



# MID-SOUTH LUTHERAN



about God. Katy wasn't impressed, but lectured him right back: "And if God isn't dead, what right do *you* have, His servant, a Christian man, to be depressed and downcast?"

She was right. No one who believes with their whole heart has the right to be downcast and depressed, yet it happens all the time. If anyone slips into despair, they're living as though God *was* dead — unable to hear our prayers and respond to our needs even without our asking.

As long as God is alive, we need not despair. The same living God who brought us to this day is the same God who loves us and cares for us in ways we can't even imagine.

But like Luther, St. Paul, St. Francis, St. Ambrose, Moses and many others, we can all sometimes get down. Like Peter, who sank into the sea, we forget to keep our eyes on Jesus and sink into the stormy sea of depression and despair.

Do we not recall that Jesus Christ died for our human race and this world? He lives at the right hand of God interceding for us! We can't be regarded as hopeless.

Through faith, we're reminded of what Jesus Christ has done for us and for what purpose God sent Him into this world:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." JOHN 3:16

There's a church marquee I passed by on one of my drives. It said, "God will be faithful if we only trust in Him."



See MESSAGE, Page 2

## FAITH DEFEATS DESPAIR



Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola  
District President

When we think of Martin Luther, we're reminded of a fiercely dedicated man who fought for truth and life with vigor.

During his lifetime, Luther had been struck by lightning, thrown into prison, lived under house arrest, endured numerous attempts on his life, lost some of his children to diseases and suffered from serious heart conditions.

Luther was relentlessly determined to stand up to every adversity and put the brightest outlook on everything. But on one occasion, Luther was depressed that things were going badly and looking grim. He stayed up most of the night sulking.

As he sat through the wee hours of the morning, he looked up and saw his wife, Katy, standing in the doorway. She had a look of despair on her face, too.

"What's wrong?" Luther asked her.

"Haven't you heard the terrible news?," she asked. "God is dead!"

Luther scolded her for saying such a terrible thing

HAVE AN INNOVATIVE MINISTRY PLAN?

## Apply for a GROW Grant!

The Mid-South District encourages innovative and creative new ministry initiatives of its congregations and schools through the GROW Grants program.

What is a GROW Grant? It is a financial contribution from the Mid-South District to support an innovative ministry program or initiative to reach new hearts with the Gospel. GROW Grants are for programs that emphasize the **Gospel Reaching Our World** so that knowledge of God's love, grace and mercy may grow.

Examples of such programs and initiatives include new ethnic ministries, outreach to college students, a community food pantry or clothing closet, outreach to the homeless, or any ongoing program that provides opportunities for Gospel-sharing with the community at large. A GROW Grant is a one-time financial outlay of up to \$15,000 for a ministry or program that will be ongoing and self-sustaining after its initial launch phase.

More information about this exciting new program and an application are available at [mid-southlcms.org/grow-grants](http://mid-southlcms.org/grow-grants). Please take a moment to learn about this important resource, and consider how your congregation or school may benefit.

If you have questions, please contact Rev. William Zwick, district mission executive, at [wzwick@mid-southlcms.com](mailto:wzwick@mid-southlcms.com).

## MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

But God is faithful, even in the times when we didn't trust in Him. It doesn't depend on us. It is solely based on His unending and unchanging faithfulness toward us. And as He is faithful, He also cares for us. We should trust in Him and His faithfulness.

If we worry — as we often do — we show signs that we no longer fully trust Him. It's like taking God's promise that He will always care for us, along with all the evidence of how He has cared for us to this day, and then casting doubt on Him: "That promise is just not good enough for my troubles today."

But Holy Scripture reminds us that God is faithful and just. He does forgive us our sins and we can always depend on His welcoming grace. Even the children of Israel grumbled when facing a wilderness with no food or shelter. They were actually willing to give up their freedom in exchange for their return to the food they ate as slaves. They worried God would forget them, even though He showed that He is faithful.

God didn't forget. He didn't abandon the harshest of grumblers, the most chronic of complainers or the most rebellious of scoffers. He preserved them all! Without fail, for 40 years — over 15,000 times — God faithfully supplied enough food to feed millions of Israelites. He gave them water from a solid rock, and He gave them victory over every enemy in leading them to the Promised Land.

Where did Moses get the strength to withstand the millions of whiners and complainers in the nation of Israel? Where did the prophets get their strength to stand up against death threats rather than deny their God? Where did the apostles get their strength to withstand the agony of torture, or Martin Luther to stand on the truth of Scripture alone? Where do any of the saints go for help to withstand persecution and scorn, for that matter?

Through faith, confession and prayer, the strong men of God realize that He is always faithful beyond the tempo-



LCMS/Erik M. Lumsford

ral threats. God assures us that fears, doubts and depression are driven away by the power of His Word and through the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

Without God, we have a right to be depressed and in fear. But the power of God's children is not in our own abilities. Through faith, we have the assurance of God's grace to withstand the powers of this sin-filled world, the fiery darts of Satan and our own fragile human flesh.

The presence of God and the assurance that we have — which comes from the sacred cross of Jesus Christ — lift us from hopelessness and despair to the joy of the forgiveness of our sins and victory unto life everlasting.

It isn't an absence of faith that lets us slip into worry, doubt and depression; it's the constant barrage of those unseen attacks from the world, Satan and our own flesh that try to erode away our gifts of faith and send us into despair. Mighty men of God suffered with the same doubts and fears, but through faith they drew on the strength that is beyond their understanding, the strength that comes from God's Word to claim a miraculous victory over all things.

Our faithful God pulls us from the depths of despair and lets us stand tall in the face of wrongs; to give power in the midst of what seems impossible, and to shine as a reflection of His bright light in a dark and depressed world — a world that needs to know that God is *not* dead. He is alive and always near to serve us continuously each day. He will lead us from the fears that would enslave us, and He will bring us to His eternal Promised Land, through the same Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our ever-living Redeemer.

Preparing to SHARE the Gospel



# The truth about Jesus

**By Bennett Rolan**  
 Editorial Manager, Bible Study Fellowship  
*(This article is continued from Page 5 of the August issue.)*

**Where to start**  
 Think about someone in your own life who desperately needs the Gospel, and how you might turn an everyday conversation toward spiritual matters.

Begin with four simple truths:  
**► The truth about God**  
 God is our wise, holy, gracious, merciful, loving, eternal Creator. As the One who set the stars in place and determined the path of the earth, God knows everything and everyone intimately. He crafted a wonderful world and created us to enjoy it forever with Him (GEN. 1:1, 27; PS. 139:7-12).

We owe our very existence to Him, and we were made to love Him, worship Him, serve Him and live for His glory (ACTS 17:25-27; ROM. 11:36). We are absolutely dependent upon Him, and He has absolute claim over us, His creation.

Reflect on the truth you know about God. How would you personally explain God and His attributes to a friend or family member?

**► The truth about sin**  
 Like every human before us, we have rebelled against our Creator and His authority. Doubting God’s goodness, we reject His commands and hurt people around us by demanding our own way (ROM. 3:10-12).

Our selfish ambitions, moments of pride, failure to forgive and desperate

lies all separate us from our perfect, holy God (1S. 59:1-2).

We see the evidence of sin in the world around us. We are all guilty because we consistently fall short of God’s standards (ROM. 3:23). We stand ashamed in the depth of our sin — the bad things we do and the good things we fail to do (ROM. 7:18). But the harder we try to dig ourselves out, the deeper we sink (PS. 38:4). The ultimate consequence of our sin is death and eternal separation from God (ROM. 6:23). We need to be made right with Him (ROM. 1:18).

Reflect on your own experience with sin. What consequences do you regret that you would like to help others avoid?

**► The truth about Jesus**  
 Caught in the cycle of guilt, shame and condemnation, we stand helpless and alone. That’s the bad news. But the good news is that God, who is faithful, just, merciful and all-knowing offers us the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

**His Incarnation:** God the Father sent God the Son, holy and perfect, into this fallen world. Jesus reveals God’s nature and lived a life of complete obedience to God. (JOHN 1:14; COL. 1:19).

**His Death:** Demonstrating God’s grace and love, Jesus willingly died on the cross in our place to bear the rightful punishment our sins deserved and give us right standing with God (JOHN 1:29; ROM. 5:8).

**His Resurrection:** Three days later, Jesus rose to life, proving He had conquered sin and death forever (ACTS 2:24).

**His Exaltation:** Jesus then ascended into

Heaven, where He rules as King and Lord of all (EPH. 1:20-21).

Through Jesus’ death on the cross, the penalty for our sin was paid. Through His resurrection, we find new life. Without the weight of sin, we find freedom. And without the fear of death, we look forward to eternal life in Heaven with the God who loves us deeply. Jesus freely gives His righteousness when we receive Him as our Savior and acknowledge Him as our Lord (HEB. 7:25).

Reflect on who Jesus is and what He has done. Practice writing and speaking about His incarnation, death, resurrection and exaltation in your own words.

The fourth truth — about our response — and how to share these truths will be explained next month in the third and final part of this article.

**Congregation mission commitment receipts**  
 as of June 30, 2022 (6 months)

Anticipated amount (50% of budget) .....	\$758,945
Actual receipts .....	\$722,329
Over (under) anticipated amount .....	(\$36,616)

**Use of mission commitment receipts**

Allocated to Synod for world missions .....	\$204,199
Allocated to Tanzania .....	\$12,500
Retained for district ministry/mission support (70% of receipts) .....	\$505,630
Total receipts .....	\$722,329

**Mission commitment receipts comparison**

Actual receipts as of June 30, 2022 .....	\$722,329
Actual receipts as of June 30, 2021 .....	\$735,660
Over (under) prior year receipts .....	(\$13,331)

LWML Sunday 2022

# ‘For Us and With Us’

By Lauren Drittler

LWML Mid-South District  
Media and Marketing Chairman

If God is for us, who can be against us? ROM. 8:31

Some days it may feel like the world is against us, but as we read on, we learn this is not the case. In Rom. 8:38-39, Paul writes:

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We just need to remember that God loves us, and that love is so powerful that nothing can take it away. This is such a powerful reminder of how our heavenly Father cares for us. We need to remember to share this Good News with others!

The first Sunday in October is when we

traditionally celebrate LWML Sunday, but it can be celebrated at any time. For LWML Sunday 2022, we focus on the passages from Paul’s letter to the Romans.

“For Us and With Us” was written by Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson. Materials should have been ordered by Sept. 1, but there is so much more available for download at [lwml.org/lwml-sunday](http://lwml.org/lwml-sunday), including the banner design, bulletin covers and sermon notes for the pastor.

### Mission grant news

We are very blessed that four mission grants have already been paid through the giving of our mites:

- ▶ **The Ascension Lutheran-Edison School partnership:** To provide vinyl wraps for playground fencing and fire alarm upgrades.
- ▶ **Trinity HOPE:** To provide noon meals to malnourished children in Haiti while sharing the Gospel.
- ▶ **Lutheran Bible Translators:** To provide



Trinity HOPE, which provides meals for school children in Haiti, has received a mission grant from LWML Mid-South District.

translation of God’s Word to the people of Cameroon, West Africa.

- ▶ **Eagle Rock Camp:** To install a sidewalk connecting the lodge to the dining facility.

Learn more at [midsouthlwml.org](http://midsouthlwml.org); click the “Missions” tab and select “Mission Grants” from the drop-down menu.

## GOOD NEWS for Lutheran schools!

In *Carson v. Makin*, the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) ruled on June 21 that the state of Maine could not exclude families who send their children to religious schools from its state-funded tuition reimbursement program. This is good news for our schools!

Here is the important language:

Maine’s “nonsectarian” requirement for its otherwise generally available tuition assistance payments violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment. Regardless of how the benefit and restriction are described, the program operates to identify and exclude otherwise eligible schools on the basis of their religious exercise. (Carson, pg. 18)



Rev. William Zwick  
Missions and Ministry Executive

The reasoning behind the decision does not surprise me, and it was based largely on the case involving Trinity Lutheran School, Columbia, Mo, in 2017. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the state of Missouri’s refusal to reimburse Trinity for playground safety enhancements was unconstitutional.

I expect *Carson* to have a profound and positive impact on our district schools. Already in Tennessee, there is a pilot choice program in Shelby County (Memphis) and Davidson County (Nashville), which recently were cleared to continue.

The July SCOTUS decision solidifies the Tennessee program. I believe that the state is planning to expend the program. Kentucky just passed and started implementing a program for educational choice funding through a scholarship.

There is a lot going on in education funding that could impact our churches and schools. I would not be surprised if there is a school choice bill that will come up in the future in Arkansas.

Most of the educational-choice programs are for low-income families, which may be needed for some of our LCMS families. We will continue to keep our eyes on vouchers, tax credits and other sources of tuition assistance for our potential students.

# ORDINATIONS/INSTALLATIONS

**Rev. Gerald Heinecke was installed as pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Batesville, and Zion Lutheran Church, Waldenburg, Ark., on June 12.** From left, Revs. Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; Gerald Heinecke; Brad Heinecke, Shepherd of the Hills, Horsehoe Bend, and Gerald's father; Brian Pummill, Peace, Cherokee Village; (back row) David Vandercook, Trinity, North Little Rock, and Shepherd of Peace, Maumelle; Paul Leigeber, Faith, Union City, Tenn.; Michael Diener, Grace, Holts Summit, Mo.; and Joshua Leigeber and Andrew Lehman, All Saints, Jonesboro .



**Rev. Randall Lewis was ordained and installed as pastor of Community of Faith, Little Rock, on June 19.** Pastor Lewis, who was colloquized into the LCMS pastoral ministry, has served Community of Faith the past 16 years as deacon. From left, Revs. Kent Schaaf, Grace, Little Rock; Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; Emil Woerner, Friends in Christ, Bryant; Randall Lewis; Amos Gray, High Impact Ministries, Hot Springs; Dr. Roosevelt Gray, LCMS Black Ministry director; and Kevin Conger, Hope, Jacksonville.



**Rev. Brent Berg was ordained at Faith, Tullahoma, Tenn., on June 25.** Faith is Pastor Berg's home congregation, and he was installed as pastor of Trinity, Auburn, Neb., on July 17. He, along with several other seminary and university students, was supported by tuition assistance funds from the Mid-South District. From left, Revs. Brian Nowak, St. John, Baldwin, Ill.; Dr. Roger Paavola, district president; Rev. Curt Hoover, Faith, Thompson Station; Brent Berg; Dr. Eric Phillips, Concordia, Nashville; David McMinn, Shepherd of the Hills, McMinnville; and Marty Nutter, Faith, Tullahoma.





## Family grows at Grace

On April 24, Grace, Knoxville, welcomed new members who were introduced to the congregation in each of three services by Rev. Rich Elseroad, Grace senior pastor.



## The pianist and the Holy Spirit

F.B. Meyer tells the following story about what it means when the Holy Spirit is at work in and through you:

When I was staying in a hotel in Norway, a little girl was among the families staying as guests. She was obviously only a beginner in playing the piano. But she insisted upon practicing in the drawing room whenever she chose. She played with one finger and one note, usually discordant. Everyone bolted for open air whenever they saw her coming.

It happened that one of the finest musicians in Norway was also a guest. Instead of vanishing with the others, he took a stool and sat beside the child. For every note she struck, he struck the most exquisite chord of music, introducing a most lovely accompaniment. As the notes floated outside, the people streamed back to enjoy the music.

When the child made a more terrible mistake than usual, he improvised with a still finer outburst of music. After 20 minutes, he took the child by the hand and led her around the

company introducing her as “the young lady to whom you are indebted for the music this afternoon.”

The child knew well enough that she had not done it, but everyone paid their compliments.

Meyer then explains what this story means to him: The truth this story illustrates has deeply touched my heart through the years. I have been as that child at the piano of God’s truth. I have tried my level best to make music with my one finger. Again and again and again I have come away feeling that I am a terrible failure and play nothing but discord.

But oh, I have also found the Holy Spirit sitting by my side. For every note of discord I have made, he has struck a nobler note.

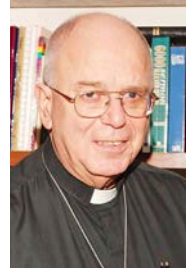
Whatever you try to do for the Lord, small or great, and feel you are only making mistakes and failures and false notes, believe that the blessed Holy Spirit is by your side turning your discords into the Hallelujah Chorus!

*From “The Life-Changing Power of the Holy Spirit” by Leona Frances Choy. Shared by the Board of Evangelism, First, Little Rock.*



Faith Lutheran Church, Fairfield Bay, Ark., will celebrate its 50th anniversary on Oct. 9.

Rev. Arthur Baisch, former Faith pastor, will preach for the 11 a.m. service and a potluck dinner will follow at Faith (310 Snead Drive). Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, Mid-South District president, will be the preacher at the 2 p.m. anniversary service.



**Rev. Arthur Baisch**

## Rejoice with St. Paul!

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wartburg, Tenn., joins the LCMS in celebrating its 175th anniversary this year by celebrating its own 175th anniversary, and invites all pastors, teachers and laity to the weekend homecoming celebration, to be held Oct. 1-2.

The keynote speaker for the Saturday (Oct. 1) event will be Rev. Will Weedon, host of *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever* Bible study podcast ([thewordendures.org](http://thewordendures.org)) and former director of LCMS worship.

St. Paul, Wartburg, is the oldest congregation in the Mid-South District and is one of the historic church planters for many of our congregations in East Tennessee. The congregation looks forward to celebrating with their district brothers and sisters in Christ.

Visit [splcwartburg.org](http://splcwartburg.org) for more information.



**Rev. Will Weedon**



This 175th anniversary logo for St. Paul, Wartburg, Tenn., was designed by Dr. Kristina Phillips, wife of Rev. Dr. Eric Phillips, pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church, Nashville.



## Trinity HOPE

### Blessings in a trying time

Dear members of the Mid-South District,

When we received pictures of students in Christian schools in Haiti, we noticed the quirky faces and broad smiles that always mark the end of a school year. For 186 school days, you have made sure the students you sponsor have had a noon meal to fill their tummy, and your compassion shines like a light from their smiles. Here at Trinity HOPE, we want to send a heartfelt thank you for your generosity.

It seems that every year we say, “This has been a trying time for our friends in Haiti.” However, that has never been more true than it is right at this moment. Just before school started last year, we learned of the assassination of the Haitian president, which was quickly followed by the news that many of our schools and staff were impacted by an earthquake and tropical storms.

As they began to recover from these devastating situations, the political climate took a turn for the worse and gangs are now controlling major cities and thoroughfares. Thus far, this has not majorly impacted the day-to-day work of Trinity HOPE, but it is



something we continue to watch closely to ensure the safety of all of our staff and students.

It has been such a blessing that our infrastructure is comprised of native Haitians, who are the “boots on the ground.” Through all of this, God continues to use these men and women to successfully manage the feeding programs in the schools and share the love of Christ with the children. They often send us videos of children praying, singing to Jesus and thanking God for the food they receive.

In dark times, those who do not know Christ struggle to find hope. However, the meals you send to your school each day are a gift of mercy and love that opens their ears to the Gospel and leads them on the path to true HOPE through Christ Jesus. Never has your gift mattered more than it does right now. Thank you.

**Candace Cook**  
Operations Manager, Trinity HOPE

## LIME



### Support for students IN MADAGASCAR

Lutheran Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship (LIME) deeply thanks the LCMS Mid-South District for the continuous and faithful support for our ministry through education. We at LIME are happy to share with you, our supporters, photos of students who have successfully passed the oral defense of their theses as part of the requirements to obtain the a licentiate degree. There were a total of 15 students, including girls and boys of different tribes, such as Merina and Betsileo of the highlands, Betsimisaraka and Antesaka of the eastern region, and Antanosy and Antandroy of the south and north.

We take this occasion to thank the LCMS Mid-South District, under the leadership of its president, Rev. Dr. Roger Paavola, for this wonderful outcome of our partnership. You have opened a horizon of future for these young Malagasy students. Now they have a better chance to find a job by obtaining this diploma. Thank you very, very much.

Thanks to Jesus Christ, the Good Teacher, for your steady and faithful support.

**Rev. Randrianasolo Joseph** • LIME Director

## Share your news with us!

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

**Deadline for the November issue is Sept. 15.**

