

# LUTHERAN

# LIFE

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

2013 | Volume 6





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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## DISTRICT CAPSULES *by Greg Walton District President*

### Calling Congregations

Bethel/Clearwater, FL..... Assistant/Associate  
Zion/Fort Myers, FL..... Senior Pastor  
Epiphany/Lake Worth, FL..... Sole Pastor  
Faith/New Port Richey, FL..... Sole Pastor  
Our Redeemer/Ocala, FL..... Associate Pastor  
Faith/Sebring, FL..... Sole Pastor  
St. Mark/Tucker, GA ..... Sole Pastor

### Calls Issued

Prince of Peace, Orlando, FL  
to Rev. Kenneth Green as Senior Pastor  
Faith, New Port Richey, FL,  
to Rev. Stephen Constein as Sole Pastor  
Our Redeemer, Ocala, FL,  
to Rev. Justin Bell as Associate Pastor  
Faith, Sebring, FL,  
to Rev. Stephen Zehnder as Sole Pastor  
Holy Trinity, Lutz, FL,  
to Rev. Gregory Michael as Sole Pastor  
Christ the King, Largo, FL,  
to Rev. Jack Mackowiak as Interim Pastor

### Calls Accepted

Prince of Peace, Orlando, FL,  
Rev. Kenneth Green as Senior Pastor  
Our Savior, Zephyrhills, FL,  
Rev. Robert Steinke as Interim Pastor

### Calls Declined

Faith, New Port Richey, FL,  
Rev. Stephen Constein as Sole Pastor  
Our Redeemer, Ocala, FL,  
Rev. Justin Bell as Associate Pastor

### Transferred to Other Districts

Peter Grana ..... Southeastern (O)  
Alston Kirk ..... Texas (O)  
Aaron Neugebauer ..... MidSouth (O)

### Transferred from Other Districts

Patricia Wittcop ..... Missouri (C)  
Janice E. Pena ..... Missouri (C)  
Gordon S. Stuckert ..... Ohio (C)  
Kenneth Garazin ..... Northern Illinois (O)  
Steven Wayne ..... Southern (C)  
Russel P. Johnson ..... English (O)  
Daniel W. Kelm ..... South Wisconsin (O)  
Kenneth D. Green ..... Southeastern (O)  
Bruce Crabtree ..... Southeastern (O)  
Rachel E. Rittierodt ..... (C)  
Thomas C. Rittierodt ..... (C)

### Emeritus

Rev. Clarence F. Reinke (O)  
Rev. Alec Pueschel (O)

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

### Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Assignments

Philip J. Klopke, Concordia/Chicago  
DCE, Florida-Georgia District

### Church Changes

Arms of Grace, Widner, GA  
Disbanded/Dissolved  
Guardian, Jacksonville, FL  
Disbanded/Dissolved

### Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Karl Floetke, Principal  
Grace/St. Petersburg, FL (C)  
Renee McLay, Teacher  
Grace/St. Petersburg, FL (C)  
Steve Durheim, DCE  
Grace/Jacksonville, FL (C)  
Kenneth W. Garazin, Pastor  
Marco/Marco Island, FL (O)  
Russel P. Johnson, Pastor  
Redeemer/Vero Beach, FL (O)  
Daniel W. Kelm, Pastor  
Trinity/Summerfield, FL  
Megan Miessler, DCE  
Lutheran Counseling Services/Winter Park, FL (C)  
Robert C. Steinke, Pastor  
Our Savior/Zephyrhills, FL (O)  
Kenneth D. Green II, Pastor  
Prince of Peace/Orlando, FL (O)  
Bruce Crabtree, Pastor  
Marathon/Marathon, FL (O)  
Rachel E. Rittierodt, Teacher  
Trinity/Orlando, FL (C)

### Called to Glory

Harlan Heideman (C)  
Rev. Wayman L. Still (O)  
Rev. Milton J. Nauss (O)  
Rev. Oscar A. Gerken (O)

### Removed from the Roster

Kristin M. Schroeder, Resigned (C)

### Change of Status within the District

Jeremy Davis from Active to Candidate (O)  
Jon Skilton from Active to Candidate (C)  
Jack Hibbs from Active to Non-Candidate (C)  
Kristen Nelson-McKenzie from Active to Candidate (C)  
Keith Schelp from Active to Candidate (C)  
Jonathan Horsman from Active to Candidate (O)  
Richard Carlton from Active to Candidate (O)  
Ryan Dauss from Active to Candidate (C)  
Ellen Mattheus from Active to Candidate (C)

## Children, Families Benefiting from Mission: Haiti Programs

Progress is being made in programs launched by Mission: Haiti's to help at-risk children and families.

According to the latest update from Helen Roenfeldt, Executive Director for the organization, this year will end on a much happier note that it began for dozens of children.



Faith Boys Home in Gonaives is being repainted, the garden is being expanded and new chicken coops are being built.

"Fifteen girls from the ages of 3-15 will move into their new home by the end of December," Roenfeldt said. "Many of the girls come from severely at-risk situations.

"Thanks to donations to Mission: Haiti, 40 boys and girls have new clothing and shoes and eat three meals a day."



Construction will begin before the end of the year on the third children's home to be built through Mission: Haiti. This new facility, being built in the rural area of Poto, will welcome between 15-20 children as it is finished.

Mission: Haiti medical teams have been focusing on the area called Jubilee, where the poverty is "almost indescribable," Roenfeldt continued.

"There is no sanitation, no place to grow food, 75% of the children under puberty had no clothing, only about 20% of the children go to school and serious disease is rampant. The Lutheran Church of Haiti with Mission: Haiti was the first mission team to ever enter this Voodoo stronghold.

"There are now more than 100 new Christians in the area, a modest structure used for a church and clinic."

Mission: Haiti has provided funds for more than 20 microloans to help individuals and families support themselves.

"Microloans of \$50 - \$100 are given for business as diverse as repackaging rice for resale, purchasing and boiling eggs for sale and mattress repair and refurbishing," Roenfeldt elaborated. "We are especially grateful to our mission teams and the many churches and LWML groups who made pillowslip dresses, donated gym shorts, shoes, underwear, baby clothes and food for these who feel abandoned and hopeless.

"The love and care of Jesus shines through the gifts and service that has been provided by your generosity!"

A recognized 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Mission: Haiti has

been endorsed by the Florida-Georgia District. The organization began in 1999 when leaders in the District saw the need to help support the growing Lutheran Church in Haiti. Advised by and accountable to the Florida-Georgia District, Mission: Haiti networks with other mission societies and

humanitarian organizations to provide support, assistance, disaster relief, medical care, education opportunities, and develop self-sufficiency projects administered through the Lutheran churches of Haiti.

For more information visit [www.missionhaiti99.org](http://www.missionhaiti99.org).





# Linking Reformation & Christmas

## An Opportunity to Focus on the True Meaning of This Season!

It seems like only yesterday we celebrated Reformation, then Thanksgiving quickly came and went, and now our focus is once again on Christmas.

As early as mid-October I began seeing the signs of the trappings of

Christmas. The *commercialization* of Christmas appears earlier and earlier, and numbs us to the reality of what Christmas truly is all about. All around us we find laws that prohibit our celebration, stores that refuse to speak the word *Christmas*, communities no longer allow crèche scenes to be erected and schools now have winter

holiday parties to be inclusive.

And all the while Satan sits back with a jolly “Ho, ho, ho.”

Maybe there’s a link between Reformation and Christmas. I think we find it in 2 Corinthians 5:21, where Paul writes, “*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*”

As the Reformation reminds us that we are justified by grace apart from the law through Jesus Christ, so Christmas reminds us that God sent us this precious gift so that we would have eternal life.

Perhaps the church should jump on the opportunity that the world affords us! I think there is more of a correlation between Reformation and Christmas than maybe we’ve given credence.

For instance, in the Reformation Luther wanted to restore the centrality of the Gospel so that people would not be burdened

by the law, but rather comforted by the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ. In the Reformation, Luther wanted to re-focus the Church from spending time on all the peripheral things, all the rites and ceremonies that don’t mean much



without understanding that it’s all about Jesus, to focusing on the death and resurrection of Jesus and His grace and forgiveness.

Perhaps it’s time for the Church to do something similar so that the world understands the true meaning of Christmas once again. Maybe it’s time to *reform Christmas!*

In our day Christmas has become an opportunity to live large and get into debt purchasing gifts. The older I get the more I realize that the best gift of all is that of time. Spending time with the ones I love can’t be bought at any price, although, at times, it may cost me.

To build relationship with others will take sacrifice and an investment of time. I have to be flexible and responsive and can’t always have my own way. It means that I have to put others before myself.

Isn’t that really what Christmas

is all about? At Christmas we remember how God, in love, put you and me first, all because He wanted to spend time with us. God sent Jesus into our human flesh so that we could enjoy a renewed relationship with our Creator,

and have the best gift of all — the gift of salvation and eternal life. Jesus sacrificed all the comforts of heaven, lowered Himself to be born of a woman, humbled Himself to experience the normal human situations from infancy to puberty to adulthood — all so that you and I would be freed from our sinful condition

and enjoy the blessings of an eternity with God.

Yet in our day so many people, even church people, fail to recognize the wonder and blessings of this magnificent season to remember the glorious joy and blessing of our faith.

Maybe you’ve heard the story about the lady who was doing some last minute shopping with kids in tow, and having a hard time keeping it all together. As she shoved her way into a crowded elevator, she said, “I don’t know who’s responsible for all this Christmas stuff, but they ought to arrest him, string him up, and shoot him.” Someone from the back of the elevator quietly said, “Don’t worry, they already arrested Him, whipped Him, spat on Him, beat Him, taunted Him, nailed Him to a cross, stripped Him and Crucified Him.”

It is way too easy to get

so caught up in the things of Christmas that we actually miss what Christmas is truly all about!

One of my favorite Christmas stories is the modern parable told by Paul Harvey about a family on Christmas Eve. This family had a tradition where the Mother and children went to the Christmas Eve service, and the Father stayed home and read the paper. When the family returned from church, they would gather to open their presents. The Father was not an evil man, but he just couldn’t believe in the childhood stories anymore of God coming as a baby in a manger.

The family left for church and he began to read the evening paper by the fireplace. Suddenly, he heard tapping on the window. It was a bird flying against the glass trying to get out of the snow into the warmth of his home. The man had compassion on the bird, and he went outside, hoping to bring it in. As he approached the bird, it flew against the window even harder. Pretty soon, the bird flew into the bushes below the window, half frozen, yet too afraid to be caught by this huge man.

The more the man tried to reach for the bird, the more the bird flew frantically into the snow and thorns of the bushes. After a few minutes in the cold and seeing the bird continue to injure itself, the man yelled out in frustration, “Stupid bird, can’t you understand that I’m trying to help?” The man paused and thought, “If only you understood you wouldn’t fly away ... if only ... if only I could become a

bird, and get you to understand.”

Just then, the church bells rang as they always did on the hour. But when the man heard the bells this time, he fell to his knees and began to cry, saying, “Oh, God, I didn’t understand. Oh, God, I didn’t understand.”

Here’s the simple truth of Christmas: Jesus came in human form that we might understand from where we have come, for what reason we were separated and how we could be restored to God. The Bible says, “*But when the right time finally came, God sent His own Son. He came as the son of a human mother and lived under the Jewish Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God’s sons and daughters.*” TGNT (Ga 4:4–5).

The world around us is so busy living life in survival mode that they don’t realize that our God has offered us something better. He’s offered us forgiveness of sins and new life in Jesus Christ. He’s offered us a personal relationship with Himself for all eternity. I can’t imagine it getting better than that!

In the days of the Reformation, Luther discovered the truth of the depth of the love of Jesus, who saves us by grace, through faith and not by works of the law. You can’t buy or give enough Christmas presents to earn God’s love—or anyone else’s. I barely remember the Christmas gifts that my parents gave me — and even the ones that I vaguely recall, I no longer have. But I do remember the time they invested, and continue to invest, in my life.

And though it is less frequent today because of distance, it is even sweeter when those opportunities arise because we realize the value of each other. I try to invest time into

the lives of my own children, and hopefully will have the opportunity to do that in the lives of my grandchildren when they come along.

Christmas is really all about relationship. First, and foremost, it’s about our relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Stop during this busy season and reflect how God in His love sent us the precious gift of His Son, Jesus, so that we might have new life. Let that good news inform and reform the way you celebrate this year.

Secondly, may this Christmas be about the relationships that God has put in your life with family and friends, and how you have been so richly blessed by them.

Someone has said that the only thing we’ll take to heaven are the relationships that we cultivate in our lives, so make the investment. It has eternal value! May your Christmas celebrations go through a wonderful reformation so that they focus on Jesus. And may your celebrations be used by God to connect others to Jesus this year! ■



*Joyous Christmas Blessings in Jesus!*  
**Greg**



# Thrivent Builds, Repairs, Impacts Ocala, Florida

It was a great day to play in the dirt for Thrivent Financial members and their friends. They were experiencing a *Thrivent Builds Repairs* event. The *Thrivent Builds Repairs* program is designed to make basic exterior repairs to existing homes.

Under the leadership of Financial Representative Shannon Adams, who

serves the Ocala area, members and friends gathered to help a single mother improve the exterior of her home.

Through the repairs program volunteers were able to use their skills to landscape new shrubs and plants, repair fencing and a shed in the back yard.

Thanks to the Ocala volunteers who changed their community for good in just one day! ■



Financial Representative Shannon Adams and Brad Nimmo, President/CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Marion County



Members of the "Thrivent Builds" team in front of the completed project



## Thrivent Financial now partners with Habitat for Humanity to help improve a neighborhood.

Help paint a house ... and see what a difference it makes in a neighborhood. Caulk a few windows ... and help lower a family's energy bills.

*Thrivent Builds Repairs* launched across the country in 2012 and concentrates on upgrading existing homes through projects like installing accessibility ramps, exterior painting, weatherization, porch repair or light landscaping. Opportunities are available to join with your financial representative to participate in a one to two

day project with a local Habitat for Humanity affiliate.

Thrivent Financial's relationship with Habitat for Humanity brings the financial, volunteer and advocacy resources of Thrivent Financial together with the affordable housing construction leadership of hundreds of local Habitat for Humanity affiliates. Upgrading existing homes not only makes the homes safer and more efficient, it also cultivates community pride.

By volunteering with Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity's new program, *Thrivent Builds Repairs*, you will be renewing your community, renewing the lives of families in your community, because volunteering just feels good, you'll feel renewed, too!

*Thrivent Builds Repairs* offers short-term projects with a big impact that also can fit into your busy schedule. Contact your local Financial Representative and he/she can work with the local Habitat affiliate to find the right fit for the volunteers in your local area. ■



Call or stop by our Information Center today! (239) 206-2646 or (866) 986-9690  
 The Arlington Information Center and Model • 12276 Tamiami Trail East, Suite 501 • Naples, FL 34113  
 Mon.-Fri. 8:30-5 | Sat. 9-4 | Sun. 12-4 | Or by appointment • [www.ArlingtonNaples.org](http://www.ArlingtonNaples.org)  
 The Arlington of Naples welcomes people of all faiths, beliefs and traditions. A Lutheran Life Community - Serving seniors and their families for more than a century. Lutheran Life Communities: Empowering vibrant, grace-filled living across all generations.

*The A-List*  
 is getting ready.

The Arlington of Naples has officially exceeded its presales goal—and that means we're getting ready for a much-anticipated event: groundbreaking. Founders have already prepared for a secure future—and soon they'll be choosing finishes and fixtures for their new homes! If you've not yet joined "the A-List," we invite you to learn more about significant benefits available only to Founders—and only until we break ground.



# Disaster Response Training Offered

In cooperation and coordination with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Office of Disaster Response, the Florida-Georgia District has announced the first of several District sponsored Lutheran Early Response



members of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Responding to a disaster allows a congregation to confess Christ to their community, region and world in ways they may have never considered before.

Team (LERT) Training sessions:  
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
1515 S. Semoran Blvd.  
Orlando, FL 32807  
January 25, 2014  
9 am to 3:30 pm  
Registration opens at 8:30am.  
Responding to a disaster is a vital part of who we are as

The central premise of the LCMS Disaster Response ministry's training is rooted in this verse "We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19, ESV) The training is rooted within our worship where our Triune God first showed His love to us through the death and resurrection of Christ. We



see this love as we are washed in Baptism, fed in the Lord's Supper and continually nourished through the Word. These ways in which God has shown His mercy and love to us are now turned outwards to our community. Since we have seen God's mercy shown to us in worship, we can now show that same mercy to members in our community.

This training session will address the nature of disasters and explore what our response should be to a disaster as members of the LCMS. Using worship as our backdrop, we will explore how Christ has shown mercy to us, and how we can show this world the same Christ-like mercy as we have seen. The goal of this training is to help congregations and individual members to be better prepared for when a disaster strikes and know how to respond not only within their congregation, but to also respond in Word and deed within their greater community. Attendees will receive Disaster Response credentials that will give them the ability to enter disaster zones in coordinated LCMS teams to lend aid to those in need.

More information and registration can be found on the Florida-Georgia District web site. There is no cost to the participant except their travel to the training event. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. If you have further questions or need help registering, please contact John Elliott in the Florida-Georgia District Office at 877-457-5556, x7 or via email at [jelliott@flgadistrict.org](mailto:jelliott@flgadistrict.org). ■

# District LWML Retreat Blends Training, Worship, Outreach

The women of the Florida-Georgia District met in retreat the last weekend of September at The Lodge at Simpsonwood, a Methodist conference and retreat center in Norcross, GA. There were 220 in attendance, which included a few men – pastoral counselors and several husbands.

The weather was perfect: blue skies and cool air! Nestled in the woods along the Chattahoochee River, Simpsonwood was the perfect setting for the theme taken from Psalm 42:1 – *As the deer pants for the water...*

Compared to other retreat weekends, this one had a pretty packed schedule, as District President Bunnie Koelsch, Vice President for Mission Service Dawn Sandvig and Vice President for Communications Trish Aamo took advantage of the gathering to PING! the Florida-Georgia LWMLers. PING! is the current LWML leadership training program, which these three officers are committed to sharing around the District.

The presentations included LWML 101, LWML 102 and A Cup of Coffee, as well as several HOPE Committee skits, which tell about the structure of LWML and the abundant resources available to all members. Ask anyone in

attendance and they can tell you the web address for LWML from memory... it's easy [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org)! There were also table activities which prompted sharing and conversations at each meal.

Keynote speaker was Heidi Floyd, author, pastor's wife and cancer patient. Heidi has spoken at and been humorous interrupter for LWML conventions and takes every opportunity she can to share her story with LCMS groups, conferences, etc. And it's a most inspiring story... of faith, strength and courage.

One constant in Heidi's presentations is her demonstration of her daily time with God... during her morning shower. When she's "washing" her hair, the audience knows that is Heidi talking to God; when Heidi's hands are positioned as a tea cup and saucer, that's God having His morning cup of tea while He listens and responds to Heidi. Photos showing this can be found on Heidi's Facebook page, captioned: Asked... and answered daily.

Donations to Gifts from the Heart were so generous that not only were several vehicles needed to take it all away, but Family Promise of Gwinnett County was

able to share with another Family Promise unit. They were very appreciative and grateful. Family Promise, known in some areas as Interfaith Hospitality Network, assists homeless families with children, providing them with temporary housing, counseling, as well as finding jobs and permanent housing.

The Sunday sunrise devotion included a

remembrance ceremony, made memorable by the singing of "Lord of the Dance" in the chill, damp air, accompanied by guitar



and violin. A worship service with communion closed out the program and President Bunnie Koelsch adjourned the LWML Florida-Georgia District until next September for the 2014 Convention at the Wyndham Jacksonville Hotel on the St. Johns River. ■



PHOTOS — above top: District LWML President Bunnie Koelsch and VP for Spiritual Growth Karen Bowers

directly above — a scene from one of the weekend skits.

At left — retreat committee members included (l-r) Trish Aamo, NE GA Zone President; Paulette Bernthal, East Central GA Zone President; Marsha Bohannon, Hostess Committee Chair; LaVon Bunker, 2013 Retreat Chair; Karen Bowers, VP for Spiritual Growth; Gwen Glidden, Registration Chair; Peggy Wagner, Atlanta North Zone President; Marilyn H. Treanor, Meeting Manager



## Join other men from the Men's NetWork for a weekend golf tournament in sunny Florida!

**FEBRUARY 21-23, 2014**

**Mission Inn Resort & Club**  
Howey-in-the-Hills, FLORIDA

Registration includes 18 holes of golf each day, breakfast and lunch, with dinners included on Friday and Saturday. Packages begin at \$700 for double occupancy.

For more information, and to register, visit [www.lhmmen.com/golf2014](http://www.lhmmen.com/golf2014).



# Student Volunteers Needed for Bethesda Summer Camps

More than 750 student volunteers are needed for four Bethesda Lutheran Communities camp programs in Wisconsin, Indiana, Colorado and Texas during the summer of 2014.

Bethesda, a national provider services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, has offered camp and retreat ministry opportunities since 1969. Bethesda camps are designed to engage volunteers (ages 14 and older) as one-to-one companions with people who have developmental disabilities. Activities — including worship, arts and crafts, and outdoor recreation — foster spiritual growth and the development of meaningful friendships. Adults are also needed to serve as cabin leaders and in other capacities.

Camps, which last six days and five nights, are ideal for youth and adult groups and families looking for mission trip and service opportunities, according to Bethesda Representative Nicholas Honeck. Volunteers receive training on topics related to developmental disabilities, including etiquette, personal care and communication.



The 2014 camp offerings are:  
**SonRise | Anderson, IN**, 45 minutes northeast of Indianapolis. Features air-conditioned, 25,000-square-foot retreat facility on 14-wooded-acres. Eight sessions are scheduled from June to August. No session the week of July 4. Email [SonRise@mailblc.org](mailto:SonRise@mailblc.org).



**Camp Matz | Watertown, WI**, between Milwaukee and Madison. Features an outdoor chapel and a large, accessible tree house. Eight sessions are scheduled from June to August. No session the week of July 4. Email [CampMatz@mailblc.org](mailto:CampMatz@mailblc.org).



**Camp Bethesda | Tomball, TX**, hosted at the Kaiserhof Retreat Center, 45 minutes north of Houston. Features a spacious outdoor pavilion overlooking a pond and a pool. Three sessions: June 23-28, July 7-12 and July 14-19. Email [CampBethesdaTexas@mailblc.org](mailto:CampBethesdaTexas@mailblc.org).

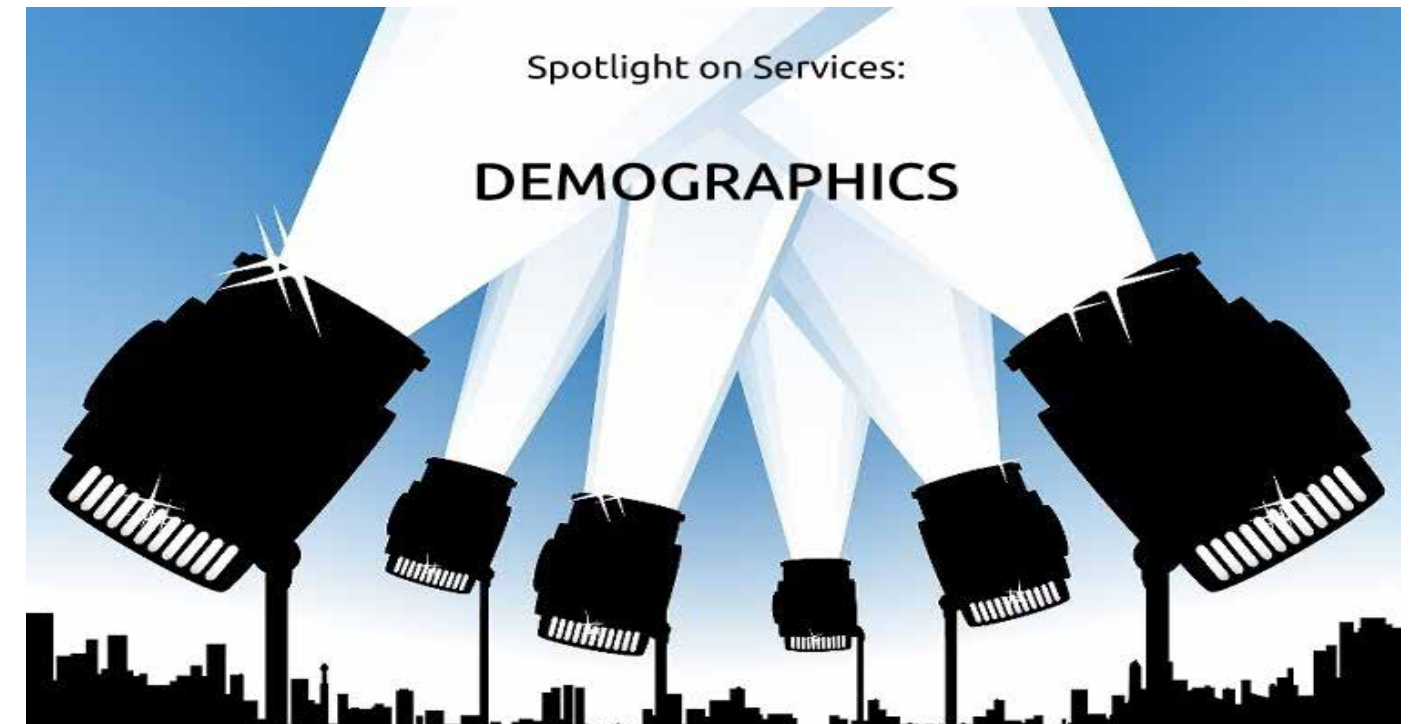


**Bethesda Mountain Builders | Woodland Park, CO**, hosted at Lutheran Valley Retreat (LVR). Features a wilderness camp setting, arts and crafts and recreational activities. Three sessions: June 8-14 and July 13-19 and Aug. 4-11. Email [BethesdaMountainBuilders@mailblc.org](mailto:BethesdaMountainBuilders@mailblc.org).

For more information visit [BethesdaLutheranCommunities.org/camps](http://BethesdaLutheranCommunities.org/camps)



# LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND

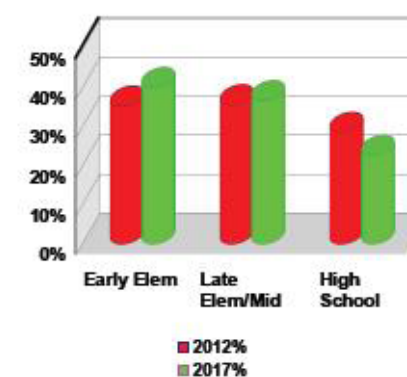


Discovering your church's ministry opportunities has never been easier. MissionInsite provides instant access to community information for your church. You'll get desktop, web-based access to demographic data for a variety of geographic levels. Choose from geographies such as zip codes, census tracts, cities or counties or from your own custom geographies to create real time demographic reports. A report provides community demographic information data, graphs and text analysis. The MissionInsite report contains current year updates for population, households and families in the study area, as well as age, income, ethnicity, phase of life and lifestyle information.

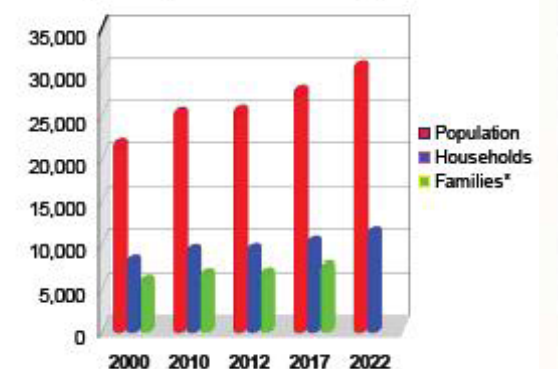
Enjoy exploring your ministry area and discovering new mission opportunities. **FREE!**

For more information, contact the LCEF Florida-Georgia District Team at: (877) 457-5556 ext. 4.

School Aged Children Trends: By Levels



Population, Household & Family Trends



# LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND



Florida-Georgia LCEF Team Daniel J. Reichard (center), Debbie Talbot (left) and Mary Byrd (right) at the 2013 District Educators Conference. ■



← Lutheran Church Extension Fund was present at the Annual Florida-Georgia Educator Conference in Daytona on September 18-20. Daniel J. Reichard, District Vice-President, introduced the Young Investors Club (Y.I. Club), a fun way to share stewardship concepts that help toddlers to teens save and learn about Jesus! Also, a record number of applications were completed and turned in from Educators who signed up for the Family Emergency StewardAccount. The winners of an Ipad Mini are pictured here with Dan Reichard: Virginia Pozzo (at left), Our Savior-Plantation and Cheri Talsma, Shepherd of the Coast-Fort Lauderdale. ■

→ The Lutheran Church Extension Fund Florida-Georgia Team had an amazing time at the Pastors Conference held in St. Petersburg on October 7-9. The event produced many opportunities for one-on-one conversation with the pastors. It was just one more way that LCEF empowers ministry. Shown here is LCEF's Dan Reichard with the winners of the Ipad mini given away by LCEF: Pastor Paul Meseke from Christ-Brooksville and Pastor Philip Vangan from Faith-Parrish ■



**Y.I. Club: Where saving money is fun and helps others learn about Jesus.**

Calling all Little Lambs, Mission Builders and World Changers! Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is introducing the Young Investors (Y.I.) Club to help children and teens save for the future while helping others learn about Jesus!

Open a Y.I. StewardAccount® with \$25 or more to benefit from these Y.I. Club features:

- Premium interest rate on balances under \$1,000
- Welcome packet with free club giveaway
- Y.I. Club newsletters and web activities
- Report Card extra credit
- Service Hours extra credit
- College Scholarship program
- Contests and fun!

**3.5%**

Little Lambs Ages 0-6  
Mission Builders Ages 7-12  
World Changers Ages 13-18

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# Parsing the Monotheists

Scholars claim that there are three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This can lead to the misunderstanding that the three religions believe in the same God. Do they?

Paul wrote to Timothy — and he writes to us — that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself as a ransom for all men.” (1 Timothy 2:4-6)

What about the Jews? First of all we must say that most Jewish people in America are not religious. They do not belong to a synagogue, they do not celebrate Jewish holidays, they are not familiar with the Jewish Bible (identical to our Old Testament) and most of them have never gone to Israel.

They have only a cultural heritage. We can only speculate what their god is — education, power, money, travel, some kind of worthy cause? But perhaps 40 percent of the Jewish people in America do espouse the religion of Judaism. They believe in the God who revealed himself in the Old Testament to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — and all the other prophets.

But they do not know

Him, Yahweh, as He really is. Only the Christ, Jesus, reveals God truly. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know the Father as well.” (John 14:6-7)

The God of the Judaism of today is obscure, distant, inscrutable, a demanding “parent” — a giver of



guilt. So it is important to continually do *mitzvot* (good deeds) to please Him, and perhaps thereby, earn eternal life.

The god of the Muslims is called Allah. *The Koran*, the holy book of Islam, reveals Allah to be a jealous god who demands obedience, submission and worship to him alone. The *shahadah*, or basic creed of Islam, is: “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad

is his prophet.”

When radical Muslims drive airplanes into buildings, or shoot Christians, they yell: *Allahu akhbar!* (Allah is the greatest.) The Koran and the *hadith* (recommendations of Muhammad) emphasize that “Allah hates sinners.”

In stark contrast, God as revealed in the Bible is a God of love, grace and forgiveness who loves

sinners, and seeks them out to forgive them. The Koran says that Jesus is a prophet, but also claims that He is not the Son of God, nor did He die on the cross. Yes, Muslims believe in one god, but not the God of the Bible.

Let me conclude with some good news. The Florida-Georgia District Muslim Evangelism Task Force will be meeting in January to envision how we might better proclaim the Gospel to Muslims.

## BURNING BUSH

by Bruce Lieske  
District Task Force on Muslim Evangelism

Members of the Task force are Jay and Julie Dass, Isaac Baroi, Dr. Tim Furnish, Michelle Turner, myself as Chairman and Rev. Doug Kallesen ex-officio. We welcome your input as we launch this new effort of the District.

Finally, Books for Missions under the able leadership of Rev. Kermit Rickenberg, continues to make good progress. We now have about 60,000 books and are in the process of cataloguing them for sale — with access through the Internet — to raise funds for missions. Each book that is mailed out contains a Christian tract.

We thank our Heavenly Father, who provides for us, for the large building that we were able to buy at a good price on auction earlier this year. The building is called the Burning Bush Outreach Center, located at 112 SE Ave D, Winter Haven, FL — just two blocks from Grace Lutheran Church.

If you have books to donate, drop by the BBOC or call Pastor Kermit at 321-696-4068. You can also reach him at [Pastorrickenberg@yahoo.com](mailto:Pastorrickenberg@yahoo.com).

Pray for the success of these two endeavors, and be open to God’s calling when an opportunity to witness to Jewish or Muslim friends presents itself. ■

# A Month of Missions at All Saints, Blairsville

The Missions Committee at All Saints-Blairsville, GA presented “A Month of Missions” in October. Each Sunday morning there was a presentation of either local, national or international missions supported by All Saints.

On October 6 the Cox family represented the Upward Sports program located at the House of Prayer. Pastor Dave Wesche and Duke Pangborn volunteer as flag football and soccer coaches for the program.

Lutherans in Africa Missionary Jonathan McCall visited on October 13. He explained the work of the mission

in Africa: working with local ministers in 20 different African countries; ministering to the people of various cultures; and the desire to build a seminary to train new pastors.

On the third and fourth weeks, the focus was on national and local missions. A favorite national mission was K9 Comfort Dogs, gentle trained service dogs who interact with people to provide a bridge

for compassionate and comforting ministry in the midst of crisis. Comfort Dogs have served in Newtown, Boston and Colorado in the aftermath of tragedy during this past year.

Also featured were Rebecca’s Garden mentoring program, Trinity/HOPE Haitian mission and the Luther Institute

environment; Healing Hands Community Clinic, a nonprofit faith based healthcare facility; His Lambs Our Lambs Preschool, a faith based tuition free preschool; Goodies from the Heart, offering healthy, convenient weekend meals to primary and elementary school children in need; and Regency Hospice. ■

## 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



of Southeast Asia.

Local missions highlighted were the Ecumenical Food Pantry with which five area churches partner; Hope House, providing assistance with basic necessities of life to those in critical need; SAFE House, which offers emergency assistance for families in an abusive

Photos — At left, Gerald and Daphne Cox and daughters Allie and Leah with Pastor Dave Wesche

Below — Host family Jack and Kelly Mazzaferro with missionary Jonathan McCall and Pastor Dave Wesche





## REGION 1

# Second Cohort of SMP Students Complete Courses at CTS

November 5, 2013, marked the completion of course work for the second cohort of Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program students at Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne. The SMP Program is a distance-education program designed to meet the need to train pastors in context for ministry and mission opportunities in the church.

One of the members of the Beta Cohort was Rev. Aaron M. Reinking, Associate Pastor of Trinity-Athens.

More information about the SMP Program at CTS is available at [ctsfw.edu/SMP](http://ctsfw.edu/SMP) or by contacting the CTS Office of Admission at [Admission@ctsfw.edu](mailto:Admission@ctsfw.edu) or 800-481-2155. ■

At right — Rev. Aaron M. Reinking



# District Students Hit the Road to Serve

With midterms mounting and Reformation Day right around the corner, students at campus ministries throughout the Florida-Georgia District prepared for a road trip – an excursion to serve. During

the October 18-20 weekend, several of the District campus ministries traveled to Auburn, AL, for the annual fall service retreat.

More than 15 students from the Florida-Georgia District along with students from Auburn and other campus ministries in the Southern District served with Alabama Rural Ministries. They helped fix flooring, assisted an elderly man who needed assistance cleaning his house out and making it a healthy environment, made new friends with



campus ministry students from other campuses, and deepened already existing relationships.

The retreat was made possible by the Florida-Georgia District providing funding from a long-defunded account for campus ministry service projects put together by the District campus ministries, according to Rev. Jay Winters of University Lutheran-Tallahassee.

“This gift will have long term benefits for the campus ministries of the District over the years enabling them to do more and more service,” Winters added. ■

## 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



# Annual Reformation Service Celebrated in Plant City

On Sunday, October 27, members of Hope-Plant City hosted the annual Reformation Celebration service for the Winter Haven Circuit of the Florida-Georgia District.

Just under 400 people gathered at Hope for a time of worship, dinner and a health fair.

Preacher for the worship was Rev. Gregory Seltz, speaker of *The Lutheran Hour* — the radio broadcast produced by Lutheran Hour Ministries that is heard around the world. Participating in the service were the pastors of five of the seven churches in the circuit as well as a mass choir of the combined congregations, along with their organists, choir directors and hand bell choirs.

Following the service, the members of Hope hosted a German meal of bratwurst, German potato salad and sauerkraut with

Shown after the worship are (front, l-r) Rev. Tod Shouse (Redeemer-Bartow); Rev. Zong Yang (Hmong Ministry, St. Paul-Lakeland); Rev. Greg Seltz; Rev. Jon Frusti (Grace-Winter Haven); Vicar Kyle Jones (Grace-Winter Haven), (back, l-r) Rev. Tony Douches (retired, Grace-Winter Haven); Rev. Dean Pfeffer (Hope-Plant City); Rev. Miguel Sanabria (Esperanza-Hope-Plant City); Rev. Ron Pennekamp (St Paul-Lakeland); Rev. Tom Block (Christ-Lakeland); Rev. Charles Reich (Grace-Winter Haven); Vicar Buck LeGreco (Hope-Plant City).

an ice cream social for dessert. The health fair took place in Hope’s courtyard and had presenters from various health agencies as well as

local doctors, the YMCA, and South Florida Baptist Hospital. The fair was coordinated by Hope’s Parish Nurse Joyce VanMatre, RN. ■



## 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



## Moving Stalled Ministry into Gear

A congregation needs healthy communication in order to grow, according to Rev. James Kress.

That's what members of Redeemer Lutheran Church-Englewood, FL, discovered this summer with the help of LCEF's VisionPath.

Five years after a leadership change created a major ministry stall, Redeemer is moving forward – with the enthusiastic participation of young working parents as well as retirees and vacationing “snow birds.” The VisionPath experience is helping members communicate, focus on ministry and determine a clear direction to best serve their community and the Lord.

“Without VisionPath, we'd probably still be stuck in a meeting,” Kress said of the relatively new tool he credits with revitalizing ministry that had become stagnant. With VisionPath and God's help, “we are confident we will produce good fruit for His kingdom.”

In 2007, Redeemer continued to benefit from an earlier population boom in Englewood. The growing congregation was looking to the future, including the potential of expanding ministry through its child care

and development center. But plans were put on hold – until this summer when the church council wanted to revisit them but was unsure how to proceed. Daniel J. Reichard, LCEF Florida-Georgia District Vice President, encouraged Redeemer to contact LCEF.

“He told us about a new tool to assist congregations in discovering what ministry, outside Word and Sacrament, God was guiding them to do,” Kress said. “He said it would help us get the ball rolling.”

In August, Max Biesenthal, Senior Vice President/LCEF Ministry Support, guided Redeemer through the half-day VisionPath event. Members discussed such questions as the greatest point of connection between the church and community and the greatest opportunity facing the ministry.

“It started slow, but by the last hour and a half, there was so much dialogue going on that Max was just nodding his head and allowing members to talk about how best to extend God's Kingdom,” Kress said.

The congregation's energy and excitement became “almost palpable,” Biesenthal said. “It was blazingly obvious that the Spirit was moving in the hearts of those in attendance to move in a particular direction.

“At the end of the event, they were ready to get going.”

Through VisionPath, Redeemer has identified seven “organic” ministry paths, including expanding ministry to meet the needs of young families and children, to strengthen relationships within the church and to enhance outreach and spiritual care to the elderly.

Most of those paths already were in place but had been detoured, Kress said. The congregation formed a VisionPath Development team of 11 members, ages 29 to 89, including working moms as well as retirees.

“Everyone is not of the same mind, but they all want to come together to see what is best for the congregation's ministry – not what is best for their particular group,” Kress said.

The congregation is ranking the seven ministry paths through a survey sent to all who worship at Redeemer – even snow birds.

“We can't accomplish everything at once. We have to set priorities,” Kress said.

Along with improving communication, the pastor sees congregants enjoying greater unity.

“Though we always will have challenges in ministry, the VisionPath experience opened up our minds to the idea that we can walk together to spread the Gospel,” Kress concluded.

To learn more about VisionPath and other LCEF tools and services, visit [www.lcef.org](http://www.lcef.org). ■

*Redeemer families enjoying fellowship during the VisionPath event.*



## Ken Green Installed at Prince of Peace, Orlando

Rev. Kenneth Green II was installed as Senior Pastor of Prince of Peace-Orlando on November 17. A reception to welcome Green and his family followed the afternoon service.

A graduate of Concordia Seminary-St. Louis, Green grew up in Indiana. He did his vicarage at Redeemer-Stuart, and served his first call at Trinity-Delray Beach from 1994-2003. He returns to the Florida-Georgia District after serving as Associate Pastor for a congregation in Springfield, VA, for the past 10 years.

“I have a passion to help people experience the power of



God in their lives,” Green said, “to connect people with Jesus, the most unique person – true God/true man – to walk this earth, and to walk with them through

challenging times of life where they can experience God's grace in new and life-changing ways.”

Expanding on his ministry passions Green continued, “I love the concept of ‘Missional Communities’ – God's work is not done ‘at the church’ but wherever we – the people of the Living God – are found.

“We bear His presence, and He works through each of us inasmuch as we are available to Him to work miracles in people's lives. It is really that simple—and that profound!”

Green and his wife Peg have five children, two sons and three daughters ranging in age from 5 to 20 years old. ■



GRACE LUTHERAN-WINTER HAVEN welcomed 19 new members on November 17, including (front, l-r) Theresa and Bill McComb, Rick Lincoln, Roger and Angela Duffield, (back, l-r) Kathy Thee, Rodney Steffen, Louis H. Richardson III, Julie and John King, Bill and Barb DeGrandchamp, Gail Butcher with Grace Pastor Jonathan Frusti. Not pictured are Susan Butcher, Sarah and Kathleen Duffield, Lauren and Gavin King, Doug Thee. ■

## Visitation Events Planned at St. Louis Seminary

Concordia Seminary-St. Louis is hosting three visitation events.

### Shepherds of God's Flock: January 9

For men in college or older, this retreat will focus on the spiritual and personal aspects of the decision process. Registrants will talk with Seminary students; study Scriptures concerning the pastoral office; worship with

the Seminary community; and talk with other retreat guests.

### Green and Gold Days January 10

Open to men and women college-age and older thinking about becoming pastors or deaconesses. Participants interact with students, attend classes, worship in the chapel and speak with members of the faculty.

### Taste of the Sem January 18-20

An opportunity for high school men to to study theology, pray, worship, meet and talk with Seminary students and professors.

To view a brochure of each of these events and to register, visit [www.csl.edu](http://www.csl.edu) or call 1-800-822-9545. ■

# Thrive Community@FGCU Expands Ministry Team, Treasury

Director of Christian Education Phil Klopke has joined the ministry team of Thrive Church and Thrive@FGCU. He joins Rev. Dr. John Roth, the pastor and mission developer for the Estero area ministry.

Klopke graduated from Concordia University Chicago in 2010. He and his wife, Kyrie, relocated to Fort Myers from St. Louis.

Roth and Klopke were at neighboring Bethlehem-Fort Myers on November 10 – Roth as worship leader and guest preacher and Klopke as Adult Bible Class teacher.

After Sunday's worship, Bethlehem's Vice President Roger Lewadowski, presented Roth with a check representing the profits of the congregation's October Second Thursday Monthly Dinner. Matching funds from Thrivent Financial were included in those profits.

Roth thanked the Bethlehem family for their "ongoing encouragement, active ministry support and financial gifts." ■



Rev. Dr. John Roth accepting check from Roger Lewadowski of Bethlehem-Fort Myers.

## 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



## James Vehling Honored by Concordia-St. Paul

Rev. James Vehling was one of five honorees to be presented an Alumni Distinguished Service Award from Concordia University- St. Paul at a ceremony during the October 2013 Homecoming celebration.

The award is given to alumni for their exceptional achievement in their profession, the community and the church.

Vehling has dedicated his career to serving the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He was a missionary in Japan for 20 years and a parish pastor in St. Paul, MN, and Hollywood, FL, for 17 years. He helped prepare undergraduate and graduate students for church work careers through his service to Concordia House of Studies and The Hoffmann Institute at Concordia University, St. Paul. ■



Our Savior Quilters Brighten Holidays for Kids

The Shepherd's Quilt Team at Our Savior-Lake Worth crafted 175 gift bags for the children of Lutheran Services Florida's PEPPi Head Start Child Development Center in Belle Glade.

The gift bags were dedicated in a recent worship service by Our Savior Pastor Steve Wipperman, who asked that the bags "help LSF fulfill its mission of bringing healing, hope and help to those in need."

Each bag was hand sewn and decorated, then filled with a toy, Christian coloring book, Beanie Baby and other items such as socks and other necessities).

"The group is excited to be helping us and has asked for ideas for next year," said Steve Cecchetti, LSF Director of Development. "Donna Macha is the leader of the group and organized the entire program." ■

## 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



## First LSF Excel Charter School Opens

Lutheran Services Florida opened the Sellev Belle Glade Excel Charter School this fall in a newly remodeled building equipped with the latest in teaching technology.

The school began the 2013-2014 academic year with 120 students from the kindergarten to grade three levels. Plans are to expand the program to include fourth grade during the 2014-2015 year and fifth grade in 2015-2016.

Sellev Belle Glade Excel Charter School is presented by the operators of PEPPi Head Start Child Development Center, open for more than 30 years. The new school will build upon the foundation of PEPPi's Gold Seal Head Start program in offering a well-rounded primary school education. As a free public charter school, there is no tuition fee.

The school is named in honor of Roger and Roberta Sellev, who decided they wanted to play a major role in turning the dream of a charter school in Belle Glade into a reality. Lutheran Services Florida chose to recognize their significant financial commitment to the new school by naming it after them.



Thanks to many generous donors, the Charter School students received free school uniforms and school supplies. Belle Glade is one of the poorest and depressed areas of the state. All of the students in the school come from an economically disadvantaged family and qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. ■

Shown here are students and their teacher in one of the classrooms at the new Sellev Belle Glade Excel Charter School.

# 2014 Hearts for Jesus Project to Benefit Disaster Response

Students in the churches and schools of the Florida-Georgia District have participated in the Hearts for Jesus project for many years.

“Each year, a worthy organization or cause is chosen to receive chapel offerings that are designated to make a difference in the lives of people beyond our local ministries,” explained Mark Brink, District Executive Director for School Ministries.

In response to recent disasters in the Philippines, which was devastated by Typhoon Haiyan, and the Midwest sector of the USA, which was torn apart by tornadoes, the 2014 Hearts for Jesus Project will benefit LCMS World Relief Disaster Response Efforts.



Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has earmarked additional funds for victims of Typhoon Haiyan.

“Our children’s chapel offerings will help bring relief to those living in these devastated areas of our world,” said Brink. “Many have lost their homes and businesses.

“The greater loss has been the loss of life especially in the Philippines where whole families appear to be missing. What greater gift can one give than that of God’s word and of His promises to those who know and love Him as they face these terrible losses?”

“We know that God will bless our combined efforts to make a profound difference in the lives of thousands of people either in a different part of our country or half a globe away from us,” Brink concluded. ■

## SAVE THE DATE

Florida-Georgia District President’s Convocation  
September 29-October 1, 2014  
Buena Vista Palace Hotel, Lake Buena Vista, FL

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# THE Back Page

## Redeeming Life Maternity Home Opens

Grand opening celebrations on November 9 officially launched Redeeming Life Maternity Home in Sanford, FL.

Established to offer hope and new life to single women who find themselves in crisis pregnancy, Redeeming Life is the realization of a longtime dream of Pastor Ed and Sheryl DeWitt.

The DeWitts were inspired to open a maternity home years ago after attending a Lutherans for Life conference, but – as they recall – it was not the right time.

“God again put this on our hearts when our daughter, Katie, came home from college pregnant and unmarried,” Sheryl said. “Unlike so many women who find themselves in this situation, Katie had her education, a loving family, a supportive congregation, and faith in a loving and forgiving God.”

Education, family, support and faith are the backbone of the program that Redeeming Life offers its residents.

“Our hope is that they will not only change their lives, but that they will embrace the love of God through His Son, Jesus Christ,” Sheryl DeWitt said.

At Redeeming Life, the philosophy is that faith, family and education are key to living a happy, healthy, hope-filled life. With that in mind, Redeeming Life residents live together as a family and are encouraged to eat, pray and study God’s Word together.

“Redeeming Life continues to love and support the women as they move through transitional housing and beyond,” concluded Sheryl DeWitt.

For additional information visit [rlom.org](http://rlom.org). ■



Redeemer Life Outreach Ministries board members (l-r) Rev. Ed DeWitt, Co-founder, President; Carsandra Buie; Leah Wroblewski; Jan Cherne; Sheryl DeWitt, Co-founder, Vice President; Katie DeWitt, Co-founder, Secretary/Treasurer; Lora Mason; Liz Borth; Joe Brooks



Sheryl DeWitt (left) with Lutheran Church –Extension Fund Florida-Georgia District Vice President Daniel J. Reichard and his wife Andrea



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