

# LUTHERAN LIFE

INSIDE:  
2013-2014  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

*Celebrating Student Ministry* 2014 | Volume 5







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

Lutheran Life Publishing:  
971 SW Pepperidge Terrace  
Boca Raton, Florida 33486

<http://flgadistrict.org/lutheran-life/>

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School Ministry, Mark Brink  
Mission & Outreach, Doug Kallesen  
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Business Manager, John Elliott

## Thrivent Grant Benefits District Leadership Program



Thrivent Financial Managing Partner Scott Morris, right, presents a \$25,000 grant check to District President Greg Walton.

The Florida-Georgia District recently received a \$25,000 grant from the Thrivent Financial Foundation.

The grant supports the District's Emergent Leadership training program, which is designed to grow healthy leaders utilizing the best training available from both spiritual and behavioral science disciplines.

"We are grateful for this important support," said Rev. Gregory Walton, Florida-Georgia District President. "We believe that healthy leaders build healthy ministries. They also equip congregational leaders with a greater ability to serve and sustain ministry in a post-church culture."

"We are delighted to assist the Florida-Georgia District through this grant," said Rick Kleven, vice president of the Thrivent Financial Foundation. "We trust that this support will strengthen the District's many vital ministries across Florida and Georgia." ■

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## DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

### Calling Congregations

Grace/Atlanta, GA ..... Sole Pastor  
Good Shepherd/Gainesville, GA ..... Sole Pastor  
Holy Cross/Jacksonville, FL ..... Sole Pastor  
Beautiful Savior/LeHigh Acres, FL ..... Sole Pastor  
Faith/New Port Richey, FL ..... Sole Pastor  
Our Savior/St Petersburg, FL ..... Assistant Pastor

### Calls Issued

Lake Oconee/Eatonton, GA:  
Rev. Andrew Schroeder as Sole Pastor

Good Shepherd/Gainesville, GA:  
Rev. Zachary Hoffman as Sole Pastor

Our Savior/Plantation, FL:  
Rev. Alston S. Kirk as Intentional Interim Pastor

Good Shepherd/Sarasota, FL:  
Rev. Steven Anderson as Sole Pastor

Faith/Sebring, FL:  
Rev. Robert Maulella as Sole Pastor

Our Savior/St. Petersburg, FL:  
Rev. Tyler Moore as Assistant Pastor

Our Savior/Zephyrhills, FL:  
Rev. Tod Shouse as Sole Pastor

### Calls Accepted

Lake Oconee/Eatonton, GA  
Rev. Andrew Schroeder as Sole Pastor

First/Gainesville, FL  
Rev. John Glover as Senior Pastor

Our Savior/Plantation, FL  
Rev. Alston S. Kirk as Intentional Interim Pastor

Good Shepherd/Sarasota, FL  
Rev. Steven Anderson as Sole Pastor

Faith/Sebring, FL  
Rev. Robert Maulella as Sole Pastor

Our Savior/Zephyrhills, FL  
Rev. Tod Shouse as Sole Pastor

### Transferred to Other Districts

Melissa Bergholt ..... Missouri (C)  
Ryan Dauss ..... Southern (C)  
James G. Stoltenberg ..... Southeastern (O)  
Benjamin S. Skelton ..... SELC (C)  
Gerald Lustila ..... Montana (C)  
David M. Meyer ..... Minnesota North (O)  
Kyle Dupont ..... Pacific Southwest (C)

### Transferred from Other Districts

Curtis L. Deterding/Minnesota North ..... (O)  
JoAnn K. Deterding ..... Minnesota North (C)  
Robert Scudieri ..... English (O)  
Caleb Abraham ..... Michigan (C)  
Emily Abraham ..... Michigan (C)  
Laura Hillman ..... Iowa East (C)  
Joy Reitsma ..... Northern Illinois (C)  
Jessica Wittcop ..... Mid-South (C)  
Edwin T. Harkey ..... New England (O)  
Kevin H. Brockberg ..... Michigan (C)

### School Changes

Christ/East Point, GA:  
from Elementary School to Child Care Facility

### Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Assignments

Roberto E. Rojas, Jr. | Pastor  
Concordia Theological Seminary/Fort Wayne, IN,  
Zion New Life/Winter Garden, FL (O)

Daisha Sorenson | Teacher ..... Concordia University Nebraska,  
Trinity/Rockledge, FL (C)

Beth Albrecht | Teacher ..... Concordia St. Paul  
Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale, FL (C)

Alexandra A. Schmidt | Teacher ..... Concordia Chicago  
Trinity/Delray Beach, FL (C)

Marisa L. Anderson | Teacher ..... Concordia Chicago  
Trinity/Delray Beach, FL (C)

Dana Topp | Teacher ..... Concordia Chicago  
Grace/St. Petersburg, FL (C)

Michael Yurk | DCE ..... Concordia Chicago  
Faith/Eustis, FL (C)

Alyssa Joerz | Teacher ..... Concordia New York  
Faith/Eustis, FL (C)

### Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Paul M. Stark, Pastor ..... St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA  
Alston S. Kirk, Interim Pastor ..... Our Savior/Plantation, FL (O)  
Caleb Abraham, Teacher ..... Trinity/Delray Beach, FL (C)  
Emily Abraham, Teacher ..... Trinity/Delray Beach, FL (C)  
Brenda K. Dean, Teacher ..... St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA (C)  
Crislyn R. Grubb, Teacher ..... Redeemer/Stuart, FL (C)  
Jessica Wittcop, Teacher ..... Grace/Winter Haven, FL (C)  
Joy Lynn Reitsma, Teacher ..... Gloria Dei/Davie, FL (C)  
Laura Hillman, Teacher ..... Grace/Jacksonville, FL (C)  
Jeffrey Potter, Assistant Principal ..... St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL (C)  
Kristine K. DeBoer, Teacher ..... Grace/St. Petersburg, FL (C)  
Curtis L. Deterding, Pastor ..... Zion/Fort Myers, FL (O)  
Kevin H. Brockberg, Principal ..... Trinity/Orlando, FL (C)  
Tod A. Shouse, Pastor ..... Our Savior/Zephyrhills, FL (O)  
Edwin T. Harkey, Pastor ..... Holy Trinity/Lutz, FL (O)  
Steven P. Anderson, Pastor ..... Good Shepherd/Sarasota, FL (O)  
Daryl M. Kruse, Principal ..... Faith/Marietta, GA (C)  
Martin R. Springer, Pastor ..... St. Mark/Tucker, GA (O)  
Jasue J. Vilsaint, Missionary ..... Trinity/Fort Lauderdale, FL (O)

### Change of Status from Active to Emeritus

Bruce Crabtree (O)  
Robert Steinke (O)  
Earl L. Steffens (O)  
Rodger Meyer (O)  
Timothy Riggs (C)

### Called to Glory

Rev. Kenneth H. Wessel  
Rev. Don Schroeder

### Change of Status within the District

Jennifer E. Vaughn from Active to Non-Candidate (C)  
Nancy Sweringen from Active to Non-Candidate (C)

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



We encourage you to post your church and school news and photos to our Facebook page! Living Faith/Cumming, GA, showed us the new sanctuary! Some 180 worshippers attended the first service on July 2nd.





**H**ave you ever been so tired that you didn't even know how tired you really were? Let's face it, life demands more and

learned on sabbatical that I hope to continue to implement. When Jesus calls you to come rest, you have to listen and respond! What a difference that makes! For many people summer is like a sabbatical from the

years by these ministries. For students who become involved, these have become a home away from home, providing a place of refuge and a community of care while students are transitioning to a new independence.

As a former college student, and parent of a college student, I can testify to how important having a faith community was for me. As a student it was a place to gather with others who shared similar values. As a parent, it

a great meal and speakers and a number of vendors displaying all sorts of useful things. I registered for a chance to win a two-day trip to Lake Lanier in North Georgia. You can't believe the shock, disbelief and skepticism I

We are intentional about making this a time for those who attend to have the opportunity to be renewed and grow in

# Renewal From the Inside Out

more time and energy, and often our schedules are overflowing and full. This summer was a great time of renewal for me personally. I had the privilege of being on sabbatical and traveling a bit with Edith. With some wise counsel and guidance, I placed a premium on just resting. It is amazing how that can impact our outlook on life. It's, well, renewing!

Jesus recognized this need for rest and renewal. The disciples had just experienced a rather traumatic experience learning that John the Baptist had been beheaded. I'm certain they were overwhelmed with grief and fear. I imagine they rushed to find Jesus to relay this news. Their hearts were troubled and their souls weary. In Mark 6 we read, "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He said to them, 'Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.' So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place" (Mark 6:31-32).

Of course, it was short-lived, yet when Jesus calls you to come with Him for rest, it is abundantly sufficient. Here's one of the most valuable things I

normal hectic schedule that we so diligently keep. Now that sabbatical is over, we've hit the ground running as we move past Labor Day into a busy Fall season. The work schedule fills and all of those activities that seem to take the summer off are back in full swing. Schools are open and teachers are back in the classroom. Many parents are adjusting to their college-aged students absenting themselves from the family, either for the first time – which is stressful enough – or maybe for the last time as they venture out on their own.



By the way, throughout this issue of *Lutheran LIFE*, you will read all kinds of news about Campus Ministry.

We have a number of active campus ministries both in Georgia and Florida. Historically we have had, for many years, ministries on the campus of the **University of Georgia (UGA)**, the **University of Florida (UF)** and **Florida State University (FSU)**. Thousands of students have been impacted over the

In fact, I would say that these ministries are a place of renewal. They provide a quiet and restful place to not only find spiritual renewal, but also a strong sense of safety and belonging. To the three ministries named above we have now added two additional communities. **Pastor John Roth** is building the **Thrive Community**, which launched in August in Estero at **Florida Gulf Coast University**. The other is **Live Community**, led by **Pastor Billy Brath**, at the **University of Central Florida** in Orlando, one of the largest schools around.

The goal of all of these ministries, and so many more led by faithful congregations near college towns, is to reach students and provide a place for them to grow as they are renewed by God's Spirit working in them, and then through them to connect others to Jesus. Let me encourage you to look into these awesome ministries and encourage students you know to seek them out. It will be a tremendous source of renewal for them.

was comfort to know my child was being nurtured in faith that was becoming his own, and now continues to grow.



It took only a few short hours after returning from sabbatical for the demands of life to kick back in.

Like a teacher returning to the classroom, or a student to their class, life becomes suddenly full. For me, personally, it's great to be back with my teammates. Maybe it's similar for you, returning to your routine schedule, your school or whatever it happens to be. However, be aware and recognize the signs of fatigue in yourself. Notice how your enthusiasm and attitude change when you are exhausted.

And then hear the voice of Jesus calling you to come take a sabbatical, however brief, with Him.

One time, when I was serving a parish, I attended a "Clergy Appreciation Breakfast" sponsored by our local radio station. It was a nice event with

felt when they notified me I had won. I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop. I figured that they wanted to sell me something. By the way, that probably was a sign of burnout... It was a total gift, and such a tremendous break. While only two days, and not very far from home, it was totally renewing.

That's what happens when we make the effort to get away, even for a short time. We call this self-care. When you take care of yourself you will be renewed from the inside out and better equipped for God's calling on your life!

From September 29-October 1 we have an awesome opportunity to gather together for the **Triennial President's Convocation**. Our focus for this event is renewal.

an atmosphere of fellowship, activity and fun. We have some awesome speakers from a variety of backgrounds, and our goal will be to understand how we can live healthier lives. When God's servants are healthy, physically and spiritually, it leads to healthier ministries, and healthy ministries connect people to Jesus.

Someone once told me that life will control you unless you get control of your life! That includes making time for rest and renewal. As we jump into this busy Fall season with all of its demands and activities, be sure to take time to listen for the voice of Jesus calling you to come and rest with Him. He wants to renew you from the inside out.

Heed His call!  
You won't regret it!



*Resting in  
Jesus With You!*  
**GREG**



# Annual Report Reflects Focus on

# Stewardship at District Level



John Elliott  
Florida-Georgia District  
Business Manager

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I am humbled by the task our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has given us and amazed at the response of His Saints. As such, I am exceedingly grateful for your continued participation with and support of the District office as we work to serve, assist and encourage Congregations in the ongoing

mission to “Connect People to Jesus.”

The following is a financial recap of the District’s finances for the Fiscal Year Ending (FYE) January 31, 2014.

Soli Deo Gloria!

The Lord has been faithful to the District. While funding overall has decreased, we continue to operate with no real debt and all restricted net assets are fully funded. Expenses are being kept in check, and we have funds in excess of restrictions giving us the opportunity to act quickly when the Lord presents opportunities for new missions.

## Statement of Activities

Unrestricted support from congregations totaled \$2,141,810. Even though this is an \$8,506 decrease from last year, we give thanks to God for this wonderful result and your continued faithful support!

Net assets released from restriction decreased by \$196,090 year over year. These assets fund specific projects or needs and are not utilized to fund ongoing operations or ministries. Their usage is determined by project need or donor restriction. Accordingly, their usage can vary greatly from year to year. Investment income from endowment funds are the exception as said income is rather consistent and is utilized for the donor restricted purposes, i.e., to fund student aid.

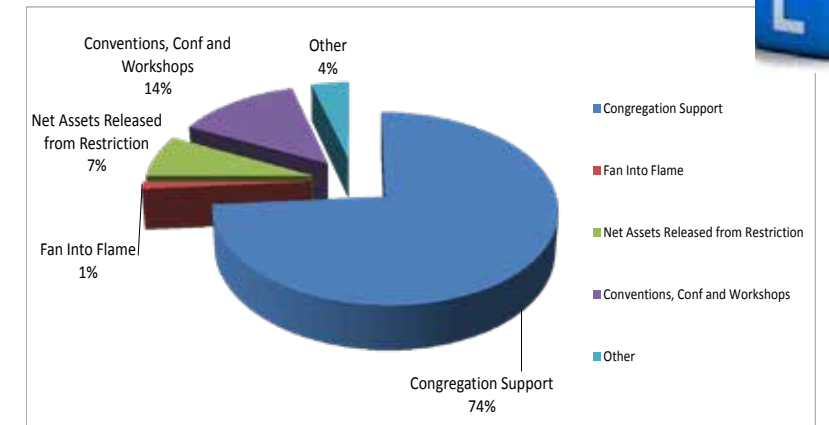
Total expenses for FYE January 31, 2014 were \$2,814,045 versus \$2,960,919 for FYE January 31, 2013, or a reduction of \$146,874. Most of this change is due to cuts in Administrative Costs and cyclical spending patterns in Congregational Services. Please note that the Ministry Support expense number is a “net” number. That is, there is revenue netted against this expense area that is not shown. This revenue is wholly reimbursement from LCEF for their program at the District office which includes the salaries, benefits and some recurring expenses of the LCEF staff housed at the District Office. We feel that by netting the revenue against the Ministry Support expense, we exclude the

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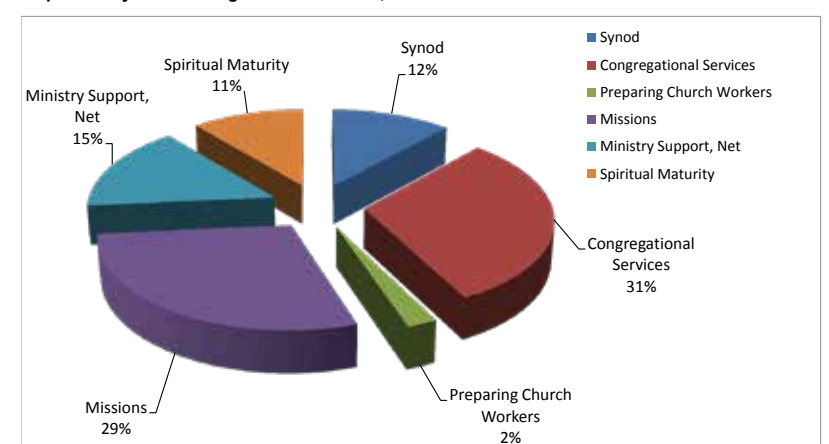


## District Financial Highlights for Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2014

Unrestricted Revenues for FYE January 31, 2014



Expenses by Critical Target for FYE Jan 31, 2014



### Florida-Georgia District The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Statements of Financial Position Audited Results

	January 31, 2014	January 31, 2013
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 1,907,490	\$ 2,564,834
Accounts Receivable	56,418	161,068
Prepaid Expense	87,390	18,014
Contributions Receivable		
From Split-Interest Agreements	672,235	735,289
Loans Receivable	270,000	280,000
Installment Sale Notes Receivable, net	249,671	256,225
Property and Equipment, net	764,267	402,021
Advance Sites	472,313	466,701
Long-Term Investments	1,955,026	1,694,291
Other Assets	907,254	798,185
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,342,064</b>	<b>\$ 7,376,628</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$ 269,935	\$ 326,092
Grants Payable	21,500	21,500
Notes Payable	270,000	280,000
Other Liabilities	276,684	304,648
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>838,119</b>	<b>932,240</b>
Undesignated	1,019,389	2,197,077
Net Investment in Land, Buildings and Equipment	764,267	402,021
Board Designated	1,152,366	246,083
Temporarily Restricted	1,868,015	1,915,213
Permanently Restricted	1,699,908	1,683,994
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>6,503,945</b>	<b>6,444,388</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,342,064</b>	<b>\$ 7,376,628</b>



Hope Mission/Jacksonville, FL, a daughter congregation of Grace/Jacksonville, moved into its new location this summer. Hope hosts Lifetree Café, a program that provides members and local residents the opportunity to meet and discuss current events and topics of interest. During July, Lifetree Café at Hope and Mandarin Senior Center collected diapers for homeless mothers. Terry Gooding delivered them to Family Promise, an organization that works to keep homeless families together while they help them put their lives back together.





Messiah Hispanic / Tampa, FL, another mission congregation of the Florida-Georgia District, is headed by Rev. Miguel Sanabria — shown here with his daughter, Deaconess Diana Bermudez. The mission sponsors a program called "We Are Family," a holistic support strategy for Hispanic families living in condos to establish an example and model for other residents that includes commitment, organization, planning, efficiency, unity, respect, honesty, ethics and civic participation.

**Florida-Georgia District  
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
Statements of Activities  
Audited Results**

For The Years Ended January 31,	2014	2013
<b>UNRESTRICTED REVENUES</b>		
Congregation Support *	\$ 2,141,810	\$ 2,150,374
Fan Into Flame	36,255	111,932
Net Assets Released from Restriction	213,614	409,704
Convention, Conferences and Workshops	392,269	383,010
Other	120,938	312,910
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>2,904,886</b>	<b>3,367,930</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Synod	330,157	313,390
Congregational Services	865,716	984,794
Funding The Mission	597	163
Preparing Church Workers	65,051	50,404
Missions	807,964	841,021
Ministry Support, Net	435,071	482,860
Ecclesiastical Administration	309,489	288,288
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>2,814,045</b>	<b>2,960,919</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME/EXPENSES</b>		
Change in Net Assets from Loan Sale/Disposition of Assets, Etc.	-	1,945,212
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	90,841	2,352,223
Temporarily restricted	(47,198)	(20,419)
Permanently restricted	15,914	45,679
<b>Total change in net assets</b>	<b>59,557</b>	<b>2,377,483</b>
<b>NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>6,444,388</b>	<b>4,066,905</b>
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 6,503,945</b>	<b>\$ 6,444,388</b>

\* Includes Congregation Support Over and Above Pledge

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LCEF expenses and provide a more accurate picture of what is being spent on Ministry Support. 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.

The District increased the tithe to Synod during the past year. During FYE January 31, 2014, 14% of all congregation contributions to the District were tithed to Synod. The District also tithed on the receipt of some special gifts. During this current fiscal year, the District increased the Synod tithe to 15%.

The total change in Net Assets for the past fiscal year was an increase of \$59,558 compared to an increase of \$2,377,432 for the year ended January 31, 2013. This variance is once again due to the three large financial transactions that occurred in 2012 – namely the sale of the Riverdale building, the sale of District Office and the sale of the YWAM Notes.

**2014 Work Program**

The highlights of the 2014 work program are as follows:

Congregation support was budgeted at \$2,100,000. Fan Into Flame revenue was budgeted at \$20,000. Through unanimous support of the Board of Directors, Synod support was increased to 15% of congregational support.

The District continues to set aside an additional 3% of unrestricted support to fund TCN and District Revitalization efforts. Missions Support remains at \$600,000 and supports 14 missions throughout the District.

The Missions Advisory Council continues to volunteer their talent, time and effort to assist the District staff in evaluating the various missions that are supported.

It should be noted that the Work Program for this year does not include revenue or expenses for conferences or the President's Convocation. These conferences are zero-based budgeted which means that they bring in as much revenue as we spend on the conference. As such, they have no impact to the overall budget picture and are not included here. We believe it brings more clarity to how much is being spent in the ministry areas of the District.

We believe that this work program 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.

It is my hope that you find this information useful and joyful. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me in the District office:

John Elliott  
jelliott@flgadistrict.org  
Toll Free: (877) 457-5556

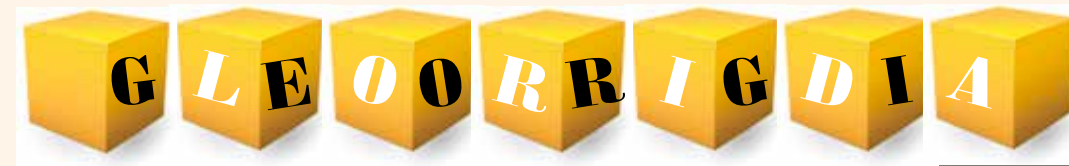
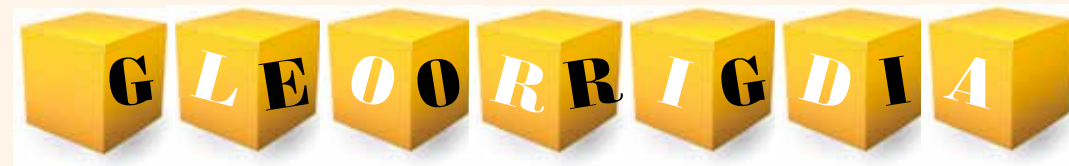
May God continue to bless our work together as we reach out to connect people to Jesus! ■



Amazing Grace / Oxford, FL, is one of the Florida-Georgia mission congregations. Shown here at September's inaugural worship in the new Amazing Grace worship facility are Steve Rockey, Evelyn Cecelia Mohammed, Jessica Rockey, Elizabeth Rockey, Kathryn Stolarz and Andy Deen.

**Florida-Georgia District  
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
District Budget  
For the Year Ended January 31, 2015**

<b>REVENUES</b>	
Congregation Support	\$ 2,100,000
Fan Into Flame	20,000
Installment Loan Repayments	14,700
Net Assets Released from Restriction	472,036
Other	54,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>2,660,736</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Synodical Pledge	315,000
TCN National Support	31,500
District Congregational Revitalization	31,500
World & National Missions	900,100
School Ministries	235,250
Congregational Services	374,650
Mission & Ministry Support	461,986
Ecclesiastical Administration	310,750
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,660,736</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ -</b>



## District Congregational Support

City, State	Congregation	Confirmed Support*	Members**	Support Member
<b>01 - Northeast Georgia</b>				
Athens, GA	Christus Victor	14,240	64	222.50
Athens, GA	Trinity	16,500	265	62.26
Blairsville, GA	All Saints	18,000	198	90.91
Clarksville, GA	Grace Mission	300	0	-
Gainesville, GA	Good Shepherd	18,708	249	75.13
Lilburn, GA	Oak Road	33,050	284	116.37
Toccoa, GA	Trinity	2,650	143	18.53
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>103,448</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>85.99</b>
<b>02 - Atlanta North</b>				
Atlanta, GA	Grace	6,000	59	101.69
Atlanta, GA	Rivercliff	26,679	431	61.90
Atlanta, GA	Living Faith Korean Mission	2,200	25	88.00
Cartersville, GA	Savior of All	9,083	310	29.30
Cumming, GA	Living Faith	10,499	166	63.25
Jasper, GA	King of Kings	2,785	16	174.06
Kennesaw, GA	Living Hope	21,749	302	72.02
Marietta, GA	Faith	13,200	315	41.90
Rome, GA	Holy Trinity	2,700	106	25.47
Tucker, GA	St. Mark	8,192	154	53.19
Woodstock, GA	Timothy	30,725	403	76.24
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>133,812</b>	<b>2,287</b>	<b>58.51</b>
<b>03 - Atlanta South</b>				
Columbus, GA	Bethlehem	6,000	83	72.29
Columbus, GA	LC of the Redeemer	4,069	182	22.36
Decatur, GA	Peace	1,066	87	12.25
Douglasville, GA	Prince of Peace	180	68	2.65
East Point, GA	Christ	3,015	50	60.30
Hampton, GA	Christ Our Savior	6,532	62	105.35
Peachtree City, GA	St. Paul	52,358	341	153.54
Stockbridge, GA	Holy Cross	0	142	-
Stockbridge, GA	Lord of Life	4,333	95	45.61
Tucker, GA	Incarnate Word	500	39	12.82
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>78,053</b>	<b>1,149</b>	<b>67.93</b>
<b>04 - East Central Georgia</b>				
Augusta, GA	Our Redeemer	40,785	419	97.34
Eatonville, GA	Lake Oconee	28,873	168	171.86
Macon, GA	LC of the Holy Trinity	0	33	-
Milledgeville, GA	Hope	900	24	37.50
Perry, GA	Christ	3,900	126	30.95
Savannah, GA	Trinity	38,160	378	100.95
Statesboro, GA	St. Paul's	1,364	66	20.67
Warner Robins, GA	Mount Calvary	68,000	678	100.29
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>181,982</b>	<b>1,892</b>	<b>96.18</b>
<b>05 - Tallahassee</b>				
Albany, GA	Trinity	9,307	71	131.08
Crawfordville, FL	Trinity	550	53	10.38
Lake City, FL	Our Redeemer	3,504	194	18.06
Tallahassee, FL	Epiphany	23,465	365	64.29
Tallahassee, FL	University LC	6,625	100	66.25
Tifton, GA	Peace	2,917	132	22.10
Valdosta, GA	Messiah	6,500	113	57.52
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>52,868</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>51.43</b>
<b>06 - First Coast</b>				
Jacksonville, FL	Grace	500	577	0.87
Jacksonville, FL	Holy Cross	1,406	87	16.16
Jacksonville, FL	Hope Mission	3,000	34	-
Jacksonville, FL	Our Redeemer	49	167	0.29

Jacksonville, FL	St. Paul	10,000	197	50.76
Jax'ville Beach, FL	Bethlehem	13,390	602	22.24
Kingsland, FL	Messiah Mission	0	17	-
Kingsland, GA	Holy Trinity	6,905	133	51.92
Middleburg, FL	St. Peter's	10,066	260	38.72
St. Augustine, FL	Christ Our Savior	1,200	51	23.53
Starke, FL	Good Shepherd	1,000	25	40.00
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>47,516</b>	<b>2,150</b>	<b>22.10</b>
<b>07 - North Central Florida</b>				
Chiefland, FL	Good Shepherd	550	59	9.32
Dunnellon, FL	Peace	1,667	66	25.26
Gainesville, FL	Abiding Savior	19,250	226	85.18
Gainesville, FL	First	35,382	528	67.01
Inverness, FL	First	2,316	329	7.04
Lecanto, FL	Faith	12,300	251	49.00
Ocala, FL	Our Redeemer	32,114	399	80.49
Ocala, FL	St. John	12,250	514	23.83
Oxford, FL	Amazing Grace Mission	24,238	125	193.90
Silver Springs, FL	Forest	4,119	48	85.81
Summerfield, FL	Trinity	36,996	753	49.13
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>181,182</b>	<b>3,298</b>	<b>54.94</b>
<b>08 - Space Coast</b>				
Cape Canaveral, FL	Christ	6,700	80	83.75
Holly Hill, FL	Trinity	5,697	318	17.92
Melbourne, FL	LC of the Redeemer	7,427	146	50.87
Palm Bay, FL	Zion Haitian	100	150	-
Merritt Island, FL	Faith	4,800	595	8.07
Merritt Island, FL	Grace	236	105	2.25
Palm Bay, FL	Risen Savior	500	60	8.33
Rockledge, FL	Trinity	243	133	1.83
South Daytona, FL	Holy Cross	0	345	-
Titusville, FL	Good Shepherd	21,862	288	75.91
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>47,565</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>21.43</b>
<b>09 - Orlando East</b>				
Casselberry, FL	Ascension	29,386	534	55.03
Deltona, FL	LC of Providence	1,200	71	16.90
Orlando, FL	Esperanza Viva	46	242	0.19
Orlando, FL	Hope	11,576	223	51.91
Orlando, FL	Iglesia Luterana Sublime Gracia	0	0	-
Orlando, FL	Journey of Life	7,406	75	98.75
Orlando, FL	Prince of Peace	10,039	658	15.26
Orlando, FL	Trinity	59,297	935	63.42
Sanford, FL	LC of the Redeemer	0	115	-
St. Cloud, FL	Grace	300	101	2.97
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>119,250</b>	<b>2,954</b>	<b>40.37</b>
<b>10 - Orlando West</b>				
Apopka, FL	St. Paul	0	110	-
Eustis, FL	Faith	45,908	884	51.93
Winter Garden, FL	Zion New Life	0	96	-
Leesburg, FL	Bethany	13,275	185	71.76
Montverde, FL	Woodlands	26,487	600	44.15
Orlando, FL	Christ the King	11,000	374	29.41
Orlando, FL	Our Savior	0	101	-
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>96,670</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>41.14</b>
<b>11 - Winter Haven</b>				
Bartow, FL	Redeemer	1,260	52	24.23
Lake Wales, FL	Lake Wales	2,974	233	12.76
Lakeland, FL	Christ	24,000	240	100.00
Lakeland, FL	St. Paul	16,385	1055	15.53
Plant City, FL	Hope	32,441	352	92.16
Winter Haven, FL	Grace	29,837	1379	21.64
Zephyrhills, FL	Our Savior	8,005	184	43.51
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>114,902</b>	<b>3,495</b>	<b>32.88</b>

## for Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 2014

<b>12 - Heartland</b>				
Arcadia, FL	Grace	2,400	75	32.00
Avon Park, FL	Christ	5,292	21	252.00
Belle Glade, FL	St. Peter's	3,350	40	83.75
Clewiston, FL	Faith	3,025	29	104.31
Lake Placid, FL	Trinity	4,532	193	23.48
Okeechobee, FL	Peace	1,950	254	7.68
Sebring, FL	Faith	11,833	130	91.02
Wauchula, FL	Peace Valley	3,091	28	110.39
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>35,473</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>46.07</b>
<b>13 - Suncoast</b>				
Brooksville, FL	Christ	2,708	244	11.10
Hudson, FL	Hope	11,273	174	64.79
Lutz, FL	Holy Trinity	7,438	489	15.21
Masaryktown, FL	Holy Trinity	15,416	168	91.76
New Port Richey, FL	Faith	11,833	316	37.45
Spring Hill, FL	Forest Oaks	5,692	277	20.55
Trinity, FL	Trinity	3,900	99	39.39
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>58,260</b>	<b>1,767</b>	<b>32.97</b>
<b>14 - St. Petersburg</b>				
Clearwater, FL	Bethel	20,000	802	24.94
Clearwater, FL	First	1,075	550	1.95
Dunedin, FL	Faith	6,308	113	55.82
Largo, FL	Christ the King	57,100	857	66.63
St. Petersburg, FL	Grace	21,769	835	26.07
St. Petersburg, FL	Our Savior	68,456	814	84.10
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>174,708</b>	<b>3,971</b>	<b>44.00</b>
<b>15 - Tampa</b>				
Brandon, FL	Immanuel	0	459	-
Lithia, FL	Lamb of God	0	170	-
Riverview, FL	Christ the King	1,250	118	10.59
Tampa, FL	Holy Trinity	4,035	106	38.07
Tampa, FL	Messiah	66,142	686	96.42
Tampa, FL	Messiah Hispanic Mission	1,500	35	42.86
Tampa, FL	Zion	3,600	29	124.14
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>76,527</b>	<b>1,603</b>	<b>47.74</b>
<b>16 - Sarasota</b>				
Bradenton, FL	Hope	1,500	398	3.77
Englewood, FL	Redeemer	1,495	221	6.76
Parrish, FL	Faith	14,175	254	55.81
Port Charlotte, FL	LC of the Cross	5,000	256	19.53
Punta Gorda, FL	Faith	10,000	251	39.84
Sarasota, FL	Beautiful Savior	49,508	461	107.39
Sarasota, FL	Concordia	18,050	203	88.92
Sarasota, FL	Good Shepherd	1,500	228	6.58
Venice, FL	Lakeside	21,670	709	30.56
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>122,898</b>	<b>2,981</b>	<b>41.23</b>
<b>17 - Southwest</b>				
Bonita Springs, FL	Amigos en Cristo	1,717	33	52.03
Bonita Springs, FL	Hope	5,602	435	12.88
Cape Coral, FL	Trinity	11,275	223	50.56
Fort Myers, FL	Bethlehem	1,200	93	12.90
Fort Myers, FL	St. Michael	43,000	856	50.23
Fort Myers, FL	Zion	41,150	809	50.87
Immokalee, FL	Immokalee	583	0	-
LaBelle, FL	Christ the King	1,000	28	35.71
Lehigh Acres, FL	Beautiful Savior	0	73	-
Marco Island, FL	Marco	67,416	394	171.11
Naples, FL	Grace	58,000	390	148.72
Naples, FL	Messiah	0	156	-
Naples, FL	Peace	1,600	50	32.00
N Fort Myers, FL	LC Good Shepherd	3,304	145	22.79
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>235,847</b>	<b>3,685</b>	<b>64.00</b>

<b>18 - Treasure Coast</b>				
Fort Pierce, FL	Trinity	4,813	271	17.76
Hobe Sound, FL	Bethel	0	44	-
Lake Worth, FL	New Alliance	18	9	-
N Palm Beach, FL	Faith	28,092	368	76.34
Port St. Lucie, FL	Grace	13,552	182	74.46
Stuart, FL	Redeemer	42,853	658	65.13
Vero Beach, FL	LC of the Redeemer	3,200	120	26.67
W Palm Beach, FL	Redeemer	0	115	-
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>92,528</b>	<b>1,767</b>	<b>52.36</b>
<b>19 - South Palm Beach</b>				
Boca Raton, FL	St. Paul	45,833	1503	30.49
Boynton Beach, FL	Son Life	11,583	352	32.91
Delray Beach, FL	Emmanuel Haitian	0	225	-
Delray Beach, FL	Trinity	9,565	603	15.86
Lake Worth, FL	Epiphany	0	147	-
Lake Worth, FL	Our Savior	10,997	314	35.02
Lake Worth, FL	Salem Haitian	0	125	-
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>77,978</b>	<b>3,269</b>	<b>23.85</b>
<b>20 - Gold Coast</b>				
Davie, FL	Gloria Dei	834	292	2.86
Fort Lauderdale, FL	Faith	0	46	-
Fort Lauderdale, FL	LC of Good Shepherd	300	50	6.00
Fort Lauderdale, FL	Shepherd of the Coast	888	240	3.70
Fort Lauderdale, FL	Le Tabernacle De La Grace	0	75	-
Fort Lauderdale, FL	Trinity Haitian	0	0	-
Fort Lauderdale, FL	Trinity	1,000	152	6.58
Hollywood, FL	Prince of Peace	3,600	46	78.26
Lderdale Lakes, FL	Tabernacle	0	150	-
Miramar, FL	Miramar	823	30	27.43
Plantation, FL	Our Savior	2,400	424	5.66
Weston, FL	St. Paul	48,848	832	58.71
<b>Circuit Totals/Average:</b>		<b>58,693</b>	<b>2,337</b>	<b>25.11</b>
<b>21 - Monroe-Miami-Dade</b>				
Hialeah, FL	Faith	4,620	150	30.80
Hialeah, FL	St. Andrews	1,800	45	40.00
Kendall, FL	Concordia	5,400	201	26.87
Key West, FL	Grace	0	140	-
Leisure City, FL	Hospital del Alma	0		



# Introducing Thrivent Action Teams

## Strengthen Your Community

As a membership organization of Christians, we believe that all we have is a gift from God and that generosity is an expression of faith.

The Florida & Georgia Region of Thrivent Financial is introducing Thrivent Action Teams to their members and communities! Eligible Thrivent members see an unmet need in their community, and Thrivent is offering an easy way to take action. It's called a Thrivent

Action Team, and Thrivent members are invited to lead a team of people to make an immediate impact to help others be wise with money and live generously.

The intent is to bring people together to take action and help others. It's not about gifting money. If members prefer directing dollars to an eligible organization, rather



than giving their time by leading a project, you can learn more at [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com) with our Thrivent Choice Program.

To get started, think of a project you would like to organize – a fundraiser, an educational event or a service activity. Review the Frequently Asked Questions on [www.thrivent.com/actionteam](http://www.thrivent.com/actionteam) to learn more about the program and criteria.

Next, use your MyThrivent user ID and password to log in and fill out a simple online application for your project. If you don't have a user ID, you can register with your member ID and birthdate. Anyone can join your team. Bring friends, family and your community together to help you with the project.

For more information on Thrivent Action Teams contact your Financial Representative or our Member Connection Center at 1-800-THRIVENT. ■



## Thrivent Action Teams Impact Community

This summer, Thrivent Financial Community Engagement Teams from across the country came together in Atlanta not only for an opportunity to learn and share ideas across regions, but also to make an immediate impact in the Atlanta community.

Team members picked one of six different Thrivent Action Teams they could participate in for the project. Thrivent members made a big impact with the refugees that Lutheran Services of Georgia supports by doing several service projects. The Thrivent Action Team pictured here had several activities happening the same day. One was bagging 150 pounds of rice into gallon size bags as a staple. Another was gathering and organizing personal hygiene kits to help refugee families transition from other countries to America and specifically the Atlanta area.

It was very exciting to see how the Community Impact card of \$250 was the seed growing into an amazing amount of donated products along with member time and talent to help LSG with their worthy mission. ■

## LSF Programs Enjoy Generous Support

Established in 1982, Lutheran Services Florida is a statewide, non-profit, human services agency dedicated to helping all people in need through its more than 60 programs statewide. Nearly 900,000 children and families have received assistance from LSF through these programs.

The ministry that gave birth to Lutheran Services was welcoming and resettling refugee families. Last year more than 2,000 refugees received services from LSF, including those who were the innocent victims of human trafficking.

LSF helps these families by getting them settled into an apartment and then providing them with furniture, food, clothing and other necessities. Agency counselors help the newcomers learn English, find the adults jobs and enroll the children in school.

LSF refugee centers in Tampa, Orlando and Miami stay busy helping clients through the maze of government paperwork, medical appointments and integration into local communities.

Lutheran Haven, a ministry located Oviedo that has provided retirement services for 65 years, is

a generous supporter of this LSF program. Twice a year Lutheran Haven residents provide refugees settling in Orlando with a large truckload of gently used furniture and household items. Volunteers then furnish apartments and get them ready for their new residents.

Individual District congregations also help LSF throughout the year. Recently, Our Savior Lutheran/Lake Worth with Pastor Steve Wipperman put the Parable of the Good Samaritan into action.

Our Savior is a congregation of about 350 people that lost its sanctuary to Hurricane Wilma in 2005. That seems to have only strengthened members' resolve to look beyond themselves and reach out into the community with the love of Jesus Christ.

They set aside Sunday, June 1, as Dedication Sunday at which time they presented Lutheran Services Florida with 125 handmade cloth gift bags filled with books and markers for the children at LSF's Sellow Belle Glade Excel Charter School. These bags helped the children celebrate the successful first year of the school.

In addition, Our Savior donated \$1,000 to the school's playground

fund. Currently the children spend their exercise period in a coned off section of the parking lot.

Our Savior members also put together 45 hygiene kits, clothing for teens and other items for the Lippman Youth Shelter in Oakland Park as well as more than 65 quilts for the Foster Children Program. ■

*Above Left — Members of Our Savior Lutheran Church/Lake Worth pose with some of the gift bags they made and filled for children's at LSF's Sellow Belle Glade Excel Charter School.*

*Below — Bill Hermann (left) and Doug Dupstadt load household items and furniture for LSF following the Lutheran Haven Flea Market.*





# A Call to Action Against Persecution

**BURNINGBUSH**

by Bruce Lieske  
District Task Force on Muslim Evangelism

“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”  
(Edmund Burke, 1729-1797)

The recent horrifying atrocities committed by groups like Boko Haram, Hamas, and ISIL or ISIS have alerted the world to the persecution of Christians — which has been going on for a long time. Christians are the most persecuted group in the world today.

In a 2013 speech to the UN Human Rights Council, a Vatican spokesman reported that more than 100,000 Christians are violently killed annually because of their

persecution of Christians has an enduring history. The Bible describes the Christian Church as the Body of Christ. The interconnectivity of the human body is paradigmatic for the church: “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” (1 Cor. 12:26)

Therefore the pain of a Coptic pastor in Egypt whose church has been burned down, or the anguish of a Sudanese mother whose son has been beheaded because of his faith, is our pain, our

anguish. Or ought to be. We have a God-given admonition: “Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” (Heb. 13:3)

God’s instructions are clear. We must do three things:

-Pray for persecuted Christians and Jews, help them and evangelize their persecutors. As individuals we may be motivated to pray for special groups and situations. Pastoral prayers for the persecuted at Sunday morning worship rally the whole congregation to pray  
-Help persecuted Christians. We can contact agencies which aid persecuted Christians. In Orlando

we have United People in Christ. Two other agencies which render help – at great risk to their staff – are International Christian Concern and Voice of the Martyrs. We can also call, write and email our government officials.

-Evangelize, which addresses the root of the problem. Scholars agree that 85% of Christian persecution comes from Muslims, the largest unevangelized people group on earth. Most Muslims in the West do not adhere closely to the core documents of Islam — and there is openness among many here to discuss matters of religion.

It is crucial to differentiate between the teachings of Islam and Muslims themselves – who are people like us. We must share the love of God with them in the hope of liberating them from the bondage of this false political-religious system. We can come alongside Muslims in friendship, and as God gives opportunity, share the good news of a Savior who died for everyone and who leads us into paths of peace and love.

We have an obligation of love, following in the footsteps of Jesus, to pray, help and evangelize. Proverbs 24:11-12 exhorts us: “Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we knew nothing about this,’ does not He who weighs the heart perceive it?” ■



# Theme, Location Announced for 2015 LWML Convention

Save the dates! Mark your calendar for June 25-28, 2015, to join your sisters and brothers in Christ at the LWML Convention in Des Moines. We gather under the theme *Bountiful! Sow · Nourish · Reap* to be equipped by the Holy Spirit to work in the Father’s harvest field. Go to [www.lwml.org/events/conventions/2015-des-moines](http://www.lwml.org/events/conventions/2015-des-moines) for more information.

And looking ahead . . . The Florida-Georgia District will co-host the 2019 LWML Convention along with the Gulf States District. In preparation for this tremendous undertaking, LWML has begun a fund raising effort to keep the hosting districts in the black – a recycling project that will benefit the LWML and help the environment.

The LWML is partnering with M.L.C. Enterprises to collect ink jet, laser jet cartridges and other recyclable items, i.e. cell phones, pagers, DV players, digital cameras, laptop computers. These items will be collected around the district then shipped to M.L.C. Enterprises.

Watch for more information in the *Evangel* and on the District website: [flgalwml.com](http://flgalwml.com). Remember! This will be a multi-year project so start now and get in the habit.

As this issue of *Lutheran LIFE* was going to press, the women of the Florida-Georgia District LWML were preparing for the convention at the Wyndham Jacksonville Riverwalk Hotel the last weekend



Trish Aamoth  
LWML District VP / Communications

of September under the theme of “Plant Seeds and Share the Joy.”

Coverage of the convention, with the full list of Mission Grants and new leaders as well as photos, will be in the next issue of *Lutheran Life*. ■

*Jesus said,*  
**“GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES**  
*of all nations...”*

**WE ARE HERE TO HELP!**

The **Outreach Initiative** is a partnership between the FLGA District and Lutheran Hour Ministries. This pilot program seeks to create a culture of outreach where congregations **connect to the lost** in their communities, **share the Gospel**, and help them grow to be **followers of Christ**.

Get your congregation involved today! Visit [www.lhm.org/flgaoi](http://www.lhm.org/flgaoi)





## Free, Professional, Architectural Advice Available

The Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) is a service of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund that helps LCMS congregations plan and build or remodel church buildings, schools and other church-related structures.



AAC strives to help pastors and building committees with their facility questions, offering them advice on how to plan and build worship facilities that are functional, beautiful and give clear witness to the Christian Faith.



Here in the Florida-Georgia District, our “AAC Guy” is Greg Beste. Greg, along with District Vice-President Daniel J. Reichard, makes “Road Trips” to congregations that want advice concerning design, planning and construction.

**FREE OF CHARGE!**  
 This is a FREE, LCEF provided

District congregations that have taken advantage of the Architectural Advisory Committee Service include:

- Christ / Perry
- Living Hope / Kennesaw
- Faith / Marietta
- Savior of All / Cartersville
- Peace / Decatur
- St. Matthew / Tampa
- Ascension / Casselberry
- Journey of Life / Orlando

analysis and can give impetus in moving your ministry forward. The Florida-Georgia District covers the costs relating to this service.

For further information, please contact Daniel J. Reichard, District VP: email at [dreichard@flgadistrict.org](mailto:dreichard@flgadistrict.org) or call toll free 877-457-5556 ext. 4. ■



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Southeastern District (SED) hosted an **LCEF Advocate Connections Conference** at Good Shepherd Lutheran/Midlothian, VA, on July 31-August 1. Approximately 40 congregations of the SED were represented. Pictured at the Conference are (l-r) District Vice Presidents **Daniel J. Reichard**, Florida-Georgia, and **Steve Heeman**, SED, with LCEF St. Louis executives **Steve Bremer**, Senior VP East Operations, and **Robyn Linke**, Customer Relations Director.

## Pastor, Former Members Reconnect at LCEF Advocate Connections Conference

During the “Getting to Know You” portion of the LCEF Advocate Connections Conference, Rev. Keith W. Loesch was seated across from Marvin and Alyce Timm.

Marvin “was looking at me with interest, and I had a strange feeling that we had crossed paths before,” said Loesch. “He spoke first, saying, ‘You look like a pastor I used to know.’”

They talked and realized they had been pastor and parishioners, co-workers in the Gospel.

In 1967 Timm was stationed at Fort Bragg, NC, after a tour of duty in Viet Nam. He and his family were members of Our Redeemer at Fayetteville, where he was the congregation’s treasurer.

That fall Loesch, a newlywed, arrived at Our Redeemer to serve his first call as a pastor. He and Timm worked closely together.

They lost contact two years later when Timm was assigned to a new military base. “Both of us continued to be involved in the life of the Church at the locations where the Lord placed us,” said Loesch.

“So it was that 45 years later, Marvin and his wife, now retired in Augusta, GA, attended this conference as a result of his role in the LCEF, and I was there as a guest leader for the Consecrated Stewards Program.

“The memories of our past relationship and service to Christ and the Church came flooding back. The rest of the conference became a celebration for us of God’s hand in our lives and how He continues to use us as His servants for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom!” ■

Marv & Alyce Timm (left) reconnected with Joan & Rev. Keith Loesch at the Advocate Connections Conference. The Timms were honored with the Farthest Travelled Award.



**You + LCEF = Empowered Ministries**

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With ConnectPLUS, you can join the powerful partnership between individuals and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod ministries that are ensuring more people hear the life-saving Gospel message.

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Join with the tens of thousands of LCEF investors helping LCMS Lutherans in their vital witness and mercy work among people around the world. Invest with ConnectPLUS today!



 **Lutheran Church Extension Fund**  
 > florida-georgia district

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# District Outreach Initiative Establishes Bench Mark at Midpoint

Lutheran Hour Ministries and the Florida-Georgia District launched a pilot outreach initiative in 2013 to double the number of new believers inside the District annually by 2015.

“The Outreach Initiative (OI) held trainings for nearly 900 attendees covering topics such as The Power of One [personal witness], The Power of Some [congregational witness], The Power of the Net or Social Media and Building Bridges to the Community,” explains Rev. Douglas Kalleesen, District Executive for Outreach. “The last presentation was done in partnership with Transforming Congregations Network (TCN).”

Other resources developed include “God Connects,” a downloadable adult information course led by **Lutheran Hour** speaker Rev. Greg Seltz. This is available to all Florida-Georgia congregations.

How is this training helping our congregations?

Grace/Winter Haven reports that they have developed a local outreach team committed to connecting people to Jesus.

“The training gave us a common ground, a starting point,” Pastor Charles Reich said. “We showed the ‘God Connects’ DVD after church one Sunday, announcing the adult information ‘Faith & Question’ course and what we would be covering. Before Easter we had 24 adults in class, which led to five adult confirmations and one adult baptism.

“Our course after Easter had 16 students, which led to one adult baptism and four adult confirmations. We went out to Saturday markets where we have a prayer booth. We handed out invitations to the class to widen the net. We are now also offering a Sunday morning version of the class with 12 students.”

Multiple adult information classes spread across the entire year have borne fruit at Grace.

“God is at work in each of these classes bringing the precious gospel and good news to people,”

Kalleesen continued. “He has already been at work preparing them for this day. Earlier in my ministry I was challenged at an evangelism training to hold regular ongoing adult information courses. I found that God always had at least one person He would send to the class, and usually several of our members would join me, too, just because they wanted a refresher.”

“We now have a bench mark – a beginning point to work from.”

Kalleesen quoted congregational statistics submitted annually to Synod showing that in 2012 (the year before the O.I.) the District lost 1,413 people (all net gains and losses). “Districts across Synod are all declining in membership; a trend now indicates that annually LCMS loses more than 30,000 people.

“Obviously we want to see a reversal of this trend,” Kalleesen continued. “The goal of the O.I. is to report 3,500 adult confirmations, professions of faith and child baptisms annually by 2015. This

shows a definite need for each of our congregations to be active in connecting people to Jesus by the grace of God.”

Kalleesen went on to say, “There is much work to do, but with God all things are possible. Paul reminds us in the book of Ephesians that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.

“Lutheran Hour Ministries and the Florida-Georgia District are fully committed to partnering with congregations; more importantly God is already at work. More training, coaching and implementation of outreach plans are being developed to assist our District congregations at the local and circuit level,” he concluded.

For more information please contact the Rev. Doug Kalleesen at [dkalleesen@flgadistrict.org](mailto:dkalleesen@flgadistrict.org) or 407-857-5556 x 6. He would also like to hear your story of how God used you to connect people to Jesus. ■

## New Florida-Georgia District Mission Starts

“We want to start at least one new mission in each of the five regions of our District by the time of our convention in 2015,” said President Greg Walton at a Board of Directors meeting. The following is a brief update compiled from work done by the Mission Advisory Council, Circuit Visitors and Board of Directors.

**Region One** – Initial work under way in Fort Gordon, Commerce, Buford, Lawrenceville and North Macon

**Region Two** – Nocatee, FL, and Tallahassee, FL, identified as areas for potential new missions

**Region Three** – UCF Campus Ministry / Orlando launched in September; exploring opportunities in Four Corners & South Orlando

**Region Four** – Exploring opportunities in Lakewood Ranch (Sarasota/Bradenton area), Thrive / Estero launched in August

**Region Five** – Royal Palms, FL identified as possible site for new mission work. ■



# District Board Welcomes National Synod Reps to Fall Planning Meeting

The District Board of Directors welcomed **Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod** First Vice President **Herb Mueller** and Regional Vice President **Robert Kuhn** to the September 5-6 meeting. The visitors shared an update on national LCMS activities and participated in the meeting from opening devotions to closing prayer.

District President **Greg Walton** returned from his three-month sabbatical days before the meeting. He described that experience as “a great opportunity for me to refocus and be refreshed for our ministry together. More than ever I am convinced that the District Vision is on target.

“When people are equipped, empowered and engaged in their community they have a greater capacity to connect people to Jesus.”

### Critical Ministry Target: Leadership

“Leadership issues continue to be a focus for the whole church,” Walton said. “By lifting up leadership and equipping leaders we provide opportunities for growth in connecting people to Jesus and sustain our mission and ministry together.”

• The first training event for **Emergent Leaders** program is set for September. **President’s Convocation** for professional and lay leaders is September 29-October 1.

• **District Youth Ministry** leadership transitioned to Executive Director of School Ministries **Mark Brink** after **David Weidner’s** retirement.

• New Florida-Georgia administrators this year include **Kelly Reilly**, Holy Trinity/Tampa; **Daryl Kruse**, Faith/Marietta; **Kevin Brockberg**, Trinity/Orlando; **Leslie Brinkman**, Lamb of God/Lithia; **Sharon Vonada**, Gloria Dei/Davie; **Mary Sherry**, St. John/Ocala; **Moise Anilus**, Faith-Grace/Fort Lauderdale.

• **2015 Pastors & Educators Conferences** will be held at **St. Paul/Lakeland** with separate programs and shared Honors Banquet and worship. This will result in a significant cost savings for participants.

• Planning for District youth participation in the **2016 National Youth Gathering** has begun.

### Critical Ministry Target: Congregations

“We continue to focus on Church health, because healthy Churches reproduce naturally,” Walton said. “Revitalization of congregational ministries is one of our signature ministries focused on Congregations.”

• A two-year effort resulted in the successful transitioning of **Faith School to Grace Tabernacle** in Fort Lauderdale. The new Grace Tabernacle school ministry welcomed 120 students on August 18.

• District schools achieving National Lutheran School Accreditation in July were **St. Paul/Boca Raton; Faith/Eustis; Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale; St. Paul/Peachtree City; Trinity/Rockledge; Hope/Bradenton; Trinity/Lake Placid; Trinity/Athens; Zion/Fort Myers.**

• **St. Michael/Fort Myers** has been nominated as an NLSA Exemplary School. A team will visit the school to validate Best Practices and make a recommendation.

• Almost 100 District high school students participated in the **Youth Servant Event ‘Radical’** in North Carolina from July 13-18.

• **2015 District Convention** will be at the Airport Marriott next to the Florida-Georgia office building from June 12-14.

### Critical Ministry Target: Outreach

“With the 2015 District Convention we begin a focus on Outreach,” Walton announced. “The urgency of our efforts reaches beyond survival to the very core of our calling. In a day when many Christians have gotten overly comfortable and have lost a sense of urgency to reach those who are lost in sin and death, it is time for the Church to step up and step out to reach people with the good news of God’s love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.”

• The District hosted a **Churches Planting Churches** workshop for 32 participants from 11 congregations seeking to start or revitalize eight ministries.

• **The Lutheran Hour Ministry/District Outreach Initiative (OI)** entered Phase II with a presentation called Building Bridges, put on with **Transforming**

## BOARDROOM

by John List  
District Communications Director



Beverly Nyce is the newly appointed Laity Board Member for Region 4. A member of Marco Lutheran/Marco Island, she served as President of the congregation during its 40th anniversary celebration. She and her husband Jim live on Marco Island and are anticipating being first-time grandparents with the birth of a little granddaughter due this November.

### Congregations Network.

• District schools are participating in a new OI component which encourages congregations to commission teachers as ‘missionaries.’

• **The Muslim Task Force** established goals with action plans to raise awareness of the tenants of Islam, provide training to respond or positively witness to Muslims and consider establishing a Missional Community to reach Muslims.

While **Funding the Mission** is not an official District Critical Mission Target, “it is critical if we are to reach any of our targets,” Walton said. “We desire to be responsible stewards of the resources that God provides to the District through the members and congregations.

“We have a tremendous District staff that works as a team, and God continues to bless our efforts.”

The next District Board of Directors meeting is set for November 7-8. ■





With the recent launches of two new ministries, the Florida-Georgia District has an intentional presence for college students in five sections of our two-state area. These include:

- Christus Victor / Athens, GA
- Serving University of Georgia
- First Lutheran / Gainesville, FL
- Serving University of Florida and Santa Fe College
- LIVE UCF / Orlando, FL
- Serving University of Central Florida
- University Lutheran / Tallahassee, FL
- Serving Florida State University
- Thrive / Estero, FL
- Serving Florida Gulf Coast University

Other areas have been identified as potential District campus ministries in the future. Updates on active campus ministries will be included in future issues of Lutheran LIFE as we celebrate this ministry of our District. ■

## Serving Community. Students Thrive Launches With Jubilant Opening

Thrive Community Church, a mission plant reaching the people of Estero and Fort Myers, FL, with a special focus on students at Florida Gulf Coast University, celebrated its grand launch on August 24.

Almost 200 worshippers filled the room at Edwards Hall on the FGCU campus for the uplifting morning worship themed “More to Life.” Rev. Dr. John Roth, Thrive’s missional pastor, focused on that topic in his message based on John 10:7-11.



## Sunday Worship Service at FGCU

McTarnaghan, FGCU’s founding president, was one of the speakers at the initial meeting and was in attendance at the launch worship.

Thrive@FGCU sponsors weekly dinner meetings that incorporate Bible study, prayer and fellowship. Mission trips and service projects with local charities have begun. ■



FGCU Founding President Dr. Roy McTarnaghan greets student worshippers at Thrive’s launch worship.



Restricted to political signs on the property where a future Thrive facility will be built, the mission choose Jesus as the candidate to promote. Posing with the sign are Thrive University Director Phil Klopke (left) and Worship Leader Sam Rivera.

## LiveUCF Opening Worship Exceeds Expectations

Wednesday, August 20, was an important night for the small group of people who had been meeting on the University of Central Florida campus since the last school year to organize a student ministry.

Rev. Billy Brath



“We gathered for the first time as a legal organization at UCF and were able to worship our Lord with about 30 students and acquaintances,” said Rev. Billy Brath who as lead pastor heads LiveUCF with Megan Miessler, lead minister, and Laura Bank, outreach minister.

Attaining the legal status required considerable paperwork, a written constitution, meetings and logistics along with “a lot of patience and prayer,” said Brath. “Needless to say, the group behind Live was very excited to complete this process!”

While the leaders agree that there was some frustration with the “becoming legal” process, they also agreed that the advance year of gathering in a small group

allowed the core group of people to form tight bonds.

“We were in this together and we were all so excited to bring this ministry to the students of UCF,” Brath continued.

He described the opening worship as “better than we could have imagined” as attendance was double the expectation.

LiveUCF worship gatherings are every Wednesday at 8:30pm in the Student Union room 224. Bible study groups meet at various times and in different locations around UCF’s campus.

Brath, who is a pastor at Trinity Downtown Orlando, has the distinction of being the student to graduate from UCF with a religious studies degree. ■



Shown here at the LCEF-sponsored luncheon that followed the launch worship are Dr. John Roth surrounded by FGCU seniors (l-r) Vanessa Fernandez, Talissa Soto and Melissa Cruz.



# FLORIDA GEORGIA

## REGIONAL NEWS



### Timothy Takes a Mission Trip to West Virginia

In mid-July, members of Timothy Lutheran/Woodstock, GA, took a one-week mission trip to Gary, WV, a boom town back in the 1950s. The decline of the coal industry has left Gary with high unemployment and little hope for the future.

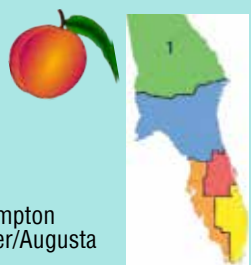
Sponsored by Experience Mission, the Timothy trip was designed to help local residents with home repairs. The Georgia group was one of four church groups working during that week.

Experience Mission came to Gary 10 years ago and now has a base of operations in the old public school where the Timothy team was housed and meals were provided. The Timothy team rebuilt a porch roof that was in serious disrepair. Bees occupied the walls of the house and, reported Timothy members, did not appreciate them working on it.

Timothy/Woodstock mission team members (l-r) Richard Wiese, Faye Wiese, Marlene Snyder, Don Snyder, Rev. Tom Wenndt, Patti Kastens and Gerald Mueller

### 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 Visitor: Rev. David Wesche | All Saints/Blairsville  
 Atlanta N Circuit Visitor: Rev. Ray Borchelt | St. Mark/Tucker  
 Atlanta S Circuit Visitor: Rev. Larry Townsend | Christ Our Savior/Hampton  
 E Central Georgia Circuit Visitor: Rev. Roger Schwartz | Our Redeemer/Augusta



While working on the porch, the visiting mission team had the opportunity to share with the homeowners and show Jesus' love through their actions. ■



### Busy Sunday School Program Under Way



August 31 was Rally Day at Trinity/Savannah, GA, offering parents the opportunity to register their children for the new classes. Teachers, parents and children filled the church's Social Hall immediately after first service for fun, games and prizes.

Highlights of the first day of Sunday School on September 7 included a puppet show, music and God's Word. A scavenger hunt is planned for October 5, when Sunday School students will make a video for their Okinawan Pen Pals.

An October 26 food drive in conjunction with Trinity's Social Ministry team will support Emmaus House. Another food drive is set for November 2.

Rounding out the year will be November Fest early in the month with activities to include a hayride; a November Thanksgiving meal; and in December the Christmas program along with a party and the opportunity to make ornaments. ■

At left — Trinity/Savannah children sing during worship on Rally Day.



### St. John Victors in Gator Town Classic

The St. John/Ocala Saints were among the smallest schools in the recent 16-team Gator Team Classic -- and they were also tournament champions.

"This was a big win for us," St. John Coach Jason Laborde said. "The girls were spot-on all weekend, and it was a total team effort. They didn't miss a beat all weekend."

Ashley Laborde and Leah Wilcox were named to the all-tournament team for the Saints, who knocked off county rival Trinity Catholic in

the semifinals for the second time in three days in order to have the chance at the championship.

Throughout the tournament, St. John received contributions from its entire lineup. ■

### 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 Visitor: Rev. Mark Schultz | Epiphany/Tallahassee  
 First Coast Circuit Visitor: Rev. Dana Brones | Bethlehem/Jacksonville  
 N Central Florida Circuit Visitor: Rev. James Rockey | Amazing Grace/Oxford



### VBS Students Learn, Help Others

Vacation Bible School was "a tremendous success" at St. Peter's/Middleburg, FL, report organizers.

Themed "Gangway to Galilee," the 2014 VBS opened with a family cookout on June 20. Sessions continued until June 23.

This year the VBS students donated \$271.83 to the LCMS' Operation Barnabas, a network of care for U.S. military members, families and veterans. The students also collected 370 pounds of food for the Green Cove Springs Food Pantry. ■





## REGION 3 CONNECTIONS

Vice President: Rev. Dr. Brian Kneser | 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 Visitor: Rev. Gary Held | Risen Savior/Palm Bay  
 Orlando East Circuit Visitor: Rev. Jeffery Moore | Trinity/Orlando  
 Orlando West Circuit Visitor: Rev. Dr. Milan Weerts | Emeritus/Clermont  
 Winter Haven Circuit Visitor: Rev. Dean Pfeffer | Hope/Plant City



## Hope Vacation Bible School Shares Comfort

At the recently concluded Vacation Bible School of Hope/Plant City, a very special mission project was adopted by VBS leaders and warmly welcomed and supported by participants and families. This year's project was to raise money to support the K-9 Comfort dog program of Lutheran Church Charities.

Used in time of national crisis, these comfort dogs have seen service after tornadoes and other natural disasters as well as times of tragedy such as mass shootings. Individual Lutheran congregations employ these special dogs to help bring comfort to hurting members at home, hospital or nursing homes.

"These dogs remind us that if a dog can sense the pain we are

experiencing, how much more does God our Creator know and feel our pain," said Hope Pastor Dean Pfeffer.

A number of Hope members are also certified in disaster response through Lutheran Early Response Training.

Throughout the week of Hope's Vacation Bible School, the children brought their offerings and placed them in a special "comfort dog bank" designed by Hope member Libby Voigtmann. By the end of VBS, participants collected \$500 for their cause.

Hope welcomed area therapy dog Bonnie – and her owners George and Cassandra Banning – to share what she does as she serves locally at South Florida Baptist Hospital, area schools, nursing homes and the public library. ■



Pictured with the comfort dog bank are (l-r) Keaira Griffin, Lana Hartmann, Keeley Bynum and Yulia Hartmann.

## District Musician Attends Summer Academy

The 2014 Lutheran Summer Music Academy (LSM), a four-week residential camp for talented high school musicians held at Luther College/Decorah, IA, attracted 100+ students from 30 states. Chosen to participate in the program from the Florida-Georgia District was Meredith Locke of Grace/Winter Haven.

Founded in 1981, LSM's mission is to transform lives and connect people through faith and music. Since its founding in 1982, more than 4,000 students have attended Lutheran Summer Music. ■



BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASH — Florida-Georgia District LCEF Vice President Daniel J. Reichard participated in the Back-To-School Bash at St. Paul/Lakeland in August. The event provided the opportunity to learn more about the clubs, activities and volunteer opportunities at St. Paul; to purchase back to school items; and get the information on the upcoming school year. Shown above with Reichard (right) is St. Paul Congregation Advocate Paul Sicca. ■

## Hope/Zephyrhills Welcomes New Pastor

Rev. Tod Shouse was installed as pastor of Our Savior / Zephyrhills on September 7.

A native of Wauwatosa, WI, Shouse was active in his home parish as a Sunday School helper, teacher and superintendent; usher; elder; youth group softball and volleyball coach.

He and his family — wife Lynn and daughter Becky — moved to Lutz, FL, in 1997. Shouse was active at Messiah/Tampa as an usher, elder and Sunday School superintendent.



After nine years in Florida, the family moved back to the Midwest, relocating to Fort Wayne, IN, as Shouse enrolled at Concordia Theological Seminary. After completing his classwork he served his vicarage at St. Paul/Albion, MI.

Shouse was ordained into the Office of Holy Ministry at his home congregation — Pilgrim / Wauwatosa — on July 25, 2010. His first call was to Redeemer / Bartow, where he served until August of this year.

Shouse is the Pastoral Counselor for the LWML Florida-Georgia District. ■

At left — Rev. Tod Shouse with his wife Lynn (left) and their daughter Becky.

## Orlando's Kenyatta Cobb Walks 40 Miles for Youth Ministry

Our Savior / Orlando Pastor Kenyatta Cobb Sr. walked 40 miles from his Poinciana home to his church campus to raise funds for a collaborative youth ministry.

The trek, which began early on August 7 and concluded on the afternoon of August 9, has to date generated \$1,500 toward Cobb's \$50,000 goal.

"Our Savior Christian Education Department has taken the stand that even though we cannot address all of the social ills of our society, we can become a catalyst for the healing and empowerment of a few," Cobb said. "Reaching Beyond The Break is a collaborative ministry developed to address the rising increase in adolescent truancy and teen violence."

The goal is to have the program operate from 5-8pm three days per week, "allowing Latch-Key-Participants to have the safety of a home environment," Cobb said. ■

At right — Pastor Kenyatta Cobb Sr. was joined by friends and supporters during his 40-mile walk.







Rev. Bill Miller, Rev. Darrell Stuehrenberg, Rev. Juan Gonzalez

## Three Pastors Assist in Bethlehem's VBS

Bethlehem / Fort Myers presented Vacation Bible School July 21-25 – with three pastors included among the volunteer team of 30+ adults and teens.

Rev. Juan Gonzalez, pastor of Beautiful Savior/Lehigh Acres, and Rev. William Miller, chaplain at Lee Memorial Hospital, assisted Bethlehem Pastor Darrell Stuehrenberg in the "Weird Animals" VBS program.

Gonzalez and his wife, Eva, were members of Bethlehem for a number of years, before he began serving Beautiful Savior.

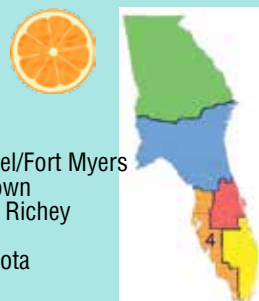
"He really went over and above the week of VBS," Stuehrenberg said of Gonzalez, "because he was also an active participant in Beautiful Savior's VBS during the evenings.

"That same week, his granddaughter, Mia, was an active participant all week at Bethlehem's VBS."

Miller is also a familiar face at Bethlehem, where he serves as the organist. Miller, his wife Darlene and their granddaughter Jazmine, were all active volunteers at Bethlehem's VBS. ■

## REGION 4 CONNECTIONS

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



Shown at left — (front, l-r) Jon Zehnder, St. Michael / Fort Myers; Jerry Lawson, Good Shepherd /North Fort Myers; Paul Koepchen, retired; Curtis Deterding, Zion / Fort Myers; Greg Walton, Florida-Georgia District; Bob Scuderi, Faith / Naples; Richard Miller, retired; (back, l-r) Charles Kanefke, Trinity / Cape Coral; John Roth, Thrive / Estero; Darrell Stuehrenberg, Bethlehem / Fort Myers; Nick Moscovites, Christ the King / LaBelle; Fred Kohler, retired; Richard Browning, Hope / Bonita Springs

## Zion Fort Myers Welcomes Curtis Deterding As Senior Pastor

Rev. Curtis Deterding was installed as senior pastor of Zion / Fort Myers on August 17. Officiating the installation and preaching was Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton. Rev. Jon Zehnder of St. Michael / Fort Myers and Southwest Florida Circuit Visitor, led the service.

A native of Kansas City, MO, Deterding attended St. John's Junior College/ Winfield; Concordia College/ Ann Arbor and Concordia College/ St. Paul. He and his wife of 32 years, Jo Ann, were both teachers at Holy Cross/North Miami for several years before he enrolled at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis.

He served his first pastoral call at Bethel/Clairemont, NC, before being called as the coordinator of a special church careers program called Project Samuel that was housed on the campus of Concordia University / St. Paul, MN. A decade later he accepted a call to Trinity/Fergus Falls, MN.

His service to the church has included Coordinator of five LCMS National Servant Events and Director of the Junior High section of the Great Commission Convocation. He published a book with Rev. Phil Bickel called *Considering a Church Career*.

He and his wife have been married for 32 years and have five children: Eva, who lives in Delaware with her husband Zach Ares; Katherine, who lives in Nebraska with her husband Seth Elley and their son James; Rebecca, who lives in North Dakota; Caleb, a sophomore at Minnesota State; and Faith, a sophomore in high school Cypress Lake High School in Fort Myers. ■



## CPH Author Visits District on Booksigning Tour

Donna Pyle visited Christ the King/Largo in mid-August as part of a promotional tour for her new book from Concordia Publishing House, *Quenched: Christ's Living Water for a Thirsty Soul*.

She described the book as intended for "both new Christians and Christians going through spiritual dehydration." The book features a collection of devotions, prayers, Scripture readings, Psalms and hymns.

Pyle is a frequent lecturer, traveling throughout the United States and internationally to speak and teach where the Lord opens doors. ■



Rev. Craig Harmon; Rev. Dr. David Brockhoff; Rev. Ed Harkey; Rev. Dr. Kent Fuqua

## Holy Trinity Welcomes Ed Harkey

Rev. Ed Harkey was installed as pastor of Holy Trinity / Lutz on August 24.

Rev. Dr. David Brockhoff, pastor of Holy Trinity / Masaryktown and Suncoast Circuit Visitor, was the guest preacher. Rev. Dr. Kent Fuqua, pastor of Hope / Hudson, was the liturgist. Keith Schenk was the organist, with Jonathan Manchester as the trumpeter.

After the installation the congregation had a dinner for Harkey and his family and

presented them with some welcome gifts that will come in handy at the beach.

Harkey graduated from Concordia Seminary-St Louis with Master of Divinity in 1987 and received his Master of Sacred Theology in 2006. Most recently he was pastor at Lutheran Church of the Way/Raynham, MA, where he served for more than 15 years.

He and his wife Miriam have four children – Elsbeth, Hannah, Elisha, Jacob. ■



## Acolytes Installed at Immokalee's Amigos en Cristo

Immokalee recently installed two young men, Wilber and Valentin, into the ministry of acolyte. "An acolyte is a person who not only follows Jesus but also helps lead the congregation in their worship of God and helps the pastor in public worship," said Rev. Robert V. Selle, Founder and CEO of Amigos en Cristo, the organization that coordinates the Immokalee worship. "Pray for these young men who have joyfully taken on this responsibility in the house of the Lord." ■



## Gloria Dei Celebrates Lutheran Academy Sunday

Welcoming the start of a new academic year, Gloria Dei / Davie celebrated Lutheran Academy Sunday at the 10:30am service on August 17. More than 100 school children came to the altar with their backpacks and school supplies to receive prayers and special blessings from Pastor George Poulos.

The service included the formal installations of Sharon Vonada as Interim Principal and Joy Reitsma as Assistant Principal-Teacher. At the conclusion of the worship celebration, students and their families walked to the classrooms to store their supplies in addition to meeting all Academy teachers and assistants.

Vonada, a graduate of Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, has been on staff at Gloria Dei for 22 of her 39 teaching years.

One of Gloria Dei's founding elementary teachers, Reitsma most recently taught at Rockford, IL, Lutheran High School. She has a master's degree in art and certification as a Lutheran school administrator. She has served as praise choir director, department chair, coach and director of athletics, director of after school programs and yearbook advisor. ■

## St. Paul/Weston Has Night of Joy at the Magic Kingdom

"The St. Paul Youth did a great job of leading our worship at our Disney Resort, during our visit to the Magic Kingdom," said St Paul DCE and Youth Director Jeremy Becker. "From song leading to bubble Confession and Absolution to creative offerings, prayer, learning about Joy and being sent with gusto, the Spirit really worked through these amazing young Christians!" ■



Gloria Dei Academy Interim Principal Sharon Vonada (left) and Assistant Principal - Teacher Joy Reitsma (right) with Pastor George Poulos



Pastor George Poulos blesses school children during Lutheran Academy Sunday.

## REGION 5 CONNECTIONS

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



## LWR Wins \$500,000 Innovation Award

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) has won a \$500,000 award from the Pathways to Prosperity Innovation Challenge to scale up its innovative cocoa programs in Central America.

The goal of the Challenge was to identify innovative, high-impact solutions that are helping create strong micro and small enterprises in Latin America and that have potential to be scaled up to larger populations and new geographies.

Using the new Pathways funding, LWR will help 4,000 farm micro-enterprises in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador, with potential expansion to additional countries, to improve their competitiveness in marketing cocoa.

The project will combine LWR's community agriculture extension model, existing printed Cocoa Toolkit, and the currently under-development Mobile Cocoa platform to assist farmers in growing better crops and accessing the global cocoa market.

LWR published a print version of its Cocoa Toolkit in 2013, and is now translating the content to a mobile platform to make it accessible to any farmer with a smartphone or tablet.

Lutheran World Relief is a ministry of United States Lutherans, serving communities living in poverty overseas. ■

## Thrivent Funding Enables New Wheat Ridge Website

Wheat Ridge Ministries has received funding from the Thrivent Financial Foundation that will support the new "WeRaise" crowdfunding platform designed to attract and financially seed larger numbers of new, Christian health ministries.

The funding included an immediate grant of \$25,000, and a two-to-one challenge grant of \$25,000 which Wheat Ridge Ministries successfully met.

In early 2014, Wheat Ridge Ministries launched WeRaise.us, a dynamic internet platform that will tap the extensive social networks of new Christian ministry entrepreneurs. By posting new health and human care ministry ventures on WeRaise.us and promoting them to social media connections, family and friends, the number of proposed and funded projects will increase as will the number of donors who can be engaged in launching new ministries.

More information is available at [www.WeRaise.us](http://www.WeRaise.us). ■



New students pose "on the quad" in celebration of Concordia Seminary's forthcoming 175th Anniversary.

## St. Louis Sem Celebrating 175th Anniversary

Concordia Seminary / St. Louis will celebrate its 175th anniversary on Friday, October 10.

The event will kick off with a special chapel service, and there will be food, beverages, live entertainment, special lectures and exhibits and campus tours.

Concordia Seminary was founded in 1839 by German immigrants in Perry County, Missouri. After the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was formed in the late 1840s, the Seminary was given as a gift to the LCMS and moved to a more central location on South Jefferson in St. Louis.

As the city of St. Louis grew, so did the Seminary; it moved to its current 72-acre location in Clayton in 1926.

Since its founding, Concordia Seminary has trained more than 12,000 LCMS church professionals, including pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, scholars and church leaders. Over the years, the Seminary has started many programs to address the needs of a changing world, including MissionShift, the Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS), the Deaf Institute of Theology, and the Ethnic Institute of Theology (EIT).

For more information, visit [www.csl.edu](http://www.csl.edu). ■



# Many District Congregations Meet the Flood Bucket Challenge

In response to a new LCMS Disaster Response program, the Florida-Georgia District in early June issued its first Flood Bucket Challenge to its congregations to assemble five-gallon buckets filled with flood relief items.

From August 28 through September 2 the results were picked up from 25 congregations:

646 filled buckets. While practical in nature, the buckets also include devotional material entitled *Where is God Now?* from Concordia Publishing House.

"It is our hope that the Holy Spirit can use these devotionals to bring people to local LCMS congregations where they can hear the Word of God preached,

be brought to faith in Jesus Christ and receive the Holy Sacraments instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," said John Elliott, District Business Manager and Disaster Response Coordinator.

He continued, "What a joy it was to travel throughout the District and not only see the natural beauty of God's world within our boundaries, but more importantly the love and energy of God's people as they gave of themselves, their time and treasure to set up this ministry of mercy here in Florida-Georgia.

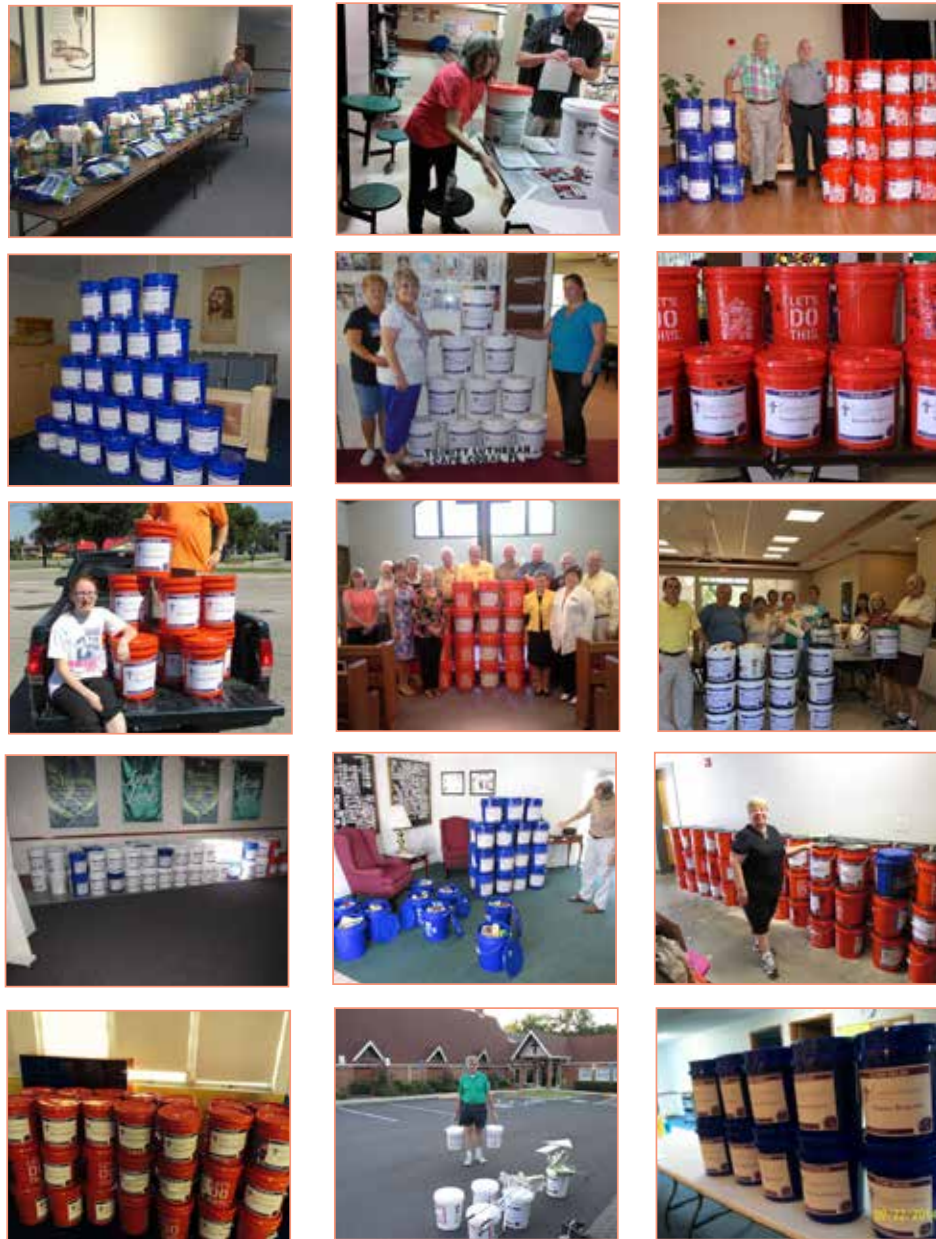
"These Flood Buckets are just one small part of our witness to our fellow man of the love of God for us and the salvation we have in Jesus Christ alone through His life, death and resurrection."

The Flood Buckets are being stored in The Burning Bush Outreach Center in Winter Haven until they are needed, when they can be deployed anywhere in the Southeastern United States within 72 hours.

Pictured here are some of the District congregations who met the Flood Bucket challenge. ■

In photos from top to bottom, left to right:

- #1 Peace /Dunellon, FL
- #2 Journey of Life/Orlando
- #3 Abiding Savior/ Gainesville, FL
- #4 Trinity /Lake Placid, FL
- #5 Trinity /Cape Coral, FL
- #6 St. Paul / Lakeland, FL
- #7 University Lutheran / Tallahassee
- #8 All Saints/Blairsville, GA
- #9 Grace / Port St. Lucie, FL
- #10 Messiah / Tampa, FL
- #11 Mt. Calvary / Warner Robins, GA
- #12 Faith / Marietta, GA
- #13 Our Savior / Lake Worth, FL
- #14 Our Redeemer / Augusta, GA
- #15 Peace / Dunnellon, FL



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# The BACKPAGE

## Inaugural LCEF Invitational Benefits President's Circle

The inaugural Florida-Georgia LCEF invitational at Orlando's Eagle Creek Golf Club on August 26 featured the return of District President Greg Walton from his summer-long sabbatical.

The Red, White, and Blue Teams were comprised of 12 golfers with various connections throughout the District. Red Team members swept the awards, including:

- 1st Place – Rev. Dennis Liebich (74)
- 2nd Place – Rev. Roy Zerbe (76)
- 3rd Place – Rev. Ron Biel and John Elliott (78)

Proceeds from this event were deposited in the President's Circle, which funds random acts of grace throughout the District and beyond. ■

*Below — Members of the Red, White and Blue team members at the first-ever LCEF Invitational.*



LYNDA VOSS, Florida-Georgia Executive Assistant for School Ministries, is the first-ever Advanced Senior Grandmaster Women's Amateur Disc Golf World Champion. She won that honor at the 2014 Amateur Disc Golf World Championship in St. Paul, MN, as one of 612 competitors in 13 divisions from 14 countries. Women divisions made up seven of those with girls from under 13 to women 60 years and older. This was the second time Voss competed in the Amateur World Championships. "When I arrived in St. Paul, I knew I was as ready as I could be for the challenge," she said. Prophetic words indeed! ■

