

LUTHERAN LIFE

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

2013 | Volume 2





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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DISTRICT CAPSULES by Greg Walton District President

CALLING CONGREGATIONS

Trinity/Delray Beach, FL Associate Pastor
Zion/Fort Myers, FL.....Senior Pastor
King of Kings/Jasper, GA.....Sole Pastor
Marco Lutheran/Marco Island, FLAssistant Pastor
Faith/New Port Richey, FL.....Sole Pastor
Our Redeemer/Ocala, FL Associate Pastor
Trinity/Summerfield, FL Associate Pastor
St. Mark/Tucker, GA Sole Pastor

CALLS ISSUED

Rev. Jeffrey Scheich
from Trinity/Delray Beach, FL as Associate Pastor
Rev. Dr. Brian Kneser
from Zion/Fort Myers, FL as Senior Pastor

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Richard Carlton
from King of Kings/Jasper, GA as Sole Pastor
Rev. Dr. John Roth
from Estero/Estero, FL as Sole Pastor

TRANSFERRED TO OTHER DISTRICTS

1/23/13 **Daniel W. Schepmann** to Texas (O)
6/30/13 .. **Gina Marie Bossow** to Rocky Mountain (C)

TRANSFERRED FROM OTHER DISTRICTS

1/7/2013 **Les L. Kimball** from Missouri (O)

CHURCH CHANGES

1/13/2013 Living Water/Sanfoard, FL Dissolved

ORDAINED/COMMISSIONED MINISTER INITIAL ASSIGNMENTS

12/23/2012
Sun Il Cho from Concordia-Irvine
as Korean Missionary to Faith/Marietta, GA (O)

ORDAINED/COMMISSIONED MINISTER INSTALLATIONS

12/2/12 **Jonathan Horsman**
as Pastor at Grace/Winter Haven, FL (O)

8/12/12 **Audrey Stoneburner**
as Teacher at Gloria Dei/Davie, FL (C)
1/27/13 **Joel Dietrich**
as DCE at St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA (C)
1/20/13 **Scott Holder**
as Pastor at Oak Road/Lilburn, GA (O)
2/3/13 **John Roth**
as Pastor at Florida-Georgia District
Estero Design Team/Estero, FL (O)

CALLED TO GLORY

12/21/12 **Rev. Robert Olson** (O)
12/30/12 **Susan Rand** (C)

REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER

1/23/13 **Harold Brandel**
Removed by District President (O)
1/23/13 **August D. Brown**/Resigned (C)
1/23/13 **John R. Payne** Resigned (C)

CHANGE OF STATUS WITHIN THE DISTRICT

9/16/12 **Stephen J. Rockey**
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)
12/30/12 **Carol Keenan**
from Candidate to Emeritus (C)
8/20/12 **Timothy A. Hanesworth**
from Active to Candidate (C)
9/30/12 **David D. Hansen**
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (O)
7/28/12 **Sandra K. Sibley**
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)
8/1/12 **Kenneth Ferrier**
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (O)
1/9/13 **Thomas A. Ziebart**
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)
1/9/13 **Mark L. Miessler**
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)
8/12/12 **Robert Besalski**
from Active to Emeritus (O)

REINSTATED TO THE ROSTER

11/15/12 **David C. Sieg** Reinstated
by LCMS Council of Presidents (O)

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

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE: ACTS OF GRACE – The President's Circle provides the resources our President needs to respond to emergencies in the lives of Florida-Georgia church workers and ministries. Members of the District Board of Directors were among guests at the first President's Circle dinner, hosted by Prince of Peace-Orlando in January and directed by Rev. Billy Brath. Though recently established, the President's Circle has already



helped District workers with medical issues and provided aid to victims of Hurricane Sandy. "Such small acts of kindness say that somebody loves you – and it's our God," President Greg Walton said. "This is about how we can come alongside those in need." For more information visit <http://flgadistrict.org/presidents-circle/>. Shown here at the President's Circle dinner are (l-r) Carmen and Tony Ramiz, Edith Walton and Nancy Brazee. ■

Teens from across the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will swell the population of San Antonio, TX, from July 1-5 as they descend on the city for the 12th triennial National LCMS Youth Gathering (NYG).

Launched in 1980, the NYG provides a venue for LCMS youth to spend time together in worship, God's Word, prayer, song and service. It is the LCMS' single largest event.

This year's NYG marks the *third time* the event will be held in San Antonio. The City's Convention Center and Alamodome will serve as the primary home for the five days of the event.

Participants will gather under the theme 'Live Love(d)' based

on 1 John 4:9. The Gathering logo features that theme and incorporates "a distinctive cross that will help tell the story of the theme," according to Gathering Program Director Rev. Mark Kiessling, associate director for LCMS Youth Ministry—Gathering Program. Seth Boggs, a graphic designer and art instructor at Concordia University Nebraska, designed the 2013 logo.

"Love in 1 John is anything but how our world defines it," explained Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, executive director of the LCMS Commission on

we might live -- and love -- through Him. In 'Live Love(d),' the 'd' makes all the difference: 'We love because He [God] first loved us.'" Coordinators from the LCMS' 35

districts served as liaisons between the Gathering, districts and congregations according to Kiessling. "The support services they provide adult leaders in each

Thousands Expected for 2013 National Youth Gathering



Theology and Church Relations and theological adviser for the National Youth Gathering.

"It's a matter of life and death. God loved us so much that He could not bear to see us die in our sin. He sent His own Son to suffer and die in our place, that

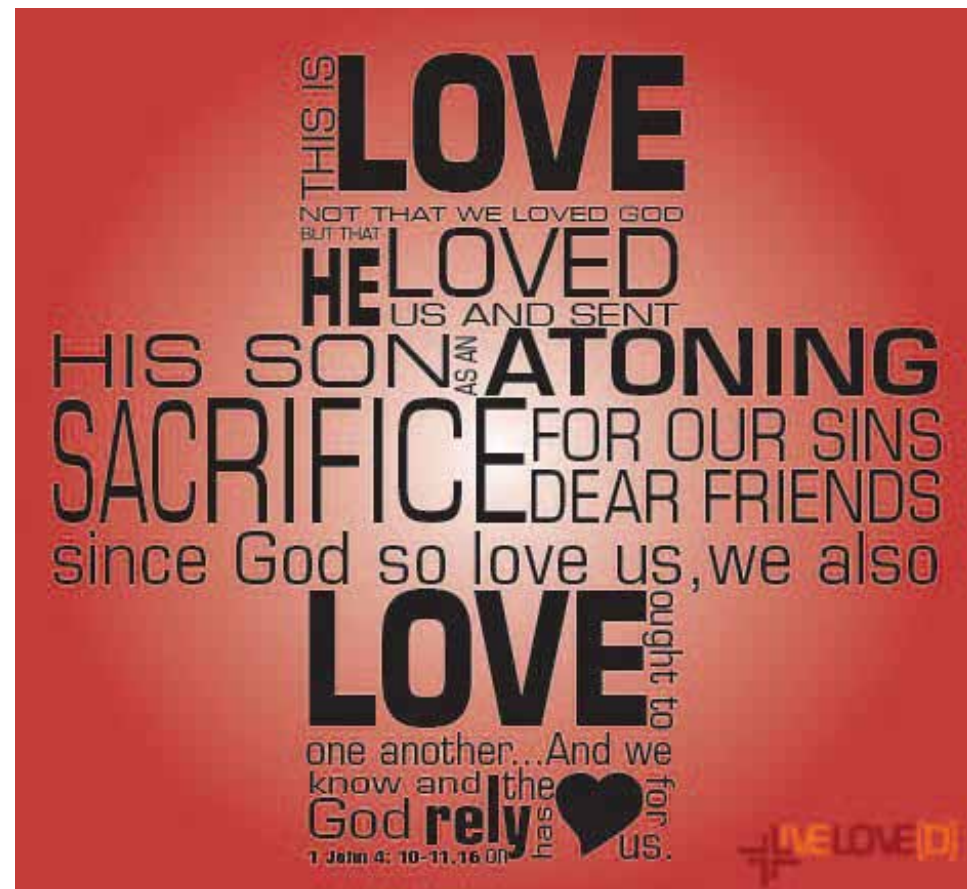
district is vital for preparing the congregations attending the Gathering and experiencing the Gathering in a positive manner. We are blessed to have these dedicated leaders partnering with us for 2013."

Florida-Georgia District Coordinators are Debbie Gaylord, Grace-Winter Haven, FL, and

Lamar Stewart, Redeemer-Augusta, GA.

Participants can register for the NYG until May 1 by sending forms to the Gathering office at the 1333 S. Kirkwood, St. Louis, MO 63122.

To learn more about the 2013 National LCMS Youth Gathering, visit the web site at www.lcmsgathering.com. ■





Discovering Joy and Revitalization in the Journey of Lent

Someone has said, “Biscuits and sermons are improved by shortening...”

While I may not personally necessarily agree with that sentiment, as many people in my life remind me ... the Gospel of Mark certainly seems to echo that sentiment. He is succinct in reporting the events in the life of Jesus. Heading into the season of Lent, we find Jesus at the beginning of His earthly ministry, immediately following His baptism. Mark writes,

“As Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased.’ At once the Spirit sent Him out into the desert, and He was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended Him.” (Mark 1:10–13).

I’ve always found it fascinating that immediately following His baptism Jesus is confronted with trial and temptation. Isn’t that also true in our own spiritual journey? Often, when we’ve experienced a moment of closeness with God, we are quickly snapped back to the reality of living in a sinful world. It seems that without fail during my years in the parish that in the midst of the Lenten season Satan was hard at work trying to discourage or frustrate the growth that comes as we walk with Jesus to the foot of the Cross.

One year we had planned a Seder meal; I think it was the first time I had done this, and we had a number of people involved. I even had my parents visiting. It was a pretty special occasion. We

had a large response and turn out, but it was Spring in Atlanta — it seemed the rain would never stop. The committee had set up a head table for me and my family so that I could lead the Seder. Wouldn’t you know it, in the very spot where I was sitting there was a small leak in the roof, and the water found its way to the top of my head.

Now, I know it seems like a minor thing, but it got to be very uncomfortable. Believe it or not, when I moved to the left or



right the water seemed to follow me. If that wasn’t bad enough, earlier in that week I had to have a temporary crown on a tooth. As I bit into some of the meal before me that temporary crown came off and fell to the ground. All I can say is, it’s a good thing there are several cups of wine ... Seriously, it was a time to keep my eyes on Jesus! That was Maundy Thursday, the next day was Good Friday, then Easter came just a few days later and was a grand celebration!



Lent can be a time of trial for us as we seek to grow closer to Jesus and reflect on His journey to Calvary for our forgiveness and life.

These weeks are a time to practice some self-sacrifice and reflection as we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection. Sure, we know how the story ends, but as has been said, part of the gift is the journey. So, how will you make use of these weeks of Lent? There are certainly enough distractions all around us to tempt us to focus on ourselves. Congregations across our District will offer midweek Lenten worship opportunities to inspire and help you prepare for a joyous celebration.

But don’t miss the journey God’s leading you on in these weeks, for there is much to be learned along the way.

Lent is a time for revitalization and renewal. As the earth around us comes back to life after a long winter’s nap (or for those in Florida, those two cold days...), so our faith can emerge, bolder and stronger, by spending these weeks of Lent focused on the growth in God’s Word that He has for us.

Don’t think of Lent as a time to give up chocolate or soda so you fit in that new outfit for Easter Sunday. That’s not true sacrifice. It is denying ourselves something we enjoy, but it doesn’t truly benefit God’s Kingdom.

Wouldn’t it be more sacrificial to commit to giving more time to serving in the name of Jesus? Perhaps it would be by cleaning out and finding how you can use the resources God has given you to bless others. Maybe it could be by volunteering time in a local school or soup kitchen or shelter, or even in your own church, for the sake of Jesus. I can tell you, from personal experience,

in the Journey of Lent



when we do that, not only do we become conduits of God’s blessings, but we too are blessed..



Revitalization isn’t just a catchword for the Florida-Georgia District. It’s a desire on our part to see God’s people rise up to the challenges of God’s Word, and His plan for His church. It’s about the renewing of our minds. Paul writes, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

That transformation happens as we being to think differently than the world around us.

I remember watching the cartoon *Jungle Book* as a child. I was always amazed that the snake could mesmerize the boy into a mindless trance. In a similar way, that ancient snake, Satan, has lulled this world

into a false sense of security. Many have bought into the lie that we don’t need to worry about the future — in the end it won’t really matter what you believe since God is a God of love. While He is indeed a God of love, He is also a God of justice. In love He sent Jesus to die on the Cross to pay the penalty of our sin. Those who receive Him, by faith, have all that He purchased for us. We are the ones called on to share that good news with the unbelieving world.

I am amazed at how often I visit congregations and individuals who talk about the desire for “church growth.” However, often “church growth” amounts to little more than “filling our pews” or “meeting our budget.” The transformation and revitalization comes when we move from so-called “church growth” to “Kingdom growth.” The difference is this: Kingdom growth is about having such a passion for those who don’t know Jesus that

we do everything we can to reach them with the power of the Gospel.

It changes how we “do” church because it’s no longer about us or serving ourselves, but about becoming the church we’ve been called to be — a people equipped, empowered and engaged, connecting people to Jesus. Lent is an opportunity to learn to resist the temptation to serve only ourselves and reach out to others in the name of Jesus.

The Church will always face trials and temptations until Jesus returns. That shouldn’t be unexpected. However, we don’t need to remain in the desert. Jesus already fought the battle and won it, not only for you, but for those all around you.

We can be confident that His Spirit will bring about the renewal of our hearts and minds as we gather around the Word and Sacrament and allow His forgiveness and grace to permeate our lives.

We can grow during this season of Lent as we turn our eyes to Jesus. As the hymn-writer reminds us, “Have we trials and temptations, is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged, take it to the Lord in prayer!”

May this season of Lent be a blessing for you as you grow in the Word and prayer, and experience personal revitalization for the sake of Jesus! May He give you joy in the journey!

And remember, Easter’s coming!

With You on the Lenten Journey!
Greg

LCMS National Youth Gathering . . . Thirty Three Years of Impact and Blessing!

At the 2001 LCMS National Youth Gathering (NYG) in New Orleans, a young volunteer named Nick from Springfield, MO, was an usher at the Mass Events held in the Super Dome at Gate A.

Another volunteer at Gate A was Candace, a Texas college student. Nick and Candace began to talk; before long interest sparked. When a storm canceled the outdoor festival, they went to a life-changing dinner. She transferred to Concordia University Nebraska the following semester to be near him. They were married within 18 months.

Now a Commissioned Minister of Religion, Nick is Director of Youth Ministry at St. Paul-Lakeland, FL. Candace works for Marriott Vacations and Resorts. They have two beautiful daughters, Natalie, 4, and Laura, 1. This vibrant family lives out their faith serving as a model for young people in their church and school – a sign of God’s blessing on two people who came together as the result of the NYG.



By: David L. Weidner, Executive Assistant to the Florida-Georgia District President and former Director of the LCMS National Youth Gathering (1993-2001)



of the NYG. He is a gifted, patient leader who has brought many innovations and improvements to the program and administration in his ten years.

God works in mighty and powerful ways to bless His Church through people like Mark.

She was just eight years old when she attended her first

NYG in 1989 in Denver. She came because her father was working for the Gathering. She went to NYG events with her parents and 12-year-old brother. She loved spending time in the Experiential Area doing crafts and participating in the games and activities.

And yes, she was at the infamous “Red Rocks” event in the outdoor amphitheater in the mountains high above Denver. A sudden storm blew in and thousands of youth were stranded until buses could make it up the mountain to drive them back down into the city.

She attended the 1995 and 1998 Gatherings as a high school student, and, like so many others, speaks of an amazing faith stretching experience that she’ll never forget.

Today Emily Weidner is an active founding member of downtown Orlando’s The Cross, a plant of Holy Cross-Lake Mary, FL. Along with a handful of other young adult Christians, Emily worked with Pastor Ben Hoyer to launch the new ministry through “Credo,” a nonprofit coffee house. She represents The Cross on the Holy

Cross board of directors and was the congregational delegate to the 2012 SELC District Convention. She will represent her circuit as a delegate to the 2013 LCMS Convention.

And yes, she is my daughter and I am so very proud of her! I thank God that He has used so many experiences and people to influence her walk of faith, including the National Youth Gathering.

There are thousands of stories about the impact of the NYG since its inception in 1980. Concordia University System admissions counselors tell us that every fall following the NYG they hear from young women and men who want to come to a Concordia because they were so impacted by the Gathering. Most of those young people end up serving in full-time ministry in some capacity.

Eleven Gatherings have been held since that first one on the Colorado State University campus. More than two million youth and adults have attended Gatherings in the last 33 years, and the impact on our church as well as our world has been staggering. No other LCMS effort has been as extensive and far reaching in its impact in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and touching the lives of its attendees, planners and the people of the host communities as the NYG.

Visit Fort Collins, New Orleans, Atlanta, Orlando, San Antonio, Denver or Washington, DC, and you will inevitably find someone who remembers the invasion of thousands of teenagers wearing brightly colored backpacks during the hottest days of summer. They will tell you about how polite the youth were and how much they enjoyed having them in their city.

Beyond celebrating in arenas and domed stadiums, thousands of youth and their leaders poured into these cities touching the lives of citizens with the love of Christ as they rendered service in hospitals, nursing homes, hospice centers, schools, private homes, orphanages and city parks through

Servant Events. The value of their service is inestimable in terms of dollars and cents, but the life changing impact will be eternal. It’s nearly impossible to



go into an LCMS congregation and not find someone who has attended a Gathering. They will tell you about their favorite event, a speaker or the impression of the magnitude and size of their church when they took communion with thousands of other young Lutherans. Their smiles brighten and their eyes twinkle when they share their Gathering experiences.

Systemically, the NYG movement has been a “leadership university,” providing extensive training and experience for those involved in the planning process. Lay people, pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, deaconesses and other volunteers have given their time and energy to create NYG events and activities that have been on the cutting edge of ministry, but always faithfully communicating the Gospel and God’s overwhelming love for His people in Jesus Christ.

Once the Gathering is over the planners return to their churches, schools, jobs and communities strengthened in their faith and stronger in their skills thanks to their Gathering experience.

I suspect if we brought together all those NYG planners and volunteers we could fill an arena with 20,000 or more faithful followers of Jesus Christ!

The National Youth Gathering has detractors. Some say the resources could be better spent elsewhere. Others claim that a few weeks after an event, the youth return to their old ways and one can barely tell that they were transformed by their experience.

After the 2001 NYG, some pastors and others who felt that the event was not faithful to Lutheran teachings and doctrines got together to organize and stage

alternative regional gatherings.

This group continues its efforts despite the fact the LCMS in convention decreed that all NYG worship experiences must be reviewed and approved by the Commission on Worship, and all keynote speakers, workshop leaders and presenters must be cleared through the Office of the LCMS President. All music and all Bible studies must be approved by the LCMS Doctrinal Review system.

Seems to me we have ample official filters to guarantee that the event is thoroughly Lutheran. A host of pastors and other rostered church workers do the NYG planning with the most honorable goal of providing youth a faith-building, spiritually uplifting and inspiring experience that will help equip them to live out their faith in vibrant ways once they return home.

I have been active in the NYG movement since 1983 as a participant, program team member, convention center director and

ultimately as the first full-time director. I cannot begin to count the blessings that the Gathering has brought to my life and that of my family including the huge family of friends and coworkers that I have been blessed to know and serve with over the years.

Most important is the sense of fulfillment in serving our Church’s youth by providing a rich, inspirational faith-building experience that they will carry the rest of their lives. My journey of faith and life have been touched beyond measure through this effort, and I count myself as deeply blessed and fortunate to have been called by God to serve in this manner.

With all of those who have attended or worked on an LCMS National Youth Gathering, I humbly proclaim – “To Him be the glory and honor, both now and forevermore!”



Photos from far left to right:

Kyle Weidner (12 years old), Cathy Weidner, and Emily Weidner (8 years old) in the Red Rocks Amphitheater parking lot prior to the arrival of a severe and sudden thunder storm with wind and hail that shut down the event and impacted an audience of nearly 10,000 NYG participants.

The Weidner Family with key leaders of the 1992 LCMS National Youth Gathering at the Omni Royal Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana. L to R: Jim Lohman (Experiential Director), Dr. LeRoy Wilke (Executive Director of LCMS Youth Ministry), David Weidner (Convention Center Director), Cathy Weidner, Randy Gervais (Royal AV President and Gathering contractor). In foreground: Andrea Lohman (Gathering Office Assistant), Emily Weidner

Rev. Mark Kiessler (NYG Director), Rev. Cris Escher (Florida-Georgia son now serving as Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Bentonville, AR), Rev. Dr. Terry K. Dittmer (Director of LCMS Youth Ministry)



BOARDROOM

Frank Marshall Returns To District Board of Directors

Meeting in Orlando on January 18 and 19, the Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors unanimously appointed Rev. Frank Marshall as Vice President for Region 2. Marshall previously served on the Board as a pastoral representative. He replaces Rev. Dr. John Roth, who recently began his service as Estero, FL, church planter.

Marshall served as pastor of St. Paul-Jacksonville before his retirement several years ago. He is now the 5th Vice President of the District.



During the meeting, the Board approved ratification of constitutions for:

- ◆ St. Mark/Tucker, GA
- ◆ St. Michael/Fort Myers, FL
- ◆ St. Peter's/Middleburg, FL.

The Vice Presidents shared updates from their regions.



Region 1 – David Brighton

- ◆ Rev. George E. Murdaugh recently retired from the church ministry at Oak Road Lutheran Church. The pastoral vacancy is being served by Rev. Gary Dehnke.
- ◆ Good Shepherd-Gainesville is building a family life center.
- ◆ Rev. Greg Michael will be helping teach for LISA in Thailand.
- ◆ Rev. Dr. Rick Carlton has accepted a one-year tenured call at King of Kings-Jasper.



Region 2 – Greg Walton

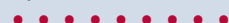
- With Dr. Roth having accepted the call to another region and Rev. Marshall just appointed, there was no Vice President to report on Region 2. President Walton shared this news.
- ◆ Amazing Grace-Oxford is planning a new facility.
- ◆ There is a pastoral vacancy at Holy Cross-Jacksonville.



Newly appointed Florida-Georgia District Second Vice President from Region 2 Rev. Frank Marshall (right) talks with Rev. Dr. Bryant Clancy at the Black Clergy Caucus at Concordia Alabama in early February.

Region 3 – Brian Kneser

- ◆ Rev. Craig Boehlke is the new pastor at Redeemer-Melbourne.
- ◆ Good Shepherd-Titusville has launched Rebecca's Garden of Hope tutoring and mentoring program.
- ◆ Risen Savior-Palm Bay has started an outreach effort called "Consecrated Visits."
- ◆ Trinity-Orlando is planning to build a Child Development Center.
- ◆ Woodlands-Montverde has begun a year of 25th anniversary celebrations.



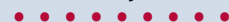
Region 4 – Jim Guelzow

- ◆ Rev. Paul Zimmermann of First-Clearwater will retire April 17.
- ◆ Rev. Bob Stienke is working with Messiah-Tampa to fulfill requirements to be an intentional interim pastor.
- ◆ Beautiful Savior-Sarasota hosted an Equipping to Share workshop on February 9.



Region 5 – Steve Wipperman

- ◆ Redeemer-Stuart is exploring possibility of starting a lay ministry program and establishing a satellite location.
- ◆ The Haitian population is growing rapidly in Circuit 20, where three Haitian and one black congregation are served by pastors who have fulltime secular jobs. The Circuit is investigating visitation circuits – grouped by commonality – that will bring the Haitian churches together.
- ◆ Faith-Clewiston is celebrating 60 years of ministry.



Other Board News

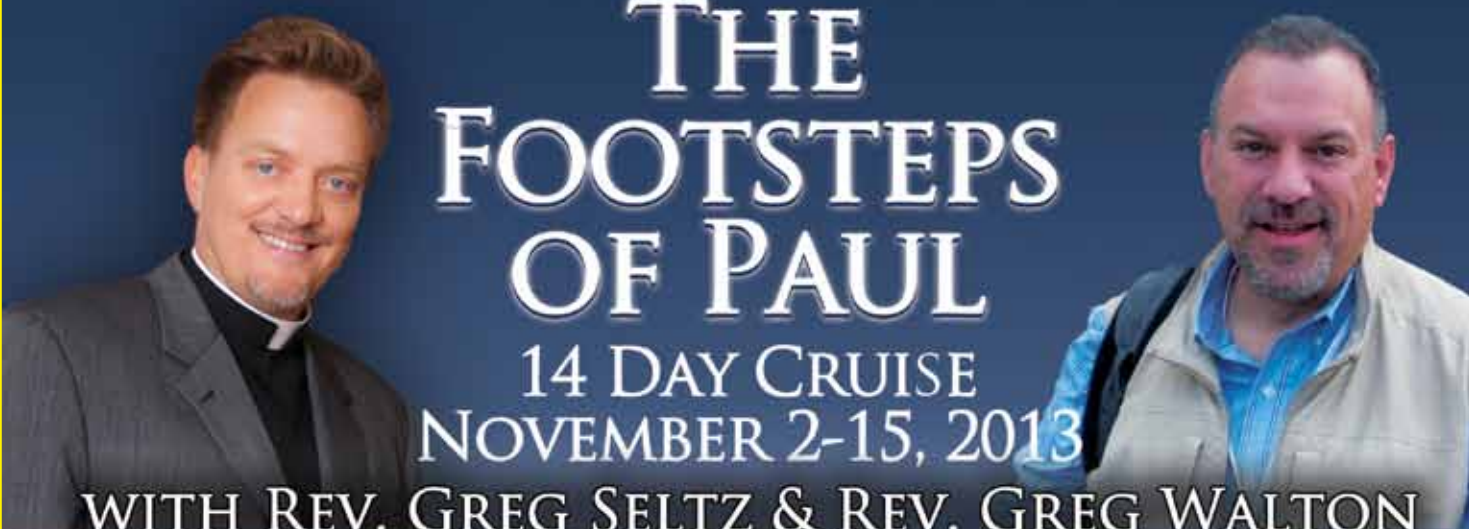
President Walton reported that Living Water Lutheran-Sanford, FL, has closed. Its pastor, Rev. Chris Bodley, accepted a call to serve in Michigan. A number of Living Water members will return to Our Savior-Orlando.

Walton discussed retirement trends in the LCMS. In the Florida-Georgia District, several pastors will retire soon — and five had recently retired at the time of the meeting.

"Clergy in Florida-Georgia is aging," he said, encouraging the Board to "think strategically about how we fill the vacancies that are coming up at a higher rate." Walton shared that he would be speaking with the District Presidium and Circuit Counselors to obtain a better understanding of the trend.

The Board approved the new work plan for the fiscal year, which included expenses projected at 97% of actual costs from last year. Giving to the national LCMS increased to 14% in keeping with the resolution to go up one percentage point annually until reaching 20%.

The Board will meet via teleconference on April 12 and again in Orlando August 30-31. ■



THE FOOTSTEPS OF PAUL

14 DAY CRUISE NOVEMBER 2-15, 2013

WITH REV. GREG SELTZ & REV. GREG WALTON

11/2 Depart U.S.A.

11/3 Barcelona, Spain / Embark

11/4 Cannes, France

11/5 Florence / Pisa, Italy

11/6 Rome, Italy

11/7 At Sea – Rev. Seltz Lectures

11/8 At Sea – Rev. Seltz Lectures

11/9 Athens & Corinth, Greece

11/10 Ephesus, Turkey

11/11 Santorini, Greece

11/12 At Sea – Rev. Seltz Lectures

11/13 Naples & Pompeii, Italy

11/14 At Sea – Rev. Seltz Lectures

11/15 Barcelona / Disembark

Worship services to be conducted by Rev. Walton.

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Clergy Scholarships and other benefits available for group leaders.

LWML 35th Biennial Convention Set for June

By Trish Aamoth, District LWML Vice President for Communications

Pittsburgh — WOW!

Plans are well under way for the 35th Biennial Lutheran Women's Missionary League Convention.

Now it's time for you to begin making your plans to attend! Block out time on your calendar for June 27-30, 2013, to travel to Pittsburgh for a weekend filled with excitement and inspiration.

The theme for this convention — **"Quenched! by the Water"** — is based on John 4:16 where Jesus says, "... but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

A special worship service has been designed by Dr. Dien Taylor, First Vice President of the Atlantic District of the LCMS, to kick off the convention on Thursday evening. Dr. Taylor will also serve as the proclaimer for this service.



Inspired! Uplifted! Quenched!

Just a few of the many benefits you'll receive by attending.

Dr. LuJuana Butts, educator and author, is sure to inspire and uplift with her keynote message of encouragement. Dr. Butts has been a professor of education at Concordia College- Alabama, Concordia University-Chicago and Concordia College-New York.

Be quenched by the Word in soul-stirring Bible studies led by Donna Pyle, founder of Artesian Ministries. Donna has partnered with LWML on the DVD-based Bible study, *Your Strong Suit*, and authored *The God of All Comfort*, a Bible study recently released by Concordia Publishing House.

Don't know what to do with the kids? Bring them along! Camp Kidsburgh will be fully staffed and ready to host children from 6 months to 17 years of age.

Look for additional registration details and all the exciting



Quenched! by the Water convention activities on LWML's website at www.lwml.org/conventions or in the Winter Issue of the Lutheran Woman's Quarterly. ■

2013 Florida-Georgia District Retreat

"As the deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God." Psalm 42:1

The Atlanta North, East Central Georgia and Northeast Georgia zones invite ALL the ladies of the Florida-Georgia District to The Lodge at Simpsonwood on the banks of the Chattahoochee River in Norcross, GA, the weekend of September 27-29, 2013. Scarlett and Pitty Pat will be on hand with lots of Southern hospitality! Registration forms and information, as well as a retreat flyer, will be published in the 2013 Spring Evangel and posted on the website, flgalwml.com, on February 20.



LHM Evangelism Workshop Equips Participants to Share Gospel

A special report by Shirley Wild, Evangelism Chairperson for Beautiful Savior-Sarasota

Jesus has commissioned us to bring the Gospel to all nations and we learned how to share the Gospel to those who are living without the light of Christ!

75... yes, 75... men and women attended a fantastic Lutheran Hour Ministries workshop entitled "MissionU101: Equipping to Share - Everyday Evangelism" on February 9. The Beautiful Savior-Sarasota fellowship hall was overflowing with interested and enthusiastic people desiring to learn how to reach out to those around us who might not know about Jesus.

Seasoned and knowledgeable presenters from Lutheran Hour Ministries Carolyn and Irwin Kranawetter from Illinois were our presenters. They have been involved in LHM MissionU for many years. Their experiences just flowed out to us through their life experiences as they guided us through the various sections of the workshop.



The Beautiful Savior-Sarasota fellowship hall was filled for the workshop.

We identified obstacles and how to overcome them to be able to share our faith, and discuss the importance of prayer in everyday evangelism.

to be a Christian witness during times of crisis. We also learned how to personalize our witness by utilizing Scripture to be ready to respond to a given situation.



We explored the mission we have been given, the message we are to carry forth, and the privileged role God has assigned us.

We looked at everyday opportunities for sharing Christ. We learned to identify a person's worldview in order to connect with his or her heart. We discussed the importance of being Spirit-led to be an effective witness.

We focused on how we could witness within long-term relationships to family members and friends as well as how

A huge thank you to all who attended our first venture into the MissionU education

workshop. I have already received some feedback from one participant. Because of this class and the information presented, she was able to reach out to strangers while in the waiting room of a local hospital. She could see they were hurting and had overheard that they were new to the area. In normal conversation, she was able to refer them to Pastor by handing them a Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church business card. She told me that if she had not heard this simple "reaching out" method, she would have been afraid to do this simple act of witnessing. Could you have done the same? ■



Trinity-New Port Richey Transforms Office Space to Worship Space

Families who went to the Longleaf sales office to learn about the New Port Richey, FL, community are now among those stepping inside to worship.

"It's a unique, great opportunity," said Rev. Marc Nauman, pastor of Trinity Lutheran, the mission worshipping in the former sales office. Trinity is the only church building in the young community.

"The developer saw the value in having a church that is solidly conservative as part of the neighborhood," Nauman said. "We said we wanted to share the Gospel, be a part of the community and help out with folks and their needs."



With the support of two LCEF loans, Trinity purchased a one-third acre lot and is building a 1,750-square-foot multipurpose center (above) that will more than double the worship capacity. The building also includes two classrooms and a large narthex.

Faith-New Port Richey in 2002 planted the mission church in a growing unincorporated area called Trinity. The Trinity congregation has grown to more than 100 members, including young families, retirees and "snowbirds."

Trinity reaches out via several ministries: a "Pioneer" youth group for elementary school students, TLC health ministry with a registered nurse hosting mini clinics, a soup kitchen where members volunteer and provide support in partnership with an independent Christian organization in a nearby, needier area.

"They aren't very big, but they are very forward-thinking and really doing things that will not only help their church grow but will help the community," said Mary Byrd, LCEF Florida-Georgia consultant who worked with the congregation.

Dan Reichard, District LCEF Vice President, sees "a good situation [at Trinity] getting better where space constraints will not be a roadblock to spreading the Gospel.

"As with any of the 200 churches in the District, it brings me great happiness to use the resources of LCEF to assist congregations in spreading the saving name of Jesus," said Reichard.

Long-range plans include purchasing more land so the congregation can add a sanctuary. Once again, Trinity expects to partner with LCEF. Nauman says he appreciates knowing that the money Trinity borrows is helping other ministries build and expand. "It's not about loaning us money," the pastor said of LCEF. "It's about furthering the Gospel."

Supporting Your Ministry Needs with LCEF Lending

The needs for your ministry loans vary, but the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) mission stays the same.

No matter the loan size, LCEF's loan specialists have the expertise and understanding to see you through the lending process with ease.

- Roof repair
- Energy efficiency updates
- Electrical maintenance
- Building expansion
- Heating and cooling updates



Learn more about your new or next LCEF loan—no matter the size—today. lcef.org

 Lutheran Church Extension Fund
Florida-Georgia District

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

An LCEF Congregation Representative is a visible, local LCEF presence in his/her home congregation. Congregation Reps are the vital link and communication conduit that promote the LCEF Ministry at the local level. We currently have congregations that are served by these "LCEF Ambassadors."

We want to increase this number! How about you?

Congregation Representatives are NOT expected to develop a detailed knowledge of all LCEF products and services, but they can be most helpful to their congregation by understanding how LCEF might be of assistance in various situations: borrowing, building, investing and other congregation planning activities.

All congregations are encouraged to identify an LCEF Congregation Representative or Co-Representatives. Congregation Reps will receive their main support from the Florida-Georgia District LCEF staff members as applicable.

Why Does LCEF Need Congregation Representatives?

In an effort to be good stewards, LCEF strives to keep its expense at less than 1% of its total assets. This would not be possible without the Congregation Representatives Network. LCEF relies heavily upon our Congregation Reps to get the word out about LCEF investment opportunities and to encourage LCMS members to invest in LCEF.

Role of Congregation Representatives

1. Raise congregational awareness of LCEF's role in the overall ministry of the LCMS.
2. Inform people of the various opportunities for investing in, or giving through, LCEF.
3. Communicate regularly how LCEF may be of assistance to members of your congregation.
4. Refer your congregation and its members to either the Florida-Georgia District LCEF or an LCEF information rep at the National office when a question arises.
5. Help facilitate various LCEF awareness programs at your congregation at the request of the District LCEF staff.
6. Pray for God's guidance as you continue your volunteer ministry to LCEF and for the needs and blessings of your pastor, church workers and lay leaders.

Join the LCEF Team!

Special Events at Your Congregation

Please keep us informed of special events (anniversary celebrations, dedications, ministry fairs) coming up in your congregation. We are always excited to attend and share in the joy and perhaps even say a few words of appreciation and encouragement.

For a more focused approach, we would love to schedule a LCEF Sunday event at your congregation and share the LCEF story.

If you are interested in becoming a Congregation Representative, please contact us:

Debbie Talbott, Administrative Assistant
Email: dtalbott@flga-lcms.org
Phone: Toll free 877-457-5556 ext 4

Daniel J. Reichard, District Vice President LCEF
Email: dreichard@flga-lcms.org



www.facebook.com/lutheranchurchextensionfund



Clarity for Ministry... The VisionPath Process

Discover the clarity you need to embrace God's vision for your ministry.

A one-time, half-day VisionPath event at your site will be guided by a trained Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) facilitator. Your members will focus on questions such as "Why are we here?" and "What is the greatest point of connection between us and our community?"

Through questions like these and facilitated discussion, your ministry's VisionPath team will:

- Refine and communicate a clear direction.
- Develop strategies and approaches consistent with a clear direction.
- Conduct an optional Covenant Event, inviting all members to join, commit and celebrate the renewed vision.

Your LCEF facilitator will stay in contact, offering encouragement and support, helping to ensure your ministry's plan remains straight and clear.

For more information contact:
Lutheran Church Extension Fund
10733 Sunset Office Drive, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63127-1020. 800-843-5233
Lcef.org ■



Revitalization Summit Focuses on Building Bridges

By Rev. Ron Biel, Florida-Georgia Transforming Congregations Network Coach/Consultant

On Saturday, February 16, more than 100 pastors and leaders from 25 congregations spread along Florida's western coast (Circuits 11-17) assembled for a Revitalization Summit.

Dr. Terry Tieman of Transforming Churches Network from Memphis was the main presenter.

Tieman began with an introduction stating the tremendous need for churches to be revitalized, re-energized across the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and right here in Florida-Georgia. He gave many examples of how some churches have turned the corner.

His two afternoon presentations focused on “Building Bridges to Your Community” – and why and how congregations might go about doing that. Without a bridge to reach them, most will never hear the salvation message we have to share.

Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton was also on hand and shared that Revitalization is indeed one of the main goals of our District during this triennium. He also illustrated that we have learned much in the past four years.

Aspects of Revitalization may be very different for various congregations. Three congregational leaders from our own District congregations spoke of how outreach into their communities with the love of Christ is taking place in dramatic fashion, by meeting specific needs within those communities. Each of the speakers revealed a passion for their respective ministries.

◆ Nancy Volz of Our Savior-Plantation demonstrated how the congregation has gained a whole new focus and is becoming alive and respected by the people in their area.

◆ From the perspective of a mission congregation, Amazing Grace-Oxford, Pastor James Rockey reiterated that the “mission” aspect will always be their focus as they seek to engage the community and its needs. They will always be “in mission.”

◆ Grace-Port St. Lucie discovered a huge, unaddressed need existed: the community of Port St. Lucie had little identity. So, as Pastor Gene Johnson elaborated, getting leaders together from the community itself became a target. They quickly addressed this situation and became instrumental in bringing leaders together monthly. They have earned the community's respect. Now, some are also learning about God's Grace, and Grace Lutheran.

After the Summit, several congregations expressed a desire to learn more. Revs. Scott Gress and Ron Biel will be in contact with them to share possible avenues on how they too might “build bridges into their communities.” It is challenging work, but it can provide a congregation with a concrete vision of how they might begin to reach more of the lost in their communities with the news of Jesus their Savior.

This first Revitalization Summit will be followed by two or three others around the District. The District's Revitalization Team will alert you to further opportunities of this nature. Participant evaluations revealed that virtually everyone left the day-long event encouraged, excited, and committed. They want to learn more and take home some fresh ideas. They desire that their congregation become a “vital” tool for Jesus with the people who surround them. ■

Below: Rev. Terry Tieman addresses participants of the first Florida-Georgia Revitalization Summit.



In the fall of 2011, Hope Lutheran was a three-year-old mission church that had lost its drive to succeed.

Since its plant, all the usual things had been tried to bring in new members: direct mail, canvassing adjacent neighborhoods, sponsoring a car show, “Christmas on the Green” and so on. It seemed that nothing we tried did much to further the spread of God's Word and Grace.

At that time, Hope consisted



of a handful of seasoned citizens with a desire to share the Gospel, but feeling defeated by the many failures, we were no longer enthused about fulfilling the mission for which the church was established. That's when we stumbled upon – or God led us – to a thing called Lifetree Café.

Lifetree Café is a franchised “Conversation Café” where people meet weekly for stimulating conversation about life and faith in a cozy, coffee-house like environment. Each week, the guided conversation is about a different topic that is making news today. Each discussion is guided towards a brief statement or two about what the Bible and/or Christ has to say about the topic at hand.

Here at last was a way to reach out and share the love of God in a way that is non-threatening. It is something that is unique and

ongoing so we can get regular (and free) publicity. It can attract the “text me” generation who hungers for meaningful, non-confrontational conversations. It can attract the unchurched and the de-churched, and it is an exciting thing for our whole congregation to be involved in.

We found that it is much easier to get a friend or acquaintance to come to a discussion about Inside Terrorism, Living after a Suicide or other such topics than it is to get them to church or Bible Study. Once people are there, the guided conversation process is ready made

for Christians to share their stories of faith and God's love with those at their table.

The dimly lit atmosphere, filled with small tables of three or four people sharing interesting stories about

themselves, their lives and their faith is where the Holy Spirit works to soften the hearts of those present and to bring them into a closer relationship with God.

Lifetree Café Experience Reignites Mission Church

By George Treiber, Director, Lifetree Café @ Hope Jacksonville

Lifetree Café is all about developing, deepening and sustaining each individual's relationship with our Lord.

So, how well does it work? At our very first event, we had a young, shy Muslim (non-practicing) man attend. He sat and listened – didn't talk. (That's ok; at Lifetree Café, you're welcome just as you are. Your thoughts are welcome, your doubts are welcome, we're



all in this together. God is here to touch you in a fresh way.) He kept returning, week after week, and began to talk – a little at first, but then more and more.

He came to church on Sunday a few times and then quit coming. We found out that he was attending another church where his friends went. His friends had tried and tried to get him to come to church to no avail, but the Holy Spirit working through Lifetree Café had brought him to faith in Christ. That young man has joined that church and is also a regular at our Lifetree Café events.

We have had atheists, Jews, Muslims, Christians of all denominations attend – few experience a “revelation” or “transformation” at Lifetree

Café, but all leave feeling better about themselves and the friendly people they met. Most return again and again to further their journey of faith. ■

For more information visit www.LTCHopeJAX.com or www.facebook.com/LTCHopeJAX.



Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Commits Nearly \$7 Million in 2013 to Habitat for Humanity International

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will commit \$6.8 million in 2013 to help build 113 Habitat for Humanity houses across the United States. Through a unique partnership — *Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity* — Thrivent Financial and its members have committed more than \$180 million and more than 3.5 million volunteer hours since 2005. Thrivent Financial is the largest non-governmental supporter of Habitat for Humanity International.

“This partnership reflects our commitment as a membership organization to building stronger communities,” said Brad Hewitt, president and CEO of Thrivent Financial. “This support helps make a difference not only in the lives of people who need safe, affordable housing, but also in the lives of our member volunteers who have been inspired to help people in need.”

The partnership consists of three programs with Habitat for

Humanity: Thrivent Builds Homes, Thrivent Builds Worldwide and Thrivent Builds Repairs. These programs allow Thrivent Financial to partner with Habitat and low-income families in the construction, repair and rehabilitation of affordable housing in communities in the United States and abroad. More than 2,900 homes have been built in the USA and around the world with Thrivent Builds.

“We are deeply grateful for Thrivent Financial’s partnership and steadfast commitment to decent, affordable housing around the world,” said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. “Working together since 2005, Habitat and Thrivent have engaged volunteers to help thousands of families improve their homes and their communities.”

The programs allow volunteers to pick their level of commitment, from week(s)-long international builds to a few hours with a Thrivent Builds Repairs project in their own community.

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 2,900 homes in the U.S. and around the world since 2005. ■

NATIONAL NEWS

Linda Kirk New Lutheran Haven Executive

Linda Kirk is the new Chief Executive Officer of Lutheran Haven. She most recently was Executive Director of Winter Park Towers-Orlando as well as Regional Vice President Central Florida Operations. In 18 years with the Westminster Communities she held a number of executive positions.

Mrs. Kirk, who began her career in senior care in 1974, has significant experience and success in retirement center campus master planning and construction. She holds a Master’s degree in Gerontology and is a licensed Nursing Home Administrator. She is active in senior living professional organizations, has published several articles and made presentations at national conferences. Mrs. Kirk has served on various college, hospital and community organization committees.

Mrs. Kirk has taken 14 mission trips and did volunteer relief work following Hurricane Katrina. ■

New Ministry for the Deaf

St. Martin Lutheran International School for the Deaf in Hartland, MI, plans to open in the Fall of 2013 with a minimum enrollment of 10-15 deaf students. Applications are now being accepted.

A private residential school for deaf students from kindergarten through 12th grade, St. Martin will be a bilingual/bicultural school.

According to the school’s web site, “reading and writing will be fundamental to all we do at St. Martin. The ability to read, write and understand the English language is crucial for success not only in all academic areas, but also throughout life. St. Martin’s will equip the student to succeed in these areas.”

For more information about St. Martin, visit www.smlid.org or contact school officials at info@smlid.org; 248-980-5741; or 13667 West Highland Road, Hartland, MI 48353. ■

Congregation Health Ministry Grant Proposals Due April 16

Applicants have until April 16 to submit proposals for Wheat Ridge Ministries’ Congregation Health Ministry (CHM) Grant Program.

The program enables ministry leaders to move inspired whole person health and wellness ideas into action within congregations and their communities through \$2,000 matching grants. These one-year grants for new and innovative health ministry programs are open to Lutheran congregations and organizations they partner with to become centers of health and hope in their community.

Quality proposals focusing on anti-violence themes will receive preference in the 2013 Congregational Health Ministry grant cycle. This preference will not exclude other quality proposals from consideration.

Grant proposals are due by April 16, 2013 with funds to be distributed by June 15, 2013. Application materials are available for download on the Wheat Ridge website – www.wheatridge.org. For more information contact Wheat Ridge Ministries at grants@wheatridge.org or at 800.762.6748. ■

LutherHostel Information Available

LutherHostel 2013 will be held October 5-8 on the campus of Concordia Seminary-St. Louis under the theme “Joyfully Aging.” The main presenter will be Dr. Richard Bimler, whose most recent book — *Celebrating God’s Gift of Aging* — was published in summer 2012.

LutherHostel is an event designed to provide growth in biblical knowledge and understanding, fun and fellowship, and a chance to gain helpful insights for daily living. It is offered for adults age 55 and older.



Scheduled activities for LutherHostel 2013 include a reception and dinner with Seminary President and Mrs. Dale A. Meyer, presentations, class visitation, student-led evening devotions, opportunities for informal interaction with faculty, a private demonstration of the organ in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus and a tour of selected St. Louis area sites.

An optional tour of Lutheran historical sites in Perry County is available on October 9 immediately following LutherHostel. ■

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.

REPAIRS

Thrivent Builds
with Habitat for Humanity



Let’s thrive. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

ST. PAUL PEACHTREE EXPANDS MINISTRY

Dr. Joel Dietrich was installed as Minister of Families and Children St. Paul Church & School-Peachtree City on January 27.

Dietrich will lead St. Paul members into new and substantial ways of discovering God's prescribed plan for passing on faith through the home with parents as the primary teachers.

He most recently served as Minister of Families and Youth at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Springfield, VA. A 1997 graduate of the DCE program at Concordia University Irvine, Dietrich earned his Master of Science in Family Life from Concordia University Seward in 2003 and his Doctor of Ministry from George Fox Evangelical Seminary-Portland in 2009.

"I've known Joel for 30 years," said David Weidner, Executive Assistant to District President Greg Walton. "I couldn't have been more proud today to stand with Joel at this important juncture in his ministry career."

Dietrich and his wife Pamela have four children: Aden, 5; Eric and Samantha, 3; and Seth, 11 months.

Shown above at the installation are (l-r) David Weidner with Eric Dietrich, Pamela, Seth, Samantha, Joel and Aden Dietrich and Rev. Dan Schepmann. ■



EXPANDING THE FAMILY OF GOD— Trinity Lutheran-Summerfield increased by 49 people at its quarterly New Member Sunday on November 11, 2012, including 12 people who joined by Adult Confirmation. Trinity has celebrated 57 adult confirmations and six adult baptisms since moving into the new sanctuary early in 2011. ■

Y Y Y Y Y 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



CADET JEFFREY KNUTSON, United States Military Academy at West Point, was one of 90 cadets selected to march in the 57th Inauguration Parade. He was the valedictorian of the Class of 2010 of The Orlando Lutheran Academy and is a member of St. John-Ocala, where his father Jeff is principal and mother Francesca teaches fourth grade. ■

Y Y Y Y Y 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
 Commissioned 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



NEW MEMBERS —

Mt. Calvary-Warner Robins welcomed 35 new members last year, some of whom are pictured below left with Jerry Bisping, Director of Christian Outreach, back left, and Pastor David Brighton, back right. The new members are, in large part, the result of the efforts of the evangelism calling ministry at Mt. Calvary. Each person who attends a worship service receives a visit from one of the Mt. Calvary evangelism teams on Monday night, the day after the Sunday worship. The evangelism team then sends a postcard following the visit, and all guests receive a personal note from Brighton the same week. "This process has proved very successful in encouraging visitors to come back a second time and to think about joining Mt. Calvary's church family," Brighton reported. "The evangelism teams have also shared the Gospel with many, many visitors to Mt. Calvary and have rejoiced to see many come to faith in Jesus." ■



THE CHURCH ON THE HILL

— Peace-Dunnellon hosted its 22nd annual Potato Pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday, February 12. Bud Koehlinger was one of the members who kept beverages re-filled at the popular event. The ladies of Peace are preparing for the annual rummage sale on April 13. This sale is a huge event, attended by residents of Dunnellon and surrounding communities each year. ■

REGION 4 CELEBRATES SUPER BOWL SUNDAY INSTALLATION OF JOHN ROTH—

Rev. Dr. John Roth was installed as campus ministry pastor and Estero Mission Church Planter on February 3. Attending were (front, l-r) Kevin Koenig Marco-Marco Island; Distirct Outreach Executive Douglas Kallesen; Paul Koepchen, retired; John, Justin, Lisa and Emma Roth; President Gregory Walton; Carl Zarte, retired; Maggie Bowles, of the District Board of Directors; (middle, l-r) Gerald Lawson, Good Shepherd-N. Fort Myers; Circuit Counselor Jon Zehnder; Aaron Neugebauer, Beautiful Savior-Lehigh Acres; Dennis Lebich, Peace-Naples; Fred Kohler, retired; Juan Gonzalez, Hope-Bonita Springs; Keith Lynch, Grace-Naples; Richard Browning, Hope-Bonita Springs; (back, l-r) Nickolas Moskovites, Christ the King-La Belle; Robert Selle, Amigos in Cristos; Charles Kanefke, Trinity-Cape Coral; Richard Miller, retired; Peter Weeks, Zion-Fort Myers; Darrell Stuehrenberg, Bethlehem-Fort Myers ■



BACK-TO-SCHOOL BACKPACKS—

Each year for the past 10 years, Our Savior-Zephyrhills has collected funds for school supplies for needy children. Last year as in the past, the funds collected were matched by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

The program began in 2002 with the collection of school supplies which were delivered to the Community Care Center for distribution. As the concept caught on and other churches in the Zephyrhills area became involved, the program blossomed. Today, many of the churches are still involved, but each focuses on a specific need and is assigned different schools.

Our Savior has concentrated on backpacks for elementary school children. “We have been blessed to be able to help out in a meaningful way,” said Pastor Clarence Reinke, Jr., shown above right with (l-r) Wendy Lane, Zephyrhills West Elementary School and Charlene Tidd, Assistant Principal. ■



LSF HONORS DISTRICT VOLUNTEERS

Lutheran Services Florida honored volunteers from ten Lutheran churches in Central Florida at its seventh annual Good Samaritan Awards hosted by Prince of Peace-Orlando.

LSF presents the award to exceptional volunteers “whose faith is an extension beyond the usual and normal activities of their life and is an expression of the love of God through helping others.”

Honored were:

- Omar and Gladys Dittmer, Trinity-Orlando;
- Ed and Marge Estes, Prince of Peace-Orlando;
- Frank Kipp, Holy Cross-Lake Mary;
- Lynn McClure, Hope-Orlando.

The dinner was sponsored by Lutheran Services Florida and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Lutheran Services Florida is a statewide, nonprofit human services agency dedicated to helping all people in need regardless of religious affiliation, age or national origin. Headquartered in Tampa, the agency has more than 60 programs located throughout Florida. Since it was established in 1982, LSF has helped more than 900,000 children and families. ■

CONCORDIA-SARASOTA on October 28, 2012, hosted a circuit-wide Reformation Service attended by almost 400 worshipers. Circuit clergy shared the liturgy and served communion; Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton preached. A 40-voice choir comprised of members from almost every Circuit church sang a rousing call to worship, *God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage*, accompanied by an organ and a brass quartet, as well as *Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word*, *The First Song of Isaiah* and *Built on the Rock* sung during the service. Jim Herre, organist and choir director of Beautiful Savior-Sarasota, directed the choir; Norm Vagn, Director of Music at Beautiful Savior, directed the brass choir; and Johnora Hildebrand of Concordia provided organ accompaniment. An October-fest style meal was served by the ladies of Concordia after the service. An um-pah band added to the ambiance. ■



WINTER LESSONS — Students at Lutheran Child Development Center-Port Charlotte has been studying winter. To help them understand the cold, they played with ice cubes, made snow angels in the mulch, skated on pieces of waxed paper and tried on mittens. They talked about animals that hibernate, then took turns hibernating in a makeshift cave. The children threw pieces of styrofoam egg cartons into the air to simulate snow. Lastly they put on a white sock on one hand and a black sock on the other and stood in the sun. “They quickly found out that if you want to stay warmer in the cold weather you should wear black rather than white,” said Director Karla Kemerling. ■

Y Y Y Y Y REGION 3 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. Dr. Brian Kneiser | Woodlands/Montverde
 Board Treasurer: Ms. Renee Varga | Woodlands/Montverde
 Laity Board Member: Mr. Jon Brazee | Christ/Cape Canaveral
 Laity Board Member: Ms. Sonia Tellez | Prince of Peace/Orlando
 Commissioned Minister Board Member: Lois Ford | Faith/Eustis
 Space Coast Circuit Counselor: Rev. Gary Held | Risen Savior/Palm Bay
 Orlando East Circuit Counselor: Rev. Jeffery Moore | Trinity/Orlando
 Orlando West Circuit Counselor: Rev. Dr. Milan Weerts | Emeritus/Clermont
 Winter Haven Circuit Counselor: Rev. Dean Pfeffer | Hope/Plant City



BURYING THE “ALLELUIA” – Because of the penitential character of Lent, singing or saying the word “alleluia” has historically been suspended during the season’s 40 days. Members of Trinity-Orlando gather around Pastor Jeff Moore on February 13 for the annual congregational event of burying the Alleluia. It will be brought back on Easter morning. ■

GRACE NAPLES HOSTS A TEXMEX DINNER

— The Youth of Grace Lutheran-Naples hosted a TEX MEX Fundraiser Dinner on January 26 to raise funds for the 2013 LCMS National Youth Gathering in San Antonio. The evening included festive Tex Mex food, silent auction, kids cake walk, picture slideshow and Texas themed video spoof by the youth.



The Youth are also sponsoring a “Kiss the Pig” Contest. All the staff members have a piggy bank with their name on it; whoever has the most money put in their bank by the congregation by March has to kiss a pig! Grace has 14 people attending the NYG this summer. ■

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. Rosseter Leavitt | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota
 SW Circuit Counselor: Rev. Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers



20 YEARS OF JOY —

February 10 was a day of celebration at St. Paul-Weston as more than 550 worshipers gathered for a special service in honor of Preschool Director Laurie Hartner and 20 years of education ministry. Many alumni and former teachers were among those in attendance.

“We raised more than \$10,000 to be used to build a Pavilion in Gonaives, Haiti,” reported Jane Schmidt, Preschool Communication Coordinator. “The celebration and special offering were a surprise to Laurie, as Mission Haiti is a ministry is close to her heart.” ■



REACHING OUT – Second grade students at Redeemer Lutheran School-Stuart show angels they made for dialysis patients as part of their on-going service project. “Thanks be to God for these children sharing the saving love of Christ with others,” said Amanda Duseberg, Redeemer’s second grade teacher. ■

50TH CELEBRATION —

Worshippers including alumni and former staff members filled the St. Paul-Boca Raton Family Life Center on January 27 to celebrate the school’s 50th anniversary. Principal Dr. Jeff Krempler joined St. Paul Pastor J.R. Jones on a stage decorated in the anniversary theme to discuss the blessings of the past half century. The service ended with Krempler and Assistant Principal Jan Tuminello bringing in an anniversary cake complete with sparklers. The celebration continued with an afternoon picnic.



Pictured at right are St. Paul alumnae (l-r) Amanda LaCheminant, Jackie LeFevre, Cayla Stine, Kristi Berg and Megan Saslow, performing under the direction of retired music director Fritz Kamprath. ■

Y Y Y Y Y REGION 5 CONNECTIONS

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THE Back Page

Take a “Walk in the Footsteps of Paul”

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to walk where the Apostle Paul walked? Imagine seeing the sights and learning the history about this servant of Christ in the very places where that history took place.

Let me invite you to join me for a very special cruise on the Mediterranean with Rev. Gregory Seltz, the speaker for Lutheran Hour Ministry, November 2-15, 2013. This journey will transform your faith life as you see the Bible come to life and visit many of the places that are referenced in Paul’s Epistles in the New Testament. This is a way to be better equipped to share the joy of your faith in Jesus as did Paul, the missionary.

The cruise aboard “Serenade of the Seas” begins in Barcelona, Spain, travels to Cannes, France, then to Florence and Pisa, Italy to Rome, then on to Athens and Corinth, Greece, to Ephesus, Turkey, to Santorini, Greece, and then to Naples and Pompeii, Italy, before heading back to Barcelona, Spain.

But more than just a pleasure cruise, this gathering will offer opportunities for Pastor Seltz to share more on our spiritual footsteps as well as worshipping and glorifying God as we learn and grow in God’s grace. It will be my privilege to lead the worship times, as Pastor Seltz will teach on Paul’s journey of grace and our personal journey as well. We were recently together, and we are both excited about sharing this experience with you.

All along the way professional tour guides will lead us through the sights and the insights as we walk in the footsteps of St. Paul.

For more information, check <http://flgadistrict.org/> or email me -- gwalton@flga-lcms.org

- Greg Walton



Tour coordinators for this cruise are Rev. Ron and Diane Biel, who

may be contacted at 352-399-5015 or BielTravelMinistry@gmail.com. ■

Lutheran Hour Speaker Gregory Seltz (left) and Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton will lead the “Footsteps of St. Paul” tour to the Holy Land this November 2-15.

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Please see pages 12 and 13 in this issue of Lutheran Life to learn more about VisionPath. If your ministry needs clarity, discover VisionPath today!



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