw at Him. God’s power has to be shared, out of our doors and into our streets and highways.

It’s all about Jesus in God’s almighty power. Don’t leave here without it.

SPRING LUTHERANS ENGAGE THE WORLD

Following where God leads



“It’s a thrilling ride when you try to go where God is leading,” says Principal John Jacob of Bethel Lutheran School in Morton, Ill. Bethel stepped out in faith to start a new Lutheran high school with only eight families and two teachers. Just three years later, the program has expanded and added new students, teachers and extracurricular activities.

In the Spring 2024 issue of *Lutherans Engage the World*, you’ll find several such stories about Lutherans who have been presented with unusual and exciting opportunities to share the Gospel. There are articles about a new Lutheran church plant in the heart of Rome; how Lutherans in Tanzania are caring for children

with albinism; and the restoration of a church in Balboa, Panama, that was once devastated by a series of catastrophic events.

“With the restoration work completed, we have the opportunity to revitalize the congregation, renew our presence in the Balboa area and serve as an example of God’s faithfulness to all our congregations in Panama,” Rev. Dr. Arthur Rickman, an LCMS missionary to Panama, says in the article.

The Spring 2024 issue started arriving 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.

High school students: Learn about life at CSL

Spread the word about **Vocatio: High School**, a retreat in which ninth- through 12th-grade students explore many aspects of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL) and learn valuable information about formation for pastoral and diaconal ministry.

Attendees will also participate in worship and devotions, sessions with professors,

and even some fun and recreation. This unique and engaging event will be held June 22-29 at CSL.

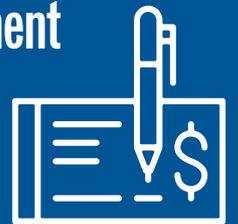
Registration is open to men and women and closes on May 24. The cost is \$100 per student. To learn more and register online, visit csl.edu/visit and scroll down to the event.

Scholarships available

Students who plan to attend an LCMS seminary or university during the 2024-2025 academic year to prepare for full-time church work may apply for financial aid through the Mid-South District office. Financial aid amounts are granted for a period of one year, and a new application must be made each year. Applications for the coming school year must be postmarked by June 15. For forms, please contact the district office at 866-373-1343 or afowler@mid-southlcms.com.



Congregation mission commitment receipts



as of
Feb. 29, 2024
(2 months)

Anticipated amount (17% of budget)	\$273,258
Actual receipts	\$217,822
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$55,436)

Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$61,180
Allocated to Tanzania	\$4,167
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$152,475
Total receipts	\$217,822

Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of Feb. 29, 2024	\$217,822
Actual receipts as of Feb. 28, 2023	\$208,700
Over (under) prior year receipts	\$9,122

Blessings in Memphis

Immanuel celebrating 100 years of ministry

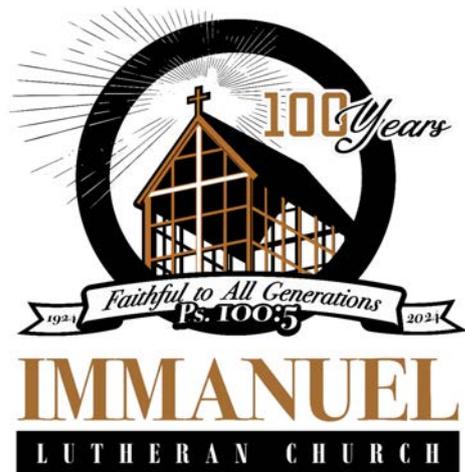
Nov. 3 marks its centennial celebration, but Immanuel, Memphis, will hold special Sunday services and potlucks leading up to the big day. Each will highlight a facet of the congregation's 100-year history.

On June 30, the theme is "People of Ministry."

On Sept. 29, the theme is "Ministry in Action."

Each service begins at 10 a.m. Immanuel is located at 6325 Raleigh-Lagrange Road.

The centennial celebration will be held on Nov. 3 with a 3 p.m. worship service and banquet. Stay tuned for more details, and make plans to celebrate 100 years of being "Faithful to All Generations" (Ps. 100:5).

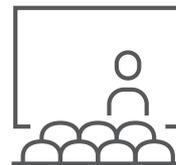


Bringing the seminary to you...

CTSFW offers courses for church workers, laypeople

As part of its Continuing Education program, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind., will offer two courses in the Mid-South District this summer.

The cost for each is \$150 for pastors and professional church workers, and \$100 for retired pastors and laypeople. For more information and to register, visit ctsfw.edu/ce. The page lists all the courses CTSFW is offering throughout the country.



How Knowledge of the Last Times Can Shape Us for the Present Times

June 3–5 • Ascension, Madison, Tenn.

Eschatology is the study of the "last things." In light of the global political and social turmoil of the past 5–10 years, many have cried, "Surely we are living in the last times!" How should we faithfully think of the last times? What are "the signs of the times?" How are Christians to live in the present hour? Specifically, how is a pastor or church leader to faithfully carry out his calling within the present context?



Rev. Dr. John Raymond Stephenson

In this course, Rev. Dr. John Raymond Stephenson will move attendees from the study of eschatology into discussion of many current issues facing the church.

Stephenson is a native of Hartlepool, England. He was ordained in 1985 and has served on the Canadian Lutheran Theological Seminary faculty in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Ascension Lutheran Church is located at 610 W. Old Hickory Blvd. in Madison, Tenn. More information, including accommodations, is also available from Rev. Gregory Bauch, Ascension pastor, at pastorgreatauch@gmail.com.

Let Us Die That We May Live: Confessing Christ with the Noble Army of Martyrs

June 26–28 • Grace, Little Rock

The class will focus on the age of martyrdom (70 AD – 313 AD) and the ancient stories of Christian martyrs such as Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, and Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas of North Africa.

Engagement with these texts will lead the class to consider the challenges that faced early Christians and how such challenges shaped their confession of Christ crucified.

The class will be taught by Rev. Dr. James Bushur, who serves as professor of New Testament and early church studies at CTSFW. He also serves as director of deaconess formation.

Grace Lutheran Church is located at 5124 Hillcrest Ave. in Little Rock. More information, including accommodations, is also available from Rev. Kent Schaaf, Grace senior pastor, at kent.schaaf@glclr.org.



Rev. Dr. James Bushur

'Well done, good and faithful servant'

Rev. Shawn Found was honored for his retirement after serving for 26 years as chaplain with the Army National Guard. The ceremony was held at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock on March 3. Chaplain Found had been serving the 77th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Throughout his distinguished career, Chaplain Found served in six states and completed two overseas deployments. Rev. David Witte, assistant pastor of Grace, Little Rock, who has also served as a military chaplain, gave an invocation and benediction. The event was attended by distinguished officials from the Army National Guard, who presented national and local awards recognizing Chaplain Found's service.

Found was also recognized by the Grace congregation during service on April 14, and with a reception.

"We extend our deepest gratitude to Chaplain Found for his unwavering commitment to God and our country," said Rev. Kent Schaaf, Grace senior pastor. "His service and sacrifice have inspired us all."

Schaaf mentioned that Found will remain in Little Rock and serve as a civilian instructor with the Guard, as well as becoming more involved in helping ministry at Grace.



Chaplain Shawn Found and his wife, Jenn, are pictured with their sons, Asher (left) and Elias.

Siberian pastor visits Johnson City

On Jan. 24, Bethlehem, Johnson City, Tenn., was honored to welcome Rev. Dr. Alexey Streltsov, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Siberia, Russia; and his wife, Elena.

They were touring LCMS congregations to ask for funding for the seminary in this remote area of the world. They were ushered by Rev. Dr. Timothy Quill, who served as director of the Russian Project while he was on the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), Ind. As part of the project, Dr. Quill traveled extensively to Russia to recruit students to study at CTSFW. In the mid-1990s, the



Welcomed, and welcoming! Pictured are, from left, Rev. Dr. Timothy and Annette Quill; Rev. Dr. Alexey and Elena Streltsov; and Amanda and Rev. Vincent Shemwell, who serves as pastor of Bethlehem, Johnson City, Tenn.

Streltsovs were the first of 40 students to be part of this program.

The Streltsovs were treated to a potluck dinner and were gratified that several

of Bethlehem's members were Russian speakers. Dr. Streltsov provided an overview of the seminary's activities. The seminary was founded also through the Russian Project.

New beginnings for Living Savior, Springdale

Rev. Roger Sterle, emeritus, was installed as pastor of Living Savior, Springdale, Ark., on Feb. 11.

Pastor Sterle had been serving the congregation in a temporary capacity since December 2021. Pastor Sterle and the Living Savior members forged a strong bond over the following two years as the congregation was in the process of changing its location. Formerly meeting in Lowell, Ark., Living Savior's church property was sold in 2020, leading the congregation to a temporary worship space near Springdale.

Later that same year, Living Savior found a new home — a historic school building in Springdale. But a long re-zoning and renovation process was required. Pastor Sterle and his wife, Shirley, were with the congregation through much of this challenging time, making the May 2023 dedication of the new building a much-celebrated occasion for all!



The natural next step for the congregation was to extend a call to Pastor Sterle. Congratulations to Rev. Sterle and the congregation of Living Savior Lutheran Church as they continue their journey together in the Springdale community!

Pictured are, from left (front row) Revs. Russell Shewmaker, Joshua Willadsen, Roger Sterle, Chris Gorshe, Mike Meyer, Richard Mayer; (back row) Albert Quoss, Brandon Martin, Eric Longman, JD Zischke and David Schmidt.



Living Savior is now located at 1600 Butterfield Coach Road in Springdale, Ark. The building was previously used as a school.

Peace, Conway, featured in magazine

The spirit and 60-year history of Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, Ark., were featured in the March 2024 issue of *501 Life* magazine, which covers central Arkansas. Rev. Tom and Sharon Boeck were pictured, and readers were encouraged to “Be part of the blessing” as the church invited the community to celebrate 60 years as a congregation and a new worship center.

“At the foot of this cross, all are

welcome,” says Karen Himes in the article. She serves on the Peace mission and outreach board. “Saints who have dedicated their life to the service of God, new believers, nonbelievers, the undecided and confused. We invite all to this cross because it represents the cross of Christ and at the foot of the King’s cross, all are welcome.”

Read the article at thelc.ms/501-peace-conway.

Happy 50!



Rev. Albert Quoss is pictured with his wife, Jan, during a celebration of his 50 years as a pastor.

Congratulations to Rev. Albert Quoss, emeritus, for 50 years of service in the pastoral ministry. He resides in Bella Vista, Ark., and still preaches regularly for congregations in northwest Arkansas and northeast Oklahoma. He was serving Zion, Waldenburg, Ark., when he retired in January 2015.

A reception in celebration of the milestone was held at Redeemer, Claremore, Okla., on April 7. Pastor Quoss served Redeemer for nearly 20 years (1978–1998).

Hitting the road



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

Summertime is almost here! For many of us that means it's time to plan the family vacation or register the children for all those camps they want to attend. I have everything down to a packing list of what we will need many weeks ahead of time.

Here is an idea of something to add to that packing list of essentials: LWML *Mustard Seed Devotions* (lwml.org/mustard-seed-devotions) or Lutheran Hour Ministries booklets (shoplhm.org/books-booklets). These offer a great opportunity to share the word with those you encounter while on vacation. Leave the *Mustard Seeds* or booklets with the tip at a restaurant or in your hotel room.

Here are some other ways to prepare for the summer:

- ▶ Pray while planning your summer activities.
- ▶ Pack a devotional or Bible for the trip.
- ▶ Add a stack of sticky notes and leave words of encouragement or prayer for those you meet along your way.
- ▶ Purchase pass-along notes like the LWML peace cards or sharing and caring cards that have a Scripture reading and inspirational quotes. You can make your own on index cards. You can get together as a family and make these with your favorite Bible passage.
- ▶ Pack a Christian-themed shirt to wear, or an LWML shirt, or a shirt you have received from your church.

These are things you can do every day; no need to wait for vacation. Leave a note at the doctor's office in a magazine. Leave a note on a car in the parking lot at the hospital. There are so many little ways to spread God's Word.

Keep these things in mind when you plan your trip to the LWML Mid-South District 28th Biennial Convention in Memphis! **Registration is open until May 20.**



Visit midsouthlwml.org to learn more. (Go to "News and Events" and select the convention link from the drop-down menu.) The convention will be held June 7–9.

DISTRICT MISSIONS

Thank you from LIME

As the first semester of the 2023-24 academic year ended for the Lutheran Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship (LIME) in Madagascar, students delivered oral defenses of their theses, completing their training in preparation for professional jobs in management, entrepreneurship, or tourism.

"This is one more opportunity to thank you, the Mid-South District as a whole, for your faithful moral and financial support to LIME," writes Rev. Dr. Joseph Randrianasolo, LIME president.

"Thank you all. May Jesus Christ from Nazareth, the head of the church, bless you all!"

Become a **MinistrySafe** member

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

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

Visit ministrysafesafe.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.

CAMP TRINITY

God be praised!

Generous donors paying off loans for two structures

Many friends of Camp Trinity have asked about the status of the camp manager's home. The old mobile home had to be replaced last year, sooner than planned, because of the discovery of high levels of toxic mold throughout the structure. A new mobile home was delivered last fall, and the family of Aaron Davis moved into the new home just before Christmas.

Entry to the home had been by temporary stairs as the porch and deck were not built until recently. Pincrest Lumber, a division of Green Bay Packaging, donated the deck boards. Anonymous friends of the camp donated the framing lumber and other materials, as well as labor for building the porch and deck.

This fundraiser for the manager's home was going on at the same time as the capital campaign for the new retreat lodge, which was completed in late 2022. Since the 2021 launch of the three-year capital campaign for the retreat lodge, 167 generous donors — individuals and congregations — have contributed more than \$450,000 in gifts designated for the construction and furnishing.

And although replacing the manager's home was unanticipated in 2023, friends of Camp Trinity have responded with another outpouring of generosity. Since the start of the drive to replace the home last summer, 92 donors have designated more than \$150,000 in gifts.

The overlapping campaigns have resulted in more than \$600,000 in gifts in less than three years! The camp board hopes to retire the debt in 2024 and invites any who desire to join in the ministry to consider a gift.

Financing for the mobile home and retreat lodge was combined. As of the end of March, the loan balance for the structures was just \$44,000. Remaining pledges are projected to cover a little over \$4,000 of that balance, leaving less than \$40,000 left to raise.

Donations may be made through PayPal at lutherancamp.org. Go to "More" at the top of the page and select "Donate" from the



Aaron Davis, who serves as operations manager for Camp Trinity, helped build the home in which he and his family are residing.

drop-down menu. Or mail a check to Camp Trinity, 110 Montgomery Trace, Morrilton AR 72110. Please write "Retreat Lodge" or "Manager's Home" in the memo line.

Anniversary blessings

Congratulations to Ernie and Donna Miller, members of Faith, Fairfield Bay, Ark., who will celebrate 66 years of marriage on April 19.

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 August 2024 issue by June 15. Please ensure photos are submitted in high-resolution.



LCMS/Erik M. Lumsford