



/ SEPTEMBER 2020

# MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN

## ‘As the head of the family should teach’



As a youngster, I hated the approach of September. Except for football and cross country season starting, it also meant school was about to resume. I don't know how many of our members remember the song "School Days":

School days, school days, Dear old golden rule days  
Reading and writin' and rithmetic, Taught to the tune of the  
hickory stick  
You were my queen in calico, I was your bashful barefoot beau  
And you wrote on my slate, "I love you, Joe"  
When we were a couple of kids

It was written in 1907 by Will D. Cobb and Gus Edwards about a mature couple looking back sentimentally on their childhood together in primary school.

There are a few things wrong with the lyrics — at least by today's standards.



**Rev. Dr.  
Roger Paavola**  
District President

First, there's a reference to the Golden Rule — "love your neighbor as you love yourself." We can't bring the Bible into public schools anymore.

Then there is a reference to a "hickory stick" — a reminder of a teacher's cadence during memorization work and a painful reminder of the consequences of bad behavior. Punishment of any kind is forbidden (even for bad grades!).

Apparently in 1907, the students were assigned slate boards to record their work. When is the last time anyone has even seen a slate board in a classroom?

But to many of us, the song is a reminder of familiar childhood memories, and it also reminds me of the memory work we did for Sunday school and Catechism classes.

Our Catechism classes went for three years, 52 Saturday mornings a year, including two weeks during VBS when we sat from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. memorizing.

During this time of the year we should be getting ready to see the kids going back to school. But who knows what will happen this year with the pandemic making decisions for us?

That doesn't mean education for the church is on hold. It means we have a chance to do what Martin Luther writes in the preface to his Small Catechism on what should happen in every Christian home:

As the Head of the Family Should  
Teach in a Simple Way to His  
Household.

See **TEACHING**, Page 2

## TEACHING

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We don't teach the way we did in generations past. But that doesn't diminish the necessity to teach the Christian faith:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*"

— **Matt. 28:19-20** (*emphasis mine*)

Education in the faith happens at every moment, from reading the Bible, listening in Sunday school, and attending Bible studies, Catechism classes and Divine Worship.

### Is worship for God's benefit?

A friend of mine, Rev. Dr. Scott Murray, struck a serious note in his daily blog — "God Doesn't Want Our Praise." Really?

Don't we hear that God created us to praise Him? Actually, it's one of the most troubling tensions in the life of the modern church. Is worship for God's benefit? The result of this tension is what Murray calls a "dumbing down" of the worship form. Singing songs that tell God what people are doing for Him rather than hymns that tell what God has already done for us is the tension. Does God really need for us to tell Him how awesome He is? "You're number one, God," as if He can't tell the condition of our heart.

Dr. Murray isn't talking down musical forms, but sharing concern over a reduction of the meaning of worship that departs from Holy Scripture and our Confessions. This kind of reductionism erects the false idea that God is the One who benefits from our worship. If our worship is for God's benefit, it would be telling God what He already knows far better than we do.

Such expressions of faith would be the same thing as one of us explaining the excruciating details of what it took to make an exquisite meal to the chef who prepared it. Or more concretely, it would be the same as a young boy



explaining the pains of his birth to his mother. Instead, we should be inclined to express our admiration of the chef or thanks to the mother with prosaic praise, "You are a fabulous chef" or "You are the greatest mother."

Theologically, reducing worship to only being praise toward God misses what happens in worship. Praising God is absolutely biblical and right. But worship is more than "God, You are really great! No really, You're great!"

Worship is *not* for God's benefit, but it is pleasing to Him as our daily sacrifice in worship of Him. What is it that an unregenerate person lacks, since we praise God for all His benefits to and for us that we receive by the gift of faith.

Worship is for the benefit of the worshipers, "...the chief worship of God is the preaching of the Gospel" — God's divine service to us (Ap XV:42). Our Confessions say that worship is to assemble to teach the people what they need to know about Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior and praise God with song and prayer (LC 376:84). The worship service is the delivery point at which God serves His people by offering Himself in the Word and Means of Grace.

He comes to the people in the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins, through which we are absolved and thus set free from sin, death and hell. God desires our worship — His to us — and then to receive it in faith as our own. He offers us the food in His Word and blessed Sacrament that we might eat and live (Isaiah 55), not that we might tell Him what a great chef He is.

Worship is designed for us. We learn of God's compassion, that we live in the midst of His grace. The service is God

justifying us, not us justifying us to Him. The impact on worship texts and hymns become immediately apparent. They're an expression of our faith. God desires our worship in His presence and by His grace. Our sacrifice of praise must be the theological expression that acknowledges and receives God's desire to give Himself to us.

St Augustine wrote in "The City of God" (10:4-5):

Who would be so foolish as to suppose that the things offered to God are needed by Him for some uses of His own? Divine Scripture in many places explodes this idea. Not to be wearisome, suffice it to quote this brief saying from a Psalm, "I have not said to the Lord, Thou art my God, for Thou needest not my goodness" (Ps. 16:2).

We must believe, then, that God has no need, not only for cattle, or any other earthly and material thing, but even of man's righteousness. Whatever right worship is paid to God profits Him not, but man. ... All the divine ordinances, therefore, which we read concerning the sacrifices in the service of the tabernacle or the temple, we are to refer to the love of God and our neighbor. For "on these two commandments," as it is written, "depends all the law and the prophets."

When we first returned to limited public worship, many of us were in tears because our being returned into the presence of Divine Worship is God's work on our behalf. Once a person is called by God's grace into His majestic presence — called to be a child of Almighty God — worship takes on a new meaning as our faith apprehends the overflowing grace of God. What parent wouldn't want to hear words of love and admiration from their child?

It also happens when God is put in the right location in our relationship with Him. Giving His love and tender mercy is the reason He created us in the first place. What would God do for us?

Look to the cross and see what He has already done in His Son Jesus Christ. Then praise, adoration, honor and thanksgiving make sense.

## Open for business!

Many thanks to our Lutheran school leadership and teachers for their prayerful and diligent work to make Christian education available to families this fall.

Mid-South District schools opened for in-person classes in late July and throughout August, and identified platforms to be used if online instruction should be needed.

Please keep our schools and the families they serve in prayer as all continue to navigate challenges related to the coronavirus pandemic.

## CSL, CUW offering online courses

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL), is partnering with Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis. (CUW), for the first time to offer two online Continuing Education courses, one in the fall and one in the spring.

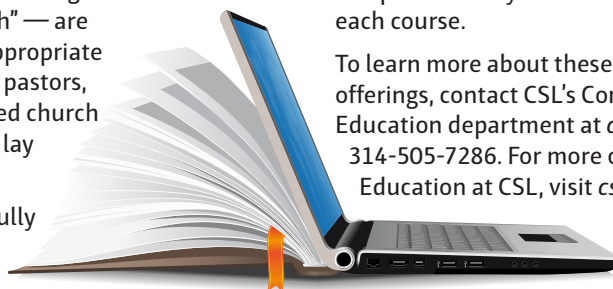
The courses — “Scripture in Counseling” and “Change Management in the Church” — are especially appropriate for ordained pastors, commissioned church workers and lay leaders.

Conducted fully online, each

course features six modules over six weeks, with video lectures, optional readings, recommended assignments and peer discussion activities.

The opening and closing sessions will be held live online and will be recorded for later viewing. All other sessions can be completed at any time during the run of each course.

To learn more about these education offerings, contact CSL’s Continuing Education department at [ce@csl.edu](mailto:ce@csl.edu) or 314-505-7286. For more on Continuing Education at CSL, visit [csl.edu/resources/continuing-education](http://csl.edu/resources/continuing-education).



## FPU offers rebates!

The Mid-South District is pleased to continue in partnership with our congregations to bring Financial Peace University (FPU) to their members and guests through a special rebate program.

For those congregations that offer FPU between now and the end of 2020, the Mid-South District will offer a rebate of the \$93 it costs for individuals to complete the nine-week program.

The rebate program is on a first come, first served basis until budgeted funds have been exhausted.



All materials must be purchased through the Mid-South District prior to the start of any classes.

Please contact Angela Fowler at [afowler@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:afowler@mid-southlcms.com) if your ministry is interested in hosting this class for your congregation.

## Congregation mission commitment receipts

as of June 30, 2020 (6 months)



Anticipated amount (50% of budget)	\$769,485
Actual receipts	\$728,989
Over (under) anticipated amount	(\$40,496)

### Use of mission commitment receipts

Allocated to Synod for world missions	\$206,197
Allocated to Tanzania	\$12,500
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts)	\$510,292
Total receipts	\$728,989

### Mission commitment receipts comparison

Actual receipts as of June 30, 2020	\$728,989
Actual receipts as of June 30, 2019	\$771,909
Over (under) prior year receipts	(\$42,920)



## MID-SOUTH DISTRICT 2020 FALL PASTORS CONFERENCE

Oct. 19-21 • Hilton Hotel, Memphis

Register online now!

[mid-southlcms.org/2020-fall-pastors-conference](http://mid-southlcms.org/2020-fall-pastors-conference)



## THE WORD OF THE LORD GROWS



**By Rev. Robert Portier**  
Pastor, St. Paul, Sevierville, Tenn.

### ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

In my wife's hometown of Fussen, Germany, is evidence of this interesting little phrase. The 700-plus year-old town has a historic marker on one of its many beautiful walking trails that displays evidence of a Roman road that once passed on that location. By the time Christ came to redeem the world, Rome had built over 53,000 miles of roads around the empire, which promoted trade and communication throughout the entire Mediterranean and up into the British isles.

God's timing was perfect for Christ to come in a time when His Gospel could travel 53,000 miles of newly constructed roads to carry His light into a dark and dying world.

Let's look at some great examples of this early church growth.

### ANTIOCH

In America we have six places called Antioch. There are also six places called Antioch in Asia. However, of the 19 times Antioch is mentioned in Scripture, most are in Acts and most have to do with the work of Paul and Barnabas during the former's first missionary journey, starting what became one of



Pictured is a view of Antakya, Turkey, which stands partly on the ancient Antioch, an influential early center of Christianity.

the earliest and largest Christian communities in the early church.

This town, which today is called Antakya in southern Turkey on the Orontes River, with a population of a little over 200,000, was a major Roman crossroad connecting many peoples, roads, a river and the Mediterranean.

Antioch was a main center of early Christianity. The city had a large population of Jewish origin in a quarter called the Kerateion, attracting early missionaries. It

was evangelized, among others, by Peter himself, according to the tradition upon which the Antiochene patriarchate still rests its claim for primacy. Converts here were the first to be called Christians.

Large 2,000 years ago, with a population estimated by Chrysostom to be about 100,000 people between 252 and 300 A.D., 10 assemblies of the church were held at Antioch and it became the seat of one of the four original patriarchates, along with Jerusalem, Alexandria and Rome.

The city's slow growth over the last 2,000 years is because it sat on the border between Christianity and Islam for many centuries, not to mention being in and out of the hands of Crusaders. However, because of its rich history, it is also a treasure trove of archaeological

evidence which affirms its place in the history of the early Christian church.

### PHILIPPI

Located on the Roman road Via Egnatia, this is the place where the Gospel was first preached on the European continent. This was also a prominent seat of early Christianity, where today you can still see ancient ruins of the Egnatian way, the Roman Forum, even possible locations of Paul's imprisonment, and the place where Paul met Lydia, who was one of the first converts to the Gospel he was preaching.

### THESSALONICA

If you continue another 115 miles southeast on the major corridor of Via Egnatia, you will come to Solonika, the second largest city in Greece. Much of ancient Thessalonica lies beneath this modern city. However, the ruins of a number of early church buildings and other Roman and Christian artifacts affirm this as the same place from which Paul was expelled for preaching the Gospel, and it is the same location to which he sent letters that are now part of God's Holy Word.

### THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea are not fictitious places dreamed up by John. They are real places, four of which have been extensively excavated. These are now all modern towns or cities with names like Anatolia, Izmir, Akisar, Sart and Alasehir, while the centers of Pergamum and Laodicea are not covered by modern towns. These churches also show that there is nothing new under the sun.

We see the same problems these early congregations faced 2,000 years ago — false apostles, false prophets, false teaching, having no fruits of faith and being worldly, spiritually poor and blind to the needs of those around them. Sounds sadly like many groups that call themselves the church today!

This article originally appeared as a post on Pastor Portier's blog, *Smoky Mountain Bible Institute*, in 2010. His archive is located at [splctn.com/blog-archive](http://splctn.com/blog-archive).



# TREASURES FOR SALE!

## *Messiah helping fund audio Bibles for military*

For the past four years the mission project of the Messiah Lutheran Church, Memphis, congregation has been organizing quarterly rummage sales to support the Military BibleStick project of Faith Comes by Hearing, which specializes in recording and providing God's Word in audio for those who cannot read or access a printed Bible in their language.

The next scheduled sale is from 8 a.m. to noon, on Saturday, Sept. 19. Messiah is located at 3743 Austin Peay Highway.

The "sticks" are MP3 players with the New Testament and Psalms recorded on them. They are distributed by military and VA Chaplains.

In each of those four years of the rummage sale, \$10,000 has been raised and matching funds have been found to give \$80,000 to the project. Sales this year are on track for another \$10,000.

The women of Messiah's LWML have been spearheading the rummage sale from day one with many countless hours and days of sorting, cleaning and pricing.

Thrivent Financial Action Team funds have paid for all of the needs for the rummage sale, allowing all of the proceeds to be given to the BibleStick project. All of the "goodies" pictured (and more besides) have been donated by local auction houses and hauled to the site by helpful husbands.

Thanks to George Allen, Mid-South District LWML *League Letter* editor for sharing this story. Allen counts himself as one of the "girls" — being awarded the lofty title of "Hayboy and Gofer."



# The Mid-South District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Ordained ministers celebrating anniversaries in 2020



### 65 Years

**Rev. Roy Jacob** (em)  
Hot Springs, Ark.

### 60 Years

**Rev. Arthur Avery** (em)  
Harrogate, Tenn.

**Rev. Albert Eichelberger** (em)  
Knoxville, Tenn.

**Rev. Clarence Helmich** (em)  
Oviedo, Fla.

**Rev. Frank Zirbel** (em)  
Harrison, Ark.

### 55 Years

**Rev. David Callies** (em)  
Brentwood, Tenn.

**Rev. Larry Marhenke** (em)  
Hot Springs Village, Ark.

**Rev. Donald Neiswender** (em)  
Paducah, Ky.

**Rev. Gilbert Pingel** (em)  
Chattanooga, Tenn.

### 50 Years

**Rev. Linsey Dettmer** (em)  
Sevierville, Tenn.

**Rev. John Freitag** (em)  
Rogersville, Tenn.

**Rev. Roger Reckling** (em)  
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

**Rev. Kenneth Taglauer** (em)  
Grace, Mountain View, Ark.

### 45 Years

**Rev. Darrell Kobs** (em)  
Russellville, Ark.

### 40 Years

**Rev. Dean Clausing** (em)  
Benton, Ark.

**Rev. Larry Peters**  
Grace, Clarksville, Tenn.

### 35 Years

**Rev. Robert Benke**  
Faith, Hot Springs Village, Ark.

**Rev. Jonathan Beyer**  
First, Hot Springs, Ark.

**Rev. John Treude**  
Our Redeemer, Fort Smith, Ark.

### 30 Years

**Rev. James Burns** (em)  
First, Benton, Ark.

### 15 Years

**Rev. Greg Bearss**  
LakePointe, Hot Springs, Ark.

**Rev. Joel Krogen**  
Hope, Batesville, Ark., and  
Zion Evangelical, Waldenburg, Ark.

**Rev. David Schmidt**  
Faith, Bentonville, Ark.

### 10 Years

**Rev. Michael Croom**  
Trinity, Memphis, Tenn.

**Rev. David Witte**  
Grace, Little Rock, Ark.



### 5 Years

**Rev. Eric Longman**  
Holy Trinity, Rogers, Ark.

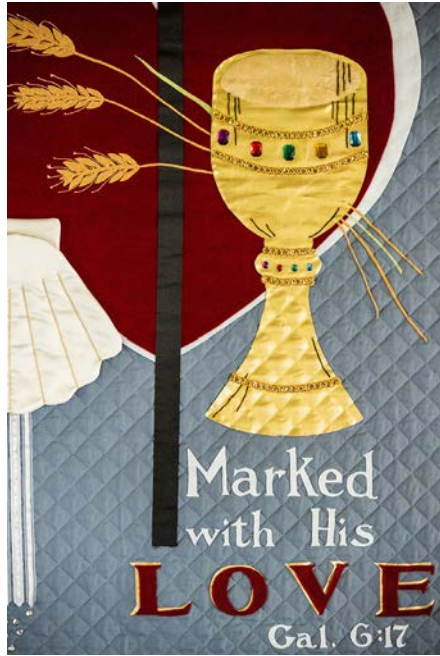
**Rev. Mark Tooley**  
Peace, Conway, Ark.

**Rev. Daniel Ulrich**  
Grace, Clarksville, Tenn.



*Well done,  
good and  
faithful  
servants!*





## TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORIOUS GRACE, WITH WHICH HE HAS BLESSED US IN THE BELOVED

Congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have a rich heritage of visual art depicting God's plan in Jesus Christ for the salvation of His people.

At [lcms.org](https://lcms.org), there is a searchable church art gallery with photographs of many of these treasures. A

few are highlighted here. To see more, go to [lcms.org](https://lcms.org) and click on the thumbnail below "Photos."

These images are offered in service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We encourage our congregations and schools to use them as they proclaim God's love in Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace.



PHOTOS LCMS/  
ERIK M. LUNSFORD





### Blessings in Little Rock

Rev. Kent Schaaf was installed as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Little Rock, Ark., on July 19. Pastor Schaaf was called by Grace following the retirement of its long-term pastor, Rev. Jim Walter. Clergy participating in the service were, from left (seated) Revs. Michael Schleider, Dr. Roger Paavola, Kent Schaaf, John Mathis, Dr. Leroy Leach; (standing) Jon Beyer, David Vandercook, Jim Walter, Tom Bartzsch, Dan Hauser, Emil Woerner, John Gierke and Shawn Found.



**George and Janet Allen celebrated their 65th year** of togetherness, sharing a German chocolate cake with cherries with their friends at Messiah, Memphis. Both stay active with their congregation as well as their local and district LWML, in which George also serves as editor of *League Letter*.



### November issue deadline is Sept. 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:

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