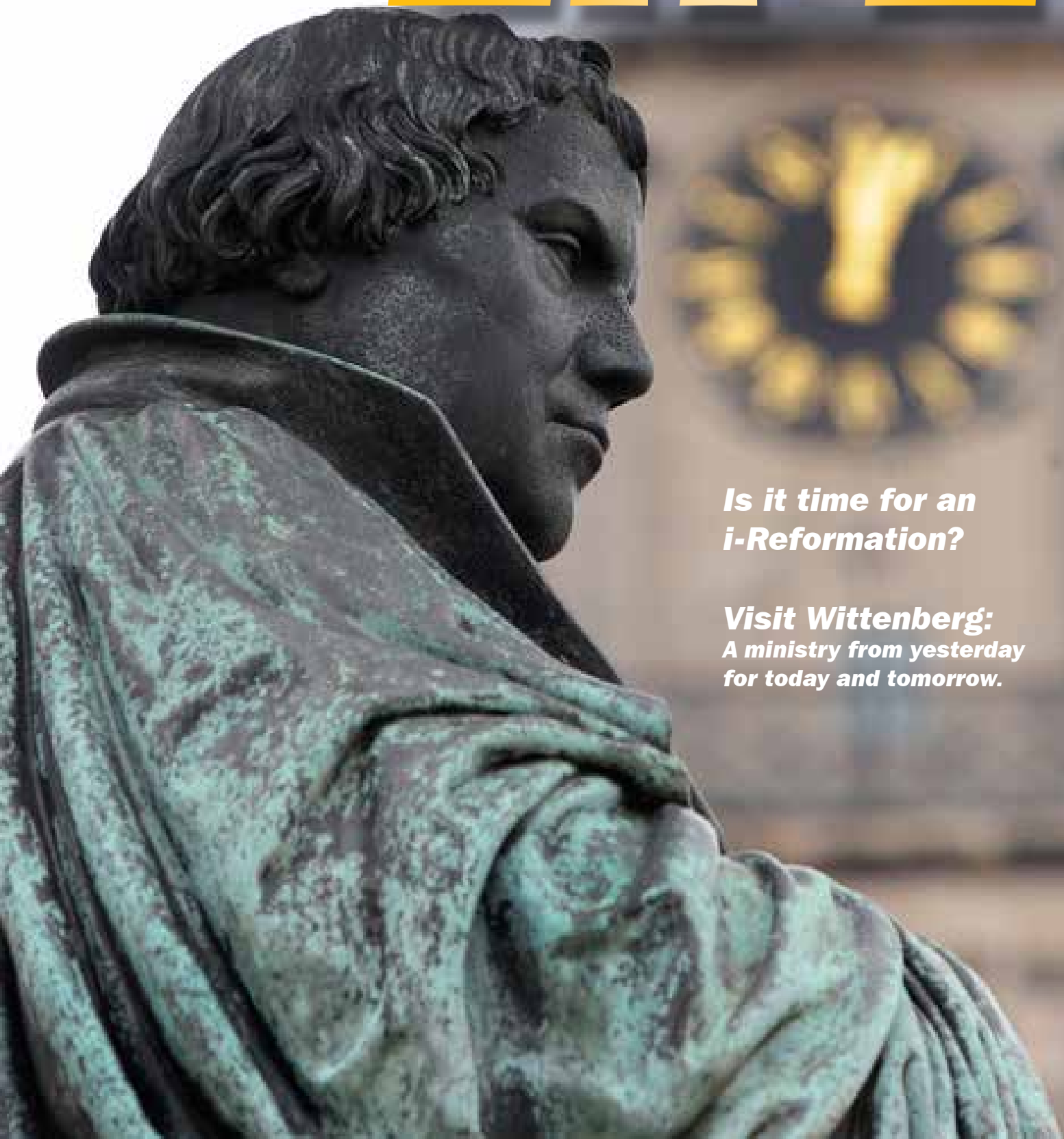


LUTHERAN

LIFE

2015 | Volume 5

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



*Is it time for an
i-Reformation?*

*Visit Wittenberg:
A ministry from yesterday
for today and tomorrow.*



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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Name a Wellness Champion and Cap CHP Rates



Concordia Plan Services is offering a rate increase cap of 4.9% on the 2017 Concordia Health Plan for all employers who commit to supporting wellness by submitting the name and contact information of a wellness champion for their organization.

Employers need to submit their champion information on the Be Engaged! letter by December 31, 2015 to secure their rate cap for 2017.

Having a wellness champion will be essential to supporting health and wellness at a local level. A wellness

champion is an ambassador within the organization who helps promote and encourage health and wellness among the staff. When selecting a champion, CPH representatives encourage employers to look for an individual who has a heart for those who serve in ministry and is passionate about wellness; committed to building a culture of health; and has a sincere desire to make positive changes in the culture.

For more information contact Concordia Plan Services at 888-927-7526.

2015 Middle School Youth Gathering
November 6-8
Lake Yale Conference Center / Leesburg, FL

LHM Regional Outreach Conference (ROC)
November 13-14
Buena Vista Palace / Orlando, FL

Create & Connect | Retreat for Adults 50+
November 16-18
Luther Springs / Hawthorne, FL / 828-209-6329

2016 Lutheran School Music Festival
February 26, 2016
Location TBD

2016 Veterans of the Cross Retreat
March 7-9, 2016
Life Enrichment & Conference Center
Fruitland Park, FL

LCMS 169th Anniversary
April 26, 2016

District Team Members Honored for Service



STAFF RECOGNITION – Members of the Florida-Georgia team were honored recently for achieving milestones in their years of service to the District and to the Lutheran



Church – Missouri Synod: Mark Brink (at left), Executive Director of School Ministries, 40 years; Daniel J. Reichard (center), Vice President LCEF, Finance & Administration, 5



years; and John Elliott (at right), Business Manager, 5 years, all are shown being congratulated by District President Greg Walton. ■

DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

Calling Congregations

First/Clearwater, FL..... Sole Pastor
Faith/Hialeah, FL..... Sole Pastor
St Paul/Lakeland, FL..... Associate Pastor
Faith/North Palm Beach, FL Sole Pastor
St John/Ocala, FL Senior Pastor
Faith/Parrish, FL..... Sole Pastor
Our Savior/Plantation, FL..... Senior Pastor
Grace/St Cloud, FL..... Sole Pastor
Our Savior/St Petersburg, FL..... Assistant Pastor
Messiah/Tampa, FL Senior Pastor
Trinity/Toccoa, FL..... Sole Pastor

Calls Issued

First/Clearwater, FL
Rev. Philip Rigdon as Sole Pastor

Calls Accepted

First/Clearwater, FL
Rev. Philip Rigdon as Sole Pastor

Calls Declined

Our Savior/Plantation, FL
Rev. Andrew Becker as Sole Pastor

Transferred to Other Districts

Mrs. Elizabeth LeinbergerMichigan (C)
Mr. Daniel DeHoyosCal-Nevada-Hawaii (C)
Ms. Jenna Weingart Indiana (C)
Rev. Gene Johnson Texas (O)
Ms. Vicky Piller..... Northern Illinois District (C)
Rev. Eugene Krentz Texas (O)

Mrs. Lisa Moore Missouri (C)
Rev. Jeffrey Moore Missouri (O)

Transferred from Other Districts

Rev. Michael G. Duchene Pacific SW (O)
Rev. James P. Martin Ohio (O)
Rev. Earl R. Schmidt Minnesota North (O)

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Assignments

Rev. Adam G. Ellsworth (O)
Concordia Seminary/St. Louis
Pastor of Grace/Atlanta, GA

Ms. Rebecca M. Ford (C)
Concordia Mequon,
Teacher at Faith/Marietta, GA

Ms. Kari L. Strehlow (C)
Concordia Chicago
Teacher at Faith/Marietta, GA

Mr. Joshua Wareham (C)
Concordia Chicago
Teacher at Faith/Eustis, FL

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations
Ms. Anna Stapleton (C)
Teacher at First/Clearwater, FL

Mr. Steve Hoffschneider (C)
Principal at Faith/Eustis, FL

Mr. Kip Sandersfeld (C)
Teacher at Faith/Eustis, FL

Ms. Cynthia Tillman (C)
Teacher at St. Paul/Lakeland, FL

Rev. James P. Martin (O)
Pastor at Trinity/Orlando, FL

Called to Glory
Rev. Lambert G. Gabbert (O)
Rev. Robert D. Frerking (O)

Removed from the Roster
Rev. John S. Fischer Resigned (O)
Ms. Kristin Becker Resigned (C)

Change of Status within the District
Mr. Daniel DeHoyos (C)
from Active to Candidate

Ms. Tara Concepcion (C)
from Active to Candidate

Reinstated to the Roster
Ms. Jessica Lukas (C)

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

Imagine

How do you “do” church in a post-modern way? *Imagine* a day when the traditions of the church are largely considered antiquated. *Imagine* a day when the authority of the church is challenged and there seems to be a rebellion against the things for which the church stands. *Imagine* a day when people continue to question, search and seek — but because of the witness of the church many look to other places for spiritual nurture.

Surprisingly, while I might be talking about the world in which we live, I’m really talking about the time of Martin Luther.

Luther lived at a time when the world was in chaos, in some ways like our world today. The witness of the Church was shadowy at best. The real concern seemed to be more about control, finances and power than it did with the eternal welfare of souls. People lived in fear, wondering about their eternal destiny, afraid of a distant God who seemed only available to some, not all. The priestly types, largely uneducated, often held people captive by standing on their definition of church law and often withholding the Gospel.

Is it any wonder that when Luther sought to bring about reform it was welcomed by the common folk who were looking for freedom and hope? The *Reformation* was not meant to be a break from the church, but rather a challenge for the church to return to her roots to become the people Jesus called us to be. Discipleship was never to be about control, but rather about a growing relationship with Jesus that had almost a gravitational pull for us to be more like Him.

For Luther, the *Reformation* was never about Luther, but always about Jesus. Truly, at the heart of

the message Luther proclaimed is the same simple message that we continue to proclaim today; namely, how can we connect people to Jesus?

That’s really what it’s all about.

Paul writes in Romans 3, “*But now righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*”

These words had a tremendous impact on Martin Luther and his

(in Christ alone), and “*Soli Deo Gloria*” (to God alone be glory!) These remain our focus even today, despite all the politics, despite all the theology, despite all the other things that distract us from keeping the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus central to what we believe, teach and confess.



*S*olomon tells us that there’s nothing new under the sun! Isn’t it interesting that the description above could be applied to the Church in the



world today?

For so long we sat at the center of many communities, and the church was considered an authority. In many ways that power went to our heads, so in an age when that authority is no longer respected we struggle to find our way.

The attitude of the church in our day is often one of the greatest stumbling blocks to those outside

understanding of who Jesus is. Our righteousness does not depend on us, but rather on Jesus alone. So we hear Luther proclaim the great cries of the *Reformation*: “*Sola Gratia* (Grace alone), *Sola Fide* (Faith alone), *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone),” to which I would add “*Solus Christus*”

the church. Many see the church as caring, but only for her own needs; they see the church as judgmental and harsh, intolerant and blind to the needs of the world. For many the church is old-fashioned and outdated. Often we’ve allowed the whole existence of the church to become about what we like and what we want, rather than a laser focus on reaching those outside the church, those who struggle with faith issues and those who have no faith, to connect them to Jesus. Wasn’t that really the passionate fire that fueled the *Reformation*?



*P*erhaps it’s time for an *iReformation*. In this day of iPhones and iPads, maybe we need an *iReformation*!

Someone once asked Billy Graham how to begin a revival. His simple advice: go into your closet, kneel and draw a circle around you, and then earnestly pray and don’t leave that circle until revival has begun within it! His point was simply that revival, renewal and reformation begin in each of our hearts. It starts with each one of us.

How much easier it is to dictate the changes needed in someone else’s faith walk; however, the Holy Spirit calls us to look in the mirror, even though now we see only dimly. It’s clear enough to recognize the changes God is calling each of us to in this post-church age. In this *iReformation* we are called to live in love, to practice forgiveness, to be quick to listen and slow to speak, to truly care about those who hold an opinion or belief that differs from ours and be Jesus to them. An *iReformation* begins in my own heart, then in my own family and in my own church, looking at the community where God has placed you with new eyes — with Jesus’ eyes. This is the message of engaging in the Master’s business.

Paul reminds us in Ephesians 2:8–10 (NIV84), “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*”

As believers in Jesus Christ we have been saved by grace alone, not by anything we have done, or may do, or even what we may have failed to do. Jesus chooses to save us in His love, despite our sinfulness, despite our rebellion, despite the fact that we often run hot and cold in our faith life. More than that, Jesus saves us with great purpose. Paul tells us it’s to do the good works that God prepared in advance for each of us to do. This was in an effort to reach the world around us with the true hope that comes by faith in Jesus Christ — a hope that we have been given, as a gift, and that we are privileged, chosen and called to share this with the world.

It’s good news, and our world desperately needs to hear it!

As you reflect on the life of Jesus, much of the “good works” He did was building relationships with sinners and offering them hope. We can do that too! You are His workmanship, recreated, reformed, reworked in Jesus to be a servant to the world, to engage in the Master’s business to connect people to Jesus!



Reformation 2015, two years and counting until the *500th Anniversary of the Reformation* is celebrated world-wide. Will it simply be another empty celebration, patting ourselves on the back for some long ago events that changed the religious world? Will it be a time for us to stand on the legacy of our heritage proclaiming the glory of Martin Luther like the Jews who claimed

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that Abraham was their father?

Our Synod has adopted the theme, “*Reformation 2017 It’s Still All About Jesus!*” What if we made it an *iReformation*? What if we make it a personal reformation and recommitment to share Jesus in our neighborhoods and workplaces and even in our churches? Then we would really have something to celebrate as the halls of heaven swell with the people who are being connected to Jesus!

We don’t need to wait until 2017. There’s no time to waste. Like the Greeks in John 12, who came to Philip, all around us are people who are hungering for us to show them Jesus, and not just tell them.

We are a blessed people who have been given the truth of God’s Word, the truth of His grace, the truth of faith. Let’s not protect it as if it is a fragile and delicate thing crafted only for us. Let’s boldly take our proclamation to the world in an *iReformation*, so that all people will see Jesus in us, and come to know Him as their Savior. What a grand celebration that would be! It’s still about Jesus. Let’s keep our eyes on Him!



Your fellow reformed sinner, saved by grace!
GREG

Wittenberg: A Ministry from Yesterday for Today and Tomorrow

Editor's Note: This article was written by Rev Lou Abel, pastor of Good Shepherd/Chiefland, FL, who has served in the Florida-Georgia District since 1973. He is a longtime supporter of the Wittenberg Project.



The author with the bronze Luther statue on display in the Luther Hotel in Wittenberg

In 2017, the Christian community will celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. There will be music, festivities, education and worship opportunities, all culminating in a month-long celebration in October. This will be one of the most exciting international events ever for Lutherans, a combination of all the options between which families, congregations, youth and college groups and individuals generally have to choose. It's a bit like summer camp meets youth gathering meets music festival meets university seminar meets European vacation meets mission trip meets International ideas forum meets life enrichment.

But that's all happening in 2017! Just what is happening NOW?

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has been in the forefront of trying to emphasize the importance

of what happened 500 years ago in the sleepy little town of Wittenberg. One of the biggest developments had its start in the summer of 1996, when Rev. Keith Loesch lived in Lutherstadt Wittenberg for two months as part of a sabbatical experience provided by his congregation in Woodbridge, VA.

He was asked by the Lord Mayor Eckhard Naumann, with the concurrence of local pastors, church leaders and other town officials, to initiate an English worship and outreach ministry at the historic Castle and Town Churches associated with Dr. Martin Luther. It was envisioned that this ministry would serve the hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit Wittenberg annually and continue forward as a worship ministry for years to come.

In 1997 Loesch and four other American pastors conducted a ten-week series of English worship services on Saturday evenings during the summer. The worship program expanded in 1998 to cover the entire tourist season, May through October. In the ensuing years, midweek chapel services on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons were added to the Saturday evening service. This worship schedule continues up to the present day.

Wittenberg English Ministry continues to provide an ongoing outreach, despite stressful redevelopment and unemployment circumstances in Wittenberg, along with generally poor world economic conditions impacting tourists planning to come to visit the Luther sites. Nonetheless, the spirit-filled presence of our onsite pastors (a rotation of American, Canadian and Australian Lutherans) provides a consistently meaningful worship ministry that is a valued source of spiritual enrichment, comfort and joy to both tourists and residents alike.

Since its beginning, the ministry has been served by more than 225 Lutheran pastors who interact with people from every Lutheran and Christian background as well from a host of nations on all six inhabited continents. Time after time, these



Tower of Castle Church, being renovated for 2017 celebration

pastors speak highly of the personal and professional growth they have received through this exceptional multi-cultural ministry experience.

Luther's Germany draws global visitors

Every year several hundred thousands of people from all parts of the world travel to Germany to visit Lutherstadt (Luther's city) Wittenberg and many other places associated with the Lutheran Reformation. Visitors from outside Germany do this for primarily religious reasons — to strengthen their connection to Jesus and the Reformation of the Church.

The vast majority of people visiting Wittenberg from outside Germany come from every conceivable denomination and theological persuasion as committed Christians to fulfill their interest in exploring and solidifying their spiritual and historical roots.

As Roman Catholics visit the Vatican or Jews visit Jerusalem, so

Lutherans and Protestants come to Wittenberg not merely as tourists, but more particularly as Lutheran and/or Christian pilgrims.

Additionally, large numbers of people travel to Lutherstadt Wittenberg from within Germany. Either they are intent on learning more about Martin Luther because of their Christian faith, or more likely because of their secular interest in Luther as the nationally significant historical person he was for the German language and culture.

English is the predominant language used in Wittenberg by both visitors and residents for international communication. It is the native language for people visiting from the United States, Canada, England, Australia and South Africa. It is most frequently the second or third and sometimes the fourth language for visitors from other world areas such as Asia, Africa, South America, India, the Mid-East, Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe, including Germany itself. Wittenberg is truly an international place during the tourist season.

A significant number of visitors have indicated over the years that worship in a familiar language at a church closely associate with Dr. Luther would be a meaningful spiritual experience and a highlight for them. Wittenberg English Ministry has been helping to fulfill this experience for them for 18 years.

Visitors readily offer appreciation for having been able to visit the churches, houses, castles and museums related to Luther. Continually, people express widespread desire to sing the hymns of faith and to worship God in a familiar language at a church where Luther conducted his ministry.

WEM seeks to creatively address this need. In addition to the afternoon services in the Corpus Christi Kapelle (built ca.1368) on the grounds of the City Church (St. Mary's and also used by Luther), there are Saturday evening services in the Schlosskirche (Castle Church).

Devotional services are scheduled by special request for

groups visiting the city, and there is Emergency Pastoral Care provided in English should the need arise.

Visiting clergy are encouraged to participate in the local English Stammtisch, a social evening for pastors, visitors and university students where English language, practices and heritage are discussed. The goal for this evening is that English speaking people from around the world meet other English speaking and German people, and Germans come to meet English visitors and practice speaking English.

Of all of these opportunities for service and interaction, none is more important than the one-on-one ministry with the people who come to this city. Individuals come from all over Europe and areas throughout the world to see, hear and experience what it was like to be in the Wittenberg of Luther's Day.

Reformation Holiday

This past year, I was able to fill the position of Visiting Clergy for the last two weeks of the ministry season, which coincides with Reformation Day. This is definitely not the height of the 'tourist season' and the beautiful summer European weather, but it is the time when the most tourists are in Wittenberg.

Ten years ago on a prior visit, I flew into Berlin and took a taxi to the local train station. I could not get over the amount of traffic on that particular day, since it was a Saturday. It happened to be early in the day on October 31, and I asked the taxi-driver why there was such a traffic bottleneck. He turned and looked at me and said, "Why, it's Reformation Day! It's a Holiday!"

I was startled because even though I knew well and good that it WAS Reformation Day, and that I needed to journey down to Wittenberg for the church service, I was surprised that HE knew that it was Reformation Day.

We talked just a bit and he told me about the important political and national reforms that were made



Unesco Globe marking Wittenberg as a Unesco Historic Site, with the 2017 anniversary approaching

because of the work of that monk, Martin Luther. I realized then that many individuals do not know and cherish the history of our church, of the Lutheran Reformation and how that had changed the world.

Some real blessings come to mind regarding my two-week stay during this past year. On my very first afternoon service at the Town Church, a couple and their teenage son came in. I introduced myself, and they told me that they were Baptists from Kentucky who were visiting Germany and wanted to see the town of Martin Luther.

"Imagine," I thought, "Baptists wanting to see the town of OUR Martin Luther." As I spoke to them I was reminded of the treasure that Luther helped unwrap for all of Protestantism and Christianity.

Several days later, two young men came into the afternoon service, sat quietly as they participated in the service and spoke to me at the end of the devotion before they left. They were 27-year-old twin brothers from Bulgaria. They explained that their parents were brought to Christ by Lutheran missionaries many years ago. As they prepared for this trip, their mother told them to be sure to "visit the town of Luther, because he was the one who caused their PUSH into faith." They were backpacking through Europe for three months and were intending to visit every Lutheran Church they could find.

Day after day I met individuals who were excited in the faith that they have and wanted to see the visual evidence of what they had been taught. They wanted to see



Castle Church doors....now in bronze with 95 theses on them

the hard rocks in the Castle Church chancel where Luther had laid for hours in the form of a cross, asking God to help him be a better person. They wanted to see the monastery he attended and to look up at the pulpit where he preached “Justification by Grace” to people who so needed to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Keep Giving It Out!

On one of my last days, a couple joined the service and said they would be at the Stammtisch that week. At the social gathering, they told me they were from Riga, Latvia. I shared with them that I had visited there some years before, as the area was still under Communist domination, and was very aware of the quiet that existed all through that city on Sunday mornings. They explained they were indirectly discouraged from open worship during those many years — and that they were some of the people who thought that crosses ... big, small, white, wood, metal ... would be a good symbol to the outside world that God was still alive in Latvia.

I had been blessed to see that “Latvian Hill of Crosses” ... thousands of crosses placed on a hill over the years that stood

as a silent memorial that “Christ was still there!” even though worshipers felt they couldn’t stand up and shout about it.

At my final afternoon service, on Reformation Day, after being a part of that magnificent morning time of praise in the Castle Church, a woman I had come to know as ‘Edna,’ who had been at every afternoon and Saturday service, every Stammtisch, and every special event that we were a part of during those two weeks,



Pastor Abel with confirmands from Sweden who won a trip to Wittenberg

came up to me as we were gathering up the last bits and pieces to put away for the next pastor who would arrive in a day or so.

She said, “Thank you so much for sharing Jesus with us. We don’t really hear the Gospel like YOU AMERICANS give it to us! Keep giving it out!” She hugged me and walked away.

I thought about her words all that day. As I went from Wittenberg to Leipzig by taxi, stayed overnight there and flew back to the United States the next day, “Keep Giving It Out!” kept ringing in my ears. I was raised by Christian parents in a Christian home with three sisters and a brother. We went to Lutheran elementary schools, high school, college and then for myself the seminary. I had never been in a situation where I could not freely talk about my faith and my life. So many of those I met had come from a completely opposite background. They had to struggle for the right to worship our God. They had to do without so many of the things that I had come to take for granted. But they still wanted the Good News of Jesus Christ, Who came to give them the gift of eternal life through their belief in Him.

Yes.....that couple was right. They hit it right on the nose...KEEP GIVING IT OUT! ■

Thrivent, Habitat Celebrate Milestone

On September 8, 2005, Habitat for Humanity International and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans unveiled an unprecedented financial, volunteer and advocacy alliance: **Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity**. It represented a four-year, \$100 million commitment by Thrivent Financial.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Thrivent Financial earmarked \$5 million to help rebuild homes in the Gulf Coast region, bringing the commitment to \$105 million. The partnership connected 1,699 Habitat affiliates and 1,362 Thrivent volunteer chapters, making Thrivent Financial Habitat’s largest ally in eliminating substandard housing.

On the partnership’s 10th anniversary, Habitat for Humanity CEO Jonathan Reckford and Thrivent Financial CEO Brad Hewitt reflected on the the last decade.

How it began

Reckford: I often talk about my first days at Habitat coinciding with the stresses of Hurricane Katrina. My second day at work was actually wonderful. That’s the day the \$105 million Thrivent Builds announcement was made at the Thrivent Financial headquarters.

The Thrivent partnership has been amazing. It is a relationship that has been characterized by big numbers: Thrivent and its members have committed \$213 million and 4.4 million volunteer hours to help create safe, decent and affordable housing with 4,000 Habitat families in 34 countries around the world.

Hewitt: Habitat and Thrivent have a longstanding relationship going back decades; Thrivent Builds was a way to enhance that relationship. At the time it began, we were looking to enhance and uplift the work our members were doing, but in a way that would have

national recognition for our members as they made a difference in their communities. Habitat was the natural partner, as many of our members and their churches were already volunteering and giving generously. Some of you may remember the Big Red Truck; getting poverty housing on the map and volunteering opportunities was good for both Thrivent and Habitat.

Where it is today

Hewitt: Thrivent Builds is one of the ways Thrivent members live generously. Every year, they find ways to volunteer, whether they build or repair a home in their community or take a trip to a build a home across the U.S. or in a foreign country. In 2014, Thrivent, its members, employees and financial representatives gave more than \$12 million and built and repaired more than 481 homes

nationally and internationally. **Reckford:** Behind those impressive figures are the stories of individual families whose lives have been changed. I have had the privilege of meeting many Thrivent Builds partner families, including a refugee family

whose Habitat home offered stability. I looked into the eyes of a young girl in El Salvador who could finally think about the future rather than just surviving. And I talked with a young couple who were so excited to bring home to a healthy environment their new son who was born with a heart defect. The Thrivent partnership has helped Habitat to think wider and to consider the impact we could make in entire communities. We began to focus on developing neighborhoods and creating partnerships with residents as we listened to their needs.



Jonathan

This led to the development of our Neighborhood Revitalization program.

The nature of our mission

Reckford: Our partnership has been a strategic alliance that has changed the way both our organizations work. Thrivent has always pushed us; as a result, they have made us better. The changes they required as part of the grant program were hard, but they were worth it. The fact that both our organizations are deeply grounded in the church has been a win for everyone. Our missions are closely aligned, and I am grateful that together we will continue to look for ways to bring people together to build homes, communities and hope.

Hewitt: Thrivent and Habitat are able to make a larger impact than either organization could on its own. As we look back over the past 10 years, we know three things. First, we are impacting lives — not only the lives of those who live in the homes we help build, but also the lives of those doing the building. Second, generosity of time through volunteering and giving financial resources are powerful tools that help our members have a healthy relationship with money. Finally, poverty housing in the U.S. and around the world will not disappear without communities banding together to help neighbors in need.

We have accomplished much over the past 10 years and look forward to accomplishing more as we continue strengthening the communities where we live, work, worship. This partnership is the proverbial win, win, win! ■



District Missions & Outreach a Priority

There has been a whirlwind of missions and outreach activity since our District Convention, where we presented an outline of goals for the next three years.

One of those goals is to reach 3,500 new believers annually through child baptisms, adult confirmations and professions of faith. Another goal is that the District initiate 10 new starts over the three-year timeframe. (The Mission Outreach Video used at the District Convention is online at [youtube.com/watch?v=HhFQKQL7FNQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhFQKQL7FNQ).)

Florida-Georgia congregations and schools are invited to use new Outreach Initiative resources from Lutheran Hour Ministries, available 24/7 free of charge at lhm.org/outreachinitiative.

More resources will be added in the coming months, including iNeighborhood. The video trainings focus on the Outreach Initiative's three Cs: Culture, Connect and Community. Videos, which are four to five minutes long, are watched individually or as a group and are accompanied by a downloadable plan that helps congregations develop an action plan for their ministry.

Convention participants were introduced to iNeighborhood by Southeast District President John Denninger. The program's goal is to reach 32 million people in 3878 zip codes within the SED.

Our Florida-Georgia staff will be trained December 10 by Dr. Bruce Jaeger, a key architect in the iNeighborhood development who lives in Lakeland, FL, and is a member of St. Paul Lutheran. The goal for our staff is that we would model loving God and loving our neighbors intentionally (Matthew 22:37-39). We cannot promote what we have not experienced, so we are going to live it in our own homes and lives.

iNeighborhood training and coaching will be provided during 2016 to select congregations in each

region of our District. Our goal is to equip our churches in their outreach programs.

ROC: November 13-14

No doubt you've heard the terms "Millennial" and "GenX" in recent news regarding the decline of the church. Are you wondering just who they are and why they are disinterested in church?

This is just one topic that LHM's Regional Outreach Conference (ROC-Orlando www.lhm.org/roc) will explore. Discover how you, the church, can teach these groups to be discerning, influential followers of Christ to their peers.

The ROC is an opportunity to rub elbows with bestselling author and researcher David Kinnaman, President of the Barna Group, as he helps to clarify the "lost" generation. Be inspired by Lutheran Hour Speaker Greg Seltz as he shares his experiences through keynote and workshop presentations.

Meet lay leaders and pastors and learn what's working in their congregations. Be empowered. Be equipped. Be encouraged to engage in your community to make a change. Be SENT!

Register online today for the 2015 ROC on the District website: flgadistrict.org.

Florida-Georgia Missions

We are actively pursuing new starts and restarts in several locations across our District.

Region 1: The District is working with central Georgia congregations to call a missionary at large for Hispanic ministry. The focus will be to identify key areas to establish core groups for multiple Hispanic ministries. Several church planter candidates have been

identified and interviewed. Initial area visits will be scheduled in late 2015. Plans are being explored for the Macon area with Mt. Calvary/Warner Robin and Holy Trinity/Macon and with St. Paul/Peachtree for the Newnan area.

Region 2: Rev. Scott Kirchoff serves Holy Cross/Jacksonville in a part-time capacity and is well received.

Regions 3 & 4: Church planter candidates/on-site visits at Four Corners/Disney Mission, Port St. Lucie and Lakewood Ranch in October and November. Messiah/Naples closed July 12, 2015, leaving property and resources to the District. This location off I-75 is in a prime area for a restart. A church planter with a strong track record has been identified; he is returning



MISSION POSSIBLE

by Rev. Doug Kalleen
District Executive
for Mission & Outreach

to the States after serving as an LCMS International missionary. The circuit has been informed, and a potential mother church has been identified. This possibility is being explored in partnership with the District. A call could be issued in late 2015 or early 2016.

Trinity Lutheran/Port Charlotte in SW Florida will be chartering October 18, 2015. They have located property that will allow them to reach North Port, Port Charlotte and Englewood. The property is a former bank building on four acres; the mission is pursuing funding through LCEF.

Region 5: Faith/Hialeah is in a calling process; placement of a worker will strengthen this Hispanic/Anglo ministry. ■

Registration Opens for 2016 National Youth Gathering

Registration for the 2016 National Youth Gathering — the largest triennial event hosted by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod — is open. NYG participants will converge on New Orleans from July 16-20, 2016, under the theme "In Christ Alone."

Church groups were invited to begin mailing in registration forms and down payments on October 21. Planners advise that submitting information early gives groups a better chance of receiving their top choices of hotel and program options.

Recent NYG events have drawn 25,000 or more teens and their leaders for five days of worship, servant events, Bible study, fellowship and networking with other Christian youth from across the country.

Lamar Stewart, DCE at Our Redeemer/Augusta, GA, is the Florida-Georgia District National Youth Gathering Coordinator. District Coordinators serve as liaisons between LCMS Youth Ministry, the District office, District youth board/committee and congregations for the 2016 LCMS Youth Gathering. They have been trained and equipped to serve Adult Leaders preparing for and attending the Gathering.



Lamar Stewart

"Lamar served in this role in 2013, so he is experienced," said District Executive Director for School Ministries Mark Brink. "He knows

the ropes. Lamar is the contact for Florida-Georgia congregations when they have questions about the Gathering.

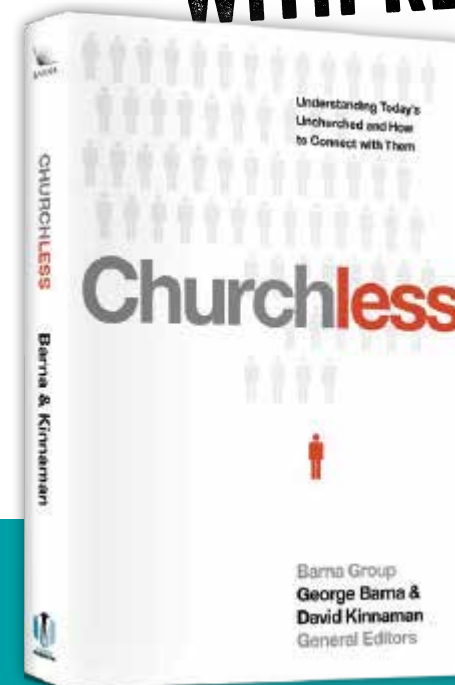
"If he doesn't know that answer, he'll find it," Brink confirmed.

Stewart graduated from Concordia University Nebraska with a major in theology in the Director of Christian Education program in 2009. He has been serving at Our Redeemer since August of that year.

Stewart's email address is flganyg@gmail.com; to reach him by phone, call 706-733-6076.

Additional information about the Gathering is available at <https://www.facebook.com/LCMSYG> or lcmsgathering.com. ■

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Do you know why people avoid church? Register for ROC - Orlando with the promo code below and receive a FREE copy of *Churchless* by conference speaker David Kinnaman. This book gets into the real data about churchless America and how to understand and connect with this group.

Visit LHM.ORG/ROC to register with promo code NLBOOK15. Offer ends November 1, 2015. Valid while supplies last.



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Speaker of
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DAVID KINNAMAN
President
of Barna Group

District Board Focuses on Being Engaged in

Gathered in **Orlando** **September 11-12** for the first meeting of the new triennium, the Florida-Georgia Board of Directors completed a full agenda that began with orientation for representatives elected at this summer's District Convention.

"We will be focused on the theme of being engaged in the Master's business," District President Greg Walton told Board members. "There are so many opportunities for us to be engaged and to serve, assist and encourage our

congregations in ministry.

"This will be a very busy fall season!"

Critical Target Review

The Board reviewed the District's three critical targets — leadership, congregations, outreach — at the beginning of the two-day session. Members discussed the success indicators for each of these targets and worked on making the language for each more concise.

Reports and discussions on activities in each of the target areas followed.

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.

Established in 2010 as a response to felt needs in the District, the **President's Circle** has helped various individuals in the past five years. President Walton is working with a sub-committee to determine how to best move forward on a regional basis.

Following the 2015 Convention, Walton appointed nine individuals to serve on the newly formed **District Youth Ministry Council**: Joe Guagliardo, chairman, Faith/Merritt Island; Rachel Schildwachter, lay, Trinity/Orlando; Mike Miessler, lay, Trinity/Orlando; Josh Blankenship, lay, Thrive/Estero; Nick Moss, DCE, St. Paul/Lakeland; Megan Skilton, teacher, St. Luke's/Oviedo; Jeremy Becker, DCE, St. Paul/Weston; Josh Petitt, pastor, Redeemer/Ocala; and Annalisa Fitzsimons, DCE intern, Living Faith/Kennesaw. This new Council replaces the Advisory Council for Youth Ministry. The group met for the first time on September 8 in the District office.

Members of the second class of **Emergent Leaders** — including professional church workers and laity — have completed their training. "This is one of the ways we are seeking to live out our commitment to strengthen leaders in the Florida-Georgia District," Walton said.

Lutheran Counseling Services celebrated its 25th anniversary on October 10 at Prince of Peace/Orlando. Florida-Georgia President Walton served as one of the emcees for the evening festivities.



Shown at **Lutheran Counseling Services'** 25th anniversary celebration are (l-r) Bishop Robert Schaefer, Florida-Bahamas Synod, ELCA; Dr. Rick Armstrong, Executive Director LCS; Dr. Mel Jacob, Founding Director of LCS; Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton.

the Master's Business for New Triennium

Congregations

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

The District was an active participant in the July **National Lutheran Hispanic Convention** held in Tampa. President Walton preached at the closing service. A special Spanish edition of the Convention Follow-up/Annual Report issue of **Lutheran LIFE** was produced and distributed.

District Middle School Gathering is set for November 6-8 at Yale Baptist Assembly. Featured presenter will be DCE Audrey Duensing-Werner; the band will be All Things New!

Many District schools are reporting **enrollment increases** after a decade of decline and plateau, among them Holy Cross/North Miami, with almost

400 students; Holy Trinity/Tampa, with 120 students and the addition of a second grade; Trinity/Orlando, with enrollment in its new Early Learning Center near capacity at more than 300.

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.

Those attending the District Convention were introduced to the **iNeighborhood** program under way in the Southeastern District by its President, Rev. John Denninger. More information on plans for this program in Florida-Georgia is included in the Mission Possible column on page 10 of this issue.

The Outreach Initiative is having an impact in Florida-Georgia congregations and schools in places such as Grace/Winter Haven and Rivercliff/Atlanta who are using "GodConnects" for adult information courses. Some District schools view this resource as a way to help non-Lutheran trained teachers understand what Lutherans believe, teach and confess. ■

The 2015 Board of Directors, shown below wearing aprons presented by the District to represent "servant attitudes," are back row left-to-right, Rusty Huseman, Dan Richard, Don Kaufman, Jay Wendland, Jeff Richards, John List; 3rd row: Samuel Ludington, Doug Kallesen, Beverly Nyce, Rene Varga, Katie Abercrombie, David Brighton; 2nd row: Mark Brink, Robert Chambers, Jesse Crosmer, Tom Reagin, Jay Winters, Lois Schaefer; front row: Jon Zehnder, Frank Marshall, Eileen Bishop, Lois Ford, Greg Walton, Karen Smith.



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LCEF Mission

To support the Church in fulfilling its mission of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ by being a Christ-centered servant partner of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, ensuring that funds and services are available now and in the future.

LCEF SUNDAY

Lutheran Church Extension Fund exists for the sole purpose of empowering ministries in Kingdom work. Our goal each day is to identify opportunities to share our resources in order to expand God's Kingdom. We want to share how LCEF is empowering ministry through loans and ministry support programs in congregations, schools and ministries across the country. One way that we do that is by having an **LCEF Sunday** at your congregation.

So what happens at an LCEF Sunday?

- LCEF will provide Bulletin Inserts and announcements for the upcoming visit.
- LCEF makes a presentation to your congregation. It could be before or after services or during the Bible Study class.
- The congregation provides a table for LCEF to display information and greet members.
- LCEF is truly your Ministry Partner. Coffee and donuts are on us!!

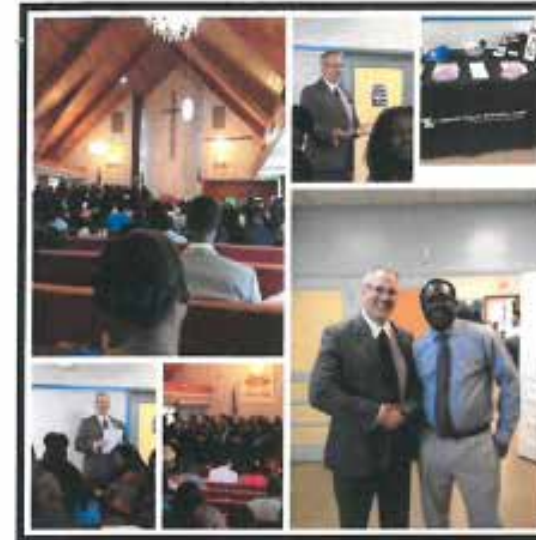
Call us today at (877) 457-5556 ext. 4 to set a date for your LCEF Sunday!

Pictured are six congregations that invited the LCEF Florida-Georgia Team for an LCEF Sunday.

Florida-Georgia District LCEF Team

Daniel J. Reichard, Vice President, dreichard@flgadistrict.org
Laura Zirbel, Loan Consultant, lzirbel@flgadistrict.org
Debbie Talbot, Administrative Assistant, dtalbot@flgadistrict.org

www.flgadistrict.org



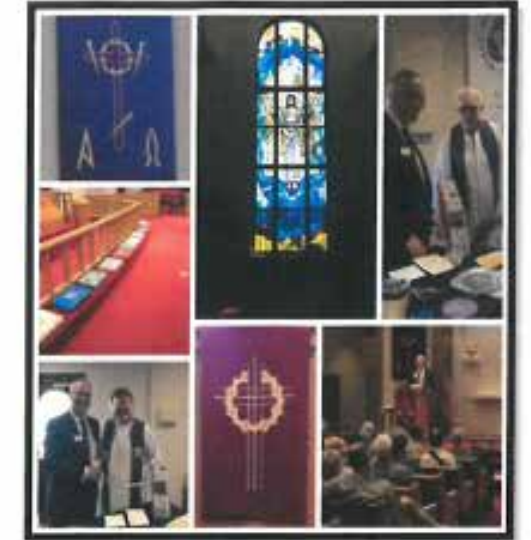
Grace Tabernacle Ft. Lauderdale



Christ the King Largo



Oak Road Lilburn



Bethel Clearwater



Living Hope Kennesaw



Thrive Ft. Myers

Florida-Georgia District LWML Retreats to the Beach

Retreat! What does the word retreat mean? According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary there are three meanings:



FUTURE & HOPE

by Joan Koch
District Vice President
for Communications

1a. an act or process of withdrawing especially from what is difficult, dangerous, or disagreeable (2): the process of receding from a position or state attained <the retreat of a glacier>
1b. the usually forced withdrawal of troops from an enemy or from

an advanced position (2): a signal for retreating

1c. a signal given by bugle at the beginning of a military flag-lowering ceremony (2): a military flag-lowering ceremony
2. a place of privacy or safety: refuge
3. a period of group withdrawal for prayer, meditation, study, or instruction under a director

So according to Webster's the women of the District LWML were number three – a period of group withdrawal for prayers, meditation, study or instruction under a director.

How did we manage to do this? We did withdraw! We withdrew from everyday life and went to the Sirata Beach Resort at St. Pete Beach for a weekend in September. What a beautiful setting. Right on the beach; God's beauty right at our fingertips. Our sunset devotion was certainly meditation, as well as beautiful. Watching the sunset is wonderful, unfortunately there were clouds obstructing our views.

Were we under the instruction of a director? Well, perhaps not a director, but a guest speaker. Donna Pyle instructed us. So many of her points hit home for many that were there. Have you read her books? I am currently reading one that I had purchased some time ago, but had just put it aside. My goodness, hit me right between the eyes! Why hadn't I

read this before? Donna has an excellent knowledge of the Bible and such insights that I had not thought of. But hearing her speak was the best wakeup call I have had in quite some time. She was spot on. Thank you, Donna. Please come back and visit with us again.

We tried something new this year. Zone pictures! Each zone came and stood on a beautiful

plaza surrounded by lush greenery. We had a blast taking these pictures. Those pictures are located at <https://lwmlflgadistrict.shutterfly.com/>. Check it out and see what fun we had there with each of the zones.

As we were ending the Saturday night entertainment portion of the weekend, all of a sudden we heard fire alarms going off. We quickly walked out of the room we were in and headed downstairs to an open area. We managed to find out that a wedding guest on a top floor had decided he needed to have a smoke. Not a cigarette smoke, but a vapor smoke! And he stood by the elevators and underneath a smoke alarm. Note to self – first don't smoke, second if you must smoke don't do it under a smoke alarm!

All in all the retreat was a wonderful success. We learned, relaxed, enjoyed the beach, had so much fun and most importantly praised our Lord and Savior. ■

Financial Secretary Nancy Hughes modeled her custom designed "money dress." ▶



▲ Guest Speaker Donna Pyle

◀ Young Woman Representatives attending the Retreat included (l-r) Christina Dorman, First Coast Zone; Jessica Wittcop, Winter Haven Zone; Linda Peters, Young Woman Developer; Rontre Rolle, Tropical Zone; Colette Orlando, Space Coast Zone; Darla Schulte, Gold Coast Zone.



▲ District LWML President Bunnie Koelsch makes an entrance.

Members of the District LWML Executive Committee (back, l-r) Dorothee Jones, Recording Secretary; Deb Buenrostro, Vice President Mission Service; Nancy Hughes, Financial Secretary; Joan Koch, Vice President Communications; (front, l-r) Debi Coran, Treasurer; Bunnie Koelsch, LWML District President; Pastor Michael Zwemke, Junior Pastoral Counselor; Karen Bowers, Vice President Spiritual Growth ▶



First Eco Dome Home Completed in Jubilee

We are so excited and proud to show off the first completed Eco Dome Home in Jubilee, Haiti! Through the hard work and persistence of Herb Nordmeyer, working with Monolithic Dome Homes, and some very patient

grants and donations to continue this worthwhile project, focused toward self-sufficiency. Mission: Haiti's goal is to develop a fully trained and prepared Haitian team to build these homes. We are working with a well-qualified Haitian architect

garden area provides the opportunity to clear, plant and irrigate the large enclosed area between the boys and girls campuses.

Home Director Lenz Etienne purchased and planted a number of banana plants and other fruit bearing trees with donations for that purpose.

The children are so grateful to their sponsors and pray daily for the generous, caring people who help provide their food, clothing and education. Child sponsorships begin at \$25 per month, but any support donation is appreciated.

God is doing great work in Haiti. Men, women and children are coming to faith in Jesus Christ. People are asking for help to become self-sufficient, feed themselves, learn new skills and educate their children. By the grace of God and with His provision, Mission: Haiti plans to continue to walk alongside these precious brothers and sisters sharing skills and training, giving hope and help, offering love and encouragement so that God may be glorified.

For more information please contact us at missionhaiti99@aol.com; Mission:Haiti, 2269 S University Dr. #227 Davie, FL 33324; or 954-868-8218. We are online at missionhaiti99.org or on facebook at mission:haiti. ■

Below — The first completed dome before application of the whitewash.

Construction teams working on the dome.

Faith's Children Home students share a message of thanks.



MISSION HAITI
by Helen Roenfeld
Executive Director
for Mission: Haiti

volunteers, we expect this economical, disaster-resistant home to be the beginning of the regeneration of this desperate community.

We give thanks to the generous folks of Shepherd of the Hills/San Antonio, The Rotary Club of Pompano Beach, FL, and all those who donated their time, talents and resources to begin this project.

While training a team of 12 Haitian workers, this partnership was able to prepare four additional foundations. The next several homes will be built during a three-week period in January. The cost of each home is approximately \$7,000 including materials and labor. A conventional home in Haiti costs about twice as much and is about 75 percent the size of the 20-foot diameter Eco Dome Home.

The mayor of Gonaives, Haiti has offered enough land in the Jubilee area to build 50 homes. Mission: Haiti will partner with Shepherd of the Hills and others seeking

who is interested in helping streamline the process of homebuilding, which presently takes 8-10 days.

Homeowners are responsible to clear and prepare land and provide windows and doors. They also will help with the final step — covering the entire dome with a limestone whitewash that will strengthen and help the home stay cooler than other finishes.

Faith Children's Home

The children in the care of Faith Children's Home had a great summer. A highlight for the girls was completing their first year of school.

During the spring and summer, various mission teams completed the foundation and walls of a new shared kitchen. The Shepherd of the Hills team worked on the well and pump system to bring running water to all parts of the orphanage, including working showers. The addition of a water line to the back enclosed future



Meyer Re-Appointed for Third Five-Year Term



The Board of Regents of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis in August voted to extend President Dale A. Meyer's service through 2020.

The Board appointed Meyer interim president

beginning in November 2004 and together with three other electors

chose him as 10th president of the Seminary in May 2005.

"The input we received through our review process from within and outside of the Seminary community has confirmed what our Board has learned firsthand: Dr. Meyer is a great president," said review committee chair Rev. Hal Senkbei and Board Chair Rev. Ralph Blomenberg in a joint comment. "He is a respected scholar, preacher, leader, teacher and churchman."

Highlights of Meyer's tenure include the elimination of the Seminary's long-term debt and the expansion of the endowment from \$43 million to \$113 million. Except for the recession year

of 2008–09, the Seminary has shown surpluses every fiscal year. Even in the recession, all student aid commitments were met, and in the years since, grants and scholarships have continued to increase.

The Seminary earned high marks from its 2014 accreditation visits and received several civic awards, most recently being named one of the top 100 work places in metropolitan St. Louis. It received top awards in 2008, 2010 and 2015 from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, which annually recognizes universities for "superior fundraising programs." ■

Concordia NY Launches Lay Deacon Program

Concordia College-New York officially kicked off the inaugural session of its Lay Deacon Program (CLDP) this fall with a cohort of 33 enrolled students from three of the East Coast Common Endeavor (ECCE) districts. Florida-Georgia is an ECCE district.

Classes are taught under the auspices of Concordia's Religion Department and are designed to equip lay men and women of the ECCE districts for greater service in the church. College professors, parish and institutional ministry professions are utilized to give students a broad based introduction to diaconal service in the church.

Built for flexibility, this program offers online coursework allowing students to schedule the program around vocational responsibilities. The program consists of 10 online courses offered through Concordia College-New York taken over two years. In addition, Lay Deacons will complete 200 hours of service under the supervision of their pastor.

For more information, contact Rev. Paul Sauer at 914-337-9300, ext. 2216 or Paul.Sauer@concordia-ny.edu. ■

Concordia Nebraska Debuts Music Therapy Degree



Concordia University Nebraska will offer a Bachelor of Music degree in music therapy beginning in the fall of 2016, pending approval from the American Music Therapy Association. Music therapy is a health profession that uses music to build a relationship in the cognitive, physical, emotional and social needs of a person in a therapeutic sense. Musical therapy treatment includes singing, dancing, creating, moving and listening to music.

Professional music therapists work with children and adults to improve a wide variety of nonmusical goals such as movement, speech and language, memory, attention, emotional expression, pain management and social skills. Music therapists work in hospitals, schools, early intervention programs, elder care facilities and mental health centers. Many

music therapists provide services through diverse private practice clinics.

"Music therapy students at Concordia will experience a curriculum and learning environment that will prepare them to be expert music therapists while nurturing and growing their musical abilities," said Nicole Jacobs, director of the music therapy program at Concordia. "The curriculum will include both theory and clinical application."

Jacobs, a board-certified music therapist and certified neurologic music therapist, began teaching music therapy undergraduate studies in 2009. She joined the adjunct faculty at Concordia in 2013 and will complete her graduate studies in neurologic music therapy at Colorado State University this fall. ■

Concordia Irvine Accepting DCE Intern Applications

Director of Christian Education intern applications are being accepted for the 2016-2017 school year through Concordia University Irvine.

Information is posted at cui.edu/dceinternship, including the application, budget worksheet and the complete internship information packet. The deadline to apply is February 1, 2016, though applying sooner is appreciated in the matching process.

CUI will be placing traditional undergraduates along with second

career post-BA/MA students. Students are typically able to begin their internships anytime between June 1 and August 1.

For additional information contact Dave Rueter, DCE Program Director, at dave.rueter@cui.edu.

For those individuals who are working in their church in a DCE related position who have not completed their BA or BS, CUI offers an online degree completion program in Nonprofit Leadership. For information on this program go to <http://online.cui.edu/degrees/nonprofit-leadership>. ■

FLORIDA GEORGIA REGIONAL NEWS

*Out and About in
the Florida-Georgia District
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*

Grace/Atlanta Welcomes Ellsworth as New Pastor

Rev. Adam Ellsworth was ordained and installed as pastor of Grace Lutheran/Atlanta during an afternoon service on September 2.

Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton preached for the service, ordained and installed

Ellsworth. Area pastors served as lectors and participated in the traditional laying on of hands blessing.

A recent graduate of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, Ellsworth and his wife, Beth, have a young son, Isaiah. The family was welcomed to Grace at a reception that followed the ordination/installation service.

Established in 1922, Grace is one of the oldest Lutheran congregations in Georgia. Fourteen area Lutheran congregations were born out of Grace's commitment to the mission of Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations.

At right — Rev. Adam, Beth and Isaiah Ellsworth



REGION 1

Vice President:
David Brighton

Mount Calvary/Warner Robbins

Laity Board Members:

Jay Wendland | Living Faith/Cumming

Robert Chambers | Grace/Atlanta

NE Georgia Circuit Visitor:

David Wesche | All Saints/Blairsville

Atlanta N Circuit Visitor:

Jeffrey Jordan | Rivercliff/Atlanta

Atlanta S Circuit Visitor:

Larry Townsend | Christ Our Savior/Hampton

E Central Georgia Circuit Visitor:

Roger Schwartz | Our Redeemer/Augusta

A PETTING ZOO,

pumpkin picking, scarecrow making, gourd decorating, making a maze and a bounce house were all part of the fun at the Fall Harvest Camp at Faith Lutheran Church & School/Marietta in late September (right). Earlier in the month – on September 11 – Faith School held a special ceremony around the flagpole in memory of the events on that day in 2001. Faith's third, fourth and fifth grade students crafted 'flag projects' in conjunction with the event (below). ■



Trinity Supports Ethiopian Missionary "One Cup at a Time"

Being small in number with an average weekly worship attendance of about 50 has not hindered Trinity/Medart from launching a project with global impact.

The congregation's "One Cup at a Time" program was developed to initially support Pastor Mark Rabe in his call to teach at seminary in Ethiopia. The secondary aim is to support other LCMS pastors teaching in Ethiopia.

Trinity's One Cup at a Time coffee club was founded with the goal of recruiting six churches with a total of 220 club members. One bag of coffee purchased monthly by each member will generate approximately \$1,000 for the mission.

Coffee will be purchased from Just Love Coffee in Nashville (justlovecoffee.com).

"Our goal for the second year is to have 1,100 club members," said congregation president Bob Fuerstenau. "We are inviting all Florida-Georgia District churches to participate in the program."

Ideally, each participating church would have a point person responsible for signing club members, collecting funds from members, ordering and distributing coffee to members. Trinity will provide training.

As of January 2015, Ethiopia's 7.4 million Lutherans were being served by 3,500 pastors – "or one pastor for each 2,400 members," Fuerstenau said. Lay ministers in Ethiopia number 4,000 – one for each 2,000 members.

"The five-year goal is 5,000 more pastors and 5,000 more lay ministers, with an anticipated growth in membership of one million annually," Fuerstenau continued.

Additional information is available by contacting Trinity at (850) 926-7808 or email directly to Jim Wetherton at jdw.omr@gmail.com.

In photo at right — Florida-Georgia Missionary family Rev. Mark and Stefanie Rabe with their children Noah, Gabriella, Julianna and Matthias.



REGION 2

Vice President:
Frank Marshall
St Paul/Jacksonville

Board Secretary:
Jay Winters, University Church
Student Center/Tallahassee

Laity Board Members:
Donald Kaufman | St. John/Ocala
Lois Schaefer | Amazing Grace/Oxford

Tallahassee Circuit Visitor:
Mark Schultz | Epiphany/Tallahassee

First Coast Circuit Visitor:
Dana Brones | Bethlehem/Jacksonville

N Central Florida Circuit Visitor:
James Rockey | Amazing Grace/Oxford

FAMILY FUN OKTOBERFEST

Members and neighbors of Epiphany/Tallahassee filled the campus during the afternoon of September 26 for a festive Oktoberfest celebration. Attractions included food, music, games, free pony rides, bounce houses and more. ■



Faith/Eustis Welcomes New Principal, Three New Teachers

Faith Lutheran Church & School/Eustis welcomed a new principal and three new teachers with a special worship service and potluck picnic for all school and church families on August 23.

New Principal Steven Hoffschneider will lead Faith into its 50th Anniversary school year with the theme 'By Faith' from Hebrews 11. Hoffschneider has served at schools in Nebraska and Texas, and most recently served as principal at St. Luke's Lutheran School/Oviedo. He helped lead St. Luke's to recognition as an Exemplary School through National Lutheran School Accreditation.

"I am excited to be a part of the ministry at Faith Lutheran Church & School," Hoffschneider stated. "Faith has the strong foundation of an excellent staff, high academic

standards, a great reputation in the community and a loving, family environment.

"I am convinced that God has incredible things in store for this place, and I feel blessed to be a part of it."

New faculty members include Kip Sandersfeld, who brings with

him 19 years of teaching and coaching experience from Immanuel Lutheran School/Belvidere, IL; Elizabeth Mayo from Tavares, FL; and recent graduate Joshua Wareham from Concordia University Chicago.

Below — (l-r) Joshua Wareham, Steve Hoffschneider, Kip Sandersfeld and Elizabeth Mayo. ■



Cynthia Tillman Installed as Director for Early Childhood at St. Paul/Lakeland

Cynthia McBride-Tillman was installed as the Director for the Early Childhood Enrichment Center and the Prekindergarten programs at St. Paul Church & School/Lakeland on August 23 during the back-to-school worship service.

A 1983 graduate of Concordia University Chicago, Tillman from 2011 through 2015 served as Director of the Peace Lutheran Early Learning Center/Naples. Previously she was the Director of the Open Arms program in Laurel, MD.

At right, St. Paul/Lakeland Principal Robert Boyd introduced Cynthia McBride-Tillman as the newly installed Director for the Early Childhood Enrichment Center and Prekindergarten programs. ■



Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/Melbourne Hosts Back to School Outreach at its Bread of Life Food Pantry

To prepare for the start of school, August 1, guests at the Bread of Life Food Pantry of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/Melbourne received more than a weekend of shelf stable food.

Picking up their food as usual were 53 family units representing 161 people while 28 children received backpacks filled with school supplies. The backpacks were purchased with Thrivent Action Team dollars, and members provided cash for the supplies. Additionally, 44 family units representing 137 people were able to "shop for free" for their entire family from clothing and shoes donated by church members. One of the pantry guests, shopping for her three children, remarked, "This is the best clothing sale ever."

Not wanting any clothing to go unused, leftover items were delivered to: His Place Ministry for Men, Pregnancy Resource Center and Children's Home Society of Florida. ■



Thrive/Estero Marks First Anniversary, End of Summer



CELEBRATIONS marked the end of the summer at Thrive/Estero – including a first birthday as a church. "We had so many new people walk into our doors," reported Pastor John Roth, "and we had more than 27 new connection cards filled out. It was great to see all the students back at Florida Gulf Coast University and the many families that came out to support us." Thrive also installed 10 Thrive FGCU officers and two new interns for the upcoming year. "We can't wait to see what God is going to do next," said Roth. ■



REGION 3

Vice President:

Brian Kneser | Woodlands/Montverde

Board Treasurer:

Renee Varga | Woodlands/Montverde

Laity Board Members:

Tom Reagin | Hope/Plant City
Katie Abercrombie | Prince of Peace/Orlando

Commissioned Minister Board Member:

Lois Ford | Faith/Eustis

Space Coast Circuit Visitor:

Gary Held | Risen Savior/Palm Bay

Orlando East Circuit Visitor:

Ken Green | Prince of Peace/Orlando

Orlando West Circuit Visitor:

Milan Weerts | Emeritus/Clermont

Winter Haven Circuit Visitor:

Dean Pfeffer | Hope/Plant City



REGION 4

Vice President:

Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers

Laity Board Members:

Jeff Richards | Hope/Brandenton
Beverly Nyce | Marco/Marco Island

Commissioned Minister Board Member:

Jesse Crosmer | Our Savior/St. Petersburg

Suncoast Circuit Visitor:

David Brockhoff | Holy Trinity/Masaryktown

St. Petersburg Circuit Visitor:

Arnold Piering | Emeritus/New Port Richey

Tampa Circuit Visitor:

Kevin Yoakum | Christ the King/Riverview

Sarasota Circuit Visitor:

Rossetter Leavitt | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota

SW Circuit Visitor:

Richard Browning | Hope/Bonita Springs



Bethlehem/Fort Myers Welcomes Holly Bell as New Organist

Members of Bethlehem/Fort Myers welcomed Holly Bell as the congregation's organist on August 8.

"Holly is certainly not a new face at Bethlehem Church," said Pastor Darrell Stuehrenberg. "She is an active member, whose 'claim to fame' is the fact that Jean Hutchings is her mother. Some time ago, Jean served as Bethlehem's organist and music leader for a number of years.

"We recognized that she has excellent organ playing capabilities," Stuehrenberg said of Bell, "and during this past month, her mother assisted her to 'practice, practice, practice' to lead Bethlehem's singing and provide special music on Sunday mornings."

Bell replaces organist Bill Miller, who moved to Buffalo, NY, in July. At left — Holly Bell (left) with her mother, Jean Hutchings. ■

Faith/New Port Richey Welcomes New Members

Faith/New Port Richey on August 30 added 27 new members to its fellowship, including one adult through baptism and 26 others from congregations in six different states.

It was all part of Faith's New Member Sunday, which included worship and a reception hosted by the Church Council.

"Faith has, in the last several months, updated both its mission and vision statements to reflect a renewed emphasis on outreach," said Pastor Thomas Wenndt. "The mission statement now reads, 'Loving Jesus, and making His love known,' while the vision statement now reads, 'With the help of the

Holy Spirit: leading by example, sharing Christ's love, serving the Lord with gladness while building bridges within our community to connect people with Christ.'"

Faith in early October hosted a special "Fam-Fest" open to the community featuring a family-style meal and the game show "FAMILY FEUD" in its Christian Life Center. ■



Redeemer/Stuart Students Place First, Second in District Meet

The Cross Country Teams from Redeemer Lutheran School/Stuart performed well in the recent District Championship meet. Redeemer girls finished in first place, and the boys achieved second place. The combined teams are shown below with their trophies. ■



REGION 5

Vice President:
Steve Wipperman | Our Savior/Lake Worth

Liaity Board Members:
Karen Smith | Peace/Okeechobee
Samuel Ludington/Holy Cross-North Miami

Heartland Circuit Visitor:
Richard Norris | Trinity/Lake Placid

Treasure Coast Circuit Visitor:
Craig Bode | Trinity/Fort Pierce

S Palm Beach Circuit Visitor:
James Weist | Epiphany/Lake Worth

Gold Coast Circuit Visitor:
Timothy Hartner | St. Paul/Weston

Monroe-Miami-Dade Circuit Visitor:
Alan Sielk | St. Paul/Miami



THE CAT IN THE HAT helped welcome students back to the new academic year at the St. Paul/Weston Child Enrichment Center. "I am so proud of my excited and energetic staff," said Director Laurie Hartner about the welcome-back decorations and spirit. ■



Our Savior/Plantation Hosts Craft Marketplace

A late September CRAFTER'S MARKETPLACE, at Our Savior/Plantation, was a great success — and fun, according to planners, participants and shoppers. Displaying and selling their wares were 18 artists, craftsmen, crafters and craft suppliers. A Marketplace highlight was the bakery, which overflowed with delicious pastries. Shown here at the Marketplace are Nancy Volz and Donna Watson. ■

Carretto Installed as St. Paul/Boca Raton Senior Pastor

Members and friends of St. Paul/Boca Raton filled the sanctuary to overflowing the afternoon of October 4 to celebrate the installation of Rev. Stephen Carretto as senior pastor.

Carretto, whose connection to St. Paul began with his vicarage, has been serving as the congregation's associate pastor for the past five years. Carretto earned his bachelor's degree at Concordia University Nebraska and graduated from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis in 2010.

Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton preached and installed Carretto into his new position.

"God has taken you on quite a journey to get you here," Walton said to Carretto, noting that during most of his vicarage year he served with an interim pastor. For the past year, Carretto led St. Paul after the death of Senior Pastor J.R. Jones. "God has prepared a pastor and a congregation."

Walton invited Carretto's family — wife Jessica and sons Caden, 5, and Jaxon, 2 to the altar as part of the installation service.

Leading the laying on of hands by area clergy from Miami/Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties were District Region 5 Vice President Stephen Wipperman of Our Savior/Lake Worth and South Palm Beach Circuit Visitor Rev.



James Weist of Epiphany/Lake Worth.

Rev. Dr. Dennis Glick, St. Paul's Pastor Emeritus and a former District Vice President, was the liturgist. Lectors were Congregation President Doug Kruse and Chairman of the Board of Elders George Stemper.

St. Paul Minister of Music Mark Lohmeyer was the organist and choir director. Special music was presented by the Festival Choir, Male Chorus and Praise Team, Vicar Jacob Schultz served as Crucifer and Male Chorus member.

A celebration dinner followed the worship service.

Participating in the installation service were (front, l-r) Pastors Elie Louissaint, Salem/Lake Worth; District President Greg Walton; Jessica, Caden, Steve and Jaxon Carretto; Dennis Glick, St. Paul/Boca Raton; Kevin Ogle, Miramar Lutheran/Miramar; (back, l-r) Vicar Jacob Schultz, St. Paul/Boca Raton; Pastors Stephen Reynolds, Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale; David Albers, Redeemer/Stuart; James Weist, Epiphany/Lake Worth; Steve Wipperman, Our Savior/Lake Worth; Dennis Bartels, Holy Cross/North Miami; Scott Gress, Transforming Congregations Network. ■

Gloria Dei/Davie Hosts LCMS Missionary to Spain



On Sunday, September 20, Gloria Dei hosted Pastor Adam Lehman. Adam and Christine Lehman serve the Lord as career missionaries through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Spain. In this role, Adam serves as a church planter, working with other church leaders to grow the church in this country. Through the relationships formed, Adam and Christine seek to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the people of Spain.

Adam was born in Fort Wayne, Ind. He earned a bachelor's degree

from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW). He received his Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Before becoming a career missionary, Adam served as the pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Mobile, Alabama. In his free time, Adam enjoys camping, hiking and going to the beach with his family.

Pastor George Poulos, Jr., senior pastor of Gloria Dei (on left), is shown with Adam Lehman after Sunday's worship. ■

Award Presentations Highlight Educators Conference



Brenda Dobler



Steve Carretto
Sharlene Friederichs



Kathy Knudson



Sherri Mackey
Dennis Bartels



Jon Zehnder

Five church workers were honored at the 2015 Educators Conference. District President Greg Walton and Executive Director for School Ministries Mark Brink participated in the presentations. Honoree introductions are excerpted below.

Dr. Ben Eggers Outstanding Educator Award

Presented annually since 1986, the Florida-Georgia Teacher of the Year award is named in honor of Dr. Ben Eggers, who served as District Parish Services Executive from 1979-1986. Honored this year were:

Brenda Dobler, Pre-K 4 teacher at St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA

"Brenda is a phenomenal teacher, leader, Early Childhood advocate, colleague, and friend. Brenda is a person who people just like to be around. She is a leader without even having to try to lead. People naturally gravitate toward her and seek out her advice and wisdom. I am very pleased the committee chose Mrs. Dobler as the Early Childhood teacher of the year as she is a true servant for Jesus. She is in the trenches every single day in our Early Childhood and lives are being changed."

—Jim Richards, St. Paul Principal

Sharlene Friederichs, 7th grade/language arts teacher at St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL

"Sharlene Friederichs...a Master Teacher as [St. Paul Principal] Dr. Jeff Krempler would say. She teaches with

the love of Christ in her great talent of literature and warms the campus daily with her infectious smile. St. Paul Lutheran School is a mission field of many none church families. Sharlene embraces this mission field and is an incredible witness as she spends her time with parents and students with the benefit of sharing her faith and how God has blessed her."

—Steve Carretto,
St. Paul Senior Pastor

Kathy Knudson, Director of Faith Lutheran School/North Palm Beach, FL

"Kathy has invested her heart and soul into ministry, developing Faith from a two-room school house to an early childhood center with two campuses and 12 classrooms. Her passion for early childhood does not end with her school. She has spent countless hours helping other schools improve through the accreditation process...Her love and devotion for her Lord is clearly evident. She has faithfully spread the love of Jesus into the lives of the hundreds of children and families she has faithfully served."

—Karen Smith, Director, Peace Lutheran Preschool/Okeechobee, FL

Barnabas "Son of Encouragement" Award

The Barnabas Award is presented by the Educators Conference to a pastor serving in a Florida-Georgia congregation that includes a school ministry. Two pastors were honored this year.

Rev. Dennis Bartels, Pastor of Holy Cross/North Miami, FL

"Holy Cross has undergone a significant demographic change since Pastor Dennis Bartels became pastor more than 30 years ago, and he has adapted to and embraced our new cultures and diversity. With him, love is not a word; it's an action. He is involved in activities and programs that strengthen and enhance our school, our community and our district. He thinks 'outside the box' and can always be counted on for creative solutions to problems. Pastor Bartels goes above and beyond for everyone."

—Sherri Mackey, Holy Cross Principal

Rev. Jon Zehnder, Pastor of Saint Michael/Fort Myers, FL

"Pastor Jon is like no other pastor I have seen in my 43 years of ministry... He loves to conduct tours of the school. His office is located on the main corridor of the school building, and he is intentionally visible. He considers himself pastor to all of the school families, and he frequently makes the statement 'if you do not have a church home I would be honored if you would consider me your pastor.' The children get to know him well from chapel services. He is extremely supportive of the entire staff."

—Mike Rhinehart, Interim School Administrator of Saint Michael

St. Paul Lakeland Campus Successfully Hosts Pastors, Educators Conferences

For the first time in the District's history, Florida-Georgia pastors and educators converged on a church/school campus for their annual conferences from September 23-25.

St. Paul/Lakeland, FL, hosted 173 pastors conference attendees along with 423 registered educators. The two groups came together for the opening celebration, worship and meals.

Dr. Tim Elmore, president of Growing Leaders and an authority on understanding the next generation and preparing tomorrow's leaders today, was the keynoter for the educators at the conference themed "Talented." Elmore offered insights on how today's students — the first generation growing up with portable devices in their hands that contain a wealth of information and communication potential — are different from their predecessors.

Using humor and relatable examples, Elmore gave educators tips on how to increase students' attention spans and their understanding of major concepts. He also discussed how adults can effectively engage students' creativity.

California-Nevada-Hawaii District President Robert Newton addressed the pastors conference, which focused on "Excellence . . . pressing on toward the goal."

Workshops offered participants the opportunity to delve into different aspects of the conference themes.

District President Greg Walton preached at the sending service. The worship team of St. Paul/Lakeland led the service, with area pastors helping with the distribution of Holy Communion.

Scott Nelson, St. Paul/Lakeland middle school science teacher, was the conference photographer. More conference pictures are viewable at <https://theworldthroughscottslens.smugmug.com/FLGA-PastorTeachers-Conf-2015/>



Dr. Tim Elmore was the keynoter at the Educators Conference



New members of the District took turns at the microphone introducing themselves



Roger Walker was recognized for 50 years of teaching service in the LCMS



Trinity/Savannah, GA, Pastor John Hopkins and District President Administrative Assistant Kathy Keene welcome conference participants



Above right — Pastors and educators at the festival closing worship service



St. Paul/Lakeland Pastor Ron Pennekamp and Principal Robert Boyd address the combined conferences.



District President Greg Walton with conference planning team leaders Florida-Georgia Executive Director of School Ministries Mark Brink and LiveUCF Pastor Billy Brath

Educator Milestones Celebrated

50 Years
Roger Walker

40 Years
Mark Brink
Lois Ford
Keith Hutchinson
Jeffrey Krempler
Sharon Vonada

35 Years
Deb Albers
Jesse Crosmer
Elaine Popp
Sue Steenis
Cynthia Tillman
Laurie Tremblay
Kathy Wilsher

30 Years
Ann Clark
Liana Diaz
Natalee Hallsted
Karri Klemm
Jon Peterson
Lynda Voss
Maraly Wagner
Jeff Walcheski

25 Years
Michele Barbieri
Jean Gillis
John Glanzer
Jackie Graham
Lori Lee Joerz
Julie Sear
Donna Swith
Ruth Wessling

20 Years
Karen Atkinson
Kathy Keene
Michelle Pasierb
Shirley Schultz
Jody Schweichler
Debby Talbott
Wendy Turpin
Christy Wenzlaff

15 Years
Rose Baez
Esther Callava
Jennifer Kard
Jill Smith
Jennifer Tippet
Jamie Wagner
Joni Zehnder

10 Years
Niki Kneser
Lori Lingsch
Matt Maki
Elizabeth McKinney
Nick Moss
Sarah Pittinger
Linda Stark
Kayla Swetz

Clergy Milestones Celebrated

65 Years
Rev. Paul Foelber

60 Years
Rev. Roland Roehrs
Rev. Dr. Hubert Temme

55 Years
Rev. Dr. Rodger Meyer
Rev. William Splitgerber
Rev. Paul Wittenberg

50 Years
Rev. Richard Arndt
Rev. Dr. David Bernthal
Rev. Dennis Glander
Rev. David Mennicke
Rev. Dr. Gerhard Michael, Jr.
Rev. Ronald Mueller
Rev. Jose Puerto

45 Years
Rev. Richard Drankwalter
Rev. Ken Fuehler
Rev. Dr. Gary Genzen
Rev. Marvin Huggins
Rev. Thomas Moore
Rev. Timothy Nickel
Rev. Pat O'Brien
Rev. Elmer Riffel
Rev. Harlan Schoenrock
Rev. Stephen Schroeder
Rev. Robert Steinke

40 Years
CH. Col. U. Gary Bomberger
Rev. Dr. Thomas Fuqua
Rev. Michael Klafehn
Rev. Earl Steffens

35 Years
Rev. Dr. Henry Baum
Rev. Craig Bode
Rev. Steven Hess
Rev. Dr. Richard Carlton
Rev. Jonathan Frusti
Rev. John Karch, Jr.
Rev. Dr. Jeffery Moore
Rev. Paul Rauscher
Rev. Edward Scott

30 Years
Rev. Dr. David Brockhoff
Rev. Stephen Gaulke
Rev. David Hansen
Rev. Richard Lineberger
Rev. Scott McLean
Rev. Dr. Warren Miller
Rev. William Sielk
Rev. Mark Steinke

25 Years
Rev. Craig Boehlke
Rev. Dr. R. John Buuck

20 Years
Rev. Ebengo Bongo
Rev. Edward Dewitt
Rev. John Hopkins
Rev. Benito Perez-Lopez
Rev. John Rallison
Rev. Clarence Reinke, Jr.
Rev. Paul Stark

15 Years
Rev. Samuel Boodle, Sr.
Rev. Gary Held
Rev. Marc Kappel
Rev. Roger Schwartz
Rev. Joseph Song
Rev. Martin Springer

10 Years
Rev. Adolfo Borges
Rev. Gregory Le Sieur
Rev. Christopher Patterson
Dcn. Lyn Senkarik
Rev. Charles Trower
Rev. David Wesche

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flgadistrict.org *(877)457-5556, ext. 4
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LSG Program Provides Gifts to People in Need

Every December, Lutheran Services of Georgia volunteers and staff visit newly arrived refugees, delivering smiles and brightly wrapped presents. Each adult receives blankets, winter coats or kitchen supplies, while the children receive winter coats and toys. For refugees with few possessions, these gifts bring warmth and joy for the Christmas season.

LSG's Hope Tree program provides Christmas gifts for children in foster care, refugee families and children and adults with developmental disabilities. Congregations and community organizations donate to bring holiday cheer to people in need. In 2014, Hope Tree provided gifts for 706 children and adults.

These gifts are met with gratitude, according to LSF representatives.

One refugee mother said, "LSG provided my family with what we needed the moment we arrived. I'm especially happy about the unexpected gestures and gifts we received on Christmas. The gift they gave to my daughter was thoughtful. It wasn't about the gift itself, but the warming kindness and meaning behind it. We felt welcomed, and my daughter was happy. Thank you LSG!"

In most cases, LSG does not know identifying information about refugees until a couple of weeks before they arrive in the United States, which makes it difficult to secure well-fitting coat donations. Donated gift cards enable LSF staff to shop as refugees arrive, making sure they receive warm winter coats that fit them. Gift cards also support clients in other programs.

For more information about Hope Tree, please contact Allison Hood at ahood@lsga.org or 404-591-0767. Visit www.lsga.org to learn more about Lutheran Services of Georgia. ■



Huseman to Assist District President in Conflict Situations

The Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors at its September 11-12 meeting unanimously authorized President Greg Walton to use William "Rusty" Huseman, who has served as the District's legal counsel since 2009, to represent him to congregations in conflict. Huseman will be working along with Florida-Georgia Circuit Visitors and District Reconcilers.

"What this does is gives me more freedom to pursue some of the other tasks within the District, including setting vision and dedicating more time to pursuing how we together can connect people to Jesus as we equip, empower and engage with the Gospel," Walton said.

Huseman — with Walton's help — began the LCMS Legal League, which includes Missouri Synod member attorneys from five different states and continues to



expand. A trained mediator, Huseman has been through the Synod's training for the reconciliation process. He is well versed in the Synod Constitution and Bylaws and has served as an advisor to the Florida-Georgia Board regarding the District Charter and Bylaw Committee.

Huseman has assisted numerous congregations and consulted on legal issues throughout the Florida-Georgia District. In addition, he participated in the Alliance Defending Freedom program and has been trained in protecting the rights and privileges of our congregations.

"We are very excited to continue our partnership with Rusty Huseman to assist our congregations in finding reconciliation and resolution in God pleasing ways," Walton said. ■



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The BACKPAGE

District Flood Buckets Help Storm Victims

Flood buckets prepared by Florida-Georgia congregations recently helped storm victims in our District and beyond.

In August, Trinity/Trinity, FL, members and other aid agencies distributed buckets from the District's storage facility to Tampa Bay area flood victims.

Hundreds of homes were damaged after heavy rain caused the Anclote River and other nearby areas to flood. Water up to five feet deep blocked roads and caused evacuations in the areas near the church.

In October, John Elliott, Florida-Georgia District Business Manager and Disaster Relief Coordinator; Ron and Mike Meek of Peace/Okeechobee; and Michael Weber and Bob Middleton of Zion/Fort Myers drove to South Carolina to deliver 700 flood buckets to Mount Olive/Irmo and Holy Trinity/Columbia. Members of both congregations were significantly impacted by extreme rainfall that caused disastrous flooding in the Columbia area, damaging homes, businesses, roads and bridges.

Elliott drove a safety/chase vehicle behind two bucket-laden trucks driven by the volunteers.

"Thank you to everyone who contributed and made these flood buckets possible," Elliott said. ■



Above — Some of the 700 flood buckets delivered to South Carolina by a five-man District team to help victims of severe flooding.

At right — Trinity Pastor Marc Nauman helps unload a delivery of flood buckets.

