

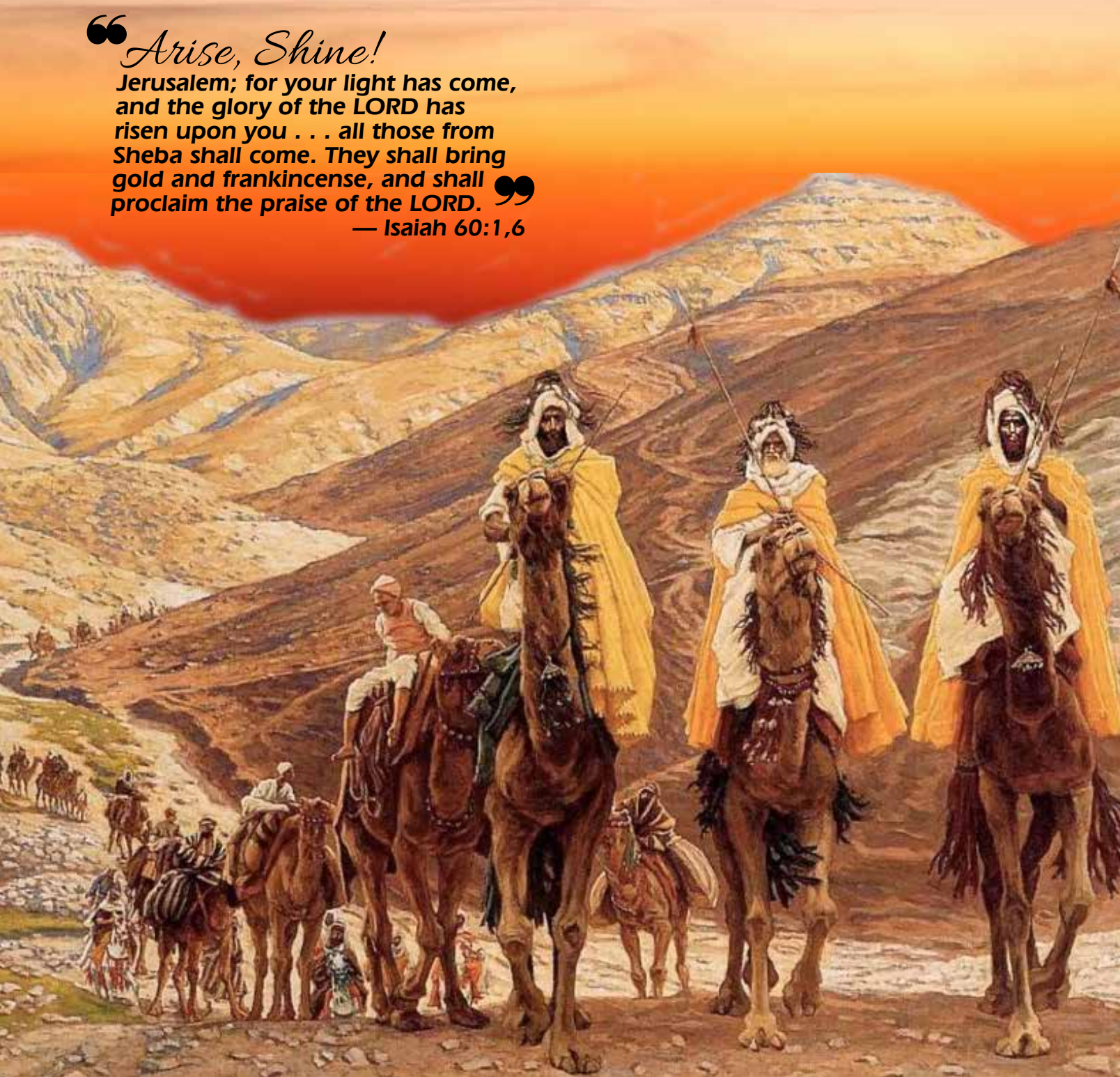
LUTHERAN LIFE

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

2014 | Volume 6

“*Arise, Shine!*
Jerusalem; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has
risen upon you . . . all those from
Sheba shall come. They shall bring
gold and frankincense, and shall
proclaim the praise of the LORD.”

— Isaiah 60:1,6





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 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.

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E-Mail photos, news, address updates to:
LutheranLife@aol.com

Communications Director, John List
Editor-in-Chief, Eileen Bishop

Florida Georgia-District LCMS
Lutheran Ministries Center
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd, Suite 500
Orlando, FL 32822
Toll-Free: (877) 457-5556

www.flgadistrict.org

District President, Greg Walton
School Ministry, Mark Brink
Mission & Outreach, Doug Kallesen
Finance/Administration, Dan Reichard
Business Manager, John Elliott

In Memoriam

John Robert Jones Jr.

Rev. J.R. Jones, 52, passed away at Hospice by the Sea in Boca Raton, FL, on October 11 after valiantly battling two glioblastoma brain tumors. A memorial service celebrating his life and final victory of faith was held on October 14 at St. Paul/Boca, where he had served the last five years of his ministry.



A native of Miami, Pastor Jones endured a hard childhood, living in more than 100 foster homes around South Florida. He served in the US

Armed Forces before graduating from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis and entering full-time parish ministry.

Pastor Jones' first call was to Rivercliff Lutheran/Atlanta, GA, where he served for almost six years before accepting the call to St. Paul. Pastor Jones was active in various community and outreach ministries as well as serving St. Paul congregation.

He is survived by Sylvia, his wife of 30 years; son Michael and his wife, Paige; daughter Christal, her husband, Bobby, and their son Caleb. ■

Lowell James Holstein

Rev. Lowell Holstein, 78, was called home on October 24 and remembered in a Celebration of Life in Christ on November 8 at Messiah/Tampa.

A graduate of Concordia Seminary-St. Louis, Pastor Holstein was ordained by his father in 1964 and was a parish minister for more than 25 years – including serving at Zion Lutheran in downtown Tampa. He began working with refugees in 1975 at Fort Chaffee, AR, and in Trenton, NJ, in 1976.

He accepted a call to be Regional Consultant for Refugee Services for



Lutheran Ministries of Florida – now Lutheran Services Florida – in 1979. During his decade in that position, thousands of refugees and immigrants were greeted and cared for with the compassion of Christ as they entered the United States from all parts of the world.

Pastor Holstein is survived by his wife of 55 years, Janet; daughters, Julie Holstein; Susan Tumlin and her husband, Joe, and their three children Emma, Andrew and Kate; sister, Eunice VanNatta; brother, Rev. Robert Holstein and wife, Lucille; nephews and nieces. ■

Send your church, school and personnel news to:
LutheranLife@aol.com



NEW WORKERS WELCOMED — Pastors and vicars new to Florida-Georgia this year were welcomed during a special gathering at the District's Orlando headquarters on November 13. Attending were (front, l-r) Rev. Anthony Mandile, Martin Luther Chapel / Marathon, FL; Rev. Roberto Rojas, Jr., Zion New Life / Winter Garden, FL; Mrs. Cheryl Fuehler; Mrs. Whitney Howe; Rev. Ken Green, Prince of Peace / Orlando, FL; Rev. Jim Weist, Epiphany / Lake Worth, FL; Vicar Shea Pennington, Hope / Plant

City, FL; Mrs. Dawn Carlson; Rev. John Glover, First / Gainesville, FL; (back, l-r) District President Greg Walton; Rev. Ken Fuehler, / North Palm Beach, FL; Vicar Andrew Howe, St Paul / Boca Raton, FL; Rev. Dr. Craig Boehlke, Our Redeemer / Melbourne, FL; Mrs. Jennifer Boehlke; Rev. Stephen Reynolds, Shepherd of the Coast / Fort Lauderdale, FL; Vicar Mark Harris, Grace / Winter Haven, FL; Vicar Jeff Carlson, Trinity / Fort Lauderdale, FL.

DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

Calling Congregations

Grace/Atlanta, GASole Pastor
First/Clearwater, FLSole Pastor
Holy Cross/Jacksonville, FL.....Sole Pastor
Beautiful Savior/LeHigh Acres, FL.....Sole Pastor
Faith/New Port Richey, FL.....Sole Pastor
Faith/Parrish, FLSole Pastor
Messiah/Tampa, FLSenior Pastor

Calls Issued

Grace/Atlanta, GA
Rev. Jon Rusnak as Sole Pastor

Faith/New Port Richey, FL
Rev. Justin Bell as Sole Pastor

Calls Accepted

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

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

Transferred to Other Districts

Mr. Brent Sankey Michigan (C)
Mr. Kyle Dupont Pacific Southwest (C)
Mr. Gerald Lustila Montana (C)
Mr. Benjamin Skelton SELC (C)

Transferred from Other Districts

Rev. Dr. Mark J. Schreiber Missouri (O)
Mrs. Cassandra A. Moore Missouri (C)

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Assignments

Mr. Michael Yurk
Concordia Chicago, Teacher
Faith/Eustis, FL (C)

Ms. Alyssa Joerz
Concordia Bronxville, Teacher
Faith/Eustis, FL (C)

Ms. Daisha Sorensen
Concordia Nebraska, Teacher
Trinity/Rockledge, FL (C)

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

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

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Rev. Andrew L. Schroeder, Pastor
Lake Oconee/Eatonton, GA (O)

Rev. Jeffrey Skopak, Pastor
Grace/Jacksonville, FL (O)

Rev. Robert Maulella, Pastor
Faith/Sebring, FL (O)

Rev. John E. Glover, Pastor
First/Gainesville, FL (O)

Rev. Tyler Christopher Moore, Pastor
Our Savior/St. Petersburg, (O)

Rev. Zachary E. Hoffman, Pastor
Good Shepherd/Gainesville, FL (O)

Called to Glory

Rev. John R. Jones (O)
Rev. Lowell J. Holstein (O)
Ms. Diane V. Haak (C)
Rev. Louis C. Castens (C)

Removed from the Roster

Mr. William Dennis Rach, Resigned (C)

Change of Status within the District

Rev. Richard S. Engel
from Active to Emeritus (O)

Mr. Mark E. Wetherell
from Active to Candidate (C)

Mrs. Carri J. Wetherell
from Active to Candidate (C)

Mr. Brent Sankey
from Active to Candidate (C)

Dcs. Lois E. Diebel
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)

Ms. Jennifer E. Vaughn
from Non-Candidate to Candidate (C)

Ms. Jodene M. Shea
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)

Mrs. Mary F. Tereszkiwicz
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)

Mr. David Lee Kroll
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)

Rev. Robert C. Weikart
from Candidate to Emeritus (O)

Mr. Timothy M. Vogel
from Active to Candidate (C)

Mr. Randall Zook
from Candidate to Non-Candidate (C)

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

Lately I've been reflecting on 2014 and the wonderful ways God has been at work across the Florida-Georgia District. We have seen some excellent workers added to an already great roster of servants; we have seen some congregations celebrate significant anniversaries, others burn mortgages and still others start new ventures in ministry. All in all, we see people connecting people to Jesus in unique and marvelous ways.

In 2014 we saw changes in the District Office, too, especially surrounding the retirement of our long-time ministry partner, David Weidner. The impact he made on our District is sorely missed, as is his smiling face! The District Executive Staff

missed opportunities to do what God called us to do. All in all, it's been a busy year.

A personal blessing for me this past year was when Edith and I learned in the Spring that we would become grandparents, and we are anxiously awaiting the arrival of a little girl this Christmas season. God is good all the time, and all the time God is good! And while we may not always understand or like the circumstances, we can have confidence that because He sent us the greatest care package in the infant Jesus, we have boundless hope and joy in Him. I pray that as you look back you find times of joy, even in the midst of the struggles, to know that the One who promised "I

how will I be engaged in this New Year? When I was in the parish I used to try to come up with a catchy way to focus on the year ahead. As I look forward to the New Year this is what jumped in my heart: God's grace will be seen in 2015. I recognize that this is nothing too profound, at least not on the surface. God's grace always abounds. The writer of Proverbs says, "The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good" (Pr 15:3). In other words, His grace doesn't depend on me seeing it to make it real or valid. His grace is seen even when I fail to see it.

However, wouldn't it be wonderful to see God's grace more and more in the year

It's become a habit for me. If you were to look in the books on my iPad, you would find a number of sample devotionals that I've checked out to map out the year ahead. The closer I stay to God's Word, the more I see His grace abound.

The second thing this requires of us is that when we see God's grace abound it should cause good works to abound in us. Elsewhere Paul writes, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:10). You and I were created, or rather re-created in Jesus into a living hope to do the works which God desires us to do. We certainly don't do these in our own strength, but rather by His Spirit working within us. We also read the familiar words in 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." This is a purpose statement. We were chosen to be declarers! And as we declare the wonders of Jesus we see His grace abound more and more!

+++++

Being engaged is nothing less than allowing the words of our faith and the actions of our lives intersect in the world around us. It's less about talk and more about action. It's less about defending our faith and more about living it out daily so that our neighbors see Jesus in our lives.

How will you engage in the New Year? Certainly there are

opportunities in our ministries — congregations, schools, social ministries and the like. These are important and commendable. But how will you move beyond that into your own home life, or into your neighborhood, or in your work place, to be the light of Jesus in the darkness and see God's grace abound? How will you make decisions, based on this past year's successes and failures, to adjust your course to live more fully for Jesus so that you connect others to Him?

Maybe it's human nature, but I've found that if I wait to think through those things until after the New Year begins, it's a lot easier to procrastinate and never get to it. But we have a clean slate ahead, a brand-new opportunity to change the future as we think about the past. And we are never alone! Jesus, whose birth we celebrate as the coming of grace in its power; whose death and resurrection assure us of forgiveness and new life; who sent us the Holy Spirit as an Advocate and Comforter and Encourager; this Jesus promises to walk into the New Year with us that His grace may abound as we engage in the future as His disciples.

May God's grace be seen in 2015 in the lives of His people who take seriously His call to engage the world with this good news. May His grace abound in you and overflow so that others might see His grace in our lives,

and taste and see that the Lord is good. He is a good and gracious God who loves us in spite of our frailties and faults; in spite of our doubts and fears; in spite of our faithlessness and failures.



An Engaging Future Ahead . . . God's Grace Will Be Seen

made a trip to Haiti to meet with our partner church there, and to see a variety of ministries and opportunities around that country. It was an eye-opening experience. We continued working with Lutheran Hour Ministries on the Outreach Initiative and on revitalization in ministries around the District. We also launched a new training event called Emergent Leaders and partnered with Cornerstone Consultants to equip leaders with additional skills to serve in ministry, whether as a pastor, teacher, administrator or as a lay leader.

Certainly there were difficult things, too. No doubt we all saw loved ones pass to new life. There were also schedule challenges and deadlines and

will never leave you nor forsake you," has been by your side every step of the way.

+++++

One thing I've learned by reflecting on the past. I can't change it. I can't unsay the stupid thing I said, I can't undo the regrettable thing I did. On the flip side, as much as I want them not to, the celebrations came to an end, the vacations are but a memory, and the good things I accomplished, while past, are hopefully becoming a legacy building for the future.

I learned a long time ago that while I can't change the past, I can influence the future. As this year quickly comes to a close and the year 2015 looms before us,

ahead? It can be seen if we just open the eyes of our hearts to see where God is already at work. Paul reminds us, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Co 9:8).

I believe this requires two things of us. First, that we open ourselves up to His grace in new ways by recommitting ourselves to being in His Word and regularly gathering around the Sacrament of the Lord's body and blood. These are opportunities that we actually have some control over, aren't they? Every year about mid-December I begin praying and considering what devotional materials I'll use in the New Year.

He invites us to look to the past and see His blessings so that as we look to the future we are encouraged to be equipped, empowered and engaged to connect people to Jesus. God has great things in store as we look to the future. May we stand in His Word as His people and engage in that future for the sake of Jesus.



In His Abounding Grace!
GREG

District Leaders Renewed During Three-Day President's Convocation

Professional and volunteer leaders serving Florida-Georgia District churches, schools and ministries were renewed and further equipped to connect people to Jesus during the September 29-October 1 President's Convocation at the Buena Vista Palace Hotel in Lake Buena Vista.

Represented among the 700 participants were 150 churches and 40 schools — including the Lutheran Church of Nassau / Bahamas.

District President Greg Walton welcomed participants, who were purposefully seated with colleagues according to their area of service. "Be equipped, empowered and

engaged to connect people to Jesus," he encouraged participants.

"I believe that God has each of us here with a desire to bring us renewal, new insights for ministry and strength to continue to serve Him."

Aspects of the Convocation theme — "Renewal from the Inside Out" — were explored during mega workshops by nationally known speakers Dr. John Eckrich of Grace Place Lutheran Wellness Ministries; Dr. Dina Vendetti of St. John Lutheran School/Dover, DE; Rev. William R. Woolsey, of Cross Point Community Church/Katy, TX; and Rev. Gerald P. Coleman, Director of Music, Christ Lutheran

Church/Washington DC. Coleman was also the music leader for the Convocation.

Designed to accommodate time for fellowship and relaxation, the agenda included workshops that focused on all areas of renewal — including physical fitness, spiritual growth, professional development and personal wellbeing.

Highlights of the Convocation included:

- President's Reception, staged for the first time in the Renewal Mall, site of various exhibits.
- Honors Banquet celebrating new workers, anniversaries and accreditations.
- 5K Fun Run/Walk, which attracted

participants of all ages — including those along for the ride in strollers.

• Renewal Worship with Holy Communion hosted by Prince of Peace / Orlando, with Pastor Ken Green leading worship and President Walton preaching. Rebecca's Garden of Hope tutoring/mentoring ministry and Stepping Stone Mission outreach to the homeless were the beneficiaries of the \$2,159.21 Convocation offering.

Held once every three years, the Florida-Georgia President's Convocation is designed to inspire and equip everyone associated with District churches and schools — called or contracted workers as well as church/school/ministry volunteers. ■



Upper left — President Greg Walton introduced the District Office Staff (l-r) Kathy Keene, Doug Kallesen, Mark Brink, John Elliott, Cindy Hammerstrom, Daniel J. Reichard, Laura Ziebel, Lynda Voss, Debbie Talbot and Mary Byrd.



Lower left — The panel takes questions from the floor. Shown on stage (l-r) are Pastor William Woolsey of CrossPoint Community Church in Katy, TX; Pastor Gerald Coleman of Christ Lutheran in Washington DC; Dr. Dina Vendetti of St. John Lutheran School in Dover, DE and President Gregory Walton.



Upper right — Sanya Parsons, Founder and Director of Rebecca's Garden of Hope.



Lower right — Pastor David Ludwig was honored for his 55th anniversary in ministry. Ludwig is Emeritus at Prince of Peace/Orlando and a former member of the Florida-Georgia Board of Directors.

Congratulations

Ministry Milestones... District Honorees Celebrating Major Anniversaries

10 Years

Kelly Allen
Heather Cowles
Amanda Duseburg
Michael Hageman
Wilton Heyliger
Elizabeth Kozieracki
Leslie Leonard
Anthony Masinelli
Carisa Meier
Ricky Mercado
Andre Mezilus
Nick Utech

15 Years

Bruce Alberts
Susan Bain
Pat Beacham
Jeremy Becker
Wendy Clark
Tim Droegemueller
Raquel Harper
Michelle Henry
Eric Macke
Raquel Martin
Shelly McGovern
Donald Moore
Paul Meseke
Jessa Popp
John Schubert
Lori Schwan
Martin Springer
Alana Stokes
Kim Tenney
Joni Zehnder

20 Years

Anita Allwardt
Joy Beach
Ken Green
Laurie Hartner
Donna Hascup
Joseph Lamoureux
Carol Maher
Janet Marcil
Karen McCarthy
James Pennecamp
Dean Pfeffer
Linda Root
Jamie Shaffer
Jan Tuminello
Paul vonWerder

25 years

Steve Constien
Denise Gosch
Susan More
Kathy Schelp
Cindy Sharman
Lynette Tegtmeier
Connie Ziegler

30 Years

David Albers
Chang Kim
Karyn McChrystal
Scott Nelson
George Murdaugh
George Poulos
Mark Schulz
Jeff Walcheski

35 Years

Robert Boyd
Gloria Klockziem
Robert Schaaf
Linda Stoeckel
Cynthia Tillman

40 Years

Jim Essig
Jim Guelzow
David Kruger
Timothy Parsch
Larry Ueltzen
Sharon Vonada

45 Years

John Westol

50 Years

Jerry Bisping
Theodore Hanus
Robert Jacobs
Alan Koch
David Mueller

55 Years

David Ludwig



Clockwise, from top left, morning participants in the 5K run/walk; Pastor Ken Green, Prince of Peace Orlando (the host congregation), celebrates Holy Communion at closing worship; President Walton with exhibitor Don Kovacs of Lutheran Bible Translators; Doug Kallesen and Joshua Brink played percussion on stage during spirited worship; District Executive of School Ministries, Mark Brink, gets a lesson in Disc Golf from his administrative assistant, Linda Voss, who is advanced senior grand master women's amateur disc golf world champion; Pastor Darrell Stuehnenberg, Bethlehem/Fort Myers, and Kaitlin Bauer, DCE at St. Paul/Boca Raton engage in a little table talk at one of the break-out sessions.

Emphasis on Outreach, Revitalization Reflected in District Board Discussions

Meeting in Orlando November 7-8, members of the Florida-Georgia Board of Directors continued work on updating District Success Indicators as part of the business agenda. President Greg Walton shared some of his recent reflections on District activity, and Board members provided their input on the 2014 President's Convocation.

Highlights of the President's Report to the Board are summarized below by ministry targets.

Leadership: *District and congregational leaders are loving, visionary people of the Word, models of healthy Christ-centered living and life-long learners committed to equipping and empowering others to join in fulfilling the Church's role in God's mission.*

• Emergent Leaders is one of the upcoming signature ministries of the District. The first and second training sessions for the inaugural effort are completed, with the final workshop set for January 2015.

• Circuit Visitation Georgia was done in conjunction with the dedication of the new worship facility for Living Faith / Cumming [see story on page 28]. District Executives visited churches and schools during the visit, which Walton described as "an excellent opportunity to be with and pray for our ministries in Georgia."

• The 2016 National Lutheran Youth Gathering is set for July 16-20 in New Orleans. Planning has begun for District youth participation in the event, themed "In Christ Alone."

Congregations: *Congregations of the Florida-Georgia District are growing communities of welcoming, vibrant and faithful followers of Jesus.*

• Another signature ministry of the District focused on congregations is Revitalization. The focus on Church health continues "because healthy Churches reproduce naturally," Walton said. Available services to congregations include personal visits, webinars, seminars, coaching in

person and via telephone.

• District Executive Director of Outreach Doug Kallesen has been on the road making regional visits to speak with congregations about their outreach plans, new starts in the region and revitalization efforts. New starts are under way in each of the District's five regions.

• The 2015 District Convention will be held at the Airport Marriott from June 12-14. The theme "**Engaged in the Master's Business**" is built off of Luke 19:13: "Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.'"

"We will emphasize our privilege and responsibility to connect people to Jesus," Walton said.

Outreach: *Living out their faith in Jesus with urgency and joy, the people of the Florida-Georgia District eagerly invest, both individually and corporately, in bold and intentional service and witness to make known the love of Christ to all people.*

• Quoting the latest available numbers, Walton announced that in 2012 District congregations reported gains from adult confirmations, professions of faith and child baptisms of approximately 2,300. The top five

congregations reporting such gains were: Trinity/Summerfield – 59; Grace/Jacksonville – 54; Trinity/Delray Beach – 49; St. John/Ocala – 49; Trinity/Orlando – 47.

• Lutheran Hour Ministry/Florida-Georgia Evangelism Camp was hosted by Living Faith / Cumming, GA, from June 19-21.

• Mission Planters are being contacted for possible service in the Florida-Georgia District. "Pray for workers in the Lord's harvest," Walton encouraged Board members.

• National Hispanic Conference will be held in Tampa from July 28-August 1, 2015. The District has been involved in the planning and will participate to support the event.

• The District Muslim Task Force has established goals with action plans to raise awareness of the tenants of Islam, provide training to respond to or provide positive witness to Muslims in our communities and consider establishing a Missional Community to reach Muslims. The Task Force has the goal of starting cultural centers to reach Muslims in Orlando, Tampa and Atlanta.

The next District Board meeting is scheduled for January 23-24, 2015. ■

EXPECTING GUESTS
this Christmas?

Give them an opportunity to come back to your church and learn more about the Christian faith through a **GodConnects** class. **GodConnects** is a free, video-based adult confirmation course developed by Lutheran Hour Ministries. It has been doctrinally reviewed by the LCMS and covers Christian doctrine in 12 topics.

NEW! GodConnects now offers a 4 Week Preparation Guide with easy to follow checklists. This guide includes suggested timelines for promotion and tips for how to host a successful class.

Visit LHM.ORG/GODCONNECTS to download your free resources today!

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LWML Members Plant Seeds and Share the Joy



Meeting in convention Jacksonville from September 26-28, Florida-Georgia members of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League gathered for worship, praise and fellowship as they elected new officers, selected new mission projects and conducted other business and outreach matters.

Humorist Jan Struck was the keynote speaker. Representing the national LWML was Vice President Communications Nancy Bogenhagen. Both women were also on the agenda as speakers on Saturday, Struck on "This is NOT the life I signed up for!" and Bogenhagen on "LWML and Social Media." Also speaking on Saturday were Julie Dass, who heads the Sisters of Faith outreach of Faith / Naples, FL, on the topic "Sharing the Gospel with Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs" and Mary Karrick on "Archiving and Scrapbooking."

A walk early Saturday morning raised funds for District mission grants.

Convention attendees brought Gifts from the Heart to benefit The Women's Resource Center of Jacksonville, a life-affirming pregnancy center for women of all ages who find themselves in crisis situations. The Center has been serving the community since 1993.

Newly elected officers include:

- Vice-President for Communications Joan M. Koch of Faith / FL, in the Heartland Zone;
- Vice President for Mission Service Debra Buenrostro of University Lutheran / Tallahassee, FL, in the Orlando West Zone;
- Recording Secretary Dorothee Jones of Hope / Melbourne, FL, in the Space Coast Zone;
- Treasurer Debi Coran of Faith Viera / Rockledge, FL, in the Space Coast Zone; and
- Pastoral Counselor Rev. Michael Zwemke of Savior of All / Cartersville, GA, in the Atlanta North Zone.

They join returning Executive Committee members District President Bunnie Koelsch (Redeemer / Melbourne, FL), Vice President of Mission Grants Carol Alberts (St. John / Ocala, FL), Vice President of Spiritual Growth Karen Bowers (Our Redeemer / Augusta, GA), Financial Secretary Nancy Hughes (Gloria Dei / Davie, FL) and Pastoral Counselor Rev. Tod Shouse (Redeemer / Bartow, FL). ■



LWML District President Bunnie Koelsch calling the Convention to order.



Cross stitched plaques were presented to the retiring Executive Committee members in recognition of their service: Treasurer Laura Moore O'Connell, Vice President for Mission Service Dawn Sandvig, Vice President for Communications Trish Aamoth and Recording Secretary Joan Koch.



Artie Hoyle - Vision Praise of Jacksonville provided entertainment at the Saturday evening banquet.

and Share the Joy



At left — Joan Cioper with Julie Dass, one of the Saturday afternoon speakers. Middle — Keynote speaker Jan Struck with Lois Ford, former LWML District President



and current webmistress. Ford is also on the board of directors for the Florida-Georgia District. At right, Chelsea models the hat declared most beautiful in the hat parade and contest.



Above — Pastoral Advisor Rev. Tod Shouse got right into the spirit of the hat parade with this bonnet sporting the LWML purple flower and ribbons.



Above — New and returning members of the Executive Committee (l-r) Pastoral Counselor Rev. Michael Zwemke; Treasurer Debi Coran; President Bunnie Koelsch; Vice President Spiritual Growth Karen Bowers; Pastoral Advisor Rev. Tod Shouse; Financial Secretary Nancy Hughes; Vice President of Communications Joan Koch; Vice President for Mission Service Debra Buenrostro; and Recording Secretary Dorothee Jones.

2014-2016 Mission Grants Adopted in Convention in Jacksonville, FL	
Concordia Seminary/St. Louis Food Bank.....	\$ 10,000.00
Concordia Seminary/Fort Wayne Food & Clothing Co-op.....	10,000.00
Trinity/HOPE.....	5,000.00
Church Bus /Lutheran Church of Nassau.....	10,000.00
Feed My Sheep.....	5,000.00
Stepping Stone Mission.....	10,000.00
Brevard Rescue Mission At Casa Carol - A Helping Hand.....	10,000.00
Muslim Mission Society Development.....	7,500.00
Bread of Life Food Pantry.....	4,257.38
Total.....	\$ 71,757.38
Pastoral Scholarships.....	\$ 15,000.00
Non Pastoral Scholarships.....	15,000.00
Grand Total.....	\$101,757.38

Thrivent Cited in Study Fraternal Benefit Societies Generate \$3.8 Billion in Annual Value to America's Communities

According to a new study from the Center for Financial Policy at the University of Maryland, from 2007 through 2011 fraternal benefit societies contributed an average of \$3.8 billion per year to the United States economy.

Even in the face of a deep recession, fraternal benefit societies produce \$76 in value to society for each dollar the federal government invests, through the fraternal tax exemption, to help support their operations. This is according to the study authored by Professor Phillip Swagel of the University of Maryland School of Public Policy and former senior economist in the Bush and Clinton Administrations.

Building on his September 2010 analysis of fraternal economic contributions, Swagel confirms and expands on that paper's finding that the nation's two largest fraternal (Thrivent Financial and the Knights of Columbus) provided \$3.4 billion in a single year through direct support and social capital. Over the five-year period studied in Swagel's new report, fraternal societies contributed \$19 billion to the U.S. economy.

Working through grassroots networks of member groups,

fraternal members are engaged in their communities and positioned to identify and help meet pressing needs large and small at the local and national levels. The study finds that fraternal societies provide direct charitable contributions and volunteerism as well as "social capital," which is built through the efforts of fraternal members bringing people together for the common good and results in stronger communities nationwide.

America's fraternal benefit societies are not-for-profit mutual aid organizations created more than a century ago to serve the financial and social needs of communities. While fraternal benefit societies provide some \$1.6 billion a year in direct contributions to communities, their impact throughout the United States generates another \$1.7 billion in social capital, according to Swagel's comprehensive analysis.

Swagel's latest analysis assesses fraternal activities over a longer period of time and through a broader range of fraternal benefit societies. He demonstrates how such activities build social capital through the networks fraternal societies create that bring people together for the common good, build

community trust, widen awareness of local needs, educate and inspire younger generations of service, as well as provide a consistent first response in times of crisis – and a consistent presence after the crisis.

For example, Thrivent Financial and its members serve as the largest source of non-governmental support to Habitat for Humanity International with fundraising and thousands of volunteers. Workers at one such project are pictured below.

At a time of shrinking government budgets and rising demands from communities struggling through a weak economy, this updated study again confirms that fraternal benefit societies represent a tax policy solution with an enormously positive ratio of benefits to costs for society. The beneficial activities performed by government or corporations are important, but cannot replace the level of commitment of dedicated fraternal member-volunteers who are active in their communities and come together through their lodges to help others in a more targeted, efficient and consistent way. As Swagel suggests, "the fraternal is the community." ■



LSF Head Sam Sipes Elected Chair of National Board

Lutheran Services Florida President and CEO Samuel M. Sipes has been elected Chair of the Board for Lutheran Services in America.

His term as board chair runs through June 30, 2015. Sipes, who joined the LSA Board in 2009, fills the chair position left vacant in September due to the retirement of previous Chair John Bauer.

Since joining LSF in September 2007, Sipes has seen the agency grow from an annual budget of \$34 million serving 33,000 people to a budget of \$200 million serving 130,000 people each year. He manages 1,300 employees who oversee more than 60 programs.

Sipes has an extensive background in leadership roles in nonprofit organizations, as well as experience in child welfare, social services and programs for senior citizens. Prior to joining LSF, he served as President and Chief Operating Officer of Lutheran Social Services of the South in Austin, Texas.

Lutheran Services Florida is a nationally recognized faith-based organization transforming individuals and families by providing healing, hope and help through education and effective human services. LSF is responsive to the changing needs of Florida communities. Established in 1982 by Lutheran churches, LSF is one of the fastest-growing nonprofit organizations in the country.

Founded in 1997, Lutheran Services in America is the umbrella organization linking more than 300 Lutheran nonprofit ministries throughout the United States and the Caribbean. Its members reach 6 million people annually, touching the lives of 1 in every 50 Americans every year. ■



Samuel M. Sipes

For additional information, please contact the Florida & Georgia Region at 407-942-1332

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Mission: Haiti Celebrates Milestone

When former Florida-Georgia District Executive Director for Missions Gerald Seaman proposed the establishment of Mission: Haiti, the goal was to support the efforts of a Lutheran pastor in that island nation.

Since its establishment in fall of 1999, Mission: Haiti has expanded to provide assistance in many areas of education and humanitarian aid while supporting the outreach efforts of the country's Lutheran churches.

"It has been a blessing to meet and work with people from all over our country as well as in Haiti," said Helen Roenfeldt, Mission: Haiti Director. She shared a few of the organization's most recent causes for celebration:

- Opening of the girls orphanage in April of 2014 with 13 residents.

- Residents of both the girls and the boys orphanages are now receiving three daily meals.
- Both orphanages have new garden areas with a professional agronomist to teach vegetable gardening skills.
- A new church building has opened in Jubilee, where plans are to welcome 200 children for school this year.
- Medical teams are visiting underserved areas three times a year to care for the sick and teaching health and wellness, "always bringing the love of Christ to the glory of God."

To learn more about Mission: Haiti or to participate in a mission trip, contact Roenfeldt at missionhaiti@aol.com. Additional information is available at missionhaiti99.org. ■

At left — The church in Jubilee was built for \$10,000, using local people to give them a job and pride in their community.

Below left — Dr. Nancy Swisher teaching a class of new moms. Education is an important part of the medical clinics. In the background is the children's clinic. Here children receive worm medicine and vitamins; mothers and their children receive instruction on hand washing and hygiene; and health concerns are addressed by a medical professional. Swisher has been on nine mission trips and is co-leader for medical teams.



Above left — Mission: Haiti Director Helen Roenfeldt with Nadej, who is 12 or 13 years old. She was found by friend of her father's living in the cemetery near her parents' graves. She had been there for three years since she had no other place to go. "She has been abused in just about every way imaginable and it is a miracle that she is alive," Roenfeldt reported. "Nadej had never had a dress or three meals a day, never slept on a bed or had a pair of shoes. She is so happy at the orphanage she said that she never wants to leave. Of course, we want her to learn and grow and have a life fitting a child of God."

Above right — one of Mission: Haiti orphanage residents with her first-ever birthday presents!

Below — Orphanage residents model new backpacks and school supplies, hats and clothing donated by Our Savior / Lake Worth, FL, and Shepherd of the Hills / San Antonio, TX.



Stewardship Program Energizes Members, Reaps Benefits for Congregations

Today there are so many resources and options to share and to teach the attitude of gratitude. Yet we live in a "me" world where we are consumed with "selfies." We have forgotten that God owns everything. Including you and me!

As churches of the Gospel, we must teach generosity, discipleship and the joy of serving the Lord. This verse from Acts 20:35 comes to mind: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, how He said, 'There is more happiness in giving than receiving.'"



The verse above reminds us that giving does not only need to be uplifted during a Stewardship Sunday — it merits being part of our everyday lives. As a whole, churches must be taught the significance of stewardship, including teaching the children who will set the pace for future generations. Teaching generosity now will be the future of the church tomorrow.

During my childhood in the 1960s and 70s, my congregation was very active in sharing and teaching what God's Word taught in the area of giving. My parents emphasized the importance of tithing, but unfortunately that is not often the case nowadays. Today many of us are working with cultures and first-generation Christians who need to be taught what God says about giving and

sharing and being a servant. Questions to Ask

- Does your church have a Stewardship or Generosity Board?
- When was the last time your congregation did some sort of Stewardship emphasis?
- Have you shared with your people the need of the "giver to give"?

Don't be afraid of stewardship, for correct teaching can lead to many benefits for the Christian. We also need to remember that educating in stewardship can happen at any time of the year.

Check out the Options

- Call Debbie Talbot at the District for help, or

- Join the many congregations that are presently involved with Consecrated Stewards — or the many who are planning their Consecrated Stewards program in January, or
- Plan now to do a program during Lent or in the spring.



Pastor Dennis Bartels
Holy Cross/North Miami, FL
Chairman
District Stewardship Committee

You see there never is a bad time to share God's message and receive the benefits of being God's faithful stewards. Benefits

such as being drawn closer to God — victory over materialism — strengthening of faith — being happy — helping other people and opening the door to God's blessings. ■

E-Mail: fasterpastorb@yahoo.com
Web Info: http://lcef.org/financial_planning/#consecrated!

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Spotlight on Services
Gift Planning

At Lutheran Church Extension Fund, we exist for the sole purpose of empowering ministries in Kingdom work. Our goal each day is to "open doors," sharing resources so that more people will hear and believe, be baptized and grow in the Word, joining together in God's saving grace and eternal life.

Planning for your legacy is an important process for you and your family. Our gift planning consultants offer valuable ideas for planning for the future and potentially receiving benefits such as tax savings and life income.

Also, you can get helpful personal planning tips and ideas for organizing your finances and estate.

Gift Planning is a complimentary LCEF service that addresses the personal stewardship needs of LCEF supporters, assisting them to include the ministries they care about in their financial plans.



Leading the team is Pam Moksnes, Vice President-Gift Planning Services. She brings years of professional experience helping Lutherans with their charitable giving plans.

Pam was elected to four terms on LCEF's volunteer Board of Directors, serving for nearly 12 years. Her tenure included leadership roles as secretary and, most recently, as vice chair.

She is a Certified Financial Planner and has served as a gift planning counselor/unit manager for The LCMS Foundation. Pam has also held management positions at Thrivent Financial.

For more information please contact the Gift Planning Services Team at (800) 843-5233 or write to gifting@lcef.org



National LCEF Leaders Gather in California

Lutheran Church Extension Fund's 2014 Fall Leadership Conference — held at the Hyatt Regency in Garden Grove, CA — brought together approximately 700 participants for three inspiring, faith-filled days.

Speakers and sessions focused on the theme "Reflect His Glory" based on II Corinthians 3:18.

"As leaders of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, we all know we can do more," LCEF President/CEO Rich Robertson encouraged participants. "Let's be innovative for the sake of Jesus Christ."

Before joining LCEF, Robertson served at different times as president, elder, Strategy and Planning Committee chairman and mission trip team leader for St. Paul Church and School / Peachtree City, GA.

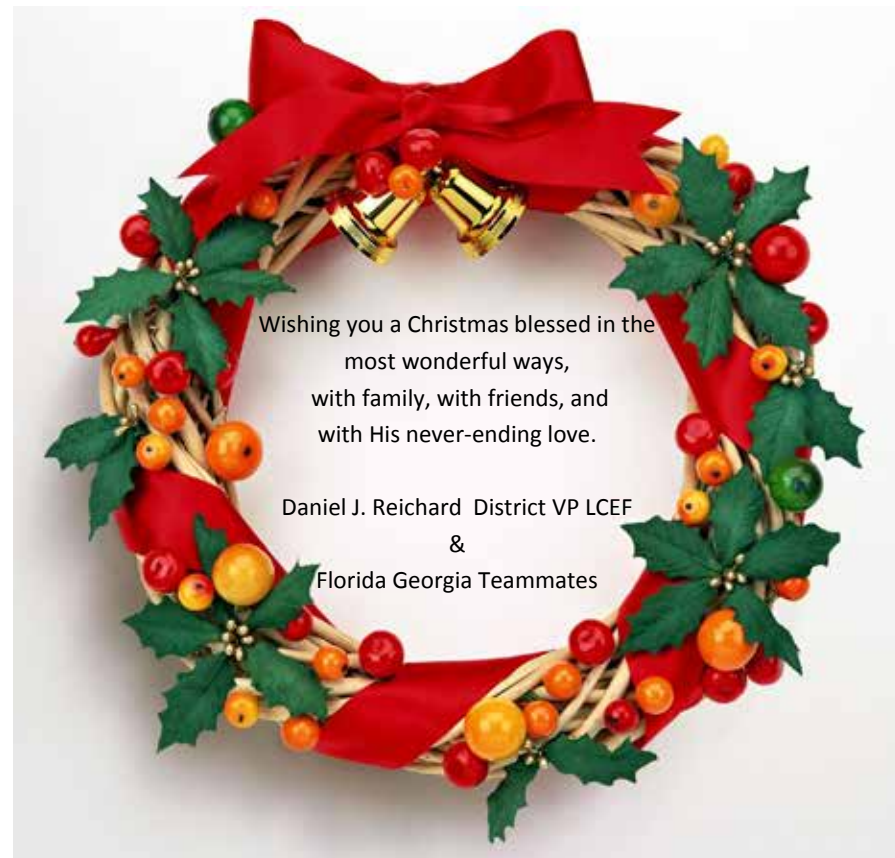
During the conference's servant event, attendees took less than an hour to fill 500 shoe boxes destined for Operation Christmas Child with personal care items, school supplies, toys and handwritten messages of love and prayers.

Lutheran schools in the Garden Grove area also participated in Operation Christmas Child's National Collection Week, November 17-24, and made an extraordinary 15,000 boxes. All of the boxes collected from this area will be sent to the Philippines, Nepal, Peru and Indonesia. ■



Cindy Robertson, wife of LCEF President and CEO Rich Robertson, finishes an Operation Christmas Child shoe box during the Fall Leadership Conference Servant Event.

Crean Lutheran High School/Orange, CA, chorus members performed during LCEF's Fall Leadership Conference worship service. Paul von Kampen is the choir's director.



Congregations Honored for Flood Bucket Results

Two Florida-Georgia churches received special recognition for their efforts in the recent District Flood Bucket Challenge.

Trinity/Lake Placid, FL, was awarded \$200 for mission in their community in recognition for achieving the Lowest Cost/ All items Purchased of \$13.20 per bucket. Martin Luther Chapel/Marathon, FL, was awarded \$150 for mission in their community for recording the Lowest Cost/ All items Donated and Purchased of \$9.83 per bucket.

The Flood Bucket challenge – issued in June of 2014 – invited congregations to assemble ten LCMS Disaster Response Flood Buckets. By the end of August, almost 650 five-gallon buckets filled with flood relief items had been assembled by District churches. They are in storage at the Burning Bush Outreach Center in Winter Haven, FL, until they are needed and will be deployed anywhere in the Southeastern United States within 72 hours. ■



The 30 flood buckets (above) donated by Martin Luther Chapel were assembled by members Ricky, Norma, Ed, Kathy, Peggy, and Angela. Left — Members of Trinity/Lake Placid, FL, filled and contributed 40 flood buckets.

LSG HONORS PASTORS – November 17 was Pastor Appreciation day at Lutheran Services of Georgia's Atlanta office. Among those honored were Rev. David and Marsha Brighton of Mount Cavalry / Warner Robins. Brighton serves as First Vice President of the Florida-Georgia District. The four pastors in attendance enjoyed lunch, listened to a presentation on LSG's services and considered future opportunities for partnership between LSG and congregations. For more than 30 years, LSG has promoted programs to enhance the stability, wellness, health and safety of individuals and families across Georgia – from Atlanta to Augusta to Savannah. Since its founding in 1981, Lutheran Services Georgia has touched the lives of more than 100,000 individuals. ■



LERT Training Set for January

In cooperation and coordination with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Office of Disaster Response, the Florida-Georgia District will host a Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) Training session from 9am to 4pm on January 17, 2015, at St. Michael Church / Fort Myers, FL.

“Responding to a disaster is a vital part of who we are as members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” said John Elliott, Florida-Georgia LERT coordinator. “Responding to a disaster allows a congregation to confess Christ to their community, region and world in ways they may have never considered before.”

The central premise of the LCMS Disaster Response ministry's training is rooted in I John 4:19: “We love because He first loved us.”

Elliott continued, “The 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.”

To register, visit the District website: flgadistrict.org. For assistance in registering, contact Elliott at 877-457-5556, x7 or via email at jelliott@flgadistrict.org.

St. Michael is located at 3595 Broadway in Fort Myers; the church office phone number is 239-939-4711. ■



Make a Joyful Noise Veterans of the Cross Registration Opens

Retired church workers and their spouses will be gathering at the Methodist Life Enrichment Center, Leesburg, FL, from March 2-4, 2015, for Veterans of the Cross, the Florida-Georgia Church Workers Retreat.

This annual gathering of Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod church workers and spouses attracts many participants from across the United States and Canada.

The theme for the retreat and the focus of the Bible study will be “Make a Joyful Noise.” Rev. Richard Koehneke, St. Peter's / Fort Wayne, IN, will be the featured speaker. Rev. Robert Steinke, Faith / New Port Richey will lead the Bible study.

Rev. Dr. Gerald Schultz will serve as worship leader. Lutheran higher education will be represented by Valparaiso University, whose

President, Dr. Mark Heckler, is scheduled to attend the retreat.

Participants will be able to choose from a number of break-out sessions that will appeal to a variety of interests. In addition, there will be ample opportunity to visit with old friends and even make some new ones.

A highlight of each retreat is the presentation of the Behnken Medallions to “veteran servants” in four categories: Pastor, Teacher, Church-at-large and Lay Person.

Retreat registration is open through February 1, 2015. Online registration is encouraged (<http://flgadistrict.org>).

Newly retired workers are encouraged to contact the Florida-Georgia District office (877-457-5556, ext. 8) to receive retreat information. Scholarships are available to participants who have financial needs. ■



Dr. Mark Heckler, Rev. Dr. Gerald Schultz

District Calendar of Events

LERT Training
St. Michael / Fort Myers, FL
January 17, 2015

National Lutheran Schools Week
January 25-31, 2015

New Worker Retreat (Commissioned)
District Office / Orlando, FL
February 6-7, 2015

School Music Festival
Friday, February 27, 2015
St. Luke / Oviedo, FL

Veterans of the Cross Retreat
March 2-4, 2015
Life Enrichment Retreat and
Conference Center
Fruitland Park, FL

2015 High School Youth Gathering
March 13-15, 2015
Westin Lake Mary
Lake Mary, FL

Florida-Georgia District Convention
June 12-14, 2015
Airport Marriott / Orlando

Educators & Pastors Conferences
September 23-25, 2015
St. Paul / Lakeland, FL

LWML FL-GA District Retreat
September 25-27, 2015
Sirata Beach Resort /
St. Petersburg Beach

Regional Outreach Conference #2
November 13-14, 2015
Orlando

Faith Welcomes Head of Haitian Church

Rev. Revenel Benoit, President of the Lutheran Church of Haiti, was the guest preacher at Faith / Fort Lauderdale November 8.



radio stations as well as a number of businesses – including a rock and sand quarry – that help support its lay pastors and teachers. The LCH is 95% self supported.

Benoit, a native of Haiti, received his seminary training at Concordia Theological Seminary / Fort Wayne.

He shares a compelling story about his childhood. He grew up in the home of a Voodoo Priestess – his mother – and was disowned by her when, at the age of 16, he became a Christian.

Joining Benoit during his visit to Faith to share the story of outreach and mission opportunities in Haiti was Helen Roenfeldt, Executive Director for Mission: Haiti. ■

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 | Trinity/Lake Placid
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



Redeemer Students Share Joy with Area Seniors

SECOND-GRADE STUDENTS at Redeemer Lutheran School / Stuart have been visiting the Kane Center in Stuart every other month. A life center for elders in the area, the Kane Center is managed by the Council on Aging of Martin County. The Redeemer students do crafts, sing songs and play games with the residents. In January, the Kane Center residents will put together a live wax museum for the students so they can learn more about famous Americans that they will be studying. “The students have really been excited about being able to positively influence the lives of others and have enthusiastically shared the love of Jesus with them,” said teacher Amanda Duseberg. “I am so proud” ■



Reformation Celebration Includes Pastoral Installation

Rev. Rob Maulella was installed as pastor of Faith / Sebring during the Heartland Circuit’s joint Reformation worship. Faith congregation hosted the service.

Preaching at the special circuit-wide celebration was Rev. Doug Kallesen, the Executive Director of Outreach for the Florida-Georgia District. Rev. Richard Norris, pastor of Trinity / Lake Placid and Heartland Circuit Visitor, installed Maulella. All of the Heartland Circuit Pastors participated in this service.

A 1987 graduate of Concordia College-New York, Maulella taught for several years before entering Concordia Seminary/St. Louis. After his 1997 graduation and ordination into the pastoral ministry, he served at Concordia / Miami for seven years.

In 2004 he accepted the call to serve Prince of Peace / Douglasville, GA, where he served until leaving in 2010 to lead the effort to plant a church in West Georgia. Most recently he served as Interim Pastor at St. Paul / Peachtree City, GA.

Maulella and his wife, Linda, also a graduate of Concordia-New York, have one daughter, Gianna. ■



Pastor celebrating the Reformation and installation included (front, l-r) Ben Schroeder, St. Peter / Belle Glade; Alan Koch, Faith / Clewiston; James Weed, Good Shepherd / Sebring; Rob Maulella, Faith / Sebring; Scott McClean, Christ / Avon Park; Bruce Summerfield, Peace Valley / Wauchula); (back, l-r) Darrell Stuehrenberg, Bethlehem / Fort Myers; Doug Kallesen, Florida-Georgia District; Tony Douches, former Interim Pastor at Faith / Sebring; Richard Norris, Trinity / Lake Placid; John Hirst, Peace / Okeechobee.



CAPTAIN WALT VOLZ, Retired U.S. Navy chaplain, visited the fourth- and fifth-grader classrooms of Our Savior School / Plantation recently. He was with the students during social studies class and talked about what military chaplains do and answered many questions. Volz is Pastor Emeritus of Our Savior.



Tampa Bay Hispanic Ministry Hosts “Noche Latina”

The Hispanic Ministry of Tampa late this summer hosted its first community event designed to strengthen and launch the ministry into the community.

“Noche Latina” featured folk music, Latin dances and an abundant buffet of Spanish food with Latin seasoning. Approximately 140 people were in attendance.

Led by Pastor Miguel D. Sanabria, the Hispanic Ministry vision is themed “We Are Family.”

“This is an holistic support strategy for the Hispanic families who living in area condominiums to assist them and establish an example and model for other residents that includes commitment,

organization, planning, efficiency, unity, respect, honesty, ethics and civic participation,” Sanabria said.

“The workshop we created had the intention to teach and assist them

with basic computer introduction, ESOL, sewing, living together, youth issues, child care, immigration and training of plant maintenance.”

He concluded, “We are Family’ is an answer

to the question, ‘If the community is no longer coming to Church like it the once did in order to hear the Gospel, how can the Church go to the community and BE the Gospel?’ ■



Bethlehem Welcomed Back into LWML

On November 3, five members of the SW Florida Lutheran Women’s Missionary League Executive Committee attended the Bethlehem / Fort Myers Women’s Guild meeting and presented them with the “charter” officially welcoming them back into the LWML.

In years past, Bethlehem Women’s Guild had been active in the LWML, but their involvement had lapsed some time ago. With a reorganization and new vibrancy in the Guild in the past several years, the Bethlehem women were enthusiastic about reconnecting to the LWML.

Bethlehem women in attendance included Lillian Taylor, Arlene Mueller, Bertha Toivonen, Joanne Erdman, Dorothy Hansen, Jean Hutchings, Betty Willis, Elsie Stowell, Sharon Kranz, Holly Bell and Joyce Kimbrell.

Representing the SW Florida Zone were: Joan Cioper, President; Phyllis Schultz, First Vice President; Chris Paganese, Second Vice President; Susan Schwinn, Secretary; and Trudy Locricchio, Treasurer.

The SW Florida Circuit includes the LCMS churches from North Fort Myers south to Marco Island. The Circuit also goes east to include LaBelle, Lehigh Acres and Immokalee. ■



LWML SW Florida Zone leaders and members of the Bethlehem / Fort Myers Women’s Guild.

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



MEMBERS OF TRINITY / New Port Richey rescheduled worship services on Sunday, October 12, to accommodate the annual Longleaf Triathlon, which is routed in front of the church property for both the running and biking events. Trinity members volunteered to staff a water station during the event and provided much needed hydration to the hundreds of participants. Sanctioned by USA Triathlon, this event is one of Tampa Bay’s premier multi-sports events including swimming in a nearby freshwater lake, bike tour through Starkey Wilderness Park and a running course through the town of Longleaf. Shown here are Trinity members Will Ausdemore handing water to a passing runner while Charmaine Dupps and Ron Bonnett fill cups during the event.



Attention Congregations!

Is your congregation’s mailing list up-to-date for *Lutheran Life*? You can e-mail your mailing list to us to ensure each member receives their personal copy of *Lutheran Life*:
LutheranLife@aol.com

“Grace Upon Grace” Celebrates Milestone

Grace Lutheran / Winter Haven on September 27-28 culminated its year-long 70th Anniversary Celebration under the theme “70 Years of Grace Upon Grace.”

Some 200 members and friends celebrated at an Anniversary Dinner held Saturday evening, September 27. Among the guest speakers was Georgia Fisher, the church’s first young person to be confirmed, who recalled poignant memories of growing up at Grace. The thread that ran throughout her heartfelt recollections was a sense of belonging to a family. “I am never alone,” she said. “I always have my Grace family.”

Rev. Mark Bernthal, son of the late Rev. Dr. August Bernthal, Grace’s pastor for 50 years, paid loving tribute to his father’s unwavering ministry, steadfast faith and visionary leadership.

Guest preacher for Sunday’s morning worship was Rev. Dr.

David Bernthal. His sermon summarized Grace’s history, tying it to the present and future ministries and mission of Grace. Ryan Hostler, the late Dr. Bernthal’s grandson, served as guest organist for the weekend. Grace’s choir, hand-bell choir, and Praise Band contributed to the joyful celebration. ■

At right — Georgia Fisher was the first young person confirmed at Grace and was one of the dinner speakers.



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



PRINCE OF PEACE / Orlando hosted an 80th birthday celebration for Pastor Emeritus Rev. David Ludwig, Sr. on October 19. The occasion provided an opportunity for fellowship and enjoying cake inscribed “Happy Birthday Pastor Grandpa!” Pictured here are Ludwig with Prince of Peace member Shannon Knibbe.

Pictured below — Celebrating Grace’s milestone were Senior Pastor Jonathan Frusti, Rev. Dr. David Bernthal and Associate Pastor Charles Reich



Hope Youth Help Feed Area Children

On Sunday, November 16, the youth of Hope / Plant City shared with the congregation the City’s United Food Bank’s need for donations for the children’s nutrition program. This program provides basic groceries to replace breakfast and lunch for those receiving free and reduced meals in the public school system when there are no classes.

To help meet that need this Thanksgiving break, Hope’s middle school Sunday School class coordinated a food drive. Grocery bags and a food list were distributed to members. The filled bags were to be returned the next Sunday.

“It was great to see our youth take the lead to help their peers over the Thanksgiving holiday while school is closed,” said Hope

Senior Pastor Dean Pfeffer, who serves as on the Food Bank Board. Middle School Sunday School Teacher Liz Pfeffer added that she “was proud of the leadership the

class gave to this project as they were able to share what God has given them and that, as they have been blessed by God, they were able to be a blessing to others.” ■



Hope youth with some of the more than 100 bags of groceries donated to the food drive.

Hymn Fest Celebrates Sanford’s New Organ

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer / Sanford combined the dedication of its new Rodgers 3 manual Artist Series Organ with a community Hymn Festival during the afternoon on November 8.

The event – themed “From

Beginning to the End: Let There Be Light” – took the congregation from Genesis to Revelation through hymns and readings. “We were reminded that Jesus Christ is our true Light,” said Deaconess Alyssa St. Georges.

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer Pastor Ed DeWitt led the dedication service.

Organist for the afternoon was David Ludwig, a composer, pianist, organist, singer and worship leader trained in both theology and music. A graduate of Valparaiso University and The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, he has served as music minister in Anglo, African-American and Latino congregations in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and as worship and workshop leader at national and local events for all ages.

A reception followed the dedication. ■



At left — Guest organist David Ludwig led the Hymn Festival celebrating the dedication of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer’s new organ.

Lieske Book Recounts Year in Antarctica

Before he was an LCMS pastor, Bruce Lieske was a member of the Antarctic Weather Central during the 1956-57 International Geophysical Year.

He shares memories of that experience in *Frozen Memories*, which was published in April of this year. Set in the context of 109 men living together for almost a year on the frozen continent, Lieske

explores with a more mature mind what he did – and thought – as a 22-year-old meteorologist.

The book emphasizes the psychological and spiritual struggles of those who “wintered over.” Friendship, humor and a personal relationship with Christ are rediscovered as essential means to coping with life.

After his year in Antarctica



Lieske spent three years in the U.S. Air Force as an aviation weather forecaster and then for two years was a senior research meteorologist in Alaska.

He left the weather field to enter Concordia Seminary / Springfield, graduating in 1969. He served three congregations, two of them as founding pastor. After his parish pastoral experience, Lieske founded an evangelistic ministry to Jewish people, and more recently has been leading the Florida-Georgia District Task Force on Muslim Evangelism.

He has three children and eight grandchildren. ■

Does your church or school have an upcoming event? Promote it on the Florida-Georgia District website! Just visit flgadistrict.org and click on the link under the copy block [District Church and School Events](#) in the right column on the page.

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



FAITH / LECANTO member donations filled 29 boxes for Operation Christmas Child, a Samaritan's Purse project. Each of the congregation's 29 completed boxes included a little book to tell the children about Jesus their Savior. Thrivent Financial contributed \$300 to use for additional supplies and postage. Shown here with the completed boxes are Carol Clayton and Anita Trout, coordinator of the project. ■

Amazing Grace Dedicates Ministry and Worship Center

Amazing Grace / Oxford-The Villages dedicated its first facility on Sunday, November 9 — the seventh anniversary of the congregation's inaugural worship service.

More than 240 people gathered to celebrate this milestone in the life of the young congregation, whose mission out into the community is that “more lives may be transformed through Christ for today and eternity.”



Amazing Grace member and District Board member Lois Schaefer during the service.

“The Lord has done amazing things in and through the people of Amazing Grace,” said Pastor James Rockey, “and the Lord has only begun to use us. We are the called out ones, and so our prayers, eyes and efforts continue to be on being Christ to the world outside of this building.”

Rockey described the 8,200-square-foot facility as “a place of feeding, equipping and sending that the people of God may fulfill the divine appointments the Lord has prepared for us each day! So we may have land, a building and be well established, but we will always be a mission church – reaching out to share God's message of undeserved and amazing grace!”

A dinner in the new facility followed the dedication service. ■



Sharing in the dedication celebration were (front, l-r) Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton; Pastors John Glover, First / Gainesville; Ken Schamens; James Rockey, Amazing Grace / Oxford; Dennis Glick, Boca Raton; (back, l-r) District Executive Director for Outreach Doug Kallesen; Tom Beaverson and Roy Zerbe, Amazing Grace; Bob Besalski, Gainesville.

Glover Installed at First / Gainesville

Rev. John H. Glover on October 5 was installed as Senior Pastor at First Lutheran Church/Gainesville – the church where he served his

vicarage in 1990.

Preaching at the installation service was Rev. Thomas J. Eggebrecht, Pastor of Ascension/Casselberry. Rev. Frank Marshall,

Florida-Georgia District Region II Vice President, officiated. Assisting in the service was Rev. James H. Rockey, Circuit Visitor and Pastor of Amazing Grace / Oxford.

Glover, a 1987 graduate of Concordia University / New York, graduated

from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis in 1991. He previously served congregations in Stockton and Berkeley, CA; Hamilton, OH; and Palatine, IL.

“Rev. Glover brings to FLC a heart for reaching the lost, sharing Christ's love and engaging God's people in lives of mission,” said Rockey.

Glover and his wife, Julie, have one daughter, Naomi. ■

At left — pastors participating in the installation service were (l-r) Ken Schamens, Joe Adams, Ken Chitwood, Thomas Eggebrecht, Alan Struckmeyer, Frank Marshall, Ron Mueller, Steve Kabe, John Glover, Enwood Nevis, Ron Scheer, Roy Zerbe, James Rockey





Good Shepherd Welcomes Zachary Hoffman

Rev. Zachary Hoffman was installed as pastor of Good Shepherd / Gainesville, GA, on November 9. Area pastors were among the special guests at the afternoon installation service.

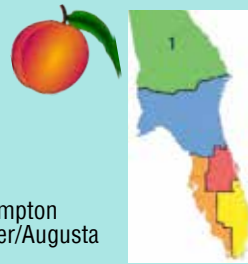
A 2010 graduate of Concordia Seminary / St. Louis, Hoffman for four years served as Associate Pastor for St. Peter's Lutheran Church / East Peoria, IL.

Hoffman and his wife, Tracilyn, have two daughters, ages three and one. ■



Participating in the installation service were (front, l-r) Pastors David Sieg, Paul Drutz, Zachary Hoffman, Dave Wesche, Gerhard Michael, (middle, l-r) Robert Maltzahn, George Murdaugh, Paul Sherouse, Gary Dehnke, (back, l-r) David Kehret, Aaron Reinking, Robert Strickert, Scott Holder, David Brighton

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

Living Faith/Cumming, Dedicates New Church Home

Members and guests filled the recently completed sanctuary of Living Faith / Cumming for the October 5 dedication service of the new facility. Worshipers gathered at the front doors of the church for the opening of the service, then followed Living Faith Pastor Timothy Droegemueller and other participating clergy inside to the sanctuary.

Among those participating in the service were Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton, District Executive for Outreach Doug

Kallesen and Rev. Chang Soo Kim, Pastor of Living Faith Korean

The journey to this new church home began with a small group of individuals meeting in a residence in 2000. The following year, those individuals began meeting at a school in Cumming and planted a mission church known as Living Faith led by Pastor Ken DeSoto.

In November 2006 – after a few other relocations and an interim pastor – Droegemueller was called. The next year the congregation moved to 103 Buford Dam Road.



After years of seeking a suitable property, Living Faith leaders in 2012 located a site on Highway 9 South in Cumming. Groundbreaking activities were celebrated on May 5, 2013, to begin the initial construction phase for the first permanent home for a congregation that in its short history had met in a house, a school, a hospital and a funeral home.

Living Faith members gathered for the first divine service in the new church on July 20.

Sharing in the joy of the dedication were pastors and members of Living Faith's mission campuses: St. John / Buford, led by Pastor Aaron Simms; Christ the King / Commerce, led by Pastor Aaron Reinking; and St. Peter / Dahlonega, led by Rev. Gerhard Michael, Jr. ■



KING JAMES — better known as Principal Jim Richards (left) — promoted the St. Paul Lutheran School / Peachtree City Book Fair after a recent chapel service. Richards' presentation coincided with a visit from the Florida-Georgia Executive Team, whose shared reaction was applause: "What some principals do to inspire their students!" St. Paul eighth-grade students (above) took to the stage in November to present an innovative Thanksgiving play ... complete with Pilgrims, Indians, Peter Pan, Captain Hook and Tinkerbell. St. Paul operates a pre-school and an elementary school with grades K-8. ■

Mission Congregation Dedicates First Facility

Members of Christ the King / Commerce, GA, are worshipping in their new facility: a 6,400-square-foot building that "offers more space than we need right now," said Rev. Aaron Reinking.

The facility features a sanctuary, fellowship hall, outside area, parking, an office, classrooms, storage rooms and five restrooms.

Reinking and a core group have been working on planting Christ the King, a mission campus of Living Faith / Cumming, since January of 2014.

"In January my feeling was that we would be meeting in a hotel conference room or some type of space in a government

building or private business," Reinking said. "But as the Lord continued to send people and resources it became apparent that we would be able to rent somewhere that we could call 'home.'

"People have been very generous with their time, talent, and treasure," he continued. "September 19 featured a prayer meeting to dedicate the facility to the service of God, pray for God's blessing on the mission and for the Commerce community. "

On September 24, Christ the King hosted its first 'open to the public event.' Weekly Wednesday Night Light activities feature food, fellowship, prayer and Bible Study. ■



Pastor's Personal Mission Trip Aids Refugees in Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya



Rev. Bafel Paul Gak Deng, the former Chairperson of Peace and Reconciliation Commission for Upper Nile State of South Sudan, spent a month this summer on a personal mission trip to aid refugees in Sudan and Ethiopia. Deng is now with the Peace Lutheran / Decatur Sudanese Ministry, which sponsored the trip. "Malaria threatens thousands of people in refugee camps in Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and IDPs [internally displaced persons] under the bushes in South Sudan," Deng said. "Many catch

the disease each year, and many die from it, mainly children under five years of age and pregnant women. Malaria kills around one child in 20." Anti-malaria medicines and sleeping under mosquito nets offer protection from the disease. "Unfortunately, in many places the malaria parasite becomes resistant to anti-malaria drugs and the problem is getting worse in refugee camps," Deng explained. "Therefore, Peace Lutheran Church and the Sudanese Ministry decided to address the concern.

"We distributed the mosquito nets to the vulnerable South Sudanese people in Alagai, Judah of Sudan and Tharpham Gambella of Ethiopia. Additionally, we preached the Word of God and empowered refugees to have confidence and strengthen their faith in Christ Jesus, so that they may have hope and peace." Deng's trip was made possible by many generous donations – including a gift from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that made it possible to do even more than expected in the camps in Ethiopia. ■



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The BACKPAGE

Meeting with Pope Generates Smiles

Rev. Dr. Timothy Parsch, Senior Pastor of Bethel / Clearwater, was introduced to Pope Francis by Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, outside of the Senate Hall at the Vatican in Rome during a recent trip to Italy.

At that meeting, Pope Francis said to Cardinal Dolan in Italian, “Tell the Lutheran Bishop ‘You’re a brave man. Four hundred years ago the Swiss guards would not have let you get this close to me. In a previous age they burned Lutherans here.’” His humorous remark was well received by Cardinal Dolan and Parsch.

“Meeting the Pope was an amazingly joyous and inspiring occasion,” said Parsch, “and to know Cardinal Dolan is a very special spiritual privilege.”

Parsch, who is celebrating 40 years in the pastoral ministry, graduated from Concordia / St. Louis in 1974. He has served all 40 years of his ministry in Florida, including the past 26 years at Bethel. ■



Rev. Dr. Timothy Parsch (center) with Pope Francis and Cardinal Timothy Dolan at the Vatican



DISTRICT DELEGATION— Florida-Georgia was well represented at the 2014 LCEF Fall Leadership Conference in California. Attending the three-day session in Garden Grove, CA, were (front, l-r) Daniel J. Reichard, Mildred Bode, Jon Boeche, Mark Schreiber, Jim Ingersoll, (middle, l-r) Connie Schreiber, Candace Moss, Patricia Pinckney, Jim Bode, Debbie Talbot, Kathy Aber, Tami Worthington, Kris Huseman, Beth Bartels, Edith Walton, President Greg Walton, David Worthington, (back, l-r) Mary Byrd, John Elliott, Andrea Reichard, Nick Moss, Robert Pinckney, Don Bergwall, Rev. Tom Eggebrecht, Hans Tews, Donna & Michael King, Ed Everts, Rusty Huseman, Rev. Dennis Bartels. See page 17 for more on the