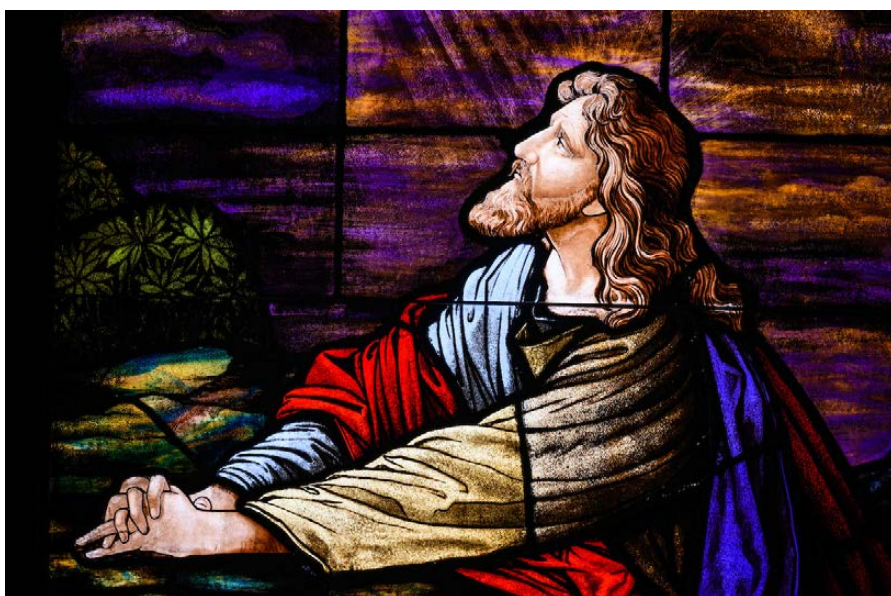




# MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN



the things of the world, and to look to Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophet's promise. All the Law and the Prophets pointed to Jesus the Way.

Jesus insists that *He* is that way. The prophets pointed not to a better life or to have more things, but to one life and one thing — to Christ and His cross. The prophets did not promise one who would dish out advice, but rather the One who would deliver sinners into the hands of a merciful Father. Jesus *is* the way. He does not point to the way. He does not give out travel advice or suggest routes to a destination. Jesus is both the destination and the path of the journey to that end.

We have got to stop thinking of Jesus as the sage advice giver or great counselor or therapist or life coach. Jesus has only one concern for you — that you know Him as He makes Himself known for now and for everlasting life. That seems exclusive and rude in our culture of many ways, many paths and many destinations. It seems odd for those who think of the journey as its own destination or reward. Jesus has nothing to do with such ideas.

Jesus is the way. No one comes to the Father except through Him. Well, everyone goes to the Father, but those who do not come through Jesus enter into judgment while those who come in Christ are immediately recognized by the Father as His own, covered with the righteousness of Christ and bearing His name. In the most profound sense of the term “the Way” in Scripture, it is Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. It is He and He alone. He is our

## CHRIST THE WAY

**T**he term “the Way” is not some small metaphor in Scripture. It is a profound thing. Jesus says that He is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). That is a familiar verse and we know it well, but what it means is not quite so well known. We keep thinking that Jesus is like a GPS — He gives directions. We treat His Word as if it's the voice of our GPS, telling us where to turn in life and what the speed limit is on our morality and when we shall arrive at our destination.

But Jesus never promises to show us the way. He does not give directions. He reveals Himself, and by revealing Himself reveals the Father.

The promise of Advent is that a messenger and prophet has come to prepare the way of the Lord. He did not come to tidy up the lives of messy people or sweep up the dirt of the world away. This is not about a better world or better lives to impress the great one when He comes. It is about preparing the Lord's way — calling people to repentance, to abandon their trust in themselves and



**Rev. Larry Peters**  
District Secretary  
Senior Pastor,  
Grace, Clarksville

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## MESSAGE

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path and He is our destination.

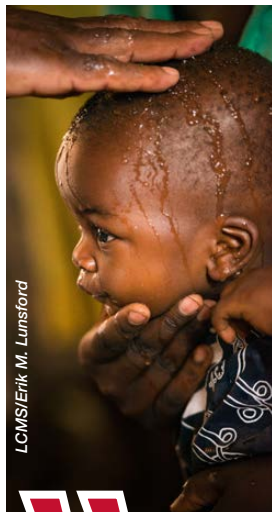
In Luke 13:22-30, Jesus insists that He is no broad boulevard, but a narrow way. That is offensive to us. We live in a culture in which every truth is captive to the individual and few things are true of everyone and most things are true only in the eye of the beholder. Jesus will not have any of our grand experiment of individual truth and reality. There is only one way and Jesus alone is that way. He is the way and He is the destination. Scripture does not merely show us where Jesus is; Jesus is that Word speaking — Jesus, the Word made flesh for us and our salvation.

There is another mention of the way in Scripture. It is from Acts 24. There it is recorded that Christians were first called the people of the Way. This name given to early Christians identified them as the people of God who lived in Christ, through Christ and by Christ. Because of this, they lived for Christ and not for themselves. The world had never known such a people so dedicated to another. What stood out to the many was the devotion of the few to the one Lord Jesus Christ and to the fellowship of Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that the first name of Christians was people of the Way.

People come to church for a variety of reasons. Some come because they grew up going to church, as if church were merely a tradition or a habit. Some come because they are lonely and the church accepts just about anybody. Some come because they have feelings of guilt and shame and want to bury those feelings once for all time. Some come because they think church helps them round out their lives or achieve their goals. Some come because they think the church is a community of good people and they are arrogant enough to judge themselves good enough. All of these reasons are wrong.

People are here because Christ is here. The Spirit calls them and forgiveness cleanses them. Luther says this in the catechism.

Sometimes we do not realize why we are here. The Spirit has not emptied our hearts and minds of all our delusions and we are tempted by the flesh. But the Spirit is working to fill us right here and right now. God is working through His Word to vacate the demons



**He goes to where we are so He might bring us to Him, to the new birth of water and the Word, to the new life that death cannot touch, and to the new love that lives to serve."**

from their dwelling places within us and set us free. God is even now working in us that which is well pleasing to Him — a people of repentance who love the Christ who forgives them, and a people of righteousness who strive to walk in Christ the Way.

Sadly, we too easily forget that Christ does not merely meet us where we are. He goes to where we are so He might bring us to Him, to the new birth of water and the Word, to the new life that death cannot touch, and to the new love that lives to serve. The way has become merely a metaphor when it is really absolute truth. Christ is the Way of truth and the Way of truth is Christ. He is not Lord because we claim Him, but because He claims us.

To walk in Christ means that we do not live by our feelings or by our desires or even by our wants. We live by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. How foolish it is that we think morality is the domain of the person. How do I get to judge who is a person and who is not, whose life matters and whose does not, what sexual preference fits my mood, what gender identity feels right at the moment, to have sex without marriage and marriage without children? Is Christ merely God's stamp of approval upon my chosen path or is Christ the path that compels me to lay down all desires, wants, feelings, needs and hungers?

People say it all the time and actually mean it. God would not want me to be poor so I can steal; He would not want me to be unhappy so I can do what I want; He would not want me to be alone so I can indulge my desires; He would not want me to be without so I am justified in keeping my money for myself. What a lie, and yet we have told it to ourselves so often that we believe God exists to make us happy.

No, my friends, Christ is the way the prophets looked to prepare, Christ is the way the truth and the life, through which any who will be saved are saved. Our words to the world are about Him and our works in the world make known His love and mercy to those still in darkness and death. The way is narrow — Christ has forged its path and now we follow where He has led the way. He is the first and many follow, and so we live not for ourselves but for Him who loved us even to death on a cross.

In the holy Name of Jesus. Amen.

## Treasurers: Register for workshop

The Mid-South District will once again hold workshops for congregational treasurers.

Workshops are scheduled for:

- Dec. 3 at Grace Lutheran Church, Knoxville, Tenn.
- Jan. 7 at Christ Lutheran Church, Little Rock
- Jan. 14 at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Nashville
- Jan. 21, at St. John Lutheran Church, Russellville, Ark.

- Jan. 28 at the Mid-South District office, Cordova, Tenn.

More information and online registration are available at [mid-southlcms.org/2022-2023-treasurers-workshop](http://mid-southlcms.org/2022-2023-treasurers-workshop).

Treasurers are asked to register by Dec. 1. Please share this information with your congregation's treasurer and encourage attendance at this free workshop.



## Trafficking awareness event is Nov. 19

The Mid-South District will hold another free community event for anyone who is concerned about the impacts of human trafficking and wants to learn more about how to engage in the fight against it.



Lutheran Church, Nashville (5110 Franklin Pike).

Representatives from local, state and national agencies will share knowledge on how to identify signs, report activity and help victims of human trafficking.

Attend this important event and help shine light into the dark world of human trafficking. Look for promotional materials for this event at district congregations.

“Light in the Darkness: Uncovering the Shadow World of Human Trafficking” will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 19, at Our Savior

## Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of Aug. 31, 2022 (8 months)

Anticipated amount (67% of budget)	\$1,011,926
Actual receipts	\$984,614
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$27,312)
<b>Use of mission commitment receipts</b>	
Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$278,718
Allocated to Tanzania	\$16,667
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$689,230
Total receipts	\$984,614

<b>Mission commitment receipts comparison</b>	
Actual receipts as of Aug. 31, 2022	\$984,614
Actual receipts as of Aug. 31, 2021	\$992,899
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$8,285)

## WANTED: Volunteers to decorate floats

Volunteer now to join the Petal Pushers in Pasadena, Calif., and decorate the Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) float, and other floats, for the Tournament of Roses parade.

As the only Christian-themed float in the parade, held Jan. 1 in Pasadena, the mission of the LHM float is to provide a Gospel witness to viewers along the

parade route to television and computer screens worldwide.

The 2023 LHM float theme is “Turning the Corner,” and the title is “New Day with Jesus.”

Registration is open. For more information, including dates when you can be part of the decorating experience, visit [petalpushers.org](http://petalpushers.org).

## A prayer of gratitude



Let us, therefore, proclaim our gratitude to Providence for manifold blessings—let us be humbly thankful for inherited ideals—and let us resolve to share those blessings and those ideals with our fellow human beings throughout the world. On that day let us gather in sanctuaries dedicated to worship and in homes blessed by family affection to express our gratitude for the glorious gifts of God, and let us earnestly and humbly pray that He will continue to guide and sustain us in the great unfinished tasks of achieving peace, justice, and understanding among all men and nations and of ending misery and suffering wherever they exist. John F. Kennedy, Thanksgiving Day, 1963

## 'Take Heart'



### Retreat for teachers, workers is Dec. 2-4 in Carlinville, Ill.

All teachers (commissioned and noncommissioned) and commissioned ministers are invited to attend "Take Heart," a retreat presented by DOXOLOGY and the LCMS Office of National Mission, to be held Dec. 2-4 at Lake Williamson Christian Center in Carlinville, Ill.

The "Take Heart" respite retreats invite teachers and church workers to step away for a few days. The retreat will provide rest and renewal for all teachers and commissioned ministers who have served faithfully throughout and beyond the COVID challenges. The goal is to serve the servants, having them return to their schools and parishes refreshed for the work God has given them to do.

These retreats are fully funded by the LCMS Office of National Mission — there is no cost for participants to attend. **In addition, the Mid-South District is offering a travel stipend of \$250** for any district commissioned minister who wants to attend. Please send a copy of your completed registration to Angela Fowler at [afowler@](mailto:afowler@)

[mid-southlcms.com](http://mid-southlcms.com) and she will process payment.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Respite retreat registration is available only for teachers and commissioned ministers who are actively serving an LCMS church, school or other institution.

The respite retreat features:

- ▶ Worship in which participants can gratefully receive the Word.
- ▶ Mutual conversation and interaction of the participants.
- ▶ Exploration of spiritual care resources.
- ▶ Christian psychological tools/strategies for resilience and application in home, school and parish settings.
- ▶ Table talk among participants for important sharing, debriefing and problem-solving.

This retreat will provide encouragement for and enhance confidence in ministry, and strengthen all teachers and all commissioned ministers. Retreat participants often report, "This is just what I needed!"

**Registration is open until Nov. 17** at [doxology.us](http://doxology.us). Click the link at the top of the page.

## Evangelism



### Watch this!

Shared by the Board of Evangelism of First, Little Rock

We have all heard the hilarious stories that include the statement "Hold my beer and watch this." Here are three scenarios that elaborate on that theme:

- ▶ A young guy in the country (I was once a young guy in the country) tells his buddies "Hold my beer and watch this," then proceeds to drive his brand-new 4-wheel drive pick-up across a shallow river, and in the process hits the only hole, totally flooding his truck and almost drowning himself. Sound familiar?
- ▶ God the Father tells Jesus: "The sin on earth has reached a grievous, unacceptable level and too many people are being lost. It is time for You to go." Jesus responds: "I am ready. Hold My crown and watch this," as He hands His crown and heavenly robe to an angel and departs for His appointment with Mary to begin his sojourn on earth to save us from our sins.
- ▶ Backpacking with a long-time friend who does not know the Lord, you are having a discussion about politics, challenges in your lives and what happens when you die. You tell him: "Hold my backpack and watch this," as you pull out your New Testament and show him what God says about all of these issues.

The question is, will you do it? Will you take this opportunity to witness to your friend about the love and truth of Jesus, or will you let it pass by because you don't want to hurt his feelings or him to look down on you?

This just might be a divine appointment, and you and I were called for this very purpose.

Be bold, be strong and walk with the Lord, for time is short and we are not guaranteed tomorrow.

# CONGRATULATIONS!

We share with you the Mid-South District pastors who will celebrate ordination anniversaries in 2022. We rejoice and give thanks to God for the gifts these men provide to His church.



## 20 YEARS

**Rev. Tracy Nelson**  
Our Savior, Nashville, Tenn.

**Rev. M. Chad Philipp**  
St. Paul, Gillett, Ark.  
St. Luke, DeWitt, Ark.

**Rev. Kent Schaaf**  
Grace, Little Rock, Ark.

## 15 YEARS

**Rev. Donald Coulter**  
Athens Lutheran Church, Athens, Tenn.

**Rev. Christopher Gorshe**  
Bella Vista Lutheran Church,  
Bella Vista, Ark.

**Rev. Jeffrey King**  
Our Shepherd, Searcy, Ark.

**Rev. David Vandercook**  
Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle, Ark.  
Trinity, North Little Rock, Ark.

## 10 YEARS

**Rev. Dr. Richard Davenport**  
Our Redeemer, Fort Smith, Ark.

**Rev. Donald Welmer**  
First, Chattanooga, Tenn.

## 5 YEARS

**Rev. Eric Rudsenske**  
Concordia, Jackson, Tenn.

**Rev. Adam Woldt**  
The Point, Knoxville, Tenn.

**Rev. JohnDavid Zischke**  
Restoration, Fayetteville, Ark.

## 65 YEARS

**Rev. Paul Donner** (*emeritus*)  
Paducah, Ky.

**Rev. John Schulz** (*emeritus*)  
Knoxville, Tenn.

## 55 YEARS

**Rev. James Evers** (*emeritus*)  
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

## 50 YEARS

**Rev. Peter Ave-Lallemant**  
Faith, Fairfield Bay, Ark.

**Rev. Philip Bohlken** (*emeritus*)  
Knoxville, Tenn.

**Rev. Gary Heckmann** (*emeritus*)  
Cookeville, Tenn.

**Rev. Paul Muench** (*emeritus*)  
Knoxville, Tenn.

## 45 YEARS

**Rev. Jan Munch** (*emeritus*)  
Athens, Tenn.

**Rev. Dr. Mark Press**  
Holy Trinity, Bowling Green, Ky.

## 40 YEARS

**Rev. Keith Enko**  
Lebanon, Tenn.

**Rev. Bradley Heinecke**  
Shepherd of the Hills, Horseshoe Bend, Ark.

**Rev. Stewart Marshall**  
Trinity, Pine Bluff, Ark.

**Rev. Richard Mayer**  
Messiah, Pea Ridge, Ark.

## 35 YEARS

**Rev. Steve Harmon**  
Bethlehem, Johnson City, Tenn.

**Rev. Paul Leigeber**  
Faith, Union City, Tenn.  
Trinity, Dyersburg, Tenn.

**Rev. H. Christopher Sheets**  
Good Shepherd, Chattanooga, Tenn.

**Rev. Russell Shewmaker** (*emeritus*)  
Gravette, Ark.

## 30 YEARS

**Rev. Jon Bischof**  
St. Matthew, Corning, Ark.

## 25 YEARS

**Rev. Mark Goble**  
Christ the King, Memphis, Tenn.

**Rev. Clarence Martin** (*emeritus*)  
Bartlett, Tenn.

**Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola**  
Mid-South District president  
Cordova, Tenn.

**Rev. Andrew Smith**  
Cookeville, Tenn.

WELL DONE,  
GOOD AND  
FAITHFUL  
SERVANTS

## CAMP TRINITY

# Young adults needed for summer camp staff

Christian young adults who want to serve in ministry in summer 2023 are invited to apply for staff positions at Camp Trinity or any of the other two-dozen camps affiliated with the LCMS across the country.

Camp Trinity is looking for six cabin counselors and three kitchen/general staff members.

All the camps of the National Lutheran Outdoors Ministry Association (NLOMA) are looking for energetic, enthusiastic young leaders who are mature in the faith to lead children and youth in all kinds of adventure — hiking, swimming, horseback riding, canoeing, archery, rock climbing, crafts

and large-group games.

Staff who serve as cabin counselors need to know Scripture and Lutheran theology to lead daily Bible studies and evening campfire devotions. Camp Trinity is especially looking for counselors who can play guitar and lead singing.

To learn more about Camp Trinity's summer camps, visit [lutherancamp.org](http://lutherancamp.org)



Jonas Rion gets a kick out of serving in outdoors ministry on the Camp Trinity summer staff for 2022.

and click the “Summer Camp” link. To apply to serve at any Lutheran camp, young adults ages 18-25 can fill out a summer service profile at [nloma.org](http://nloma.org).

# Retreat lodge ready for bookings

LCMS congregations are invited to book the new retreat lodge at Camp Trinity in 2023 for family retreats, leadership retreats, womens retreats, family reunions, mens club service retreats, circuit pastors retreats, LWML zone retreats, outdoor education or other events.

The lodge sleeps 30 in six sleeping rooms and comes with a kitchen and large gathering room for meetings, presentations and fellowship. Guests can also take advantage of camp amenities while on site, including hiking trails, canoeing/kayaking, archery range and volleyball.

The camp also has bunkhouse cabins, a family cabin and a dining hall that can be booked for retreats and other events.

To inquire about specific dates, send an email to [director@lutherancamp.org](mailto:director@lutherancamp.org).



The retreat lodge at Camp Trinity was nearing completion when this photo was taken in August.

# Fathers/sons retreat is Nov. 18-20

FATHERS AND SONS (ages 8-plus) are invited to join Rev. David Vandercook, pastor of Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle, Ark., and Trinity, North Little Rock, as he hosts an Evanguard gathering on the biblical understanding of the patriarchy Nov. 18-20.

The guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. Adam Koontz, pastor of Trinity, Denver, and former professor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

The event will be held at Camp Trinity on Petit Jean Mountain. There will be opportunities for study, conversation, fellowship, prayer, indoor relaxation and outdoor adventure. Camp Trinity will offer canoeing, ax throwing, hiking and other fun outdoor activities.

For more information and to register, visit [evanguard.org/f/an-evanguard-retreat-for-2022](http://evanguard.org/f/an-evanguard-retreat-for-2022).



## WANTED: YWR applicants for Milwaukee convention

Applications are now begin accepted for Young Woman Representatives (YWRs) to attend the 40th LWML Biennial Convention, to be held June 22-25, 2023, in Milwaukee. The LWML Mid-South District will send four YWRs to the convention. We hope that every LCMS Mid-South District woman ages 22-35 would consider applying for this wonderful opportunity.

Among other events at convention, YWRs participate in helping with the Gifts from the Heart collection and escorting our Mid-South District LWML president in the opening processional. The deadline to apply is Dec. 31. For more information and to apply, visit [midsouthlwml.org/ywrs](http://midsouthlwml.org/ywrs).

**Mission Grants update:** We are very excited to see Mission Grants being funded through our mites. Our next grant being funded is \$5,000 for the Compassion Closet in Oak Ridge, Tenn. The Compassion Closet provides tangible needs for foster children, like beds and mattresses and age-appropriate Bibles. Training for foster parents is also offered. The grant will also help cover the facility's rent.



From left: Julie Duncan, Susanna Beeler, Candy Habich (LWML district president), April Tester and Nikki Holcomb walk in the processional with the LWML Mid-South District banner at the LWML 39th Biennial Convention in Lexington, Ky., in June 2021. Julie, Susanna, April and Nikki were Young Woman Representatives.

# REDEEMER, NASHVILLE celebrates 40 years



Steve Hallock, Redeemer congregation president, and Rev. Philip Young display the certificate of recognition from Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Mid-South District president.

On Sept. 11, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Nashville, celebrated her 40th anniversary (1982-2022) as a congregation.

Rev. Philip Young, Redeemer pastor, recognized the faithful service of Redeemer's founding pastor, Rev. Chris Powell (who entered the Church Triumphant in 2019), and Rev. Paul Donner, who served as vacancy pastor prior to Pastor Young's call.

Pastor Young also presented a letter and certificate from Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola recognizing the occasion. (Dr. Paavola's duties as Mid-South District president prevented his attendance.)

The day concluded with a celebration luncheon, where a collection of photographs of the church and her people, several now in the Church Triumphant, was displayed.

Though now 40 years old, Redeemer has had the joy of being served by just two pastors in that time. Pastor Powell served from Redeemer's incorporation as an LCMS congregation in January 1982 until his retirement in October 2001. Pastor Young has served Redeemer since his installation in July 2002.

On July 31, Pastor Young was surprised by the congregation with a recognition of his 20 years of service. The congregation gifted Pastor Young with a stole for the Advent season.

May Our Lord Jesus Christ continue to bless all who enter the doors of Redeemer and preserve them in the one true faith.



For the expanding grandeur of creation, worlds known and unknown, galaxies beyond galaxies, filling us with awe and challenging our imaginations:

We give thanks this day.

For this fragile planet earth, its times and tides, its sunsets and seasons:

We give thanks this day.

For the joy of human life, its wonders and surprises, its hopes and achievements:

We give thanks this day.

For our human community, our common past and future hope, our oneness transcending all separation, our capacity to work for peace and justice in the midst of hostility and oppression:

We give thanks this day.

For high hopes and noble causes, for faith without fanaticism, for understanding of views not shared:

We give thanks this day.

For all who have labored and suffered for a fairer world, who have lived so that others might live in dignity and freedom:

We give thanks this day.

For human liberty and sacred rites; for opportunities to change and grow, to affirm and choose:

We give thanks this day.

We pray that we may live not by our fears but by our hopes, not by our words but by our deeds.

We give thanks this day.

**O. Eugene Pickett**

## Share your news with us!

Send us your stories and photos for the first issue of a bright new year. Submissions for the January 2023 issue are needed by Nov. 15.

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.