

FLORIDA GEORGIA ANNUAL REPORT

LUTHERAN LIFE

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

2013 | Volume 4

“I CAN DO ALL THINGS
THROUGH CHRIST WHO
STRENGTHENS ME.”

— *Philippians 4:13*



LUTHERAN LIFE



The Mission of the Florida-Georgia District is to serve, assist, and encourage congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ. People of the Florida-Georgia District are equipped, empowered, engaged... connecting people to Jesus. **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.

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Congregational Services, Dave Weidner

DISTRICT CAPSULES *by Greg Walton District President*

CALLING CONGREGATIONS

Bethel/Clearwater, FL Assistant/Associate
Trinity/Delray Beach, FL Associate Pastor
Zion/Fort Myers, FL Senior Pastor
Epiphany/Lake Worth, FL Sole Pastor
Marco/Marco Island, FL Assistant Pastor
Faith/New Port Richey, FL Sole Pastor
Our Redeemer/Ocala, FL Associate Pastor
Prince of Peace/Orlando, FL Senior Pastor
Faith/Sebring, FL Sole Pastor
Trinity/Summerfield, FL Associate Pastor
St. Mark/Tucker, GA Sole Pastor

CALLS ISSUED

Rev. Jonathan Horsman from Faith/
Sebring, FL, as Pastor
Rev. Daniel Thews from Zion/Fort Myers,
FL, as Pastor

CALLS ACCEPTED

Candidate Jared P. Hartman from Grace/
St Petersburg, FL, as Associate Pastor

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Michael Salemink from Faith/
New Port Richey, FL, as Pastor

TRANSFERRED OUT TO OTHER DISTRICTS

Ronda Taylor..... Kansas (C)
Sandra J. GroleauMinnesota North (C)
Scott Burmeister..... Oklahoma (O)
Daniel Prugh Southeastern (O)
William Chormann..... Northern Illinois (O)
Jennifer N. Thomas Indiana (C)
Tamara Worthington ..Pacific Southwest (C)
Megan R. Franz..... Indiana (C)
Robert C. Reinhardt.....Indiana (O)
Benjamin Haupt.....Missouri (O)
Ellen L. Porter.....Pacific Southwest (C)
Joy Lynn Reitsma..... Northern Illinois (C)
Daniel P. Czaplewski... South Wisconsin (O)
Patrick Leupold..... SELC (C)
Megan Sibley.....Oklahoma (C)
Tamara WorthingtonEnglish (C)

TRANSFERRED IN FROM OTHER DISTRICTS

Carol S. Felderman.....Ohio (C)
Lisa M. Cook Texas (C)
Russell Anderson..... Iowa West (O)
Eugene Krentz Northern Illinois (O)

ORDAINED MINISTER INITIAL ASSIGNMENT

Raleigh Norman Sims from Concordia
Seminary/St. Louis as SMP Pastor Ascension/
Casselberry, FL

COMMISSIONED MINISTER INITIAL ASSIGNMENT

Wynn T. Derong from Concordia Texas as
DCE Good Shepherd/Gainesville, GA

ORDAINED MINISTER INSTALLATIONS

6/2/2013 Donald Hinchey
as Interim Pastor at First/Gainesville, FL (O)
7/7/2013 Henry E. Baum
as Interim Pastor at Trinity/Lutz, FL (O)
7/7/2013 James G. Stoltenberg
as Interim Pastor at Lake Oconee/Eatonton, GA (O)

COMMISSIONED MINISTER INSTALLATIONS

8/19/2012 Erica L. von Ebers
as Teacher at Trinity/ Delray Beach, FL (C)

CHANGE FROM ACTIVE TO EMERITUS STATUS

5/23/2013Terry A. Steinke (C)
5/31/2013 Barbara Dorlac (C)
4/14/2013 Gilbert Kuehn (O)
4/28/2013Ronald L. Schornhorst (O)
5/12/2013 Douglas E. Fountain (O)
6/30/2013 Donald S. Roberts (O)

REMOVED FROM THE ROSTER

5/24/2013 Ms. Linda Owens
By Action of the President (C)
5/24/2013 Rev. L. James Brooks
Called to Glory (O)
6/10/2013 Rev. Christian G. Airey
Called to Glory (O)

CHANGE OF STATUS WITHIN THE DISTRICT

5/21/2013 Ms. Elizabeth F. Haney
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)
3/23/2013 Ms. Ellen K. Lewis
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)
2/27/2013 Mrs. Kathleen Jane Gerling
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)
5/31/2013 Ms. Tamara Worthington
from Active to Candidate (C)
6/7/2013 Mrs. Darla R Beckwith
from Active to Non-Candidate (C)
6/18/2013 Ms. Janet Okun
from Active to Non-Candidate (C)
2/8/2013 Mrs. Mary Zabel
from Active to Candidate (C)

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

LUTHERAN LIFE

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congregations, schools and ministries around the Florida-Georgia District and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to our pastors, teachers, vicars, deaconesses, students and parishoners. Please contact John List at 561-212-2112 or by email at LutheranLife@aol.com for more information or to discuss your sponsorship.

District Outreach Initiative Training Launches With Lutheran Hour Ministries

The Florida-Georgia District in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries will begin Phase 1 training for the Outreach Initiative (OI), starting Saturday, September 14. Based on research conducted by The Barna Group, this effort is designed to capitalize on the vast opportunities available for sharing the Gospel in the cities, towns, communities, and circles in which we live. The OI also addresses the issue of declining LCMS membership while considering the societal and cultural shifts taking place all around us.



The three sets of training sessions held at five locations in the District are intended for congregational leaders, church professionals and interested laypeople. Two of the venues will be conducted in Spanish. Additionally, there will be a five14 presentation (LHM's youth and young adult outreach program) at each of the English-speaking sessions on the first session date.

The purpose is to train laypeople to share Christ relationally. Sessions will encourage and instruct participants to be effective witnesses in and to their communities and in an online world. Each training session is five hours long; lunch is provided.

The promise of the Outreach Initiative is sensed across the board among those participating in this new and challenging initiative.

"After our initial round of introductory presentations in the Florida-Georgia District in April, we at LHM continue to be excited about the wonderful response we received from the people and congregations of the district," said Rev. Dr. Mark Larson, director of U.S. Ministries for LHM. "We are looking forward to working with such a fantastic group of people who love Christ and want to make Him known,"

For additional information on the Outreach Initiative, please go to <http://flgadistrict.org/>

Locations offering the Outreach Initiative this coming fall and winter will be
Faith/Marietta, GA
Grace/Jacksonville, FL
Grace/Winter Haven, FL
Holy Cross/North Miami, FL
Zion/Fort Myers, FL

The schedule for Outreach Initiative Training is as follows:

Session One: **The Power of One**
Saturday, September 14: 10am - 3pm
Session Two: **The Power of Some**
Saturday, October 19: 10am - 3pm
Session Three: **The Power of the Web**
Saturday, January 11: 10am - 3pm

Each of the five churches above will conduct its own OI. Spanish-speaking OIs will be offered at Grace Lutheran Church in Winter Haven and Holy Cross Lutheran Church in North Miami. There will also be five14 presentations at each of these locations on September 14 only.

The sessions feature the following topics:

Session One: Witnessing 24/7:
The Power of One — Sharing Christ One on One. Understanding the culture. Starting a conversation. Intentional relationships. Winsome invitations.

Session Two: Witnessing 24/7:
The Power of Some — Sharing Christ as a Congregation.

Putting the house in order – are you ready for company? Looking beyond the walls – bringing the church to the community. Looking outside the walls – social/spiritual ministry opportunities.

Session Three: Witnessing 24/7:
The Power of the Net — Sharing Christ Digitally. Define the net – what vehicles are available. Cast the net – creating an alluring message. Retrieve the net – moving from virtual to personal.

San Antonio... What a hot city!

The temperature climbed as 25,000 folks from across the LCMS convened for the 2013 National Youth Gathering. The theme "Live Love[d]" was a great reminder of how loved we are in Jesus Christ!

One of my favorite aspects of an NYG – beyond the energy and excitement – is the atmosphere. In one sense, it's a picture of our church at its best.

The focus was on 1 John 4:7-21, which contain some important words about our life together as God's people. John, now at an advanced age, and perhaps with acquired and experiential wisdom, writes:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as He is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

As those 25,000 youth came to understand God's love in Jesus as the source of our love, it made me realize – again – that this is a great message for the whole church. It is this very love that touched my life and opened my eyes to the potential of full-time ministry. It was the very love of Jesus that forced me to recognize my unworthiness to stand in His presence. His love made me feel guilt, shame and pain for my sin.

His love also gave me great hope and peace as His forgiveness washed over me, and I knew that my sin had been forgiven and I was free to serve Him. This is the easy part – receiving the forgiveness and love of Jesus!

What do you do when you've received such an awesome gift? John tells us, "if God so loved us, we ought to love one another." Of

course, John spoke from personal experience. He was with Jesus for His public ministry and observed the way Jesus treated others, with compassion and love.

John was in the Upper Room where Jesus instituted the Holy Supper, told of the upcoming betrayal and gave His disciples these crucial words to guide them as they survived past the crucifixion: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Imagine a world in which people lived out the words of Jesus! It seems highly unlikely. However, imagine a church which actually lived out the words of Jesus! Imagine if we operated our congregations according to the commandment of Jesus, striving to love each other as He loves us! This is NOT impossible. Jesus empowers us to love each other, not in our own strength, but in His.

So often we allow sinful pride to stand in the way of the Gospel. Whenever we allow conflict to infiltrate our ministry and impede the Gospel, whenever our agendas or desires get in the way of our proclamation of Jesus, whenever we allow sin to exist unchecked, it tells the world that we are not genuine in what we say we believe. They don't recognize that we are sinners clinging to the banner of God's grace for us in Jesus. In many cases the perception the world has of the church is real because we haven't

given a positive witness for Jesus. We must deal with the conflicts, the agendas and the sin — but in a godly way with a focus on God's Word and Spirit guiding us all along the way.

In some of the most convicting words of Scripture, John says, *We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

None of us are worthy of the beautiful gift of love we have from Jesus. None of us have the capacity to love as we are called to do. Read again the wonderful words that John shares: *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* In this alone we rejoice! God sent Jesus to teach us not only what love is, but how to love. We love best when we our love is expressed through Jesus!

So, let me get back to the NYG. Love was clearly and enthusiastically on display. You saw it as our youth, with their Florida turquoise-blue backpacks, roamed the Riverwalk. You saw it as they made their way from the events back to hotels. I observed it as I walked around the exhibit hall and encountered youth from all over the USA. (Our District had

just over 700 youth in attendance. The last mass event was in large part a Florida-Georgia production, thanks to Nate Peregoy and youth from Christ the King/Largo; Megan Miessler, Billy Brath and youth from Trinity/Orlando; and youth from St. Paul/Weston.)

I heard comments like, "I wish my church could be more like this." It can, but it takes some effort. It means that we see that church isn't about what I get, but rather what I give. It isn't about meeting my needs (Jesus did that at the Cross) but more about how we reach those who have not been connected to Jesus. Our churches should be joyful places, filled with the love of Jesus, who continues to love and forgive us, despite our many failings.

The Apostle Paul wrote, *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.* (1 Corin. 13:4-8) This is the perfect description of the church, and how we are called to live out our faith in these latter days.

Watchman Nee wrote, "Genuine spiritual knowledge lies not in wonderful and mysterious thoughts but in actual spiritual experience through union of the believer's life with truth. When a truth is unfolded by God it most naturally becomes a power in man, who then finds himself able to believe." Or: love is just a word

LIFELINES

until we put it into action.

Here's a favorite image of the fruits of the Spirit from Donald Grey Barnhouse: "Love is the key. Joy is love singing. Peace is love resting. Long-suffering is love enduring. Kindness is love's touch. Goodness is love's character. Faithfulness is love's habit. Gentleness is love's self-forgetfulness. Self-control is love holding the reins." May these fruits infect our churches and fill us with love—love for Jesus, and love for each other. Live in that love. Let Jesus guide your thoughts and actions. Live loved! ■



A FELLOW
SINNER-SAINT IN THE
GRACIOUS HANDS OF
JESUS, *Greg*

Youth Gathering: a Powerful Representation of Living Love[d]!

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only son into the world, so that we might live through him. —1 John 4:9



By Kate Schnake
St. Paul/Boca Raton, Florida

The theme of the 2013 LCMS National Youth Gathering (NYG) was to LIVE LOVE[D]. For five days, more than 25,000 Lutheran youth and leaders came together

in San Antonio, TX, to praise and worship God. Throughout the week participants were able to enjoy all of the city's attractions, from the legendary Alamo to the River Walk, as well as attend Mass Events in the Alamodome.

"NYG helped strengthen my faith and taught me a lot about love" said Jamie Richards, a youth from St. Paul Lutheran-Peachtree City, GA. From the Florida-Georgia District alone, 20 churches with 500 youth attended this year's National Youth Gathering. Dave Weidner, the Executive Assistant to the President of the Florida-Georgia District is "so proud of our church" for NYG and "hopes that it goes on and on" because it helps to "build hope and joy in our church through the young people who experience it." Julie Rogers from St. John Lutheran-Ocala, FL, said that NYG gave her the courage to admit to her youth group that she had been struggling with doubting God and His existence. However, Julie also said that her experience at the Gathering caused her to finally let God into her heart and she became a believer. During the gathering there were many different events and activities for participants to enjoy. Among the

biggest attractions of the Gathering were the many diverse booths and games that took place in the Convention Center, where students could take part in Experiential Learning Activities. Hall A included activities such as Food Collection, Lutheran Malaria Initiative and Prayer Reminder Bracelets, which gave youth the opportunity to learn more about the struggles that people in other countries may face. Participants were able to connect to exhibitor booths in Hall B that included various Concordia Universities, many LCMS ministries and all the LCMS districts. In Hall C youth could have fun playing games such as Epic Twister, Human Bowling and Ziplining.

Other activities were meant to help participants learn while having fun such as the Homeless Walk, Learn Your Love Language and Wheelchair Adventure. These activities provided hands-on-learning for the youth to Live Love[d]. In Hall D participants could take part in recreational games such as basketball, volleyball and dodgeball.

The majority of Interest Centers and Concerts were held in the Convention Center as well. Participants could go to a variety of Interest Centers



Tais Perez and Alexis Latona
of St. Paul/Lakeland, Florida

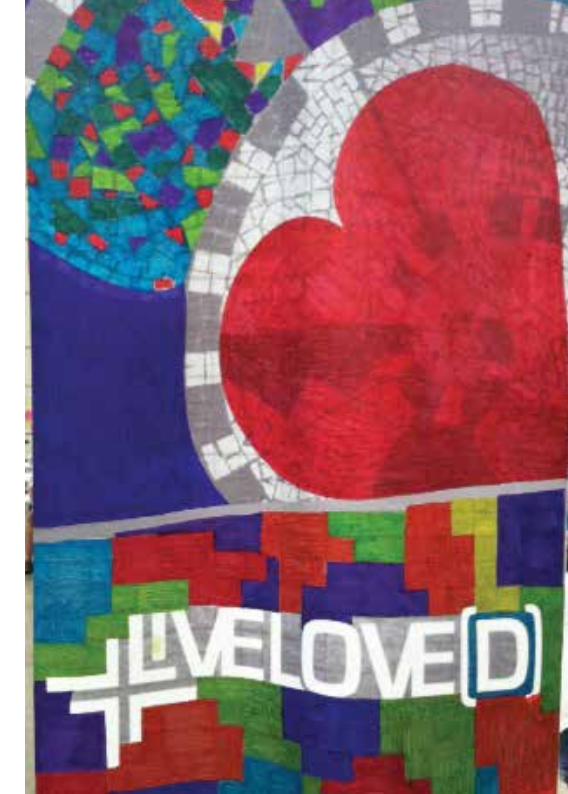
throughout the week to hear all different speakers talk about diverse topics such as How to be Awesome! and Other Pointless Pursuits..., Is There Jesus After High School? and Being the Light in a Dark World. Several concerts took place every day, including performances by Remedy Drive, Lost and Found and 211 Band.

When the sun went down the City of San Antonio cooled to about 90 degrees as opposed to 106 degrees, and so the fun continued as

youth and leaders took part in the Gathering's Night Life. From a Texas Themed Dance Party to Gathering's Got Talent to Music on the River Walk, night life included all types of dancing, games and concerts. Some of the events provided the opportunity to join with others in prayer or deeper conversation with some of the speakers from the Interest Centers, while others gave youth the chance to relax and connect with new friends. Night Life also included a Scavenger Hunt App which was an awesome activity for youth groups to do together to explore the city more.

"One of my favorite parts of NYG has been being able to travel to San Antonio and experience the city with others of the same faith as me" said Sebastian Soltzer, a youth from St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL. Each night there was a Mass Event in the Alamodome for which all 25,000+ participants came together to worship God. As Luke Langer from St. Paul-Peachtree City, GA, said, "Being with 25,000 other people in the Alamodome worshipping is just fantastic."

Each Mass Event had a different theme centered around Love and



God's Love for us. During the Mass Events there were many different speakers such as the President of the LCMS, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison; Mia Koehnel and Jessica Stevens. Mass Events consisted of worship songs, prayer and Gathering News as well as special performances which included the Skit Guys, Outcast BMX and the Jesus Painter.

After the Mass Event on Thursday

(continued on page 8)

Youth Join for Fellowship, Service,



Outreach, Worship and Learning



Photos — far left: Some of the youth from Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Second from left — Five members of the contingent from Our Savior/St Petersburg, Florida

Near left — A few members of St. Paul/Boca Raton, Florida's youth pose for a photo.

Above right — one of the many colorful posters celebrating the theme for the National Youth Gathering.

night, all of the National Youth Gathering youth, leaders and volunteers gathered together outside the Alamodome to watch the Fourth of July fireworks display above the Tower of the Americas. "This was definitely the best July 4th celebration I've ever been to," said Andrew Schnake of St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL. "The National Youth Gathering is the best thing our church does," said Dave Weidner. "Nothing equals it. For all of these students to experience an event like this is truly a gift from God." Don't forget to keep Living Loved! See you in New Orleans 2016! ■

Editor's Note: Kate Schnake not only wrote this report, she was the photographer for most of the NYG pictures on these pages. She experienced her first NYG in 2010 as a youth participant. This year she was one of the Young Adult Volunteers. Kate finished her freshman year at Concordia University/Texas and has just begun her sophomore year at University of North Carolina/Wilmington.

Photos clockwise from right —

Julie Rogers and Brittany Higginbotham of St. John, Ocala/Florida.

The main stage offered immense projection screens to ensure all 25,000 participants had excellent visibility. Floor seating and multiple tiers of raised balconies helped accommodate the crowds.

The Florida-Georgia District youth and counselors gathered for dinner at the Grand Hyatt on Thursday evening — more than 600 participants enjoyed a meal and the entertainment of 321 Improv.

DCE Nick Moss (St. Paul/Lakeland, FL) greets Dave and Cathy Weidner on the floor of the Convention Center where Nick was part of the team the planned and developed hundreds of activities and experiences for participants to enjoy. David is the Executive for Congregational Services for the District



LWML Adopts \$1.83 Million Mission Goal

Delegates to the 35th Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) adopted a \$1.83 million mission goal for the 2013-2015 biennium. This goal, when completed, will fund 18 mission grants.

More than 3,100 people attended the convention, held in Pittsburgh, PA, June 27-30, under the theme "Quenched! by the Water," based on John 4:14.

At the Opening Worship Service, Rev. Dr. Dien Taylor inspired the attendees to come to be quenched and refreshed by the Living Water, so that we can be quenchers for others. The live-streamed service was picked up in ten countries and 48 states with many thousands joining in real time.

The funds raised by the organization's members nationwide over the next two years will be used to support the following mission grants:

- Training K-9 Comfort Dogs for LCMS Chaplains \$ 30,000
- Lutheran Children's Books for Southeast Asia \$ 72,000
- Training Indigenous Pastors/Deaconesses—Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne, \$100,000
- Rebuilding Nord Est Haiti Lutheran School \$100,000
- Jesus Our Savior Lutheran Schools—Winnebago Tribe, Nebraska \$ 58,553
- I CAN—Serving At-Risk Children with Learning Needs \$ 99,000
- Bible Story Books in Sign Language and Written Text \$100,000

- Native American Outreach Training Center—Fairbanks, Alaska \$ 95,000
- Strengthening and Expanding Campus Ministry \$100,000
- Worship for Shut-Ins \$ 80,000
- Preparing Leaders for a Diverse World—Concordia College Alabama \$ 50,000
- Voice of Care Ministry to the Developmentally Challenged \$ 50,600
- Christ-Centered Tutoring Through Rebecca's Garden of Hope \$100,000

LWMLUPDATE
by Patricia Aamoht
Florida-Georgia LWML VP Communications

- Student Scholarships for MOST Ministries Mission Trips \$ 20,000
- Building Homes and Hope in Haiti \$100,000
- Support for Lutheran Public Radio \$ 40,000
- Christian Educational Support for Children—India \$ 85,000
- Mission Outreach at St. Paul Community Lutheran Church—Pontiac, Michigan \$ 65,559

LWML President Kay Kreklau of Drayton, ND, said, "The LWML has existed for 71 years and by God's grace will continue to thrive because we, quenched by the water and the Word, will do God's work in God's time in God's way. You are the Lutheran Women's Missionary League! With the help of God, go and tell the world!" ■



The Florida-Georgia District Convention Banner depicts the theme "Quenched by the Water!"

Delegates Elect Leaders, Determine Direction for National Church Body

Representing circuits from throughout the 35 Districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, a reported 1,191 clergy and lay voting delegates met in St. Louis from July 20-25 to elect leaders and consider resolutions to determine policy and direction for the national church body.

The Synod convention serves as the principal legislative assembly for the LCMS. During the five days of business, delegates adopted 100 resolutions. These resolutions were grouped under seven focus areas: Witness, Mercy, Life Together, Theology and Church Relations, Seminary and University Education, Administration and Finance, Structure and Ecclesiastical Matters.

President Matthew Harrison was elected to his second term as head of the church body in an election concluded a

month before the convention began. Rev. Dr. Herbert C. Mueller Jr. was returned to the office of first vice-president of the LCMS on the first ballot for that position.

Five regional vice-presidents were elected, then ranked by vote as second through sixth vice-



presidents: Rev. Dr. John C. Wohlrabe Jr., second vice-president, representing the Great Lakes Region; Rev. Daniel Preus, third vice-president, representing the Central Region; Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray, fourth vice-president, representing the West-Southwest Region;

Rev. Nabil S. Nour, fifth vice-president, representing the Great Plains Region; and Rev. Dr. Robert T. Kuhn, sixth vice-president, representing the East Southeast Region — including the Florida-Georgia District.

Delegates elected the Rev. Dr. Raymond L. Hartwig on the first ballot to his sixth three-year term as secretary of the LCMS.

Before any convention business began on the morning of July 21, delegates and guests gathered for worship with Holy Communion on the evening of July 20. The services introduced the convention theme of “Baptized for This Moment.”

Daily essays explored aspects of that theme, including sessions on being baptized for mercy and for life together. Daily activity opened with either matins or prayer.

Among those bringing greetings to the convention body were Dr. Brad Hewitt of Thrivent Financial; Dr. Bruce Kintz of Concordia Publishing House; Kay Kreklau of Lutheran Women’s Missionary League; Bruce Wurdeman of Lutheran Hour Ministries.

Special recognition was given to LCMS President Emeriti, including Rev. Dr. Ralph Bohlmann; Rev. Dr. Robert Kuhn; and Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick.

Outgoing LCMS Third Vice President Rev. Dr. Paul L. Maier was also recognized for his many years of service to the church. A veteran member of various boards and commissions, Maier served as Fourth Vice



Convention delegates give a standing ovation to outgoing Third Vice-President Rev. Dr. Paul Maier, who was recognized for his many years of service to the LCMS. Maier, who is now a part-time Florida-Georgia District resident residing in Bonita Springs, Florida, also retired after 50 years on the faculty of Western Michigan University. A much-published author of both scholarly and popular works, Maier’s novels include two historical documentaries — Pontius Pilate and The Flames of Rome — as well as A Skeleton in God’s Closet, a theological thriller that became a #1 national bestseller in religious fiction when it was released. Sequels, More than a Skeleton and The Constantine Codex, followed in 2003 and 2011.



LCMS President Matthew Harrison opens the convention with the 175-year-old Pfothenauer historic gavel — which has been used to open and close LCMS conventions for more than a century. It was commissioned and carved in 1911 in Germany for the 100th anniversary of Dr. C. F. W. Walther’s birth. Its wood came from the original Concordia Seminary log cabin, which the Saxon immigrants built in Perry County in 1839.



The Rev. Dr. Tilahun Menedo, a native of Ethiopia and president of Concordia College-Selma, preached at one of the Convention worships. “We need the Master of the Harvest, God the Holy Spirit, to enlighten our hearts and our minds that His Word comes to us through the Word and Sacraments, that we be lifted up and connect to those who are lost,” he said.

President from 2001-2004, as Second Vice President from 2004-2010 and as Third Vice President from 2010 until this convention.

The author of some 16 Christian-themed books, Maier is the Emeritus Russell H. Seibert Professor of Ancient History at Western Michigan University and now a part-time member of the Florida-Georgia District residing in Southwest, FL.



Lutheran Church Charities Comfort Dogs were popular throughout the week in the Convention exhibit hall.



Former LCMS presidents received special recognition during the Convention. Sharing the stage for that recognition were Rev. Dr. Ralph A. Bohlmann (1981-92); Rev. Dr. Robert T. Kuhn (March-August 2001), who was elected sixth vice president representing the East Southeast Region; and Rev. Dr. Gerald B. Kieschnick (2001-2010), with his wife, Terry.

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Through the close of the Convention, LCMS congregations and households had given more than \$484,000 to “Together as Synod,” the triennial LCMS National Offering. Congregations were asked to gather contributions on June 2 for the National Offering and send them with their delegates to the convention. The offerings were collected during opening worship July 20 and throughout the convention. Contributions are being accepted through 2015.

Gifts to the National Offering will benefit five LCMS funds that specifically support the Synod’s Witness, Mercy, Life Together work, both nationally and internationally. Those funds and the amounts received as of the end of July include:

- Together as Synod, for LCMS work where needed most: \$323,178.17
- LCMS Global Mission, supporting National and International Missions: \$60,612.32
- Lutheran Malaria Initiative: \$38,956.70
- LCMS Joint Seminary Fund: \$42,212.01
- Global Seminary Initiative: \$19,058.01. ■

Editor’s Note: For more information on Convention resolutions, detailed information is available on the LCMS website at www.lcms.org/convention.



District Delegates and friends wore bright orange shirts on a “casual day” that included an evening tour and reception of the LCMS seminary campus.

President Walton Offers Perspective on LCMS Convention

The 65th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is now completed. We learned that we are baptized for this moment. About 1900 people gathered at the America's Center in St. Louis to carry out the business side of our church work. The Florida-Georgia District had 42 voting delegates elected by Circuit Forums, and another eight Advisory delegates who all represented us very well!

The schedule was demanding, and the days seemed long, especially as we considered resolutions, heard numerous amendments and voted for various boards and committees in what, at times, seemed like a marathon stretch. All delegates deserve a special commendation for their outstanding focus and attention to the matters presented before them.

My personal thanks to all of the Florida-Georgia District delegates who so faithfully lived up to their responsibilities and proudly represented us all. In the end, we passed more than 75 resolutions covering a wide range of issues and opportunities.

While I won't attempt to give you



On the last morning of convention, Florida-Georgia District Board Chairman Rev. Jim Guelzow presented District President Greg Walton and his wife Edith with remembrances of their baptisms. Guelzow emphasized that we are all "Baptized for the Moment" — the theme of the 65th Regular Convention of the LCMS.

a detailed, play-by-play description (you can get that in the Convention Proceedings that will come out in a few months), I did want to share a few personal observations regarding the 65th Regular Convention.

First, as my friend Southeast District President John Denninger reminded our delegates, he had once heard that there are really two Missouris. There's the Missouri in Meeting, which is what we were attending. Then there's the Missouri in Ministry, which is what we engage in day in and day out in the Florida-Georgia District and in places all across the United States. The meetings are necessary, but the ministry is essential. It is always my joy to be home in the Florida-Georgia District to do the ministry God has set before us, connecting people to Jesus!

I learned that early morning breakfasts make the day even longer, but being with my fellow delegates, spending a few moments together, is a great way to start the day! This was an opportunity for us to touch base. In fact, on the day we wore the District shirt, we were the talk of the convention!

Some highlights of the Convention included great worship opportunities that centered on God's Word. The truth is, it's not often that we have the chance to worship in such a large group, all lifting voices in praise to God, focused on our Lord Jesus. Any worship that proclaims Jesus is good worship!

Personally, having lived through chairing a convention last summer, I thought President Matthew Harrison did a great job convening the gathering. He kept it moving, with focus and some good humor. There was a good spirit among delegates, even though the days could be draining.

Some of the great things we discussed included revitalizing churches, which is definitely something we support. We talked about support for Native American Ministry and Black Ministry, about reaching college campuses and urban and inner city regions as well as rural areas. Discussion was held on the importance of learning Spanish and other languages so that we are

better equipped to reach many in our communities. There was a call to reach out to those in prisons and jails, sharing the good news of Jesus, and in thanksgiving for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service's 75th Anniversary, to focus on reaching out to refugees.

One of the major discussions centered on counseling — circuit counseling, that is. It was approved that the name would change from "Circuit Counselor" to "Circuit Visitor," placing an emphasis on the role of visitation in congregations. The call for District Presidents to visit congregations, through the use of Circuit Visitors and Vice Presidents, was strongly encouraged. And the Synod President is encouraged to visit each District and Board of Directors, which he will do in the Florida-Georgia District at the end of August. We invited President Harrison to join us as we dedicate our new office space. All of this is in an effort to investigate, understand and encourage the teachings of the LCMS among our people.

Among the most controversial resolutions was one that called for a study of the role of women in combat (Res. 2-12A). We also agreed to study the roles of men and women in the church and home, with a focus on family devotions (4-11, 4-12). Much discussion was had concerning the role of Lay Deacons and the role of laity, and a task force will be appointed to consider this (4-06). There was a call to develop and study "A Theological Statement of Mission for the 21st Century" due for congregation study in 2017 (1-02). There were many other studies commissioned, which all goes to show that there is much work to be done.

One of the most encouraging, but simple, resolutions that seem to be moving us into the 21st Century, from an overture submitted by the Florida-Georgia District, among others, now allows for e-meetings for things like Circuit Forums (7-05). This is great news for some of our Circuits that stretch over a broad area. It's a small victory, but with huge implications for our

District and how we may conduct business together.

Another resolution that I would draw attention to underscores the importance of continuing education for pastors (5-02). This validates action taken at our District Convention, and reminds congregations of the need to support and invest in their pastor continuing to learn and grow as Christ's servant. It also reaffirms the Synod Bylaw 4.8.2.d, which states, "All ordained and commissioned ministers on the district rosters are expected to attend meetings of their official conference or present a valid excuse." Pastors and teachers need to be at the Fall Conferences, and congregations need to provide this opportunity for them to be there!

We celebrated receiving the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia and the Siberia Evangelical Lutheran Church as ministry partners. It's exciting to see how grateful these churches are for the witness the LCMS gives in the world for Confessional Lutheranism. There are many other resolutions that we considered and passed, and I would encourage you to read the proceedings when they are printed.

Perhaps the best part of the week was the fellowship enjoyed outside of the convention floor with ministry partners and friends from all over. We, in the LCMS, have one degree of separation, it seems. You can hardly speak with anyone who doesn't know someone or know of someone you know in the LCMS. I guess that's why we are a family. And as families often do, we can be pretty frank and direct with each other. There were even some younger delegates, probably in their mid-30's, who challenged the fact that many of our convention decisions seemed to be centralizing power and that the LCMS seems to be leaning in a very hierarchical way. While they didn't sway the delegates, their voices were definitely heard, a great reminder of our congregational polity and the priesthood of all believers.

So, the good Lutheran question for us is, what does this mean? I suppose over the next few months

we'll sort that out. Part of the role of the District President is to "cause the resolutions of Synod to be implemented in the district, encouraging the congregations and schools to embrace the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention for the triennium" (bylaw 4.4.2.a). We'll sort through it all, and I will do my best to make you aware of things of which your congregation will need to be aware as we continually learn to walk together as Synod.

In the meantime, we are about ministry and mission for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are all about equipping, empowering and engaging people so that they grow in their faith and love for Jesus, and use the gifts God has placed in their lives, grow His church and ultimately His kingdom. That's what we've always done, and by God's grace, I pray it is what we will always do.

As I reflect on the convention, busy as it was, it was good in so many ways. It was a great reminder of the enormous joy and responsibility you've entrusted to me to serve you and serve with you as we proclaim the love, grace and forgiveness of Jesus to a sin-sick world. I am reminded how blessed I am, and how blessed we are, to be part of a Church, and part of a District, that loves Jesus, loves His Word, and desires to tell that good news to the world.

May we always fix our eyes on Him, remembering the promise of our baptism, and living as His baptized, those who are baptized for this moment, serving Jesus where He's placed us so that many might live with Him eternally.

Your fellow servant
under the Cross of Jesus,
Rev. Gregory S. Walton, President
The Florida-Georgia District

Editor's Note: Rev. Jay Winters, secretary of the Florida-Georgia District and pastor at University Lutheran/Tallahassee, is shown at microphone #2 in the photo at upper right. The winning captions from the District Facebook page contest in competition with Jay's personal Facebook page are shown below his photo.



Of course it's hand-tied.
Is there any other way?
(Mark Brink)

What we've got here is . . .
a failure to communicate!
(Ken Babin)

It says so right here: bowties are an
acceptable alternate to the clerical collar!
(Adam Peters)

But I learned Hebrew with
Ruth, the Queen of Moab!
(Ruth McDonnell)

Jesus had long hair,
therefore we should all have long hair.
(Andy Pugh)

It says right here, fries are free
with your order of German brats?
(Mark Schulz)

I'm sorry, I just don't understand my
character's motivation here. He's seemed
like a good dude the whole time,
so why is he wrecking the temple?
(Tom Wheatley)

I tell you, I understand the minions!
They speak a French dialect
that I've analyzed here.
(Nancy Volz)

I don't see why we can't have a binding
resolution that makes beer the official drink
of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.
(Matt Holman)

Mr. Chairman — point of of order!
(Gerald Seaman)

No, I promise Tallahassee isn't Gehenna.
(Logan Cast)

But Your Honor — I mean Rev. Chairman —
I thought this was the place to audition for
the new Grisham Broadway show,
"A Time To Kill!"
(John List)

Remember Those in Prison ... And Those Who Are Mistreated

How would you feel if members of a religious group would burn down the homes of your entire congregation, and then burn your church and one other

extremely dangerous in Muslim countries. Voice of the Martyrs, a Christian group that helps persecuted Christians, tells the story of Musa Mohammed Yusuf

in Somalia who saw both of his sons beheaded "for the sins of their father" because he shared a Bible

with his Muslim friends. In the same month that Musa lost his sons, Omar Khalafe was killed at a checkpoint in Somalia after jihadists discovered Bibles in his

church building to the ground, taking special delight in destroying the crosses on those buildings?

This actually took place earlier this year in the Christian section of LaHore, Pakistan.

Why were the 200 Christian homes and two churches torched? The violence was occasioned by a rumor that a Christian had insulted the prophet Muhammad. Islamic law, sharia, specifies death for anyone who "insults the prophet."

Church burnings by angry Muslims are common in countries like Nigeria, Indonesia, and even in Egypt where 20% of the population is Christian. My wife and I have Egyptian Christian friends here in Orlando who tell us how difficult it is to be a Christian in Egypt: permits to renovate church buildings are regularly refused and Christians are denied permission to emigrate to the United States by Muslim workers in the American Embassy.

Christian evangelism is

luggage.

Persecution of Christians is not limited to Muslim countries, but also takes place in China — where house churches continue to thrive and grow in spite of government oppression.

God's mandate to us is clear. "Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." (Hebrews 13:3) Do we remember the secret house churches in Iran, Musa from

Somalia who lost his two sons because he shared Jesus, or the grieving church leader Chenma Ngwaba from northern Nigeria who lost his wife and 10-year-old son on January 5, 2012, when Boko Haram militants fired through the church windows killing 10 people and injuring 20 (Voice of the Martyrs, November 2012)?

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Jewish community worldwide arose in protest at the way Jews were being persecuted in the Soviet Union. Jews placed signs and banners in front of their synagogues, letters were

written and demonstrations were held at cultural and athletic events with signs and banners saying "Free Soviet Jewry" and "Let my people go." On December 6, 1987, 250,000 Jews gathered in Washington, DC to express their love and concern for persecuted Jews. Several days later President Ronald Reagan told

Mikhail Gorbachev there would be no expansion of trade with the USSR unless the Soviet Union let the Jews emigrate because "I have seen thousands of people in my backyard protesting." Gorbachev relented within days, and soon one million Jews were allowed to emigrate to Israel and other free countries.

Can we do something for our suffering Christian brothers and sisters? Can we begin to pray? Can we do what Hebrews 13:3 tells us to do? ■



Fitch Affirms Thrivent Financial for Lutherans AA Rating

Fitch Ratings has affirmed Thrivent Financial for Lutherans AA (Very Strong) rating, the third-highest of Fitch's 19 categories, and given the organization a stable outlook.

Fitch cited Thrivent Financial's very strong capitalization with no financial debt, high-quality investment portfolio, consistent profitability, and favorable market franchise within the Lutheran market as part of the basis for the affirmation.

The stable outlook was driven by Fitch's expectations that Thrivent Financial's operating and balance sheet fundamentals are sustainable relative to rating expectations. These ratings reflect Thrivent Financial's

overall financial strength and claims-paying ability, but do not apply to the investment performance of investment products.

"Our strength and stability are key components of our ability to help keep the promises we make to our members," said Randy Boushek, senior vice president and chief financial officer for Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. "Ratings from agencies like Fitch are a valuable external validation."

Fitch global rating agency is dedicated to providing value beyond the rating through independent and prospective credit opinions, research, and data. ■

Thrivent Members Vote in Favor of Extending Common Bond to Christians

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans' membership has approved an extension of its common bond, which will allow the 111-year fraternal benefit society to serve more Christians. Seventy-two percent of Thrivent members who cast their votes during the March 1 – April 30 timeframe voted in favor of revising the organization's articles of incorporation. Nearly 425,000 members participated in this historic vote – more than double the

turnout of other typical membership votes at Thrivent.

"Thank you to the many members who participated in this process, demonstrated their role as member-owners and had a voice in the decision," said Brad Hewitt, president and CEO of Thrivent. "This vote will allow us to strengthen our mission of helping more Christians be wise with money and live generously. Working together, we'll be able to serve more people, meet more needs and strengthen more Christian communities."

Hewitt continued: "One of the unique aspects of Thrivent is that our benefit members are our owners so they get to make these important decisions. We are certainly excited about the possibilities of serving more Christians. However, we are looking at this from a long-term perspective and changes will be gradual. Over the short and the long-term, one thing remains the same though: our commitment to serving Lutherans and strengthening the Lutheran community remains as strong as ever. We value our Lutheran members and our heritage and that will never change even as we move forward in a new chapter for the organization."

In May 2012, the Thrivent Financial Board unanimously voted in favor of amending the Articles of Incorporation to extend the common bond and for submitting the proposed amendment to a benefit member vote for approval. Benefit members voted between March 1 and April 30. The vote was conducted by and certified by Election America, a third-party election services company.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is a faith-based, Fortune 500 financial services membership organization helping its nearly 2.5 million members to be wise with money and to live generous lives. Thrivent Financial and its affiliates offer a broad range of financial products and services. As a not-for-profit organization, Thrivent joins with its members to create and support national outreach programs and activities that help congregations, schools, charitable organizations and individuals in need. For more information, visit Thrivent.com. ■



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For more information, contact Florida & Georgia Regional Financial Office: 866-380-0558.

For additional important disclosure information, please visit Thrivent.com/disclosures.

Let's Grow! Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

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the Gospel; use LCEF as your ministry's lender of choice. LCEF has been a source of capital funding for LCMS organizations worldwide, offering ministries a place to borrow money for building purposes at interest rates they can afford. Our expert staff knows

how ministries operate and the unique challenges they face. LCEF is thankful for God's blessings on the ministry of Church Extension. We pray that by the continued grace of God, LCEF can provide loans and ministry support that further expand His kingdom. ■

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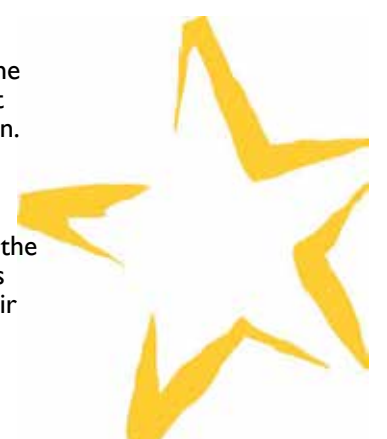


Lutheran Church Extension Fund
 > florida-georgia district

LCEF STAR PERFORMERS



Starting July 2012, Daniel J. Reichard, Vice-President, Lutheran Church Extension Fund, gave his Congregational Representatives in the Florida-Georgia District a challenge to add at least four new investors to their congregation. Pictured with Dan (left) is Jay Wendland from Living Faith-Cumming GA. Jay added an astounding 61 new investors. Along with Jay, listed are the Congregational Reps who met the challenge in a big way. Thanks to all our Reps for all the hard work they do in behalf of their congregation and LCEF.



May our Heavenly Father continue to bless them and their efforts!

- Jay Wendland, Living Faith-Cumming GA – 61
- Marvin Timm, Our Redeemer-Augusta GA – 7
- Carl Scheuman, Peace-Naples FL – 6
- Jean Weinrich, All Saints-Blairsville GA – 4
- Tamie Worthington, St. Paul-Peachtree City GA – 4

LCEF—Florida-Georgia District Team:
 Daniel J. Reichard, Vice President, DReichard@flgadistrict.org
 Mary Byrd, Loan Consultant, Byrd7980@bellsouth.net; (352) 592-3316
 Debbie Talbot, Administrative Assistant, dtalbot@flgadistrict.org
flgadistrict.org (877)457-5556, ext. 4
 National Office: St. Louis lcef.org 800-843-5322

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Learn more at lcef.org



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

Let's Talk!

Lutheran Church Extension Fund offers a wide array of investment opportunities to help individuals meet their financial goals while supporting the overall mission and ministry of the church. For further information, please contact one of the St. Louis based Information Representatives shown above at (800) 843-5233



Looking for the next Mary Byrd

LCEF Florida Georgia District
 Part-time position available for a Loan Consultant to replace the retiring Mary Byrd. Must have banking/loan experience. For more information please contact us at:
 Daniel J. Reichard
dreichard@flgadistrict.org
(877) 457-5556 EXT 4

Financial Highlights for the Year Ended January 31, 2013 Annual Report Underscores District's



John Elliott
Florida-Georgia District
Business Manager

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! As fellow servants of Jesus Christ, we are exceedingly grateful for your continued participation with and support of the District office during the last year. The following is a financial recap of the Fiscal Year Ending (FYE) January 31, 2013. Soli Deo Gloria!

The Lord has done some mighty things for us this past year.

A cursory glance at the financial statements will probably have you wondering why there is such a reversal of fortune in the District finances. Three major financial transactions happened within the District last year.

First, the District sold the church building in Riverdale, GA. This sale is reflected in the change in Installment Sale Notes and accounts for a portion of the change in Net Investment in Land, Buildings and Equipment as well as a portion of the Cash increase as noted in the Statements of Financial Position.

Second, we sold the District Office building in Orlando, FL. The Board of Directors directed that we sell this asset as it was underutilized and the neighborhood around the building had deteriorated since the departure of Darden Restaurants from the office park. This sale accounts for the majority of the decrease in Net Investment in Land, Buildings and Equipment and a portion of the increase in Cash.

Third, the District was able to sell the YWAM note held on the camp property in Montverde, FL. This sale enabled the District to pay off all debt with the exception of one note and is the greatest

portion of the Cash increase.

Additionally, over the past year, the District completed the restoration of internal borrowing against Temporarily Restricted Net Assets. Our auditors noted at FYE 2011 that we had utilized cash restricted by donors for ongoing operations. Last year we reported that we had reduced the deficit from \$798,000 to \$243,000. With the restoration complete, the District has physically separated the funds covering Temporarily Restricted Net Assets from the everyday Operating Cash in order to help ensure that this will never happen again.

Positive Position, Bountiful Blessings

Statement of Activities

Unrestricted support from congregations totaled \$2,150,374. This is about a \$23,000 increase year over year. We give thanks to God for your faithful support! The ministries God has commanded us to do can only be accomplished if we continue to walk together.

Net assets released from restriction increased by \$26,325 year over year. These assets fund specific projects or needs and are not utilized to fund ongoing operations or ministries. Investment income from endowment funds are the exception as said income is utilized for the donor restricted purposes, e.g., to partially fund

student aid.

The total change in Net Assets for the past fiscal year was an increase of \$2,377,432 compared to an increase of \$471,960 for the year ended January 31, 2012. This variance is due to the three large financial transactions noted above.

Total expenses for 2012 were \$2,960,919 versus \$3,210,378 for 2011, or a reduction of \$249,459. We continually strive to model good stewardship with the funds you have entrusted to us and use them in a manner that meaningfully benefits and supports ongoing ministry.

2013 Work Program

The highlights of the 2013 work program are as follows:

Congregation support was budgeted at \$2,100,000. Fan Into Flame revenue was budgeted at \$88,000. Through unanimous support of the Board of Directors, Synod support was increased to 14% of congregational support.

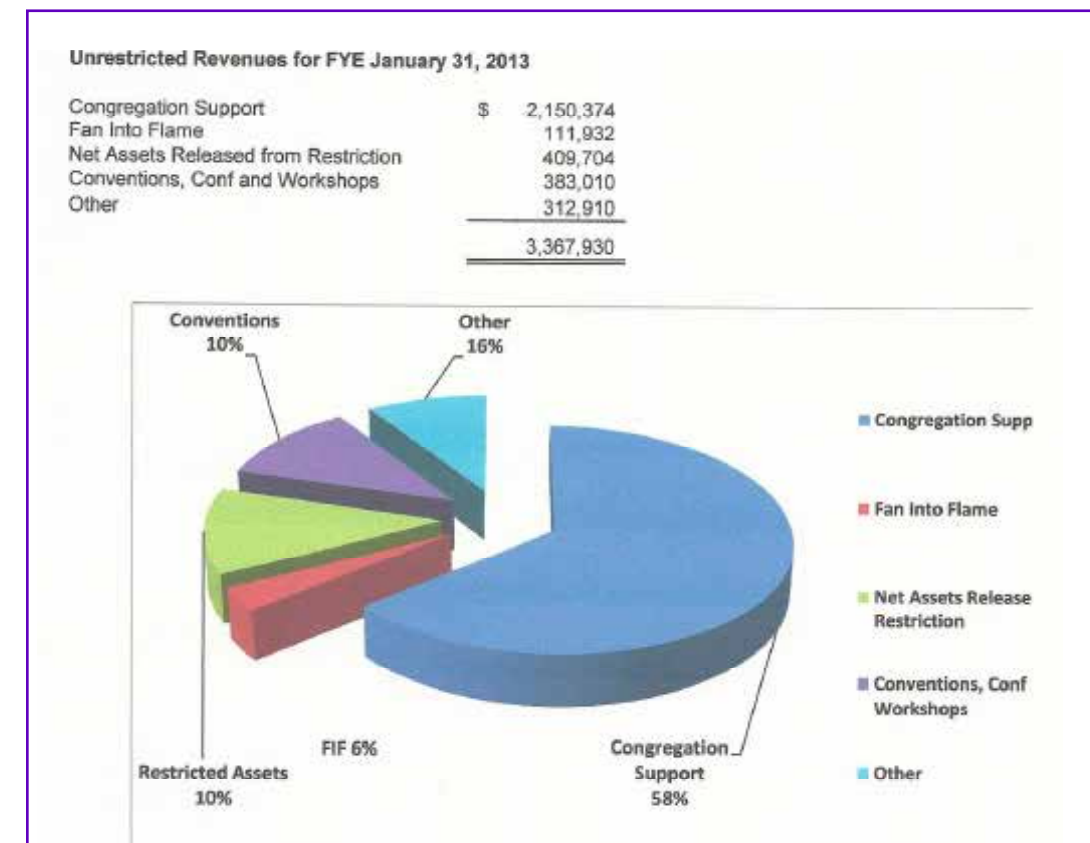
The District continues to set aside 3% of unrestricted support to fund TCN and District revitalization efforts. Mission support remains at \$600,000 and supports 15 missions within the District. The Missions Advisory Council continues to assist staff in evaluating the various missions sup-

[See page 20]

FLORIDA-GEORGIA DISTRICT
2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Florida-Georgia District The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Statements of Financial Position Audit Results		
	January 31, 2013	January 31, 2012
Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 2,564,833	\$ 527,767
Florida-Georgia District The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Statements of Financial Position Audit Results		
	January 31, 5127652.46	January 31, 1053522
Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 7,690,472	\$ 1,579,277
Other Assets	899,095	1,431,724
Total	\$ 16,282,052	\$ 4,592,290
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts Payable	\$ 450,571	\$ 336,909
Grants Payable	21,500	21,500
Notes Payable	280,000	3,087,640
Other Liabilities	280,705	232,161
Total Liabilities	1,032,776	3,678,210
Undesignated	2,197,447	(1,039,107)
Net Investment in Land, Buildings and Equipment	402,020	1,271,056
Board Designated	246,085	260,786
Temporarily Restricted	1,915,215	1,935,808
Permanently Restricted	1,683,991	1,638,556
Total Net Assets	6,444,758	4,066,899
Total	\$ 7,477,534	\$ 7,745,109

Florida-Georgia District The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Statements of Activities Preliminary Audit Results			
	For The Years Ended January 31,		
	2013	2012	
UNRESTRICTED REVENUES			
Congregation Support	\$ 2,150,374	\$ 2,265,670	
Fan Into Flame	111,932	229,864	
Net Assets Released from Restriction	409,704	383,379	
Convention, Conferences and Workshops	383,010	311,991	
Other	312,910	465,494	
Total revenues	3,367,930	3,656,397	
EXPENSES			
Synod	313,390	323,796	
Congregational Services	984,794	883,686	
Funding The Mission	163	2,206	
Preparing Church Workers	50,404	78,472	
Missions	841,021	885,609	
Ministry Support	482,860	754,339	
Ecclesiastical Administration	288,288	282,271	
Total expenses	2,960,919	3,210,378	
OTHER INCOME/EXPENSES			
Change in Net Assets from Loan Sale/Disposition of Assets, Etc.	1,945,379	15,048	
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS			
Unrestricted	2,352,390	461,066	
Temporarily restricted	(20,392)	10,283	
Permanently restricted	45,435	(7,389)	
Total change in net assets	2,377,432	471,960	
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	4,066,899	3,594,939	
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$ 6,444,331	\$ 4,066,899	



[from 19]

ported.

We have attempted to provide a work program for 2013 that is fiscally responsible, within our current funding forecast and continues to enable the District to continue its mission to serve, assist and encourage congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Board of Directors and District Staff continue to monitor expenses and will make necessary adjustments to ensure this happens.

Last But Not Least!

After reading all of this good news you are probably wondering what we are planning to do with the abundance of God's blessings. Well, we assembled a team consisting of Board and Staff members to pray, discuss and come up with a plan, summarized here:

- 1. Funding for a New Mission Loan Program: **\$500,000**
- 2. New Fund for Worker Assistance: **\$100,000**
- 3. Addition to Revitalization Fund: **\$100,000**
- 4. New Endowment: **\$200,000**
- 5. Tithing — Sharing God's Blessings: **\$150,000**

TOTAL: \$1,050,000

The tithing distributions were discussed at length, and it was decided it was wholly proper to focus on those ministries outlined at the 2012 District Convention. Accordingly, the following ministries within the Florida-Georgia District will be receiving

the following sums, totaling \$100,000:

- a. LISA (Lutherans in Southeast Asia): **\$ 25,000**
- b. Mission Haiti: **\$ 25,000**
- c. Social Services (a total of \$50,000)
 - Lutheran Services of Florida: **\$ 10,000**
 - Lutheran Services of Georgia: **\$10,000**
 - Lutheran Social Services of NE Florida: **\$ 10,000**
 - Lutheran Services of North Florida: **\$10,000**
 - Lutheran Counseling Services: **\$10,000**

- The following funds (\$50,000) will be used to provide resources for:
 - d. Short Term Missions **\$25,000**
 - e. Continuing Education **\$25,000**

It is my hope that you find this information useful and joyful. If you have any questions regarding this report, please feel free to contact me on our toll-free number: (877) 457-5556.

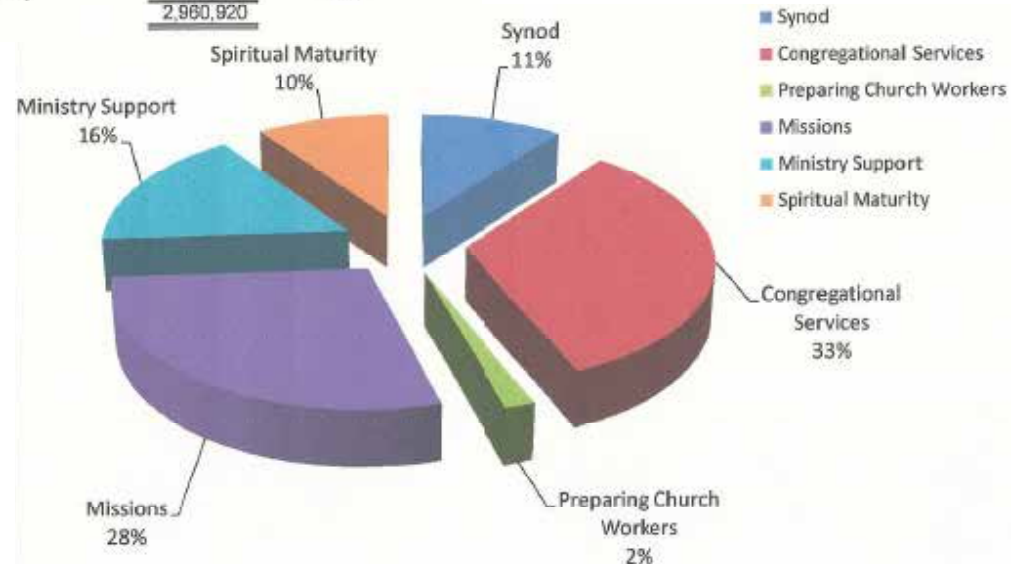
May God continue to bless our work together as we reach out to connect people to Jesus! ■

— John Elliott



Expenses by Critical Target for FYE Jan 31, 2013

Synod	313,390	11%
Congregational Services	984,794	33%
Preparing Church Workers	50,404	2%
Missions	841,021	28%
Ministry Support	483,023	16%
Spiritual Maturity	288,268	10%
Total	2,960,920	



REVENUES

Congregation Support	\$2,100,000
Fan Into Flame	88,000
Installment Loan Repayments	—
Net Assets Released from Restriction	406,900
Other	15,100
Total Revenues	2,610,000

EXPENSES

Synodical Pledge	294,000
TCN National Support	31,500
District Congregational Revitalization	31,500
Total World & National Missions	927,300
School Ministries	234,700
Congregational Services	397,500
Mission & Ministry Support	389,200
Ecclesiastical Administration	304,300
Total Expenses	2,610,000

Change in Net Assets \$ —



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GOOD SHEPHERD-GAINESVILLE, GA, members are celebrating the completion of construction on the fellowship hall, kitchen and two youth rooms. The former fellowship hall was remodeled earlier and dedicated in November of 2012. That project encompassed the remodeling of the building

to include the church office, food pantry, three adult classrooms and four children's classrooms plus the nursery. Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton and LCEF District Vice President Daniel J. Reichard were among the special guests at the August 18 dedication for the new building. LCEF provided

the funding for the construction projects. Good Shepherd has been featured in LCEF publications, highlighting the congregation's very successful capital drive that exceeded its goal before any work began. The new construction is to the right of the sanctuary. ■

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
 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



Wendy Belton Newest Fulton County Associate

Wendy Belton has been appointed as associate judge of the Fulton County Juvenile Court. She is the third certified child welfare law specialist of the Fulton County Juvenile Court.

She previously served as a law clerk and Clerk of the Court for Fulton County Juvenile Court. Most recently she was an associate with Robert E. Hall, special assistant attorney general,

representing the Department of Family and Children Services.

Belton is a former Judicial Assistant for the Fulton County Superior Court and a staff attorney for the Office of the Public Defender.

Judge Belton, wife of Rev. Dr. Victor J. Belton of Peace-Decatur, was sworn in as associate judge on July 31. ■



LSG Benefits from 2013 Hunger Walk

This year, five faith-based nonprofits worked with the Atlanta Community Food Bank to raise money for Hunger Walk/Run 2013. Among these five nonprofits, Lutheran Services was the top fundraiser, gathering \$75,333.21!

"The real work, however, was done by the Lutheran churches in the Atlanta area," said LSG's Lorraine Dorough. "Through a variety of fundraising drives and appeals to their congregations, they raised the vast majority of LSG's Hunger Walk funds."

"Thank you to all of our churches who raised money for the Hunger Walk and to the members of the congregations for contributing to the event!"

A longtime benefiting partner of the Hunger Walk/Run, LSG channels the money raised from the event into the local community. LSG grants a significant portion of the funds to participating Lutheran congregations, which use that money to stock their own food pantries, to develop their own programs to feed the people most in need, or to provide resources for local food cooperatives.

LSG addresses the root causes of hunger by providing food, clothing, shelter and employment services to its refugee clients. ■ Among those Florida-Georgia District congregations participating in Hunger Walk 2013 were (right, top to bottom) Rivercliff-Atlanta, Christ-East Point and Oak Road-Lilburn.

REGION 1



Peace-Dunnellon Celebrates Golden Anniversary

GOLDEN CELEBRATION – Peace-Dunnellon will celebrate “Fifty Years in God’s Grace” on October 20. Divine Worship at 10:00 a.m. will be followed by a catered lunch (reservations required). Guest preacher will be Rev. Douglas Kallesen, Executive Director Missions-Outreach for the Florida-Georgia District. For more information call the church, 352-489-5881 or visit PeaceLutheranOnline.com. ■



ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION BEGINS – Faith Lutheran Church & School-Eustis is launching its 60th anniversary on August 16. A six-month celebration of our Lord’s past, present and future blessings is planned. The celebration will begin on August 16 with a cake and coffee reception and will continue in upcoming months with a series of community concerts and activities. The main diamond jubilee celebration will be a 1:30pm congregational dinner November 17 at Lake Receptions in Mount Dora with Rev. Dr. Gerhard Michael, Jr. as the keynote speaker. For more information on any of the events, call 352-589-5433 or email faithbusiness@aol.com. ■



Y Y Y Y Y REGION 2 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. Frank Marshall | St. Paul/Jacksonville
 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



SWAG Teens Extend NYG Experience

Members of SWAG – Saved With Amazing Grace – were among the thousands of teens and counselors who flooding the streets of San Antonio

for the LCMS National Youth Gathering earlier this summer. They were at the NYG from July 1-5, then spent the next three days on a San Antonio Servant Event.

The Florida group partnered with Acts 1:8 Mission Society volunteers and their Director, Pastor Randy Wilken, St. Louis, MO, and Pastor Aaron Goeke, Messiah-Boerne, TX, to serve in Adult Daycares, a Senior Center and building relationships in the neighborhoods.

Amazing Grace is a mission congregation in Oxford/The Villages. ■

Shown in their Amazing Grace Transformers Youth Group SWAG NYG shirts are (second from left to right) Carie Levy, Jessica Rockey, Katie Levy, Evelyn Mohammed, Elizabeth Rockey. Flanking the youth are adult leaders Robin Levy and Lois Schaefer in the Florida Georgia District shirts developed for the NYG. Not pictured is SWAG member Mandy Mills.



ORDINATION MILESTONE – The 50th Anniversary of Ordination for Rev. Gerry Schultz was celebrated recently at Christ the King-Orlando. Schultz’s sermon summarized his half-century of ministry. Speaking at the anniversary luncheon was Florida-Georgia President Greg Walton, whose remarks celebrated Schultz’s ministry in the District. Shown here are (left) Rev. Gerry and Patricia Schultz and (right) President Greg and Edith Walton. ■

GRADUATES HONORED – As a part of a Summer Sunday worship, Hope-Plant City recognized those members who graduated from high school or college during the 2012-2013 academic year. Among those recognized were Skylar Smith, who graduated sixth in her class from Plant City High School and has received a President’s Scholarship to Concordia University- Austin; and Jason Pfeffer who in December of 2012 graduated in Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary

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
 Commissioned Minister Board Member: Nick Moss | St. Paul/Lakeland
 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



Education from USF. Pictured following the service are (l-r) Tena Matthews- standing in for daughter Lauren (Plant City High School); Kara Lawson- St. Leo’s University (AA- Education); Jason Pfeffer

(USF) B.S. Elementary Education; Rev. Dean Pfeffer; Skylar Smith (Plant City High School), Brittany Arlow, Hope’s Director of Christian Education & Youth. ■



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP – Recently Grace Lutheran-Winter Haven had the privilege of hosting 17 brothers and sisters in Christ who are members of the Gutnuis Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. Grace has formed a partnership with the Papua New Guinea Mission Society and the Gutnuis Lutheran Church and has provided Bibles and hymnals for the seminary students at Timothy Lutheran Seminary in PNG. Additionally, Grace continues to support Pastor Jeff Horn and his family, who are missionaries currently serving in PNG. Pictured here: Gutnuis LC Pastor Patrick Minato presents the Papua New Guinea flag to Grace Pastor Jonathan Frusti. The other photo is from the picnic that followed worship on the visitors' Sunday. ■

Congregation, Publix Join Forces to Feed the Hungry

Earlier this year, a sea of blue- and orange-t-shirt clad members from St. Paul-Lakeland descended on a nearby Publix for the sole purpose of helping feed the hungry in the community.

“This involvement in the community was one of the most impactful this year, said Becky Nelson of St. Paul.

Everyone aged three and up received an envelope with \$10 seed money to buy food for four organizations — Agape SmilePak (a food program for school children on the weekends), Anchor House (a boys’ home), Parker Street Downtown Ministries and St. Paul’s food pantry.

More than 600 envelopes were given out during two Sunday worship services and the mid-week service.

“Because of so many joyful and generous givers, approximately \$14,000 was spent on merchandise having an approximate retail value of over \$20,000 due to the Publix special buys,” Nelson

said. “We wish to thank the Publix management team who worked with us in planning and facilitating this event: Store Manager Edd Dean, Jennifer Bouilly, Travis Holzworth, Bob McCarthy, and Michelle Wilde.

“We are also grateful for

all the extra Publix employees who were there helping to keep things running smoothly.” ■

Randy Andersen, Lloyd Brekke and Jac Rose participating in St. Paul’s effort to feed the hungry in the Lakeland community.



Bethlehem Haitian Welcomes New Pastor

Rev. Andre Mezilus has been installed as the pastor of Bethlehem Haitian Lutheran Church, which meets at the Amigos Center in Immokalee. Mezilus is a recent graduate of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod’s Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT), which is offered by Concordia Seminary-St. Louis through a collaborative arrangement with LCMS World Mission. EIIT is a specialized program of theological education and formation for effective pastoral leadership within immigrant-based churches.

Mezilus worked closely with Rev. Bob Selle and Rev. Steve Hess to complete his studies and prepare for ordination.

In attendance at the installation services were pastors from the Florida-Georgia District’s Southwest Circuit. Rev. Douglas Kallesen, District Executive Director of Outreach, was the preacher. Officiating at the Ordination and Installation was Rev. Jon Zehnder, pastor of St. Michael Lutheran-Fort Myers Southwest Circuit Counselor. ■



Shown at the installation are (front, l-r) Jerry Lawson (Good Shepherd-North Fort Myers), Jon Zehnder (St. Michael –Fort Myers and SW FL Circuit Counselor), Dennis Lebach (Peace-Naples), Gene Volcy (Translator), Andre Mezilus (Bethlehem Haitian-Immokalee), Fred Kohler (retired, North Fort Myers), (rear, l-r) Steve Hess (retired, Fort Myers), Nick Mascovites (Christ the King-LaBelle), Keith Linsch (Grace-Naples), Douglas Kallesen (District Executive Director of Outreach), Robert Selle (Amigos Center), Darrell Stuehrenberg (Bethlehem-Fort Myers), Charles Kanefeke (Trinity-Cape Coral)

REGION 4 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. James Guelzow | Messiah/Tampa
 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



Mission Trip Takes Florida Couple to Alaska

Rev. Juan and Eva Gonzalez will be participating in a mission trip to Alaska from July 31 until September 2.

This trip is part of Alaska Mission for Christ, an LCMS organization that seeks to facilitate a bold witness to Jesus Christ in every community in Alaska. Gonzalez is assigned to serve two small congregations – Cooper Landing and Sterling – on the Kenai Peninsula of the state.

During their time in Alaska, Gonzalez and his wife will

be involved in outreach to unchurched Alaskan natives in a remote part of the state.

Gonzalez is on staff at Hope-Bonita Springs as the Mission Equipping Pastor.

For more information about the mission program, visit www.alaskamissionforchrist.org/. ■

Vacation Bible School programs are one of the ministries led by volunteers through Alaska. Shown left are participants at one of the VBS programs.



LCEF Sunday a Creole, English Celebration

Members of Grace Tabernacle and Tabernacle Lutheran Churches gathered recently to celebrate LCEF Sunday. During the hour before worship, LCEF District Vice President Daniel J. Reichard provided information on Lutheran Church Extension Fund and its investment opportunities.

Also attending was Florida-Georgia Executive Director for School Ministries Mark Brink, who shared updates on District education ministries as well as work being done in Haiti. According to Brink, the \$20,000 raised by Florida-Georgia students during last year's Hearts for Jesus – Hearts for Haiti project is being used to complete the drilling of a water well and to build the first phase of the Poto Boys Orphanage, which will house 20 of the most at risk boys in the village.

An LCEF loan enabled Grace congregation to purchase its Fort Lauderdale facility from Faith Lutheran Church. The site now houses three congregations serving Haitian and Anglo worshippers: Tabernacle leases worship space from Grace, as does Faith.

Faith also leases its original school facility from Grace for its ongoing educational ministry, which serves students from the pre-kindergarten to eighth-grade levels. Faith was begun more than 50 years ago by District Pioneers who were instrumental in establishing several churches and schools in the Greater Fort Lauderdale area — Pastor Dallas Gibson and his wife Susan. Mrs. Gibson was Faith School's first teacher and principal.

Grace Pastor Bernard Julmiste and Tabernacle Pastor Oslet Maccenat are both



graduates of the LCMS' Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology coordinated through Concordia Seminary-St. Louis. ■

Shown above: Grace Tabernacle's choir shares an anthem during LCEF Sunday worship. Scripture readings, songs and the sermon mixed Creole and English.

REGION 5 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. Steve Wipperman | 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



FLORIDA TAKES THE ALAMO – Youth from St. Paul-Weston attending the National Youth Gathering this summer enjoyed a visit to the historic Alamo. Paying tribute to their hometown NBA champions, the youth sported Miami Heat gear. ■



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THE Back Page

Abiding Savior's Food Packing Party Produces Meals of Hope

Earlier this year, more than 250 volunteers of all ages filled the fellowship hall of Abiding Savior Church & Preschool/Gainesville, FL, for a food packing party.

The outreach project was done in partnership with Meals of Hope to benefit Bread of the Mighty food bank of Gainesville. During a busy two-hour period the volunteers packaged 93,300 meals for the food bank, which serves

north central Florida. Established in 1987, Bread of the Mighty distributed a record 4.8 million pounds of food during fiscal year 2011-2012.

According to Abiding Savior Pastor Alan Struckmeyer, volunteers helped with food packing and with financial sponsorship of the meals at 20 cents each. Participating in the effort were volunteers from Abiding Savior members as well as the greater Gainesville community. ■



We Want You!



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LCEF—Florida-Georgia District Team:

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Mary Byrd, Loan Consultant, Byrd7980@bellsouth.net; (352) 592-3316

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Lutheran Church Extension Fund