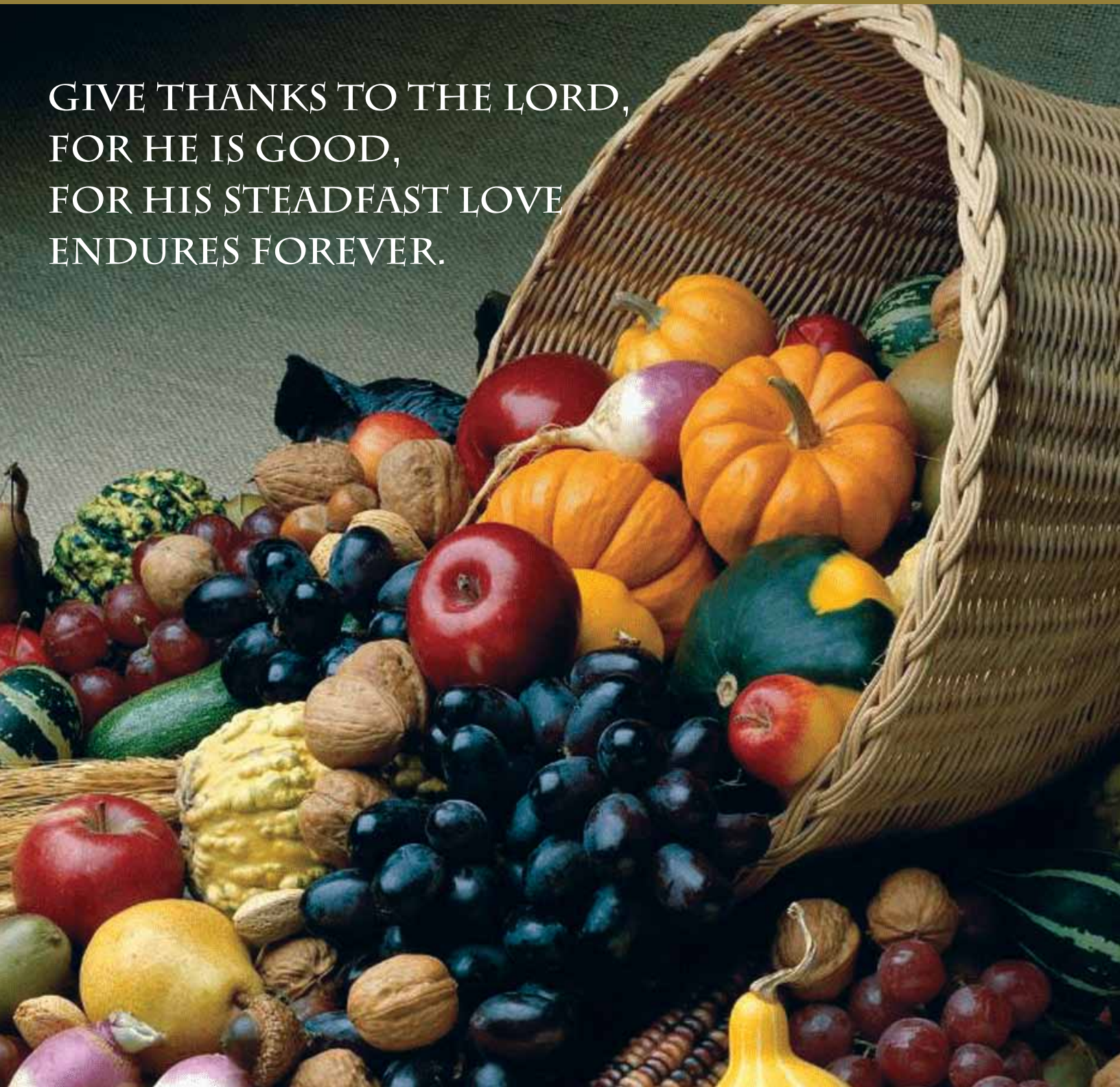


LUTHERAN LIFE

**The Newsmagazine of the
Florida-Georgia District
of The Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod**

2012 | Volume 5

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD,
FOR HE IS GOOD,
FOR HIS STEADFAST LOVE
ENDURES FOREVER.





Every congregation is a church in mission, and every member is a missionary; with all of us working together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, empowered by His Gospel to share His love. **Lutheran LIFE** is the official communications instrument of the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. **Lutheran LIFE** is designed to inform LCMS church and school members of the activities, the personalities and resources offered by the Synod and the District. **Lutheran LIFE** may also provide a forum for Lutherans to express their views and ideas on a wide range of topics. We welcome and encourage your letters and editorials emphasizing that the views and opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by Synod or District personnel or by the editors, churchworkers or personnel of the Synod's or District's congregations or schools. **Lutheran LIFE** is published bimonthly. Editorials, news items and photos are encouraged. Please send scanned photos of approximately 300 DPI as a .jpg attachment rather than embedded in your emails. Or mail your photo print in a good quality resolution to our address below. Advertising is welcome and encouraged; rates and information are available from **Lutheran LIFE's** office. Changes of address including e-mail changes, additions or deletions should be directed to our production office.

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Congregational Services, Dave Weidner

DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

CALLING CONGREGATIONS

Trinity/Albany, GASole Pastor
St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL DCE
Trinity/Delray Beach, FLAssociate Pastor
Estero Mission Estero FL Sole Pastor
Trinity/Fort Pierce, FLSole Pastor
Zion/Fort Myer, FLSenior Pastor
King of Kings/Jasper, GASole Pastor
Oak Road/Lilburn, GASole Pastor
Marco/Marco Island, FL DCE
LC of the Redeemer/Melbourne, FL.....Sole Pastor
Good Shepherd/Sarasota, FL.....Principal
Living Water/Sanford, FL.....Sole Pastor
Trinity/Summerfield, FLAssociate Pastor
St. Mark/Tucker, GASole Pastor
LC of the Redeemer/Vero Beach, FLSole Pastor

TRANSFERRED TO OTHER DISTRICTS

7/19/12 | Rev. Roland Vega, O | Kansas
7/18/12 | Sarah Bakkelund, C | Northern Illinois
7/30/12 | Jeffrey Wegner, C | Southeastern
7/20/12 | Rev. Michael Heidle, O | Central Illinois
8/17/12 | Pamela Bailey, C | SELC
9/04/12 | Rev. Dr. James Eggert, O | Michigan
9/07/12 | Kimberly Link, C | South Wisconsin
9/19/12 | Rev. Richard Markworth, O | South Wisconsin
9/13/12 | Faith J. Rattei, C | Minnesota North
10/17/12 | Rev. Karl K. Schmidt, O | Southeastern
10/17/12 | Rev. Phillips Larsen, O | Pacific-Southwest

TRANSFERRED FROM OTHER DISTRICTS

7/03/12 | Rev. Robert C. Reinhardt, O | Indiana
7/08/12 | Thomas J. Eggebrecht, O | S. Wisconsin
7/01/12 | Rev. Andrew Schermbeck, O | N. Illinois
7/30/12 | Janice Lynn Schrader, C | Southeastern
7/19/12 | Rev. (Chp) Scott Kirchoff, O | Indiana
7/01/12 | Gordon F. Stoneburner, C | Texas
7/01/12 | Audrey A Stoneburner, C | Texas
7/27/12 | Nickolas A. Utech, C | Iowa East
8/21/12 | Kristin A. Becker, C | Missouri
7/01/12 | Jeremy Becker, C | Missouri
6/30/12 | Dr. Kristen Nelson-McKenzie, C | Michigan
9/01/12 | Phyllis N Simela, C | Southern
9/08/12 | Rev. Alston S. Kirk, O | Texas

ORDAINED/COMMISSIONED MINISTER INITIAL ASSIGNMENTS

8/19/12 | Rev. Joel P. Meyer
Concordia Seminary - St. Louis to
Pastor at Holy Trinity/Kingsland
8/12/12 | Tyler D. Beltz Concordia Nebraska to
Teacher at Grace/Winter Haven
8/12/12 | Ryan M. Dauss Concordia Nebraska to
Teacher at Grace/Winter Haven
9/09/12 | Micah Korb Concordia Nebraska to
Teacher at Grace/Winter Haven

ORDAINED/COMMISSIONED MINISTER INSTALLATIONS

7/08/12 | Rev Thomas J. Eggebrecht, Sr. Pastor,
Ascension/Casselberry
7/03/12 | Rev. Robert C. Reinhardt, IIM Pastor,
Faith/Sebring

7/15/12 | Rev. Andrew D. Schermbeck, Pastor,
Holy Trinity/Tampa
8/12/12 | Rev. Mark Jurkowski, Pastor,
St. John/Ocala
8/12/12 | Carisa D. Meier, Teacher,
Our Savior/Plantation
8/19/12 | Janice Lynn Schrader, Teacher,
Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale
7/22/12 | Gordon F. Stoneburner, Principal,
Gloria-Dei/Davie
8/12/12 | Angie Rush, Teacher,
Faith/Marietta
8/12/12 | Emily Toms, Teacher,
Faith/Marietta
8/19/12 | Larry Ueltzen, Teacher,
Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale
8/12/12 | Ellen Mattheus, EC Director,
Grace/Winter Haven
8/19/12 | Dorothy Costley, Teacher,
Redeemer/Stuart
8/19/12 | Nicholas Utech, Teacher,
Redeemer/Stuart
8/19/12 | Jeremy Becker DCE,
St. Paul/Weston
8/19/12 | Dr. Kristen Nelson-McKenzie, Principal,
Grace/Jacksonville
8/26/12 | Patrick H. Leupold, Principal,
Trinity/Holly Hill
9/09/12 | Rev. David Kehret, IIM Pastor,
Trinity/Toccoa
8/26/12 | Julia Malenke, Teacher,
Trinity/Orlando
7/01/12 | Rev. Bafel Deng, Missionary,
Peace/Decatur
9/23/12 | Rev. Alston S. Kirk, Sr. Pastor,
Prince of Peace/Orlando

EMERITUS

6/30/2012 Paulette Wagoner, Commissioned
9/5/2012Arlin A Arbeiter, Commissioned

CALLED TO GLORY

7/9/2012Rev. Dr. Walter Zeile
7/22/2012Rev. Adrian R Kelly
8/28/2012Rev. Karl Thiele

CHANGE OF STATUS WITHIN THE DISTRICT

7/09/12 | Rev. Richard Knapp, Ordained
from Active to Candidate
8/03/12 | Jared Juszcak, Commissioned
from Active to Candidate
6/30/12 | Elizabeth Faye Haney, Commissioned
from Active to Candidate
7/01/12 | Levana James, Commissioned
from Active to Non-candidate
9/05/12 | Faith Rattei, Commissioned
from Active to Candidate
8/31/12 | Amanda Ramiz Eden, Commissioned
from Active to Non-candidate
6/15/12 | Rev. Peter Grana, Ordained
from Active to Candidate
1/15/12 | Rev. Alec Pueschel, Ordained
from Active to Candidate

* Note: In district transfers above, C = Commissioned Minister; O = Ordained Minister

District Educators Recognized for Excellence, Service

Four Florida-Georgia teachers were honored with the Ben Eggers Award on September 27 during the 2012 Educators Conference breakfast:

Early Childhood: Nancy Dearborn, Peace Preschool-Okeechobee, FL;
Elementary: Barbara Dorlac, St. Paul School-Boca Raton, FL;
Middle/High School: Mark Abresch, St. Paul School-Peachtree City, GA;
Administrator: Jane Nicklas, Our Savior School-Plantation, FL.

Formerly known as the Teacher of the Year Award, the accolade in 1993 was renamed to honor Dr. Ben Eggers, the District Parish Services Executive from 1979-1986. In 2001 additional categories were added to recognize teachers at various grade levels as well as administrators.



Nancy Dearborn

A preschool and kindergarten teacher for 31 years, Dearborn has been at Peace-Okeechobee for the past decade. She teaches a four-year-old class.

Dearborn, who attended Gordon College, “had no idea we had nominated her for the award,” said Karen Smith, Peace Preschool Director. “She was surprised, astounded, excited – and humbled.”

Dearborn told her fellow educators that “every teacher who follows God’s calling to teach little children deserves this award.”

She and her husband, Ed, have four children. Each member of the family is involved in full-time ministry.



Barbara Dorlac

Florida-Georgia has been home to Dorlac since she graduated from Concordia-River Forest in 1970. She was at Prince of Peace-Hollywood until 1973 when she went to St. Paul-Boca Raton, where she teaches first grade. She plans to retire at the end of this year.

“I feel honored to receive this award,” she said. “It is extra special since I knew Ben Eggers.”

Dorlac has been active in church groups including Sunday School, VBS and LWML and has been a Bible study leader and a prayer warrior.

“A Bible verse that reflects my outlook on life is ‘In all things God works for good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose,’” she said. “I am blessed to have been able to plant seeds of God’s love and to watch them grow.”



Mark Abresch

Now a seventh-grade teacher at St. Paul-Peachtree City, Abresch began his career at Faith-Hialeah, where he taught for 11 years. He has been at St. Paul for 13 years and just completed his 30th year in Lutheran schools.

Abresch attended Concordia-Seward and received his Master’s in Science Education from Western Governors University.

“When I heard about the award – I was shocked,” he said. “But what an honor to be recognized for ‘basically doing what you’re supposed to be doing’ as a Christian educator.”

He and his wife, Kirsten, have a daughter and son-in-law and two granddaughters.



Jane Nicklas

Principal at Our Savior/Plantation, Florida since 2002, Nicklas added the role of Preschool Director in 2004.

Nicklas graduated from St. Louis University and earned her Master’s in Early Childhood Education from Towson University in Maryland. She and her husband, Our Savior Pastor Ed Nicklas, have two children and two grandchildren.

“My teaching career has followed the moves that come with him being a pastor,” Mrs. Nicklas said. “Before being an administrator I taught in Maryland, Virginia and Broward County schools, teaching every grade from kindergarten through eighth grade.

“I am honored to receive this award and am reminded of the scripture, ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths,’” she concluded. ■

Unchanging Truth in a Changing World



As we head into the busy fall season, it is so easy to get back into the routine of life that we fail to embrace the opportunities all around us. Change is good, and it's important that we learn to see things from a new perspective. That is the encouragement of our Synod.

Following the 2010 Synodical Convention, we were introduced to a churchwide emphasis focused on Witness, Mercy, Life Together — phrases chosen to illustrate how the church lives and works together to proclaim the Gospel and to provide for brothers and sisters in Christ in congregations, communities and throughout the world.

These emphases were chosen to assist us in keeping Christ at the center of our faith, leading us, sustaining us, keeping us focused on our mission. This is an unchanging truth that is truly exciting in its implications for how we “do” church in a post-church world. Consider how we might apply these emphases in our District and in your parish.

WITNESS

The first word in the emphasis is the Greek word μαρτυρία, which means “a witness,” transliterated as martyria, from which “martyr” comes, bespeaking of that depth of commitment and passion.

A witness testifies to the truth — instrumental in a court setting to determine the truth. Witnesses speak of something they know and have personally experienced. Synod points to 1 John 5:7-8 to represent this emphasis: “For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.” The testimony of multiple witnesses is powerful, especially when they point us to Jesus.

For me, perhaps an even more important verse to consider is from Acts 1, where Jesus declares, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Here Jesus reminds us that we are equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of engaging the world. We are witnesses, not by virtue of our desire, but through His grace, by virtue of His call on our lives.



In a post-church world it is critical that pastors and people are aware of the power of their witness (or lack thereof) in their community. We represent Jesus. Paul tells us we are Jesus’ ambassadors in the world. Even though the church has lost much credibility and influence in any given community, people are still watching and weighing everything it does and the actions of those who call themselves Christian. It amazes me how so much good done by the church in a given place can be jeopardized by the thoughtless actions of a few.

We are witnesses of Jesus according to Acts 1:8, testifying to the transformational power His death and resurrection have had on our lives. We need to continually

focus on this and live as witnesses in our homes, at our jobs, at school, while shopping or dining out.

MERCY

The New Testament has several words for mercy, including “charis” or grace. However, the word that the Synod has chosen to use is διακονία, meaning one who serves. What a wonderful choice, because while we can talk all we want about mercy, it is seen in what we do. Our example is Jesus. The Bible says, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) He came as a servant, and through the power of God’s Spirit working in us, we also are servants. We are servants called to exercise mercy for the sake of Jesus.

Exercising mercy isn’t optional. It is our responsibility — our ability to respond to all that Jesus has done in our lives. Certainly those opportunities are within the context of our congregations, but the needs go beyond this. Luther allegedly said that we are to be “little Christs” in our communities.

There are homeless, hungry, hurting people all around us. In many cases they have formed a negative opinion of the church, and often we’ve earned it. We cannot be everything to everyone, but there are things that we can all do, and our people will find greater joy and deeper commitment and broader passion as they exercise their faith by serving others.

This is what Jesus pointed to in the Upper Room when He washed the feet of the disciples. It’s interesting that in the context of the Lord’s Supper Jesus gives instructions to serve and then empowers them for service. So it is with us; when we gather at

the altar to receive Jesus in, with and under the bread and wine of communion, He empowers us as His servants even as He assures us of His forgiveness and love, and sends us into the world as beacons of His mercy. We read in Micah, “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Imagine the impact we might have on our world if we would simply become servants and love mercy. Recently I was at a Lutheran Services of America board meeting and then with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. What makes me so proud to associate with them is that they don’t worry about the theology or politics, but focus on providing acts of mercy to those who need it most. The world around us doesn’t care what we think. In fact, as John Maxwell has said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” We need to exercise mercy in our communities for the sake of Jesus. When we do, people will be asking about this Jesus we represent!

LIFE TOGETHER

The Greek word for the final emphasis is κοινωνία, meaning fellowship. Paul writes, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:9) I’m convinced that life is all about relationship.

I love the concept of Life Together — koinonia. As a child I used to go to a Lutheran camp in upstate New York called Koinonia, a wonderful place where we truly learned to live our life together. We would camp with our pastor and his family, and the families got to know

one another very well. We grew in friendship, but more importantly, we grew in our faith — it was part of life together — building relationship and learning and growing as a community in Christ.

Remember the “old days” when the church community was the community? When there seemed to be fewer distractions vying for our attention? Today there are so many things pulling us in so many different directions that we often sacrifice relationships in the wake.

The only way to build community is by investing our time and energy into relationships. If we want to live life together it means we not only learn, but also exercise, forgiveness. It means that we carry each other’s burdens. It means we put the best construction on everything and on all relationships. Koinonia doesn’t just happen. It takes some effort on our part. At times it’s hard work, but the result is life together that glorifies Jesus.

There are a multitude of contexts for this. Certainly it applies to parish life, as we work with God’s people, equipping, empowering and engaging them to connect people to Jesus. It serves in the context of each of the circuits, the regions and the District overall. Living together as brothers and sisters in Christ is a learning experience, a journey and an adventure. It comes with many risks as we make ourselves vulnerable, but as they say, the best fruit is out on a limb, so we go out on a limb to cultivate life together.

Interestingly enough, if you read between the lines with the disciples of Jesus, it becomes clear that they didn’t always see eye to eye on every issue. What unified them was Jesus and their desire to follow Him. The same is true for us. We may even go about it somewhat

differently from place to place, but the bottom line of a desire to honor Jesus is the same.

What makes us Lutheran isn’t our liturgy or even our politics. What makes us Lutheran are the solas of the Reformation — sola Scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, solus Christus. When we allow other things to get in the way we have to question how truly confessional we are. Being a member of the LCMS is a choice, especially today.

Certainly our theology has something to do with this, as we stand on the truth. We should be proud of our doctrine and our heritage. However, having good theology doesn’t build community.

The world outside our Lutheran circles doesn’t understand or even care about theology or heritage. It would be like arguing with someone dying of thirst as to which is more pure, Dasani or Evian. We deal first with the thirst and then the quality of which water is best. People need to be connected to Jesus, that’s most important. Then we create the opportunity, through relationship, to share our doctrine. Life together is about growing in Jesus and sharing our faith with one another.

“Witness, Mercy, and Life Together” — tremendous emphases for God’s Church. May we rise to the challenge in the Florida-Georgia District. There are opportunities to live these out all around us. I pray that God would equip, empower and engage us to connect people to Jesus! ■



Peace
Greg

Members of a Mission: Haiti team recently returned from a trip that Executive Director Helen Roenfeldt described as “by far my most difficult trip to Haiti, even harder than the trip three weeks after the [January 2010] earthquake, because this trip was not in response to a natural disaster, but addressed the poorest urban area in Gonaives.”

In an area ironically named Jubilee “reside the outcasts, the completely jobless, entirely uneducated, those without families or resources, widows — many young with children, or grandparents with grandchildren,” Roenfeldt continued.

“Less than 30% of the children go to school . . . so the situation perpetuates itself.

“There are no functional latrines or fresh clean water in this community of 3,000 - 4,000. There isn’t a blade of grass anywhere, just rocks and dust and the smell of raw sewage. The homes are about the size of a garden shed and shared by up to 12 people. They sit up or crush together to sleep, and often younger children sleep on laps.

“The structures that serve as homes are mostly unfinished, made with concrete block — many of which are broken — mud and sticks and rusty metal. Doors are made from pieces of cloth secured with string or rope.

“Only about half of the children under puberty had clothing and that little more than filthy rags.”

Joining Roenfeldt on the September trip were Dr. Nancy Swisher from Wisconsin; mother-daughter nurses Alice and Kat Layne from North Carolina; EMT John Rougeux of Eustis, FL; and Pharmacist Jesse Rasster-Theis from Nebraska.

Cheryl Masinelli of Davie, FL, and Amanda Fulbright, of Conover, NC, taught toothbrushing and distributed gift bags of soap, washcloths, toothpaste, toothbrushes, peanut butter crackers and a small toy. They partnered with in-country liaison Lophane Laurent to present three days of Bible School for 150 children. Pastor Tony Masinelli of Gloria Dei-Davie taught at the Lutheran Church of Haiti Concordia Seminary.



The medical team saw more than 800 people in four days, and 600 children came through the hygiene clinic. Issues ranged from colds, flu and allergies to serious STDs, malaria, numerous skin and eye infections and philoriosis (commonly known as elephantitis).

Malnutrition was the norm: almost every child was underweight and under height. Fifteen containers of powdered formula were distributed for at-risk babies or toddlers — six of whom were baptized “because we were so concerned for their health,” said Roenfeldt.

“From the best we could tell, most everyone there eats only every two or three days,”

Roefeldt elaborated. “There are no government programs to help, and the Lutheran Church of Haiti [LCH] is the first church to come into Jubilee.”

Two community leaders — neither of them Christian — thanked the visitors for their work. “They told us that we were the first ever white people or medical team to ever come to them and that it gave them hope that things could change for them,” Roefeldt added.

“Mission: Haiti is praying about how to help here, but on our list is getting the community fresh clean water, building sanitary latrines and beginning a microloan bank program to help people have a business to support themselves,” she continued.

“We did give three microloans of \$50 US each to women who wanted to start small businesses in their homes to support themselves and their families. These will be



supervised by the local church leadership with our assistance.

“This community is trying desperately to change, and we want to walk beside them to encourage and assist them.” ■



Jubilee residents received dental hygiene instruction and supplies at one of the clinics taught by the Mission: Haiti team.



How Can You Help?

Visit missionhaiti99.org

email the organization at missionhaiti99@aol.com

call Helen Roenfeldt at 954-868-8218

Mission: Haiti,
PO Box 773088
Coral Springs, FL 33077

Mission: Haiti is a 501(c)3 IRS recognized non-profit organization and gifts are tax-deductible.

Lutherans Combatting Voodoo in Haiti

In July of 2012, the Lutheran Church of Haiti launched an



evangelism program in the area where residents are entrenched in voodoo. “Forty people came to faith in Jesus Christ upon hearing the Gospel that night,” reported Helen Roenfeldt, who heads Mission: Haiti.

“We followed that with an eyeglass clinic, and on the next weekend another 40-some joined the family of God,” she continued. In September, “we learned that six more families came to faith during the clinic as they learned of God’s love for them. One family is a grandmother with 11 children and grandchildren.”

According to Roenfeldt, “here’s what seems to happen: these people have never heard that God loves them. They have never seen compassion in their lives. When they hear the Gospel and see it demonstrated through Christian love, it takes root in their hearts. The marvelous light of Truth shines through the darkness of voodoo and literally snatches souls from the gates of hell . . . God is sovereign and He shows us that every time we step out in faith and let Him work through us.” ■



Mission: Haiti team members spent time with residents of Faith Boys Home, a facility for school-aged boys who have been abandoned by parents or other relatives. “Most of the boys have no personal records so they are not available for adoption,” said Helen Roenfeldt, Mission: Haiti executive director. “Without this facility, these boys would be living on the mean streets of Gonaives, unprotected, with no food, medical care, clothing or opportunity for education.”

All of the boys attend either Faith Lutheran school sponsored by the Lutheran Church of Haiti or a local high school. “We always need help with nutrition support for them,” Roenfeldt added. “Food costs in Haiti have risen 20% since the hurricane, so we could use extra support to continue to give the boys three meals a day.”

Daytona Fall Conference Celebrates,

More than 300 Florida-Georgia educators gathered September 26-28 at the Daytona Beach Hilton Resort for Connection Power, an innovative conference that focused on developing, celebrating and strengthening Christian and professional connections.

The usual keynote speakers were replaced by “Professional Connections” plenary sessions. Participants were seated in groups according to shared ministry — eighth-grade teachers, for example. Five presenters led sessions on Faith Formation, Early Childhood, PR & Recruitment, Instruction and Technology.



“Connection Playground” featured a wide variety of educational and fun technologies as well as assistance from a team of Tech Gurus.

Connection Power Breakout Workshops covered a range of topics.

“Connections Playground was a large space where everyone could go to experience a wide variety of educational and fun technologies with the assistance of a team of Tech Gurus who were there to guide, teach and explain,” said Mark Brink, Executive Director of School Ministries for the, Florida-Georgia District.

“The idea behind this was that many educators who come to

the conference want to network and grow their skills through interactions with others who have tried different techniques in their classrooms or from those whom many would consider ‘experts’ in their areas.

“The Playground allowed educators to mingle, interact and learn from those around them within the District. At the same time, they were able to try out some new technologies and also work with and explore what they learned throughout their time in breakouts and intensive sessions at the conference.”

Accreditations Awarded

Four District schools received National Lutheran School Accreditation and Florida-Georgia Accreditation certificates: Redeemer-Stuart, FL, represented by Principal Jim Essig;



Lamb of God Open Arms ECC-Lithia, FL, was one of four District schools to receive National Lutheran School Accreditation and Florida-Georgia Accreditation certificates at the Conference. Shown with ECC Director Trudy Hutchinson (center) are Lamb of God Pastor Mark Wood and Katie Wilcox.

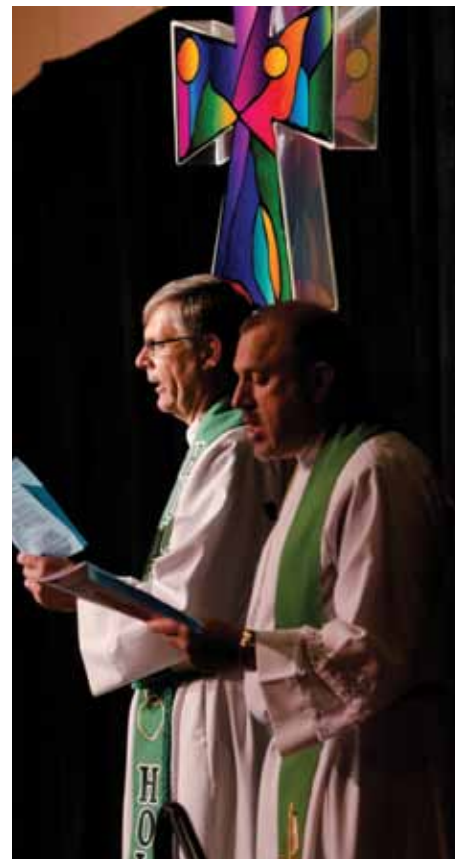
Lamb of God Open Arms ECC-Lithia, FL, represented by Director Trudy Hutchinson; Our Savior School-St. Petersburg, FL, represented by Seventh-Grade Teacher Janice Pisieczko; Immanuel School-Brandon, FL, represented by Teacher Nancy Richards.

“This certification is renewed every five years as our schools strive to maintain the rigorous guidelines set forth in the NLSA accreditation standards,” said Brink.

Ministry Milestones

More than 40 educators received Anniversary Plates to commemorate their years of service in Lutheran ministries.

“The plates were specially cast for last year’s President’s Convocation,” said David Weidner, Executive Assistant to the District President. “When we saw how much the recipients liked the plates, we asked the artist to cast some for our educators conference for the next few years.” ■



Rev. Brian Kneser, (left) pastor of Woodlands-Montverde, District President Greg Walton (right) at the conference’s opening worship service. Kneser and Charles Crownover designed the worship service; Walton was the preacher.

Strengthens Educator Connections



Florida-Georgia Executive for Schools Mark Brink accepts a \$5,000 check from Thrivent Financial for Lutheran Representative Darlene Kaiser for 2011-12 Hearts for Jesus/Hearts for Haiti project. A three-year commitment, Hearts for Jesus/Hearts for Haiti is supported by students in participating Florida-Georgia Sunday schools, preschools, elementary, middle and high schools.



More than 40 Florida-Georgia educators received Anniversary Plates to commemorate their years of service in Lutheran ministries.

Charles Crownover, Minister of Music at Woodlands-Montverde and music teacher at Woodlands ELC, at the opening worship. He was recognized for his 10 years of service as Lutheran educator during the conference.



Mark Abresch,
St. Paul-Peachtree City, GA (30);
Jane Anderson,
St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL (40);
Arlin Arbeiter,
Grace-Winter Haven, FL (45);
Maydelline Barrionuebo,
Holy Cross-North Miami, FL (10);
Beth Bartels,
Holy Cross-North Miami, FL (15);
Debra Beck,
Our Savior-Plantation, FL (20);
Gina Bossow,
Loving Arms Preschool-Largo, FL (10);
Joyce Cochell,
Gloria Dei-Davie, FL (15);
Charlie Crownover,
Woodlands-Montverde, FL (10);
Sarah Czaplewski,
Shepherd of the Coast-Fort Lauderdale, FL (25);
Beverly DeLemos,
St. Luke’s-Oviedo, FL (20);
Linda Fernquist,
Trinity-Delray Beach, FL (25);
Dave Geidel,
Immanuel-Brandon, FL (40);
Lori Gregory,
Gloria Dei-Davie, FL (10);
Susanne Hopper,
Trinity-Kissimmee, FL (25);

Marie Innocent,
Holy Cross-North Miami, FL (10);
Wendy Kirin,
Grace-Winter Haven, FL (25);
Kathy Knudtson,
Faith Preschool-North Palm Beach, FL (40);
Lisa Krempler,
St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL (35);
Ann Leimer,
Grace-Jacksonville, FL (10);
Jack Lustilla,
Concordia-Tampa, FL (25);
Martha Martinez,
Grace-Winter Haven, FL (25);
Wendy Niska,
Our Savior St Petersburg, FL (20);
Susan Norris,
Trinity Preschool-Lake Placid, FL (25);
Sarah Nowicki,
St. Luke’s-Oviedo, FL (30);
Jackie Okun,
Immanuel-Brandon, FL (35);
Janice Pisieczko,
Our Savior-St. Petersburg, FL (30);
Ellen Reikowski,
Immanuel-Brandon, FL (20);
Mike Rhinehart,
St. Michael-Ft. Myers, FL (40);
Tracey Rice,
Zion-New Life-Winter Garden, FL (15);

Carl Schiefer,
St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL (50);
Jan Schrader,
Shepherd of the Coast-Fort Lauderdale, FL (25);
Steve Schrader,
Shepherd of the Coast-Fort Lauderdale, FL (35);
Paul Schwan,
St. Michael-Fort Myers, FL (30);
Sue Schwan,
St. Michael-Fort Myers, FL (30);
Donna Swift,
Our Savior-Plantation, FL (20);
Beverly Thompson,
Holy Cross-North Miami, FL (15);
Beth Walters,
Grace-Winter Haven, FL (35);
Barbara Wegener,
St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL (40);
Roger Whitney,
St. Luke’s-Oviedo, FL (40);
Marty Zabel,
Trinity-Delray Beach, FL (40);
Jon Zehnder,
St. Michael-Fort Myers, FL (30).

Additional photos are posted on the Florida-Georgia website: flgadistrict.org.



Jewelry and Clothing Can Open Doors

Her waitress came to serve their table and asked Lois, “What’s your bracelet mean?”

Lois told her what each of the colors meant — from sin, to blue for the waters of baptism that cleansed us and red the blood of Christ that was shed to claim, purchase and redeem us. As Lois told the whole story of salvation to

Necklaces, rings, jewelry with religious symbols and meaning Going public with your Bible (I love it when someone asks me, “What are you reading?”) Religious clothing with Bible passages, especially those that are thought provoking. Pocket Crosses taken out of your pocket or purse when you are

paying a portion of the bill with change. I will sometimes put all my pocket stuff on the counter while I am sorting the coins out.

There in the midst of all of this is my pocket cross. If they don’t comment on it, why not ask them to pick that up and hold it for you while you sort out the change? You can then tell them how important the cross is for you and offer to give it to them as a reminder for them.

Jewelry and religious clothing often will open doors of opportunity to share the great news of Jesus! You may notice people taking notice, asking questions, making comments and realize -- this is your moment to give an account of the hope that is within you! (“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” -1 Peter 3:15b). ■

MISSIONMOMENTS

by Doug Kallesen, District Executive Director Mission & Outreach

her waitress, she asked, “Could I give this to you?” The waitress said, “Oh yes please.”

Lois responded. “I will give you this bracelet if you will get someone else to come over and see it. This time, however, I want you to tell your friend what the colors of the bracelet mean [the plan of salvation]. If you do I will give you and her a bracelet.”

Lois told me that this went on for eight people.

Wasn’t that exciting, a way to open the door for sharing your faith, and then giving them a tool to do the same time and time again. What other items do we have that open the door for sharing our faith?

I recently wore a t-Shirt with a picture of Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Lutheran guy who designed the shirt. Over the top of their heads were the words, “Three Wise Men.”

The waitress at a restaurant came closer, looked at the shirt, pointed, smiled and then laughed, saying, “I love your shirt... that’s funny, The Three Stooges as Three Wise Men.” So much for religious heritage and recognition of our church fathers.

I share this story because from it rose the opportunity for me to tell about who these people on my t-Shirt actually were and what they had done with their lives for the proclamation of the gospel.

I recently heard from a friend, Lois Schaeffer with the 72 Partners, on how effective the witnessing bracelet was that she had worn.

LANDS OF THE BIBLE – The Florida-Georgia District was well represented among the 650+ participants in a “Lands of the Bible” excursion in September. Dr. Paul Maier was the guest lecturer on the 12-day cruise to Italy, Israel, Malta, Turkey and

Greece. Educational Opportunities Tours coordinated the trip and recently announced that the Florida-Georgia District will be partnering with the Lutheran Hour for a “Footsteps of Paul” cruise in November of 2013. Lutheran

Hour Speaker Rev. Greg Seltz will be the guest lecturer and District President Greg Walton will serve as worship leader on that 14-day trip to Spain, France, Turkey, Greece and Italy. For more information, check the District website. ■



Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Launches New Program with Habitat for Humanity

A new program, Thrivent Builds Repairs, is helping low-income homeowners spruce up their homes and neighborhoods. The program launched across the country in July 2012 and will concentrate on upgrading existing homes in partnership with low-income homeowners.

Examples of projects the program will undertake are: exterior painting and weatherization, porch repair, and construction of accessibility ramps and light landscaping. The program supports neighborhood development by making homes more attractive, safer or more energy-efficient. It will encourage homeowners and communities to use a more holistic approach to maintenance, improvement and upkeep which seeks to involve more than a single home but encourages an entire community to get involved in improvement efforts.

“The Thrivent Builds Homes program has been an outstanding program for new home construction and rehabs,” says Jackie Hintz, vice president of Member Engagement and Growth for Thrivent Financial. “This new program allows us to upgrade existing homes and help restore and foster community pride.”

The program aims to complete 160 repair projects in 2012 with more than 3,200 volunteers engaged in supporting the program and giving back to their communities.

The projects will typically call for a one or two day commitment from volunteers, providing opportunities to those unable to make longer time commitments or those preferring to volunteer for light construction work.

With the one- or two-day

projects, the volunteers will still have a chance to experience the camaraderie and self-fulfillment of a Thrivent Builds trip. They also have a chance to partner in the project with the homeowner and see a project through to completion.

For more information about the program or to volunteer you can visit Thriventbuilds.com.

Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity is a multi-year, multi-million dollar partnership between Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Habitat for Humanity

International. Thrivent Builds is designed to involve Thrivent members and Lutherans in helping provide a “hand up” to people in need of affordable housing, offering them a path to greater economic independence. Excluding government funding, Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity is Habitat’s largest single source of funding, constructing more than 2,600 homes in the U.S. and around the world since 2005.

For more information, visit Thriventbuilds.com. ■

REPAIRS

See what a difference a day can make

Help someone’s home in your community be a better, safer place to live.

It takes just a day or two through Thrivent Builds® Repairs, a new volunteer program of Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity.

Caulk windows. Fix a porch step. Build a wheelchair ramp. Or make other outside repairs.

You’ll renew your community—and renew yourself, too. Visit ThriventBuilds.com/repairs.

Let's thrive. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans®

27480 NJ-12 Appleton, Wisconsin • Minneapolis, Minnesota • Thrivent.com • 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836)

LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND

Lutheran Church Extension Fund Florida-Georgia District Team



Mr. Daniel J. Reichard has served as LCEF Vice President for the Florida-Georgia District since January 2010. Dan has more than 30 years of experience in finance and accounting positions. He has held senior financial positions in the manufacturing and industrial services industries. Dan has a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and an MBA in Finance. In addition, he is both a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Certified Management Accountant (CMA). Dan leads the LCEF Team with a servant heart, grounded in sound financial experience and with this operating philosophy:

Treat People Like You Want to be Treated (Matthew 7:12)
Do the Right Thing (Deuteronomy 6:18)
Give 100% (Proverbs 3:27)
Have Fun (Psalm 126:2)
Maintain Balance (James 2:22)



Mrs. Mary Byrd, Loan Consultant, just celebrated 25 years of service with LCEF. Mary brings a vast knowledge of Loan Operations with extensive expertise in guiding congregations through the loan process. She is available to consult with your leadership in determining which of our loan products will meet the needs of the ministry and will walk with your team through completion.



Mr. John Elliott joined the Florida-Georgia District in September of 2010 as the Business Manager, filling the role upon the retirement of Mr. Don Lauher. John brings more than 20 years of experience in technology, operations, insurance and finance. He has an MBA and a BS degree in Computer Systems. With John's extensive finance background he is available to assist congregations with their financial reporting, providing guidance in the completion and maintaining of financial record keeping.



Ms. Debra Talbot joined the LCEF Florida-Georgia District Staff in July of this year. She serves as the Administrative Services Consultant, working with individuals and churches to match LCEF Ministry & Investment Services with ministry opportunities in their congregations and communities.

LCEF Mission

The mission of LCEF is to support the church in fulfilling its mission of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ by being a Christ-centered servant partner of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, ensuring that funds and services are available now and in the future. LCEF accomplishes this mission through Investments, Loans & Services. If you are seeking to expand your ministry, looking for some financial guidance or simply have a question, a member of the Florida-Georgia LCEF Team is available by phone (877 457-5556, ext 4), email (see below) or to meet with your leadership team to discuss opportunities available through our partnership. We are here to serve Christ by serving you.

Daniel J. Reichard DReichard@flga-lcms.org
John Elliott JElliott@flga-lcms.org
Mary Byrd MByrd7980@bellsouth.net
Debra Talbot DTalbot@flga-lcms.org

Circle of Partnership Allows LCEF to Share Earnings

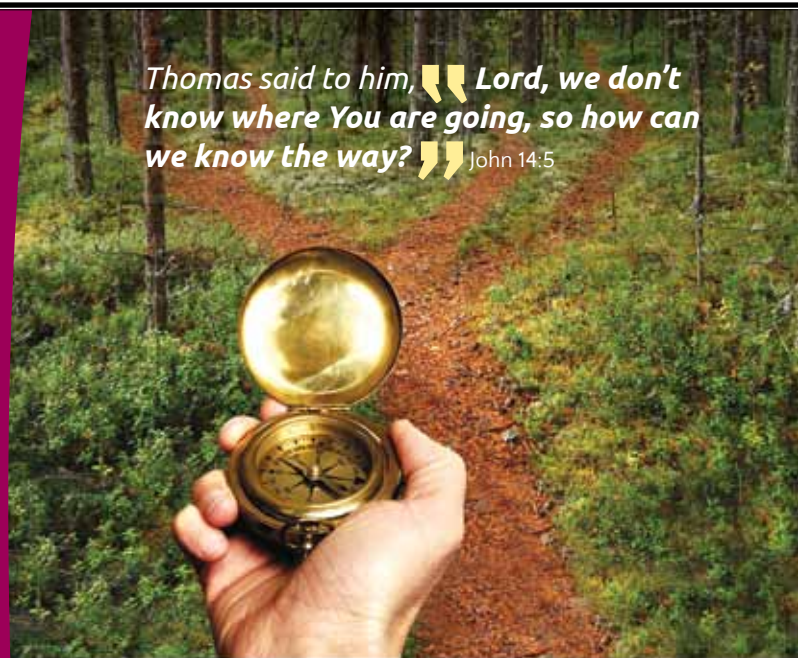
The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) will distribute a portion of its earnings to the 28 LCEF member districts and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). This distribution for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, totals \$1.68 million, with \$1.38 million provided to the districts (an average of \$49,000 per district) and \$306,000 to the Synod.

This distribution was made possible through the partnership of dedicated LCMS members and ministries that invest in the building of God's kingdom. They invest to provide funds for loans and

ministry-enhancing support to LCMS organizations and rostered church workers. The ministries and church workers with LCEF loans remain diligent in repaying the borrowed funds, which provides opportunities for others to receive loans and support from LCEF.

It is estimated this committed partnership and the circular flow of funds has made it possible for LCEF to assist more than 80% of LCMS ministries over the years. We are grateful to God for this strong bond of partnership and the blessings He continues to bestow upon His Church. ■

Thomas said to him, **Lord, we don't know where You are going, so how can we know the way?** John 14:5



Many ministries are still asking the same question, "Which is the way?"

VisionPath

VisionPath is a dynamic approach designed to help ministries achieve clarity as they follow the Spirit's direction.

Go where God calls you to go. lcef.org



Daniel J. Reichard, District Vice President
Florida-Georgia District
877-457-5556
dreichard@flga-lcms.org

All Saints-Blairsville Pays Off Mortgage

At the June 10 semi-annual voters meeting, members of All Saints-Blairsville, GA, voted to pay off the balance of the mortgage on the church property. On July 19, the "Paid in Full" paperwork was presented to the officers of the congregation by Dan Reichard, Vice President of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, the holder



of the mortgage. Pictured here, ready to burn the mortgage, are (l-r) All Saints President Bruce Eisel, Treasurer Joyce Knappenberger, Pastor Dave Wesche, Financial Secretary Duane Sieck, Secretary Linda Asvtestas and Vice President-Richard Robinson.

All Saints, which has served Northeast Georgia since 1990,

includes worshipers from Blairsville and surrounding communities in Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee. The congregation serves Jesus Christ in the community in a variety of areas, including school mentoring, hospital "pink ladies." Meals on Wheels, the Ecumenical Food Pantry and the Upward youth sports program. ■

LWML Gathers to Shine Like Stars, Hold Out the Word of Life!

President Marilyn H. Treanor chaired her final convention as the District LWML gathered September 28-30 in Orlando, hosted by the Space Coast Zone. The 323 women in attendance elected officers and selected Mission Grant recipients for the 2012-2014 biennium.

Keynote speaker Virginia Von Seggern, LWML President 1999-2003, encouraged the women to look to the stars for direction, noting that “we all have an excellent GPS – God’s Power Source – with a Spirit who tells us when we need to ‘stop and recalculate.’” With a reminder that “God doesn’t send the equipped, but equips those He sends,” she challenged attendees to find five women to share their faith journey.



Working on the Servant Event

National LWML Representative Carolyn Blum, Vice President of Organizational Resources, shared that 12 Mission Grants still need to be funded by the end of the 2011-2013 biennium. During the LWML’s 70 years, Mite Box collections have totaled an impressive \$100,000,000.

Guest speaker Cynthia Khan gave an unsettling presentation on the rise of Islam. Her organization, POBLO (People of the Book Lutheran Outreach), encourages and equips Christians to be bold in sharing their faith and countering the Muslim evangelism efforts, particularly on college campuses. Also addressing the Convention were Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton and Executive Director Mission-Outreach Doug Kallesen. Elected to serve for 2012-2014 were President - Bunnie Koelsch, Melbourne, FL; Vice President for Mission Grants - Carol Alberts, Ocala, FL; Vice President for Spiritual Growth - Karen Bowers, Augusta, GA;



Young women representatives at the dinner.

Financial Secretary - Nancy Hughes, Hollywood, FL; Pastoral Counselor - Rev. Tod Shouse, Bartow, FL; and Nominating Committee - Deb Buenrostro, Chair, Tallahassee, FL; Karen Gott, Pompano Beach, FL; and Christine Jennison, Lake Mary, FL.

Ten Mission Grant proposals were selected: Trinity/HOPE – providing lunches in Haiti, \$5,000; Rebecca’s Garden of Hope after School Program, \$10,000; Concordia Seminary-St. Louis Food Bank, \$10,000; Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne Food and Clothing Co-op; \$10,000; Helping Blind People See Jesus, Lutheran Bible Translators, \$4,000; Carpenter’s Hands, St. Petersburg, FL, \$10,000; Body and Soul Ministry Food Bank, Hernando County, FL, \$10,000; The Heartbeat of Miami, Pregnancy Help Medical Clinics, \$10,000; Gospel Outreach to At-risk Children, Naples, FL, \$10,000;



Members of the East Central Georgia Zone

and Training Future Pastors in Uganda, LCMS Office of International Mission, \$5,472.92. A Mission Grants brochure will be available via flgalwml.com.

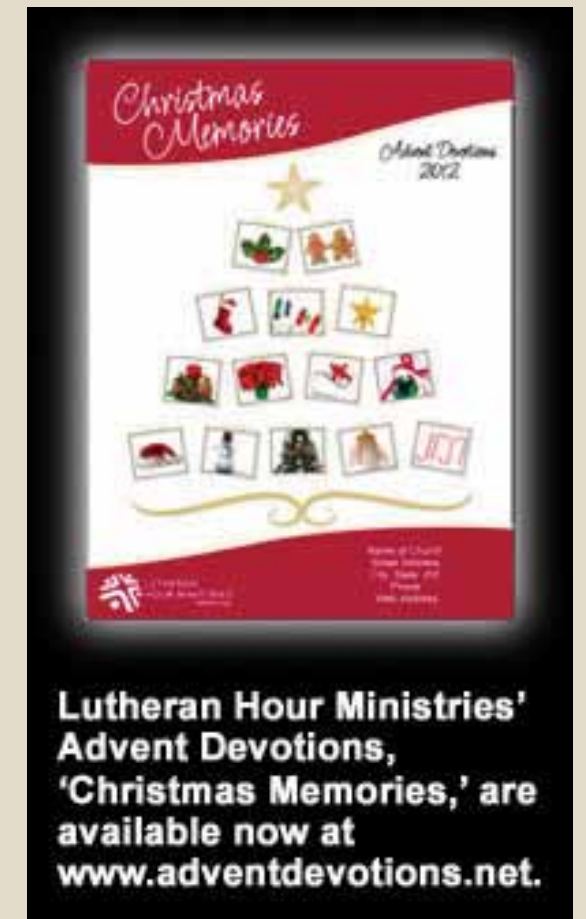
Convention offerings benefitted 2012-2014 District Mission Grants (\$2,149.64); Mission: Haiti (\$1,876.81); and District Love Gifts/Scholarships (\$2,406.25). The Gifts from the Heart/Ingathering for Matthew’s Hope outreach to the homeless included three pick-up truck/van loads and \$245. Another \$865 went to Lutheran Services Georgia. The Mission Walk raised \$920 for 2012-2014 Mission Grants. Servant events aided Matthew’s Hope and the NICU at Winnie Palmer Hospital. An additional \$231.91 was collected from special gifts, memorials and Mite-tilda, the Board of Directors’ purple piggy bank.

Saturday’s banquet – the “Pretty in Purple Party” – celebrated the 70th anniversary of LWML. Rev. William and Susan Reister and Lois Ford provided music and led a devotion. Members of the East Central Georgia, North Atlanta and Northeast Georgia Zones performed the invitation skit for the 2013 Retreat (September 27-29, Norcross, GA).

The Convention closed with a communion service and the installation/rededication of officers. ■



Outgoing LWML Zone President Marilyn H. Treanor with Senior Pastoral Counselor Rev. John Hopkins – in Jester garb.



LHM Advent Devotions Draw on Christmas Memories

Meditations in Christmas Memories, the 2012 Advent Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries, were inspired by the Biblical account of Jesus’ birth in the first two chapters of Luke.

Written by Wayne Palmer, the meditations “in particular look at Mary’s observations and reactions to the awe-inspiring events surrounding the foretelling, birth and infancy of the Christ Child.

“Just as we all have cherished memories of Christmases past, Mary shares her treasured memories of the first Christmas, relating the events to Luke to include in his Gospel,” Palmer said.

Available to read online or to hear as a podcast, Christmas Memories can also be received as an e-mail subscription throughout the Advent season. It is now available online, and the audio version will begin December 2. All the details can be found at www.adventdevotions.net. ■

The NIMBY phenomenon is well known: “Not in my back yard” – evidence of enlightened self-interest heedless of the plight of others. It is of course contrary to God’s wisdom.

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4)

The history of the holocaust is well known; perhaps what is not so well appreciated is the gradual way that it happened. The poison of Nazism and anti-Semitism slowly infiltrated German culture and even the church. Only a minority of Christians were alert, spoke up and resisted, including Lutheran pastors Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemoeller. Bonhoeffer was martyred, but Niemoeller survived his imprisonment and helped to rebuild the Lutheran church in Germany after the war. A famous statement attributed to him should give us pause for reflection:

*First they came for the socialists,
And I didn’t speak out because
I wasn’t a socialist.
Then they came for the
trade unionists,
And I didn’t speak out
because I wasn’t a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews,
And I didn’t speak out
because I wasn’t a Jew.
Then they came for me,
And there was no one
left to speak for me.*

Recently I attended a series of lectures on anti-Semitism in Europe, given by the senior rabbi of Ohev Shalom Synagogue-Winter Park, FL. The rabbi had been given

Rather than go to jail, she paid a stiff fine. Islamic intimidation runs the spectrum from the brutal stabbing and beheading of Theo van Gogh on the streets of Amsterdam in 2004 to fallacious accusations of “islamaphobe” or “hate speech.”

Why should we care about the new anti-Semitism in Europe? We should care first of all because of what God said: “Look to the interests of others.” We should also care because of our Jewish heritage as Christians, even as Paul exhorts us as Gentile Christians: “Just as you who

were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they [the Jews] too now have become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you.” (Romans 11:30-31)

We should also care because Islam has come to America. In a 2011 report, the Center for Security Policy identified 50 legal

cases in 23 U.S. states involving conflicts between American state laws and the constitution and shariah law. In 27 of those cases at the trial or appellate level the court ruled in favor of the foreign (shariah) law. Shariah law is codified Islamic law taken from the Koran and other historical documents describing the actions and recommendations of Muhammad, the sole founder of Islam.

Finally, we should care because anti-Semitism, from whatever source, is anti-Christian. And when we see it, if we do not confront it, we know that Christians will be next. ■



Why We Should Care About Anti-Semitism

BURNINGBUSH

by Bruce Lieske
Lutherans In Jewish Evangelism

a seven-month sabbatical to speak with Jews in Europe about their situation. He told us that every Jewish institution and synagogue in Europe has security guards and metal detectors. The Jewish community is afraid, and many European Jews are leaving Europe because of the growth of the new anti-Semitism coming from Islam.

I have a personal friend in Vienna, a Christian, who was convicted last year of “denigrating a religion” by the Austrian court system because she taught the truth about Islam in a seminar.

New District Board Organizes in First Meeting of Triennium

Newly elected members of the Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors met in September in Orlando for the first time since the June 2012 Convention.

Traditionally, the first Board meeting of the triennium focuses on introducing new members to the structure and operation of the District. This year’s three-day meeting included a cross orientation session with District Circuit Counselors.

An early order of business was the election of Renee Varga as District Treasurer. A CPA with a business in Orlando, Varga and her family are members of Woodlands-Montverde where she serves as treasurer.

Rev. Jim Guelzow, pastor of Messiah/Tampa and Third Vice President of the District, was elected Board Chair with Rev. Dave Brighton, pastor of Mount Calvary/Warner Robins and District First Vice President, the Assistant Chair. Joining them on the Executive Board Committee are Commissioned Minister Bob Ziegler of St. Michael/Fort Myers, Region 1 Lay Representative Bill Gaik and Treasurer Renee Varga.

Gaik was also selected to serve on the Policy Governance Committee along with Fourth Vice President Rev. Steve Wipperman of Our Savior/Lake Worth and Region 4 Lay Representative Maggie Bowles. Sonia Tellez, Region 3 Lay Representative, is the new Assistant Secretary.

President’s Report

During the next triennium the focus will be on revitalization in a post-church world. “Living in a post-church world means that the culture views the church as one of many ‘spiritual’ offerings, but certainly not any more or less important than any other religion,” elaborated District President Greg Walton.

“Many of us grew up at a time when the church was understood to be a moral compass and seen as a gathering place and leader in most communities... That is no longer true.

“This is why the church needs

revitalization. We need to find new ways to empower our members and engage our communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ while there is still time, without compromising our doctrine or theology.”

Walton emphasized that the revitalization must encompass our churches, our workers and our schools. The goal is to “build in our congregations, our pastors and church workers, our laity, a deeper passion for Jesus and a desire to connect people to Him.”

Highlights of Walton’s report to the Board included:

The President’s Circle, a ministry of the Florida-Georgia District that provides the resources our President needs to respond to emergencies in the lives of District church workers and ministries, is being coordinated by Rev. Billy Brath of Trinity/Orlando. To date several church workers with medical bills have been helped.

District Executive Director of Schools Mark Brink has been making campus contacts to encourage administrators as well taking the opportunity to evaluate programs and strengthen relationships. A July 30 orientation for school principals new to the District included learning, networking and fellowship. Welcomed to the District were Kristin Nelson-McKenzie of Grace/Jacksonville; Steve Schrader of Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale; Gordon Stoneburner of Gloria Dei/Davie.

The District Stewardship Advisory Council, led by **Rev. Dennis Bartels** of Holy Cross/North Miami, is finishing up a stewardship sermon series, which focuses on whole-life stewardship. The revitalization effort will focus partly on stewardship as an attitude for life more than a financial response.

David Weidner, Executive Assistant to the President, is taking a professional sabbatical beginning in January 2013. He is planning to work on a project that will assess the effectiveness of mid-level judicatory offices in meeting the



Renee Varga

needs of churches within the mainline denominations in the midst of our post-church culture.

The **Muslim Ministry Task Force** is forming to enlighten, empower and engage District members to share their faith in Jesus with all people. Rev. Bruce Lieske, Julie Dass, Tim Furnish and Rev. Doug Kallesen, District Executive Director for Outreach, serve on this task force. They have met about a ministry proposal to launch a Muslim Ministry in Naples.

The first of several “Revitalization Summits” is planned for February 16, 2013, at Messiah/Tampa.

Churches in Circuits 11-17 will be invited to send leaders to this event, which will be free of charge and will introduce the menu of resources available to assist congregations in revitalization efforts. Outreach Visits will be made to each circuit in 2012 and 2013 to provide District executives the opportunity to speak with congregations, schools and individuals about the opportunities for sharing the Gospel in their areas. The goal is for each circuit to hold at least one annual outreach training event for its congregations and that an outreach strategy will be developed for each circuit and its congregations. ■



MISSION LEADER — Rev. Aaron Simms was ordained on June 17 at Living Faith/Cumming. He is serving two missions: St. Peter/Dahlongega, and St. John the Apostle/Gwinnett County. Shown at the ordination service are (front, l-r) Ray Borchelt, District President Greg Walton, Aaron Simms, Tim Droegemueller, Chang Soo Kim, (back, l-r) Paul Droegemueller, Ernest Knoche, Jeffrey Jordan, Robert Strickert, Pastor Yunsoo. ■

REGION 1 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. David Brighton | Mount Calvary/Warner Robins
 Laity Board Member: Mr. William Gaik | Trinity/Toccoa
 Laity Board Member: Mr. Jay Wendland | Living Faith/Cumming
 Commission Minister Board Member: Ms. Tamara Worthington | St. Paul/Peachtree City
 NE Georgia Circuit Counselor: Rev. David Wesche | All Saints/Blairsville
 Atlanta N Circuit Counselor: Rev. Ray Borchelt | St. Mark/Tucker
 Atlanta S Circuit Counselor: Rev. Larry Townsend | Christ Our Savior/Hampton
 E Central Georgia Circuit Counselor: Rev. Roger Schwartz | Our Redeemer/Augusta



MEMBERS AND FRIENDS of Holy Trinity/Kingsland gathered on August 19 for the ordination and installation of Rev. Dr. Joel Meyer as the congregation's pastor. Meyer graduated from Concordia Seminary-St. Louis in May of 2012. Participating in the service were (front, l-r) Rev. Rick Engel; Rev. Frank Marshall; Rev. Ross Engel, Rev. Dana Brones; Rev. Dr. Joel Meyer; District President Greg Walton; Rev. Patrick McKenzie; Rev. Jay Cantwell; Vicar Weston Wildauer; (back, l-r) Rev. Jason Lane; Rev. Gene Snow; Rev. Joe Molitoris; Rev. Jeremy Lucke; Rev. Ron Mueller; Rev. Jerry Figuli; Rev. Bill Reister. ■



REV. ROD HOUPPERT was recently installed as pastor of The Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity-Macon. Shown here at the installation are (l-r) Rev. John Hopkins, Trinity-Savannah; Florida-Georgia District President Gregory S. Walton; Vicar Luke Anderson, Mount Calvary-Warner Robins; Houppert; Rev. David Brighton, Mount Calvary-Warner Robins; Dr. WDavid H. Bernthal, retired; Rev. Roger Schwartz, Our Redeemer-Augusta. ■



MEMBERS OF ST. PAUL-PEACHTREE CITY on September 16 had a special celebration of the work of Lutheran Church Extension Fund. Guests included Pastor Max Biesenthal, who gave an inspiring message, and LCEF District Vice President Dan Reichard, who presented the congregation with a plaque in recognition of its status as a Million Dollar Congregation. Reichard also held an information session for the adults during our Sunday School hour which highlighted the investments, loans, and services. An increased interest in the work of LCEF has been realized since this special day. Shown here are (l-r) LCEF Vice President Dan Reichard with Tamie and David Worthington, LCEF congregation representatives for St. Paul. ■

Lutheran Campus Missionaries Installed, Plan For Expansion

Three years of planning became a reality on July 15 as Hannah Koops and Laura McLeran were installed as Lutheran Campus Initiative (LCI) missionaries.

The LCI program is a new ministry supported by a Florida-Georgia District grant to give recent college graduates the opportunity to serve as missionaries to college campuses through local congregations. Pastor Jay Winters of University Church & Student Center/Tallahassee and Pastor Dan Prugh of First/Gainesville are launching the program in conjuncture with Outreach Executive Director Rev. Doug Kallesen and the District, LCMS World Mission and LCMS Campus Ministry.

McLeran and Koops serve the University of Florida and Santa Fe

College through First/Gainesville.

McLeran, who is from Melbourne, FL, recently graduated from the University of Florida with a marketing degree. She is developing the international student ministry at First through building relationships while working at the University of Florida English Language Institute. After serving a summer in China through LCMS World Mission, she wanted to pursue this longer-term missionary position through LCI following graduation.

Koops, who hails from Ulysses, KS, is a recent graduate of Concordia Nebraska with degree in marketing and a minor in graphic design. She is helping to further develop undergraduate and graduate ministries at First as she reaches out to students at both campuses. Koops, who said she had

an amazing experience at Concordia Nebraska growing in her Christian faith, felt the Lord's call to travel 1,500 miles across the country to serve in a town with approximately 67,000 college students.

"Over this next year we will be looking to expand this program to other churches near college campuses," said Prugh.

For more information about LCI, visit www.lcinitiative.org. To host international missionaries, contact Pastor Prugh at pastordanprugh@gmail.com. ■

REGION 2 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. Dr. John Roth | First/Gainesville
 Board Secretary: Rev. Jay Winters | University Church & Student Center/Tallahassee
 Laity Board Member: Mr. Donald Kaufman | St. John/Ocala
 Laity Board Member: Ms. Lois Schaefer | Amazing Grace/Oxford
 Tallahassee Circuit Counselor: Rev. Mark Schultz | Epiphany/Tallahassee
 First Coast Circuit Counselor: Rev. Dana Brones | Bethlehem/Jacksonville
 N Central Florida Circuit Counselor: Rev. James Rockey | Amazing Grace/Oxford



Laura McLeran and Hannah Koops with Pastor Dan Prugh



ST. JOHN-OCALA members celebrated the installation of Rev. Mark Jurkowski as congregation pastor late this summer. Participating in the installation service were Pastors (front, l-r) Ken Schamens, James Rockey, Chris Schaar, Mark Jurkowski, District President Greg Walton, Mark Abram, Tom Beaverson, (middle, l-r) Daniel Prugh, Ron Scheer, John Roth, Joe Adams, John Fisher, Terry McKee, (back, l-r) Alan Struckemeyer, Bob Besalski, Ron Mueller

Tom Eggebrecht Installed at Ascension

Rev. Tom Eggebrecht was installed as pastor of Ascension-Casselberry in July. Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton performed the Rite of Installation.

Eggebrecht has been a pastor for 21 years. He served congregations in North Carolina and Virginia before accepting the call to Mt. Calvary-Milwaukee in 1997. He served there until accepting the call to Ascension.

Eggebrecht was an adjunct professor of theology at Concordia University-Wisconsin for 13 years. He has served on boards and in leadership roles of various community organizations including the Lutheran High School Association of Greater Milwaukee and



was a circuit counselor in the South Wisconsin District.

He and his wife, Tammy, have two children: Ashlyn, a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University who now works at Sea World, Orlando, and Benjamin, a singer-songwriter studying at Belmont University. ■

Y Y Y Y Y REGION 3 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. Dr. John Roth | First/Gainesville
Board Secretary: Rev. Jay Winters | University Church & Student Center/Tallahassee
Laity Board Member: Mr. Donald Kaufman | St. John/Ocala
Laity Board Member: Ms. Lois Schaefer | Amazing Grace/Oxford
Tallahassee Circuit Counselor: Rev. Mark Schultz | Epiphany/Tallahassee
First Coast Circuit Counselor: Rev. Dana Brones | Bethlehem/Jacksonville
N Central Florida Circuit Counselor: Rev. James Rockey | Amazing Grace/Oxford



Hope Sends Members on Missionary Trips

As a part of their Sunday morning worship on July 8, the members of Hope-Plant City commissioned Cathie Warner and Jana Watkins for their mission experience that began July 13 in Managua, Nicaragua.

Warner and Watkins participated in and led Vacation Bible School and various children’s ministries as well as assisted in street evangelism.

According to Hope Pastor Dean Pfeffer, “As is the tradition at Hope, as they send members into the mission field, the congregation encircles the member, lays hands and joins together to pray.” ■



Prince of Peace Welcomes Interim Senior Pastor

Rev. Alston Kirk was installed as Interim Senior Pastor at Prince of Peace-Orlando on September 23.

Kirk served as a Navy chaplain, with assignments that took him to Vietnam, to Newfoundland and Iceland as well as destroyer duty the included circumnavigation of South Africa. He retired as a Navy chaplain in 1994 and from the parish ministry in 2004. Since then, he has served as interim senior pastor in for congregations in Texas and Florida.

Kirk is a fellow of the American Academy of Religion and a member of the English Language section of the International Bonhoeffer Society.

He and his wife, Susan, have three children and five grandchildren. ■

Pictured at left during Hope’s congregational prayer for the commissioning service are (center, in front of Pastor Dean Pfeffer) Cathie Warner and Jana Watkins.

District Kids Win Thrivent Contest

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans recently asked students from preschool through high school to share their insights on being wise with money. The top three entries in each age category, selected by a panel of judges, received \$100.

The winner in the Pre-Kindergarten essay was Alexander Ballans of Lamb of God/Lithia. He wrote: “Maybe being wise with money is like adding money. You take money out, but you always put it back in. You don’t just do what you want to do with money ... You don’t throw a fit when Mommy says you have to save your money.

“It’s a good time to spend your money when you are older because you will know how to



Hunter Matthews

spend it the right way ... If you are going to spend your money, spend it on something important, like something you need really bad. I am saving my money for when I grow up.

“You know how else you can be



Alexander Ballans

wise with money? You can share it with other people. Like people who don’t have any money so they can buy what they really need....”

The winner in the Grades 4-6 drawing category was Hunter Matthews of Our Savior/Plantation. ■

Tampa Women Honored as Good Samaritans

Ten volunteers from nine Lutheran churches in Hillsborough County were honored with Good Samaritan Awards on October 21 by Lutheran Services Florida including Donna Pero of Messiah/Tampa and Dorothy McCarthy of Holy Trinity/Tampa. The award recognized those identified by LSF as “exceptional volunteers who express their love of God through unselfishly and faithfully helping people in need.”

Pero serves as a Stephen Minister and a member of the team that coordinates monthly birthday parties for members at Carrollwood Care Center. She teaches a class at Magnolia Manor in Tampa, helps serve meals at LSF’s monthly luncheons for the blind and volunteers at Northwest Elementary School each week.

McCarthy was a key member of the Holy Trinity team that guided the congregation through financial challenges during the recent pastoral vacancy. As treasurer of the Holy Trinity School Board, she assisted in reorganizing the school and its budget to provide more financial stability. ■



Hunter’s winning drawing was featured on the cover of the Summer 2012 Thrivent Magazine.

Y Y Y Y Y REGION 4 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. James Guelzow | Messiah/Tampa
Laity Board Member: Ms. Maggie Bowles | Peace/Naples
Laity Board Member: Mr. Jeff Richards | Hope/Brandenton
Commissioned Minister Board Member: Mr. Robert Ziegler | St. Michael/Fort Myers
Suncoast Circuit Counselor: Rev. David Brockhoff | Holy Trinity/Masaryktown
St. Petersburg Circuit Counselor: Rev. Arnold Piering | Emeritus/New Port Richey
Tampa Circuit Counselor: Rev. Kevin Yoakum | Christ the King/Riverview
Sarasota Circuit Counselor: Rev. Rossetter Leavitt | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota
SW Circuit Counselor: Rev. Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers



Faith Directs Unplanned Mission Trip

When five Redeemer/Stuart youth and Associate Pastor Brian Gauthier left on what they called “The Unplanned Mission Trip” this past summer, they had no idea where they would go, what they would be doing or even where they would stay.

“We trusted God, knowing He would direct our path,” said Lindsey Evans, the youth group member who led the adventure.

The Redeemer group helped stranded motorists, handed out bags to the homeless, cut grass, pulled weeds and assembled playground equipment as well as purchased gas, groceries or dinner for “some very surprised people.” They assisted individuals and served in three different soup kitchens, a day care ministry, a nursing home, two churches and a non-profit ministry that helps to re-establish homeless men and women.



Sleeping arrangements included a church floor in Plantation, a relative’s home in Fort Myers and a hotel in Orlando.

“What amazed us the most was the obvious way that God showed us

His plan,” Evans said. “As promised in Proverbs 3:5-6, we trusted God and He directed our path. We were honored to represent Redeemer Lutheran Church and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans as they prayed for us and supplied us with the finances and gifts that made this trip possible.” ■

Pictured above: Thad Day, Asthon Evans (standing), Lindsey Evans (seated), Shauna Bur, Pastor Brian Gauthier and Meghan Mateer working at Trinity-Orlando during their Unplanned Mission Trip.

REGION 5 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. Steve Wiperman | Our Savior/Lake Worth
 Laity Board Member: Ms. Karen Smith | Peace/Okeechobee
 Laity Board Member: Ms. Nancy Volz/Our Savior-Plantation
 Heartland Circuit Counselor: Rev. Richard Norris | Faith/Sebring
 Treasure Coast Circuit Counselor: Rev. Kenneth Larson | Emeritus/Lake Worth
 S Palm Beach Circuit Counselor: Rev. Douglas Fountain | Epiphany/Lake Worth
 Gold Coast Circuit Counselor: Rev. Walter Volz | Emeritus/Plantation
 Monroe-Miami-Dade Circuit Counselor: Rev. Alan Sielk | St. Paul/Miami



Gloria Dei Academy Welcomes New Principal

Gordon Stoneburner was installed as principal of Gloria Dei Lutheran Academy-Davie late last summer.

A graduate of Concordia University Chicago, he has been teaching for almost 30 years. His wife, Audrey, is now the fourth-grade teacher at Gloria Dei. She is also a graduate of Concordia University Chicago.

The Stoneburners have been

married for 29 years and have three children: Amy, Daniel and David.

Gloria Dei Academy, a ministry of Gloria Dei Church, serves approximately 225 students from infancy through eighth grade. ■

Shown at the installation service are (l-r) Gloria Dei Senior Pastor Tony Masinelli, Gordon and Audrey Stoneburner, Gloria Dei Pastor George Poulos Jr.



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THE Back Page

Valparaiso's Lutheran Leader Scholarship Awarded to District's Rachel Rockey

Before Rachel Rockey arrived on Valparaiso University's campus this fall to start her college career



Rachel Rockey with her family at her high school graduation
Jessica Rockey, Stephen Rockey, Rachel, Lori Rockey, Kaitlin Rockey

she was already a member of a select group: she is one of just eight students identified as Lutheran Leaders.

A graduate of Villages (FL) Charter High School and a member of Amazing Grace-Oxford, Rockey is one of two incoming freshmen awarded VU's Lutheran Leadership Scholarship. She was offered the prestigious award for many reasons, according to David Fevig, Executive Director of Financial Aid and Enrollment Planning, including her "leadership potential, academic achievements, ability to express herself, capacity to motivate others and commitment to serve the Lutheran Church as a lay or professional leader."

Fevig added, "Rachel's involvement on boards to help plan Florida-Georgia youth gatherings for both middle and high school students stood out... This involvement was in addition to what she was actively a part of at her church. She wrote a compelling essay about the importance of relationships.

"When the selection committee talked to her on the phone she articulated clearly and confidently the

importance of her faith life in her daily living."

Looking back at her three-year involvement in helping plan and facilitate Florida-Georgia middle and high school youth gatherings Rockey said, "It was an amazing experience to get to be involved in such a diverse leadership team and getting to work among Lutheran leaders across the Florida-Georgia District."

Rockey, a secondary mathematics major with a minor in photography and digital design, is enrolled in Christ College, Valpo's honors college. In addition to the Lutheran Leader program, she is involved in MSEED, a new program funded by a National Science Foundation grant. Students in the program plan to be STEM majors who teach in high school when they graduate.

Rachel is the daughter of Stephen and Lori Rockey and the sister of Jessica and Kaitlin. ■

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