

LUTHERAN LIFE

2016 | Volume 5

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

NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING * VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL * BACK TO SCHOOL





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 in the Master's business ... 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, 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. Lutheran LIFE is published bimonthly. News items and photos are encouraged. Please send scanned photos 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 — if possible via e-mail: LutheranLife@aol.com

LUTHERAN LIFE

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

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

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Do You Know Someone Who Needs Encouragement to Enter Professional Church Work?

One of my favorite Sunday School stories growing up was of Samuel and Eli in 1 Samuel 3. Perhaps you remember the story. Samuel was serving under Eli the Priest when God called to him. Samuel ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But, of course we know, Eli had not called him. This went on three times and Eli, recognizing that something else was going on, said to Samuel, "Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.'" Samuel did as he was instructed, and the Lord spoke to him; and the Bible says, "Thus Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fail." (1 Samuel 3:19).

As Samuel needed some help in discerning God's call, so each of us are called on to encourage the next generation to rise up and become the leaders God has created them to be. Whether it is pastoral ministry, teaching in a Lutheran School, serving as an administrator or a DCE, we are living in a time when those who are being called to serve need to be encouraged to listen.



Here's where you can help.

Look around your congregation. Who are the boys and girls, men and women who have the gifts and skills, who love Jesus and are servants? God may be calling them into ministry, and you may be the voice that confirms that call.

It's amazing how often, when church workers have been asked how they came to be in ministry, their response is that they were encouraged by their pastor, parent, teacher, youth leader or someone who held influence in their life. Certainly God can speak directly to our hearts, but sometimes He uses others to help confirm that. So take a look around your church. Who is God calling? You may be a link to the next generation of ministry in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. God has blessed each of us with a sphere of influence. Who is looking to you for direction?

The District has scholarship dollars available for those considering church work professions and attending any of our Concordia University System schools. God is calling to raise up a new generation of leaders. Who do you know who could respond? For the sake of the Gospel, will you be that one to encourage?

Thank you.

Rev. Greg Walton
President, Florida-Georgia District

In Memoriam



Remembering Rev. Lou Abel – Good Shepherd/Chiefland was filled to overflowing for the September 3 memorial service for Rev. Lou Abel, who served the congregation for eight years. Prior to that Pastor Able served pastor of Trinity/Fort Lauderdale. He was a principal in the District before becoming an ordained minister. Rev. James Rockey, Amazing Grace/Oxford and North Central FL Circuit Visitor, led the memorial service. Rev. Dr. Dennis Glick, Pastor Emeritus St. Paul/Boca Raton, was the preacher. Rev Darrell Stuehrenberg, Bethlehem/Fort Myers, shared "Memories from a Friend." Circuit pastors shared prayers and Scripture. Pictured (front, l-r) James Rockey, Dennis Glick, Ken Schamen, (back, l-r) Roy Zerbe, Paul Sutterer, Ron Scheer, Darrell Struenburg, Alan Struckmeyer, Max Rittgers, Stephen Lane, Tom Beaverson. ■

Calling Congregations

Faith/Dunedin, FL Sole Pastor
Our Savior/Griffin, GA Sole Pastor
Christ the King/Largo, FL Senior Pastor
Marco Island/Marco, FL Associate Pastor
Peace/Naples, FL Sole Pastor
Trinity/Orlando, FL Senior Pastor
LC of the Cross/Port Charlotte, FL Associate Pastor
Grace/Port St Lucie, FL Sole Pastor
Redeemer/Stuart, FL Associate Pastor
Trinity/Toccoa, GA Sole Pastor
Lakeside/Venice, FL Associate Pastor

Calls Issued

Christ the King/Largo, FL
Rev. Mark Mueller as Sole Pastor
Trinity Lutheran Church/Orlando, FL
Rev. Jacob May as Senior Pastor
LC of the Cross/Port Charlotte, FL
Rev. Raymond Stolarczyk as Associate Pastor

Calls Accepted

St Paul/Lakeland, FL
Rev. Andrew Ritchie as Associate Pastor

Calls Declined

Trinity Lutheran Church/Orlando, FL
Rev. Jacob May as Senior Pastor

Transferred to Other Districts

Mr. Timothy Vogel to Pacific Southwest (C)
Mr. Scott Nelson to Nebraska (C)

Transferred from Other Districts

Rev. Keith W. Bicknase from South Dakota (O)
Rev. Mark Stillman from New Jersey (O)

Ordained/Commissioned Minister

Initial Assignments
Ms. Annalisa Fitzsimons, Concordia Nebraska
DCE, Living Hope/Kennesaw, GA (C)
Ms. Alexis Dippel, Concordia Chicago
Teacher, Trinity/Delray Beach, FL (C)
Ms. Crystal Jones, Concordia Chicago
Teacher, Trinity/Orlando, FL (C)
Mr. Zachary Kollbaum, Concordia Nebraska
Teacher, Grace/Winter Haven, FL (C)
Mrs. Clarissa Kollbaum, Concordia Nebraska
Teacher, Grace/Winter Haven, FL (C),

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Ms. Heidi Blank
Teacher, Faith/Eustis, FL (C)
Rev. Mark Stillman
Pastor, Faith/North Palm Beach, FL (O)

DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

Mrs. Patricia Wittcop
Teacher, Grace/Winter Haven, FL (C)
Mr. Michael Rottmann
Principal, Grace/Winter Haven, FL (C)
Rev. Jeff Shanks
Pastor, St. John/Ocala, FL (O)
Mrs. Anette Shanks
Director Of Family Life, St. John/Ocala, FL (C)
Ms. Staci Welburn
DCE, Living Faith/Cumming, GA (C)

Called to Glory

Rev. Richard P. Miller (O)
Mrs. Gladys Wendt-Foust (C)
Rev. James Edge (O)
Rev. Louis H. Abel (O)
Rev. Bruce Sommerfield (O)

Removed from the Roster

Ms. Amanda Bundy, Resigned (C)

Change of Status within the District

Mr. Justin Tayon, from Active to Candidate (C)

CALENDAR

Lutheran Hour Ministries 100th Anniversary Celebration
October 21-23, 2017 • Union Station/St. Louis, MO

499th Anniversary of the Reformation
October 31, 2016

Florida-Georgia Middle School Youth Gathering
November 4-6, 2016
Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center/Leesburg, FL

Florida-Georgia High School Youth Gathering
February 18-20, 2017
Hilton Daytona Beach Resort/Daytona Beach, FL

District School Music Festival
February 24, 2017
St. Michael's Lutheran Church & School/Fort Myers, FL

Veterans of the Cross Retreat
March 6-8, 2017
Life Enrichment Center/Fruitland Park, FL

Haitian Teachers Conference
April 9-11, 2017 • Haiti

LW/ML 75th Anniversary Celebration
June 22-25, 2017 • Albuquerque, NM

Florida-Georgia High School Youth Servant Event
July 9-15, 2017 • Atlanta, GA area

When you think about New Orleans perhaps you conjure up images of a flood ravaged community still recovering from Hurricane Katrina. Maybe you think about the decadence of Mardi Gras parties and Bourbon Street with all the revelry and often questionable behavior. Maybe you think about the cultural and historic city known for its fine cuisine and jazz music.

In July, New Orleans hosted the National Youth Gathering for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Some 22,000 youth plus adult leaders came together for a week of worship, fellowship, learning and play in this welcoming city. Under the theme “In Christ Alone,” these youth made their presence known throughout this community, sharing the love and light of Jesus as they went. It was an energetic, joyous celebration of our heritage as Lutherans, but more importantly — a bold proclamation of our faith in Jesus Christ.

In a day when many lament the fact that the church is losing young people at an alarming rate, it was heartening to see so many enthusiastic kids praising Jesus at the mass events in the New Orleans Superdome. We saw youth groups marching through the streets in matching t-shirts with their lavender backpacks. It really made a huge impression. It made me proud to be part of this wonderful Gathering.

These youth not only were willing to boldly proclaim their faith in Jesus in worship — they became the

hands and feet of Jesus. Numerous servant events happened all over New Orleans for everything from cleaning up yards to feeding people to painting to building and helping with home repairs. Participants were challenged to live out their faith In Christ Alone, and they did that in marvelous ways.

As we wandered around New Orleans, it wasn't unusual to hear very positive statements from shop owners and wait staff as to how polite and well-behaved the youth were. I read an article from a New Orleans newspaper following the Gathering that gave high praise to the way our

The Next Generation



youth behaved during their time in the city.

As one who often hears the negative reports of a denomination that continues to age and shrink, seeing the numbers of youth who made time to be in New Orleans gave me hope. Someone surmised that for every one who attended there may have been one or two times that many who were unable to be part of this Gathering due to other things going on in their lives. I mention this because it underscores the fact that many of our youth have a firm commitment to their faith in Jesus.

This Gathering is one way that we continue to link them to our historic

faith. We continue to wrestle with how to keep them engaged in the Master's business within our Lutheran context. I believe challenging our youth and entrusting them with opportunities to serve in the name of Jesus is an important piece of the puzzle.

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 78:5-7, “He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.”

Faith is often generational. I know dozens of people, including family members, who were baptized and raised in the church, only to later follow a different journey that led them into the wilderness

but eventually led them back to Jesus.

While I know that isn't everyone's story, we have this promise in Scripture: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6) This was not only the Wisdom of Solomon, it was commanded by God.

Listen to these words in Deuteronomy 6:4-7, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your

children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

In later years Martin Luther was so passionate about teaching the faith he put together the *Small Catechism* and the *Large Catechism* so that children could learn the chief articles of faith. We still deem catechizing our children an important part of preparing them for a life of faith.

As I've watch my granddaughter grow I've seen her parents teach her many life skills like saying “please” and “thank you,” learning to count, learning shapes and colors. These are all important skills as a child develops. In addition, they have taught her to fold her hands to pray at meals and at bedtime. She sings with them in church, often at inappropriate times. In fact, she has even been known to shout “amen” at various points in the service, like in the middle of a sermon. I see this faith being taught among the little children in many places I visit, and I rejoice in seeing young parents eager to raise their child with a faith in Jesus. What a joy and blessing to see the faith being taught and lived out by multiple generations!

The church continues to ponder the question as to why there seems to be a decline in youth in our churches. I wish I knew the simple answer.

Perhaps we could have greater influence if our youth began to see the values lived out and shared openly in homes as a natural part of life, understanding that discipleship is a daily walk. I'm not just talking to parents of teenagers, but to the whole church. When we value our youth and teach them our faith values by example, it can have a lasting impact. With that in mind, here are a few suggestions I've considered after seeing such energetic youth at the Gathering.

◆ **First, don't make the Gospel law.** Teach and share the faith with gentleness and respect, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in hearts to strengthen our spiritual walk. I don't believe that we gain much ground for our faith by criticizing, demeaning or nagging. That doesn't mean that parents should allow their kids to do whatever they want. Boundaries are healthy. My father used to say, “If you're healthy enough to go out on Saturday night, you're healthy enough to get up on Sunday morning.” While I didn't always appreciate it at the time, I am grateful now for my parents holding me accountable.

◆ **Second, put them to work!** Have you ever been invited to help with a project only to stand around with nothing to do? I believe that our youth have a real desire to serve if they are given the opportunity to do so. If we truly believe that our kids are the leaders of tomorrow, and an argument could be made that they are the leaders of today, we need to equip and empower them so they also can engage in the Master's business. Imagine one of the youth leading a Bible Class on Sunday morning! That could be a fascinating experience! Give your youth purpose in being at church and see how they grow, not only in maturity, but also in their faith.

◆ **A final thought would be to encourage your youth in their faith.** There are so many forces in the world that are trying to drag them down and away from their faith. Kids today face pressures and stresses that many of us could never imagine, especially at their age. Be a Barnabas and build up the youth in your church. Make it a place where they want to come because they are loved, needed and encouraged. Listen to their suggestions, give them a voice and celebrate their accomplishments.

This may be a step to reverse the trends that the church is seeing among our youth today.

◆ ◆ ◆
How blessed we are in the Florida-Georgia District! Did you know that many of the key people who helped to develop and drive the Gathering are folks from our District? At the risk of leaving names out, let me highlight a few. Kurt Bickel completed his 13th and final NYG, serving 39 years directing the mass events. We also had some outstanding leaders on the NYG team, including Nick Moss, St. Paul/Lakeland; Leslie Leonard, Christ the King/Largo; Megan Miessler, Lutheran Counseling Services, among others. I mention these folks because it's a reminder that we have many influencers in our midst, and we are grateful for their leadership and work.

Now the Gathering is over and our kids are back in school. In many ways life has returned to “normal,” whatever that is. For many of these youth perhaps there is a new normal that accents their walk with Jesus.

My prayer is that the impact of this National Youth Gathering had on all those who attended will lead them forward in their spiritual growth professing that we face every day with Christ Alone. May our churches respond by loving these youth and supporting them in their daily growth by being the example of the faith and entrusting them with opportunities to serve Jesus and His Church. As we entrust our future to Christ alone, look at the next generation He's raising up, and celebrate them!



Peace in Christ alone!
GREG

A Florida-Georgia District First Lutheran Church Charities Comfort Dog

On August 24, a dog arrived at the Savannah/Hilton Head Airport. This was no ordinary dog; it was Elizabeth – the first Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) Comfort Dog being delivered to a congregation in the Florida-Georgia District.



Lizzie's first visit to a Trinity member at a nursing care and rehabilitation facility in Savannah.



Lizzie's first visit wearing the camouflage vest at an Air Force Promotion Ceremony.

Elizabeth, known as Lizzie, became a member of Trinity Lutheran Church/Savannah during Passing of the Leash ceremonies in worship services on Sunday, August 28. A blessing was given over Lizzie, and the Comfort Dog Handlers were installed as the Comfort Dog Ministry became official.

"This dog's sole purpose is to bring comfort to those who need it," said Karen Monahan, the "Top Dog" heading up Trinity's Comfort Dog Ministry. "From crisis situations – local and national – to nursing homes, schools, shelters, first responder situations... the dog is here to help provide healing to people in our community."

Each LCC Comfort Dog is a purebred golden retriever who is AKC certified, has completed more than a year of training to the level of a service dog and has passed the AKC Good Citizenship Test. Monahan and the ten other members of Trinity's Comfort Dog Ministry underwent four days of rigorous and extensive training. At the end of the training, they had to demonstrate their skills in order to become LCC Comfort Dog handlers.



Settles into Trinity/Savannah Home

"The most incredible thing about this ministry is that this dog will have two vests: one blue and one camouflage," Monahan stated. "The camouflage vest is a military vest. Our Comfort Dog will have the capability to be invited onto military bases to provide services to the members of our military who have the need, because one of our handlers, Todd Freeseemann, is a veteran."

"To have a dually vested dog with us at Trinity to help us reach further to people in our community is amazing!"

"We are excited about building new connections with our community through showing compassion and comfort," said Trinity Pastor John Hopkins. "These connections are for those in our neighborhood and the City of Savannah. We have a new way to show the same love God has for us all."

In fact, they are happening already. After one visit by Lizzie to a nursing care and rehabilitation center, the director invited Hopkins "to come back, lead a Bible study if you like and/or bring your choir, too." A local fire department asked if Lizzie could come visit the first responders who serve there on Tuesdays, not just the next Tuesday, but "every Tuesday."

The parent of a college student who was on campus during the the October 2015 Roseburg, OR, shooting contacted Lizzie through her Facebook page and requested a visit. Her child was coming to Savannah to attend a local university. The Comfort Dogs that were sent to Oregon were of such value to her child, that she wanted to meet Lizzie upon arriving at her new university.

"It is amazing the bridges that are being built through using one of God's creations. Keeping in mind at the same time, it is not a ministry about the dog, it is a ministry connecting people together and the dog is the tool being used to do it," concluded Hopkins.

To see and follow Lizzie on Facebook, search: Elizabeth Comfort Dog and like Lizzie. ■



Lizzie made new friends at the Tunnel to Tower Run, a memorial to the NY fire fighter who ran from the Battery Tunnel to the Twin Towers and was killed in the line of duty. The race represents all the first responders who lost their lives trying to rescue people from the Towers on September 11, 2001. The Scouts are wearing the pictures of the fallen responders with their stories on the back. This race happens in multiple USA cities around September 11. It was at this event that Lizzie was asked to stop by the Savannah Fire Department and visit the first responders on Tuesdays.



Lizzie became a member of Trinity/Savannah during Passing of the Leash ceremonies on Sunday, August 28. A blessing was given over Lizzie, and the Comfort Dog Handlers were installed as the Comfort Dog Ministry became official.

District Campus Ministries Launch New School Year

Happy Fall Semester from LiveUCF and all our sister campus ministries around the District!

Here in Orlando we are in the middle of a semester of ministry with new leaders and members. This is one of the most exciting parts of campus ministry. We have the opportunity to continually raise up and equip students to be members and leaders of our church so that they can be a blessing to their neighbors here. Additionally, we get to continually send out members and leaders who graduate to new adventures in life and ministry.



CAMPUS NEWS

by Rev. Billy Brath
LIVE University Central Florida

I think of our former President, Tyler, now in graduate school at the University of New Mexico. As he studies and works on campus, he has already become involved with ministry groups in town and will certainly be a blessing to his neighbors. I think of our former VP, Matthew Arp, who accepted a full-time job in Orlando and is still a part of LiveUCF while assisting us with his professional PR skills. I think of Tyler Gay, one of our leaders who transferred to FSU and is a part of ministry up there — you're welcome Pastor Jay Winters at University Lutheran Church!

I think of our current secretary, Kate Dierker, who is learning and working with our Board treasurer, Andi Reichard. I think of our new President, Charles Allen, who is leading and challenging us to be an even greater blessing to UCF.

These are only a few snapshots in the massive album of ministry stories all of our campus ministries can share. We want to continue doing this work that we have been called to do — this work that extends the work of your congregations. Campus Ministries in the Florida-Georgia District are a perfect example of how we all work together.

How can you continue to support?

- Most importantly, connect your students to us. Take a few moments with your congregation this Sunday and ask for contact info for your members away at school. Go to LCMS.org/LCMSu and connect with the appropriate ministries and congregations.
- Support us financially: LiveUCF.com or look up your nearest campus ministry.
- And of course, pray for us continually.

Finally, on behalf of all the Florida-Georgia campus ministries, thank you for your support, for the work of the District and for the work you all do for young people, preparing them to join our ministries when you send them off.

God's continued blessings & Go Knights! *Charge on!* ■

Below — LiveUCF student leaders visit with youth group members from St. Paul/Lakeland, Florida



Impacting the Community According to Need

How do you begin a confessional, Lutheran church? I begin by looking for a need. When I find it, I show the mercy of Christ in the best way I can without creating a dependency, a false expectation of our Lord Jesus or His church or a disconnect between the mercy provided and the Savior who provided it through us, His servants.



MISSION POSSIBLE

by Rev. Mark Eisold
Mission Developer Golden Gate

In the area of Golden Gate City and East Naples, there is a very real need: English. Five miles inland you will find more than 70% Latino and Caribbean, many recent arrivals who fled Venezuela, Cuba or Haiti seeking political asylum. Some are highly educated, others are not. All need to learn English.

By our offering English two nights a week, the Lord gathered 20-40 people each evening for two hours. Other opportunities exist in Collier County for people to learn English free, yet dozens flock to the new Christian community center and fill the hall!

At the close of each night, we tell everyone who we are and why we do what we do for free: *We are followers of the Risen Savior, Jesus Christ. When the Eternal, Living God gives you faith in Him, full credit for HIS perfection, sets you free from the debt of your sins and gives you eternal life, He also leads you to joyfully serve others as freely as He has served you. We LOVE DOING THIS!* If you want to know more about the free forgiveness we have in Jesus, speak with Pastor Mark or one of the other leaders here.

We share the two devotional activities we offer — every Thursday evening over dinner and every Sunday afternoon between soccer and lunch. Many respond and participate, but the Lord Jesus first worked through the mercy to connect them to us so that they may also hear His word.

The Lord has greatly blessed our efforts with about a dozen volunteers from three area LCMS congregations. We understand that our purpose is much greater than to “start an LCMS congregation” — it is to fill the community with Christ and serve as an outpost for His gifts so that many will know Him through His active work in the community and in their lives, and that they may also know Him through His word and sacraments.

Keep us in your prayers as we at the Golden Gate Pelican Community Center & Church move toward starting full-time worship services in November while always caring for our community by finding the needs and meeting them as servants of Christ. ■

The Pelican & Christ

Early Christians used the pelican as a symbol for the love, sacrifice, power and life delivered by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The people of the Mediterranean respected the pelican. In times of famine, the pelican would tear at its breast, draw blood and feed its young. When these people learned that God had come into the world in human form, shedding His own blood to wash, adopt and redeem us and to feed us so that we may have forgiveness and life, they made a direct connection with what they had seen in the pelican.

The symbol of the pelican feeding its young with three drops of blood from its chest was used in cathedrals through the end of the Middle Ages. The story of the pelican as a reminder of Jesus was included in European Christian literature and song through the beginning of the 17th century. Even today, liturgical items bearing the pelican symbol are available.

Today in Naples — where pelicans are abundant and popular — the pelican is a perfect fit for a new mission with a vision for filling the community with Christ, training converts to be fishers of men and courageously diving headfirst into a multi-ethnic community.

Of the many names being placed over Christ's Church these days, in Naples there is one that is not just “unique” or “cool” but also historical, relevant to the culture of SW Florida and provides a direct connection to Christ! Welcome to the Golden Gate Pelican and The Pelican Lutheran Church of Naples!



Worship at Golden Gate Pelican Community Center & Church

You've been in leadership for a long time. You've chaired the meetings, made things happen, kept the machinery of that board or committee going for...forever. But you are tired. That seems to be a boat that a lot of people find themselves in. Church leaders over the years are those people who are dependable, faithful, tenacious with a never-say-die attitude. You've said "yes" to just about anything that anyone has asked you to do. But lately it seems no one else seems to want to do anything anymore. It's often just you or you and one other. Where do you go from here?

GETTING UNSTUCK

Leadership Network, an organization of church leaders supporting church leaders has said, "eighty-seven percent of people respond to volunteering because someone asked them" and "both church-going volunteers and non-church-going volunteers serve to fulfill a need for community and friendship."

This is good news for the lay leader at church who is getting tired! It says that relationships, community and friendships are keys to volunteerism. What that means is that people don't necessarily serve because they like the project or task. Rather they

serve because of the people and relationships doing it. That means you as a leader (clergy or lay) are in a great position to gather people so they experience genuine relationships and community — and you can ultimately get things done. Perhaps you have always focused on the ministry aspect of your group or committee or ministry. Good! Now as you find yourself looking for help or doing something alone - it is time to recognize and focus on the relationship aspect of what you do.

Next steps:

- ▲ Think less about getting the job done and more about building relationships with people. At this stage think: "People are more important than the task."
- ▲ Widen your invitation list to include friends of members and infrequent visitors or worshippers, those invisible people who may just be looking for friends at church.
- ▲ Think less about calling a meeting and more about gathering a group for fellowship.
- ▲ Think less about getting to the business and more about getting to know the people.
- ▲ When the time is right, take a short five minutes to share the vision of that ministry ask people to contact you if they have questions.
- ▲ As people may be anxious about being saddled with a big responsibility, be prepared to share small bite sized pieces of the ministry to try it on for size.
- ▲ Be ready to show that you value people by thanking them for their time and contribution no matter how small.
- ▲ Point out to them how they made a difference in the lives of others
- ▲ Give the relationships the time and opportunities to develop and have fun doing what you do together.

If you do this, you will be coaching rather than telling and listening rather than giving orders. As the task of the particular ministry has value God will bless it! So work the process of giving people a place for fellowship and community. Along the way God will lift up the people of His choosing to continue the work. ■

Rev. Scott Gress is called by Lutheran Counseling Services as an independent contractor in leadership training, consulting and coaching. Contact Scott through LCS (407- 644-4692); email scottgress@me.com; or his blog page scottgress.com.

The COACHING LEADER

by Rev. Scott Gress
Lutheran Counseling Services
Leadership Coach



Looking back, it's hard to imagine changing what you've done. When no one wanted to help you did it yourself. When others dropped to ball you picked it up. Now everything seems to fall upon you. How can you do anything differently? How can this get better? The coaching leader sees another way.

First congratulations on your dedication. You are a blessing! Second, don't give up just yet. There are other options.



One bite
at a time

SE Florida Stewardship Summit Draws 125+

Powerful keynote addresses, uplifting devotions and insightful breakout sessions along with multiple fellowship opportunities filled the August 19-20 District Stewardship Summit hosted by St. Paul/Boca Raton. Here are just a few pictures from that session. Check out the Florida-Georgia District Facebook page for more photos. ■



Left — Samuel Ludington's presentations talked about the "Generational God" who has built His church through multiple generations. During his popular sessions, Ludington gave advice on how to capture the millennial market. He is a member of Holy Cross/North Miami and a Region 5 Laity Representative on the District Board of Directors.



Right — St Paul Boca Raton's Vicar Noah Kegley led the closing devotion for the summit. Pastor Steve Carretto along with St Paul Director of Christian Education, Jeremiah Bauer, led the worship singing throughout the two-day event.



The District team grilled hot dogs and brats for Friday's welcoming lunch. Dan Reichard, VP Finance and LCEF; Holy Cross/North Miami Pastor Dennis Bartels, chairman of the Stewardship Advisory Council; Doug Kallesen, Executive Director of Missions & Outreach; Greg Walton, District President; Mark Brink, Executive School Ministries.



Rev. Daniel Bartley, Pastor of Emmanuel Haitian Mission/Delray Beach, with some of his congregational members.

Thrivent Members Generously Support Orlando



When tragic events occur, Thrivent members often want to know how they can make a difference. In the wake of the tragic events this past June in downtown Orlando, they responded in a truly generous and overwhelming way. In addition to continuing to hold those affected by this tragedy in our prayers, Thrivent matched all Choice Dollar directions as well as any personal donations made through Thrivent by July 31, 2016.

The final contributions are as follows:

- Choice Dollar Directions Total - \$86,428; after Thrivent match - \$172,856
- InFaith Personal Donations Total - \$29,117.75; after Thrivent match - \$58,235.50
- Total amount that was generously given to support the victims of the PULSE shooting = \$231,091.50

The local churches that worked together with Thrivent to receive the directions are continuing to work alongside multiple non-profit organizations in the Greater Orlando Area to create the most effective and direct impact with these funds in the lives of those affected by this tragic event.

We want to thank everyone that took the time out of their day to make these Thrivent Choice Dollar directions and for the personal donations of generosity and giving part of your treasure to help others.

We continue to hold in our prayers those affected by this tragedy. If you are interested in designating Choice Dollars, visit Thrivent.com to find a list of organizations.

The choice isn't always obvious!



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Megan Miessler to Direct LCS Programs

Lutheran Counseling Services (LCS) has promoted Megan Miessler, LCSW, DCE, to the fulltime position of Director of Programs. She will oversee the successful School Counseling Ministry which she began and will be involved in coordination and planning of programs and other entities throughout the organization.

LCS Executive Director Rev. Dr. Rick Armstrong said, "I am grateful for what Megan has brought to our organization in the nine years that she has been associated with LCS, and I look forward to what she will bring to LCS and the larger community."

LCS is a regional counseling agency and Recognized Service Organization of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod with satellite offices throughout central Florida. The organization recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

In addition to providing faith based individual and family counseling, LCS works with church bodies, judicatories and local churches to promote healthy congregations and day school ministries with counseling, training, consulting and coaching.

Miessler has eight years of parish ministry experience as a DCE and youth and family minister. She received her BS in Psychology from the University of Central Florida in 2005 and her MSW from the University of Central Florida in 2007. She was certified as a Director of Christian Education in the LCMS in 2010.

Miessler served at LCS as a Florida Registered Intern from 2007-2013 and received her State of Florida license as a clinical social worker in 2013. She recently received her certification as a Clinical Supervisor for Social Workers seeking licensure. Since 2013 she has directed the LCS school ministry program, which places counselors in six schools in the Central Florida area. She also now directs the counseling partnership LCS has with the Plymouth Senior Housing Center in Winter Park.

Miessler and her husband Matthew and their three children reside in Orlando. ■



Megan Miessler (center) was installed as LCS Program Director at her home congregation of Ascension/Casselberry. She is shown here with Ascension Pastor Tom Eggebrecht (left) and LCS Executive Director Rev. Dr. Rick Armstrong.

Florida-Georgia Part of Lutheran FCU "Firsts"

Lutheran Federal Credit Union, one of the country's few faith-based credit unions, is growing with each new member during its first calendar year in business.

"In a church body with such a deep and long history as the LCMS, it isn't often we have such a celebration of firsts," said Jane Dulle, said Lutheran FCU Chief Operation Officer.

Those milestones include the Florida-Georgia



Florida-Georgia District Business Manager John Elliott and Bookkeeper Laura Zirbel review paperwork.

District, the first of the LCMS' 35 districts to join Lutheran FCU.

According to Florida-Georgia Business Manager John Elliott, "no fees and better rates" with Lutheran FCU was the "driving force behind the move away from a commercial bank where the District had been paying \$2,000 in annual fees.

"That's money we can now use for the District's mission to serve, assist and encourage congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ."

Elliott also appreciates the improved customer service offered by the new organization. "They know who I am and ask what they can do for me when I call," he said. "When I call the bank, that isn't always the case."

The Lutheran Federal Credit Union received its charter approval in December of 2014. After a quiet launch in May of 2015, the Lutheran FCU opened for all eligible members in January of 2016.

Delegates at the 2016 LCMS convention recognized the value of services provided by Lutheran FCU when they passed Resolution 10-02, calling it a "way to connect our LCMS together in a common bond of biblical stewardship and daily household financial management."

To learn more, visit LutheranFCU.org or call 314-394-2790. ■



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District Board Reviews Critical Ministry Targets

Meeting in Orlando on August 26-27, the Florida-Georgia Board of Directors completed a full agenda that included a review of the District's critical ministry targets.

"Since our new Board members joined us last fall we have not had this opportunity," said District President Greg Walton. "As we plan for future days it is important that we together set some goals."

Highlights from the meeting reports are summarized below under the critical 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.*

- The third session of Emergent Leaders was well received with 12 participants. The goal is to broaden the program to other East Coast Districts.

Conference and revitalizing the parish nurse program.

- The District partnered with LCEF to sponsor four youth at the Teenpreneur Conference in Jacksonville, designed for teens from who operate their own business or are interested in starting one.

- The District is partnering with Pastoral Leadership Institute to strengthen pastoral leaders. Twelve District couples will be participating in the first session in October.

- The District is partnering with Mission: Haiti to present an in-country Haitian Teachers Conference from April 9-11, 2017. More information will be in upcoming issues of *Lutheran LIFE*.

- A planning team from Amazing Grace/Oxford is working with a group of District early childhood directors in preparation for launching a new early childhood ministry.



BOARD ROOM
by John List
District Communications Director

February 18-20, 2017, District High School Youth Gathering at the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort.

- Veterans of the Cross retreat for retired workers will convene March 6-8, 2017, under the theme "Boldly Engaging the Culture." More details will be available later this year.
- Planning has begun for the October 2017 President's Convocation. "As Luther taught about the priesthood of all believers, and 2017 being the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the focus will include laity and be a very different schedule than normal," said Walton.

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 witness to make known the love of Christ to all people.*

- District Executive for Outreach Doug Kallesen is working on a District Outreach Conference to be held regionally in multiple locations. The only cost would be lodging and travel.

- Florida-Georgia mission starts include: Faith/Hialeah (restart); Trinity SW Florida/Port Charlotte; Resurrection/Naples; Shekinah/Orlando; South Port Lucie (daughter of Redeemer/Stuart); Nocatee Mission/Nocatee; Atlanta area Hispanic; eight locations in central Georgia (District interviewing; will call soon); Muslim Ministry/Orlando-Tampa-Atlanta; Lakewood Ranch Mission/Lakewood Ranch (satellite model with Beautiful Savior/Sarasota); Clermont Mission/Clermont (daughter of Woodlands); N Macon/Macon (daughter of Mount Calvary/Warner Robins); Newnan Mission/Newnan.

The District Board of Directors will meet in Orlando on November 4-5. ■

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

- A District Operation Barnabas task force is being assembled to work with OB on a national level to assist US veterans and congregations in reaching veterans in their communities.

- The 2015-2016 Hearts for Jesus program benefitted the Garuna Foundation school construction projects

in Cambodia, contributing \$10,216.64 toward the effort.

- The District Middle School Youth Gathering is set for November 4-6, 2016, at Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center under the theme "Shaken and Stirred."

- Planning is under way for the



Marla Adrian accepts a blessings of encouragement check on behalf of the Amazing Grace Early Childhood Center/Oxford from Daniel J. Reichard, District VP Vice President LCEF, Finance & Administration

- The District Wellness Network — formerly the Church Worker Family Care Commission — is implementing plans to encourage and promote wellness among Florida-Georgia workers and their families. The District group will be partnering with Grace Place Wellness on a Spring Regional

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

LCEF—Florida-Georgia District Team:
Daniel J. Reichard, Vice President, DReichard@flgadistrict.org
Laura Zirbel, Loan Consultant, lzirbel@flgadistrict.org
Debbie Talbot, Administrative Assistant, dtalbot@flgadistrict.org
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EACH YEAR

through its Shared Blessings rebate program Lutheran Church Extension Fund gives back to those LCMS congregations who have an LCEF loan.

Shared Blessings rebate checks are issued to congregations

qualifying for an interest rebate from their LCEF loan, with the amount based on the percentage of communicant members who are LCEF investors.



This year, LCEF Florida-Georgia District distributed more than \$85,000 in rebate to 18 Congregations, including:

- ☞ Immanuel/Brandon, Florida
- ☞ First/Clearwater, Florida
- ☞ Living Faith/Cumming, Georgia
- ☞ Peace/Decatur, Georgia
- ☞ Zion/Fort Myers, Florida
- ☞ Good Shepherd/Gainesville, Georgia
- ☞ Holy Cross/Jacksonville, Florida
- ☞ St. Paul/Lakeland, Florida
- ☞ Christ The King/Largo, Florida
- ☞ Faith/Lecanto, Florida
- ☞ Faith/Marietta, Georgia
- ☞ Good Shepherd/North Fort Myers, Florida
- ☞ Trinity/Orlando, Florida
- ☞ Amazing Grace/Oxford, Florida
- ☞ Christ/Perry, Georgia
- ☞ Trinity/Trinity, Florida
- ☞ St. Paul/Weston, Florida

For information about how your congregation can participate in LCEF's Shared Blessings rebate program, please contact Dan Reichard in the District Office.

**Lutheran Church Extension Fund
Daniel J. Reichard,
Florida-Georgia Vice President
(877) 457-5556 extension 4
dreichard@flgadistrict.org**

LCEF Florida-Georgia District Shared Blessings to 18 Congregations Top \$85,000



Amazing Grace/Oxford: Marla Adrian, Chair of the Early Childhood Center Committee, Congregation President Bill Donaldson, LCEF District Vice President Dan Reichard



Christ/Perry: LCEF Congregation Advocate Robert Pickney, Treasurer Rick Hill, Pastor John Lehenbauer



Immanuel/Brandon: Pastor Daniel Brammeier with LCEF District Vice President Dan Reichard



Living Faith/Cumming: Jay Wendland, LCEF Congregation Advocate for Savior of All/Cartersville Don Bergwall who presented the check, Living Faith Pastor Timothy Droegemueller



Trinity/Orlando: LCEF Congregation Advocate Bruce Hahn and Trinity Business Manager Eric Havens



Trinity/Trinity: Pastor Marc Nauman with LCEF District Vice President Dan Reichard



Zion/Fort Myers: Pastor Curtis Deterding, Tom Cioper, Executive Board President Ken Koopman and Ben Place, LCEF Congregation Advocate



St. Paul/Lakeland: LCEF District Vice President Dan Reichard (left) and District LCEF Administrative Assistant Debbie Talbot (right) with St. Paul/Lakeland members Don Diltz and Paul Sicca, who serves as LCEF Congregation Advocate.

All Saints Part of Backpack 2 School Bash

All Saints Lutheran/Blairsville was one of a dozen churches and several community partners participating in the first annual "Backpack 2 School Bash" for Union County on Saturday, July 30.

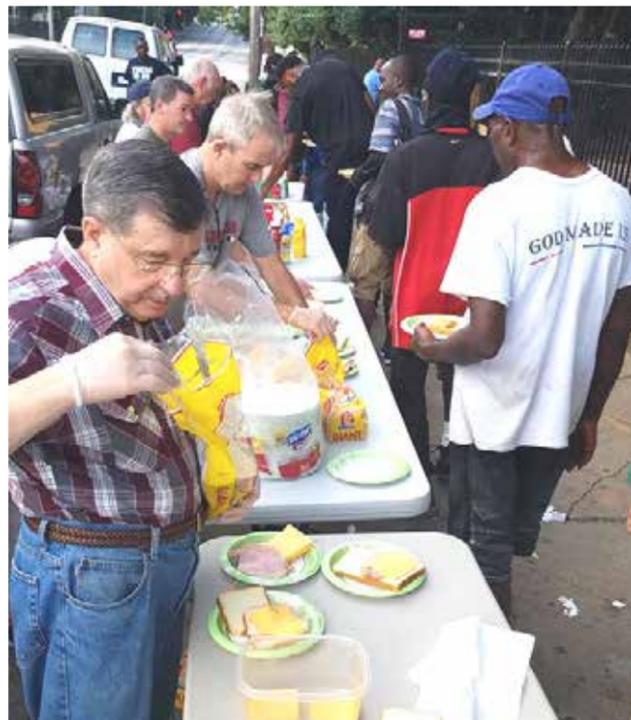
Thanks to the organizations' collective efforts, more than 275 students started the school year with new backpacks full of supplies.

Volunteer hosts met each family as they came to the event and escorted them around the gym to help the students fill their backpacks with the items on their individual supply lists. Everyone was treated to a free hotdog lunch, and the students enjoyed snow cones and popcorn.

"The volunteer hosts had a blast as they shared hugs from the children, and the parents were so thankful for their generosity," said All Saints Pastor David Wesche.

"It was truly a day of celebration."

Below — All Saints Pastor David Wesche (far left) with church volunteers participating in the Backpack 2 School Bash.



GRACE/ATLANTA members joined Stepping Stone Mission in serving the community's homeless community on August 20. Stepping Stone Mission has been serving Atlanta's homeless since July of 2009.



Vice President:
David Brighton
Mount Calvary/Warner Robbins

Laity Board Members:
Jay Wendland | Living Faith/Cumming
Robert Chambers | Grace/Atlanta

Commissioned Minister Board Member:
Lamar Stewart | Our Redeemer/Augusta

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

Trinity Youth Head to Alaska for Mission Trip

After a couple years of fundraising – and aided by a Short-Term Mission Grant through the Florida-Georgia District – youth of Trinity/Savannah flew up to Alaska at the end of July for a Lifetree Adventures mission trip devoted to serving the people of Big Lake.

The youth chose Ephesians 2:10 for their mission statement to Alaska: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

The Trinity group was split into two service groups: one built a trail that would be handicap accessible and the other worked at a facility that services teens who attend an alternative high school for students who are challenged in a regular academic environment. Projects at the school included fixing a ropes course, staining a pavilion, creating a trail to a campsite, laying and compacting gravel to be wheelchair accessible.

"These projects provided a new perspective for our youth in serving the Lord," said Trinity Youth Leader Rachel Hopkins. "Doing these 'good works' led them to experience in real ways how to 'love your neighbor' through serving. This got them all excited about wanting to do more servant event activities."

"As the leader at the alternative high school project said, 'I am glad you are doing this because it puts into your youth a servant mentality. It will last them a lifetime.' That is our hope for our youth – a desire to serve the Lord in all kinds of ways, at all kinds of times in their life!"

The Trinity group had such a good experience interacting with other youth groups from across the country that the leader of an Indiana group wants to coordinate a trip next year.

During the week, the Trinity group of six youth and three adults was taken to Talkeentna "to do the tourist thing," Hopkins added. "Trinity's youth took advantage of this and landed on a glacier near Mt. Denali, so they could have a snowball fight in July."

"It was a great time. God is good!"

Photos top to bottom — Trinity team members (l-r) Ryan Peirce, James Allen, Samantha D'Annunzio and Rachel Hopkins on seeing the fifth dump truck load of gravel being dropped off for their work project.

The Trinity mission team (l-r) Ryan Peirce, Julianne Thomas, Jacob Hopkins, Samantha D'Annunzio, Rachel Hopkins, Gabrielle D'Annunzio, James Allen, Christel-Ann Ramus, John Hopkins.

Trinity team members (l-r) Jacob Hopkins, Julianne Thomas, Gabrielle D'Annunzio, Christel-Ann Ramus and John Hopkins built a handicap accessible trail.





Quilters Efforts Benefits Many

On Sunday, August 14, Our Redeemer/Augusta dedicated 140 quilts for Lutheran World Relief. In addition, 130 personal health kits were collected for LWR, an international non-governmental organization that focuses on sustainable development projects and disaster relief and recovery.

Some 30 baptismal baby quilts and 20 prayer shawls were also dedicated during the service.

"Some of the quilts dedicated are used by the local fire department and placed on their trucks to give to families in need during tragic events such as a home fire," reported Our Redeemer Pastor Roger A. Schwartz.

"God continues to bless this type of ministry at Our Redeemer as our quilting group meets each Tuesday from 9am - noon and involves up to 30 people, both members and non-members." ■

Faith Celebrates Patriot Day

Students, faculty and staff of Faith School/Marietta assembled around the campus flag pole on September 9 for Patriot Day in remembrance of the 15th anniversary of September 11, 2001.

The flag was raised by some of the school's Boy Scouts. Those assembled sang "God Bless America" and "America the Beautiful" and recited the Pledge of Allegiance as well as the pledge to the Christian flag.

Poems and prayers were also part of the program.

The group was dismissed in silence in honor of the victims of the 2001 terrorist attack. ■



St. Peter Joins in Community Celebration

St. Peter/Dahlongega celebrated the United States' 240th birthday in a special way.

On Sunday, July 3, the worship service was themed "Sweet Land of Liberty." Rev. Dr. Gerhard C. Michael, Jr., pastor at St. Peter, challenged hearers, "Christian, Exercise Your Freedom by Serving Others," on the basis of Galatians 5:1, 13-25.

The next day, the congregation sponsored a booth on the town square, giving out about 100 copies of "Prayers for the Nation," a collection of petitions written by members including such concerns as mutual respect, responsible citizenship, a positive view about taxes, the judiciary, officers of the law, elected officials, families, peace, our enemies, one imprisoned, etc.

Additionally, members gave away more than 200 bottles of water. A Thrivent Action Grant provided funding to help the congregation sponsor this endeavor.

In commenting on the congregation's participation in the community's Independence Day celebration, Michael emphasized that this "was a way for St. Peter's members to live responsibly as citizens of our land and for the church to say we believe our Lord calls us to be involved, even as Jeremiah urged the Jewish exiles in Babylon 'to see the welfare of the city,' and Jesus instructed us to 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.'" ■



J. Blair Clark Installed as Trinity's Associate Pastor

The members of Trinity/Summerfield welcomed new Associate Pastor J. Blair Clark, Jr., and his wife Kimberley recently. Officiant for the August 28 installation service was Rev. Dan Kelm, Trinity Senior Pastor. Florida-Georgia District President Gregory Walton provided the message and performed the Service of Installation. Area pastors participated in the traditional Laying on of Hands and blessings for ministry.

The Clarks were welcomed between the worship services with a special Sunday brunch and reception.

Pastor Clark, a 1987 graduate of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, has served a number of congregations in a variety of roles. He is trained as a revitalization coach for pastors and congregations through the Transforming Churches Network (TCN) and successfully transitioned his former congregation through that process. He has served for the past 13 years as an online instructor of religion as a member of the faculty of American Public University Systems of Charles Town, WV. He will be fostering the development of small group ministries and Christian discipleship in his new role at Trinity.

The Clarks have three children: Jason and his wife Kaja of Troy, MI; Ashley and her husband Jared and daughter Eliora of Huntsville, AL; and Austin, who is completing his senior year in high school. ■



St. John Welcomes New Ministry Team Members

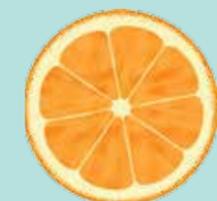


Rev. Jeffrey Shanks is the new Senior Pastor and Anette Shanks the Director of Family Life for St. John Church & School/Ocala.

Most recently he was worship pastor and she Director of Family Life at Royal Redeemer Church and School/North Royalton, OH.

Preaching at the August 8 installation service for Pastor Shanks was Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton. A potluck supper followed the 4pm service. ■

In Photo Below — Participating in the installation service were (l-r) Rev. Ken Schamens, Rev. Josh Pettit, Rev. Roy Zerbe, Rev. Ronald Scheer, Rev. Greg Walton, Rev. Doug Kallesen, Rev. Jeff Shanks, Rev. Stephen Lane, Rev. James Rockey, Rev. Ron Mueller, Rev. Joe Adams.



REGION 2

Vice President:
Frank Marshall
St Paul/Jacksonville

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

Lay 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

Hope Welcomes Pastor Shea Pennington

In an almost standing-room-only service on Sunday, July 31, Rev. Shea Pennington was installed as Associate Pastor of Hope/Plant City.

"It was the day that the congregation had been anticipating

for some time as their new Pastor served Hope during the 2014-15 academic year as their Vicar and then returned to Concordia Seminary/ St. Louis to complete his Master of Divinity program," said Hope Senior

Pastor Dean Pfeffer, who led the afternoon installation service.

Preaching was Florida-Georgia District President Gregory Walton, who based his message on various texts describing the work of a shepherd under the Good Shepherd.

Music featured Hope's Jubilation Singers, Praise Team, Handbell Choir and various instrumentalists.

Pennington, who hails from the Austin, TX, area received his undergraduate degree from Texas Christian University. Chief among his responsibilities will be leading Hope's youth ministry. He will also work side by side with Pfeffer in the daily ministry of the congregation into the community. ■



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

Above — (front, l-r) Rev. Nathan "Buck" LeGreco; Rev. Dean Pfeffer; Rev. Shea Pennington; Rev. Greg Walton; Rev. Ed Trinklein; (back, l-r) Rev. Charles Reich; Rev. Tom Block; Rev. Jerry Munz; Rev. Mark Harris; Rev. Miguel Sanabria; Rev. Kevin Youkum.

Hope/Plant City welcomed new members on Sunday, August 7, with applause and song. Shown with Hope Senior Pastor Dean Pfeffer (back, far left) are new members (front, l-r) Scarlett & Savannah Gembala; Rev. Shea Pennington; (middle, l-r) Joey, Jenna & Jamie Ford; Tony Gembala; Sandy Dahlke; Flint Seth; (back, second from l-r) Jacob Ford; Todd & Kathy Martens; Marilyn & Jon Taylor; Richard & Mary Decker; Brian Heipp.



Downtown Trinity Launches New Ministry

Trinity Church & School on August 26 began a new ministry designed to further mission work within Orlando and lead to a positive impact across the world.

Trinity has established a Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) club, which will serve K-8 students who attend Trinity as well as other downtown area schools. Led by Trinity staff and parent volunteers, this club is a charter of the national FCA Organization and will align with its mission, vision, values and structure.

FCA will meet every Friday afternoon on the Trinity campus and will include team-building and practicing good will as Christians through athletics as well as arts, crafts, dialogue and fellowship. ■

Glander to be Ordained, Installed in Immokalee

Amigos en Cristo will celebrate a milestone in the development of its mission work in Immokalee on Sunday, October 16, with the ordination and installation of Vicar Karl Glander. His father, Rev. Dennis E. Glander, will be the preacher.

Glander will be the third pastor that Amigos en Cristo, Inc., has trained, ordained and called into the pastoral ministry in the past three years.

"Karl will focus on the English speaking Hispanic and Haitian community in Immokalee," said Rev. Robert Selle, Founder and CEO of Amigos en Cristo. "God willing, our next pastor to train and ordain will be one of the men from our Hispanic congregation.

"Our ministry model relies on the formation of a team of bi-vocational pastors, each with their own specialties and strengths. In addition to his pastoral duties, Karl will continue to serve as the Service Director of the Immokalee Amigos Center where he oversees our social service programs and staff," Selle added. ■



Florida Gulf Coast/Estero's THRIVE Celebrates Second Anniversary



THRIVE COMMUNITY CHURCH/Estero, which recently celebrated its second anniversary, kicked into high gear in August in preparation for the start of the new academic year at Florida Gulf Coast University. In mid-August, Thrive sponsored a welcome event that attracted 1,000 students for fun and games. Thrive Pastor John Roth (above right) joined in the festivities with a ride on the mechanical bull. Later in the month, Thrive FGCU officers and interns enjoyed a leadership event at Riverside Retreat Center. Completing a challenge course encouraged team bonding.



REGION 4

Vice President:

Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers

Laity Board Members:

Jeff Richards | Hope/Bradenton
Evita Gonzalez | Beautiful Savior /Lehigh Acres

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

Star Wars Theme Enlivens Summer Camp



Costumes, special guests and creative menus were part of the fun at the Peace /Okeechobee Summer Camp.

One week was designated as Padawan Training. "Who better to get our future Jedi Knights in shape than the Okeechobee High Football Team," noted Peace Preschool Director Karen Smith. "These young men and their coaches were patient and kind. The force was strong in them!"

Another week was all about food. Campers and staff cooked, played games, counted and sorted food. The week culminated with a Star Wars lunch prepared by the campers.

"What the children didn't know was there were special visitors awaiting in the wings to join them," said Smith.

Those special guests included C.J. Smith (Darth Vader), Marshall Rucks (Hans Solo), Chewbacca (Matt Cook), Yoda (Gay Carlton) and Princess Leia (Jennifer Ceballos). "They were such good sports and the children were ecstatic," Smith concluded. ■



REGION 5

Vice President:

Steve Wipperman | Our Savior/Lake Worth

Laity 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

Faith North Palm Beach Welcomes Mark Stillman

Rev. Mark Stillman was installed as pastor of Faith/ North Palm Beach during an afternoon service on Sunday, August 14.

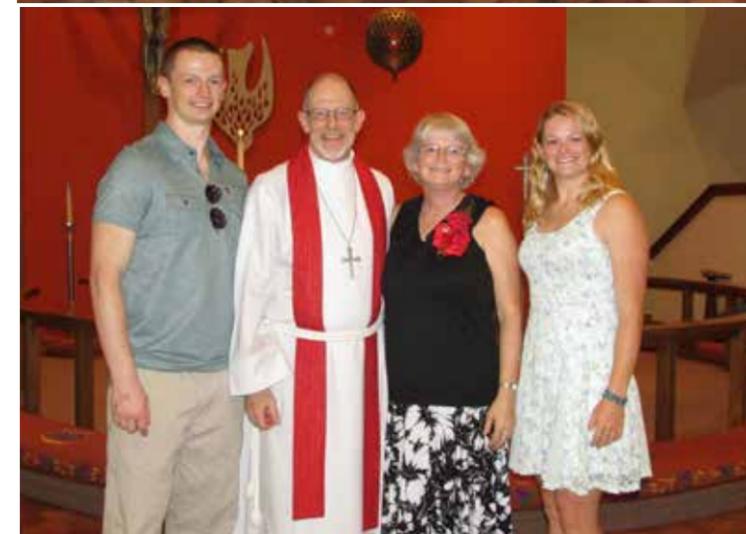
Highlighting the worship was special music under the leadership of Dr. David McCalla, Director of Traditional Music and Choir Director, and Janet Cunningham, Contemporary Music Director. Preaching and leading the Rite of Installation was Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton.

Pastors from Southeast Florida congregations participated in the service.

A congregation dinner followed the installation service.

A 1986 graduate of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, Stillman most recently served as senior pastor of Village Lutheran/Lanoka Harbor, NJ.

He and wife Tracey have four adult children, two of whom were at the installation service. ■



Participating in the installation service were (front, l-r) Our Savior/ Lake Worth Pastor Steve Wipperman, Region 5 District Vice President; Trinity/ Delray Beach Pastor Assistant Ken Larson; Faith/North Palm Beach Pastor Mark Stillman; Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton; Rev. Ray Huddle; (back, l-r) Rev. David Mueller; Redeemer/Stuart Deacon Joe Lamoreaux; Trinity/ Fort Pierce Pastor Craig Bode;; Rev. Scott Gress, Lutheran Counseling Services; Redeemer/Stuart Pastor David Albers; Trinity/Delray Beach Pastor Vince Putman.

SPECIAL EVENTS HIGHLIGHT ST. PAUL SUMMER – Among the special Sundays celebrated this summer at St. Paul/Weston were the "Blessing of the Backpack" service and a celebration of Pastor Tim Hartner's 40 years in the ministry. Shown directly below at the Backpack service are St. Paul children of all ages with Director of Youth and Family Ministry Jeremy Becker. Oversized balloon numbers and a cake were part of the day for Hartner's celebration (below left). ■



St Paul Weston's Blessing of the Backpacks

Florida-Georgia Vacation Bible Schools Take Kids on Range of Adventures



Timothy Lutheran Church/Woodstock invited members and the community to Cave Quest VBS from June 13-17. Some 112 children — preschoolers through students completing 5th grade — enjoyed a week of “Following Jesus the Light of the World.” Each day the students explored the rock solid foundation of Jesus’ love.



Cave Quest was the theme for VBS at Bethlehem/Fort Myers. Shown here are the students and congregation members who participated in the event.



Hope Lutheran/Hudson was transformed into a Barnyard Roundup for its July 18-22 Vacation Bible School. Part of the week’s activities included making care kits for the needy with the help of congregation members.



Vacation Bible School at St. Paul/Boca Raton focused on the theme “Cave Quest.”



VBS was a week full of music, games and more at First Lutheran/Clearwater. The theme was EVEREST: Conquering Challenges with God’s Mighty Power!



VBS at St. John/Ocala ended on July 29 with a celebration as four children and one adult were baptized into the Christian faith during the closing session. The week’s theme was Cave Quest.



VBS 2016 was a “farmtastic” time for all at Our Savior/Lake Worth.

LUTHERAN LIFE

Please send your congregation and school news — including your photography — to LutheranLife@aol.com



LCEF Florida-Georgia District sponsorship enabled four teens to attend the Teenpreneur Conference in Jacksonville. The conference was for teens who either have started a business of their own or who want to start a business of their own. Pictured with Florida Georgia Vice President LCEF, Finance & Administration Dan Reichard (center) are (l-r) Marina Roberts, Faith/Merritt Island; Nyah Marley, St. Paul/Jacksonville; Tyler Metz and Sarah Swetland, St. Luke’s/Oviedo.

NYG a Celebration of Identity

More than 22,000 participants from 48 states and 14 countries impacted New Orleans from July 16-20 as they convened under the theme "In Christ Alone" for the 13th triennial Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod National Youth Gathering.

For five days, youth experienced uplifting worship and mass events, explored scripture on aspects of the Gathering theme and beyond, participated in various services projects, savored fellowship with old and new friends.

Gathering planners designed the event for participants to come together around the book of Philippians. Four mass events featuring nationally known speakers, musicians and performers focused on aspects of the theme "In Christ Alone" – joy, identity, humility and community. LCMS President Matthew Harrison preached at Wednesday's closing worship.

During some 33,000 hours of volunteering, Gathering participants:

"In Christ Alone"

- ✦ filled more than 900 backpacks with school supplies;
- ✦ build the frame for a Habitat for Humanity home;
- ✦ donated 791 pints of blood;
- ✦ made 1,000 fleece hats for children with cancer;
- ✦ packaged 500,906 meals for Feeding Children Everywhere.

Twelve organizations received donations of items collected or collected at the Gathering, including 7,000 diapers and wet wipes; 500 health kits; 3,500 pairs of socks; 2,000 underwear items; 2,000 rolls of toilet paper and paper towels; and 1,000 toothbrushes.

Also in attendance at the Gathering were 580 Young Adult Volunteers, 200 Community Life Builders, 250 Gathering Planners and 580 other volunteers. Adults leaders in attendance attended special Interest Centers designed to support them in their ongoing work in youth ministry.

This was the 13th triennial National Youth Gathering of the LCMS. The next event is slated for July 11-15, 2019, at the US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, MN. ■



Florida-Georgia District Executive for School Ministries Mark Brink (left) and District President Greg Walton joined Florida-Georgia youth at the District event to kick off the Gathering.



Pastor Billy Brath of LiveUCF (above) and Pastor Jay Winters of University Lutheran/Tallahassee (below) led some of the Gathering breakout sessions.



Sarasota was represented at the Gathering by youth from Concordia and Beautiful Savior.



Amazing Grace/Oxford youth visited the NOLA fire department to deliver a huge container of homemade cookies in appreciation of their service.



Teens and counselors from Ascension/Casselberry preparing for the final National Youth Gathering mass event. The four NYG mass events featured acclaimed speakers, musicians and performers.



First/Gainesville contingent taking a photo break.



The group from Grace/Jacksonville celebrating their arrival in New Orleans.



The Faith/Marietta team completing their service work project at the NYG.



Trinity/Orlando youth at Mardi Gras World.



Faith/Fort Lauderdale teens on the streets of New Orleans with their counselor.

St. John/Ocala youth model the Mardi Gras masks they made at the District NYG event.



Woodlands/Montverde youth getting ready to leave New Orleans after the final worship service in the Mercedes Benz Superdome.



Grace/Naples youth inside the Mercedes Benz Superdome.



Uplifting worship with more than 22,000 other teens and adult leaders from across the globe was a Gathering highlight



Once back in Florida, youth from St. Paul/Lakeland hosted a breakfast for congregation members to thank them for their support.



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The BACKPAGE

Weekly Walks with Pastor Offer Prayer, Scripture, Exercise

For the first two weeks of July, Rev. James Wiggins Jr., Pastor of St. Paul/Jacksonville, led hour-long walks broken up at the half-way mark by Scripture reading and prayer time.

It was the second year Wiggins coordinated the walks, which attracted St. Paul members along with their friends and family. The treks began at 6am on a local college track and concluded at 7am.

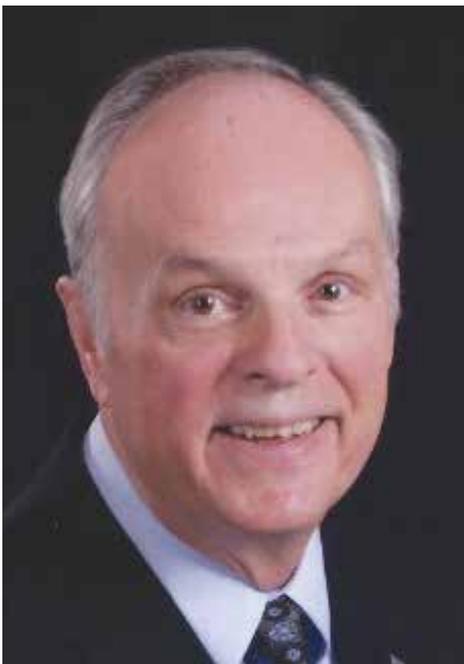
According to Wiggins the walks are “a really great time to not only get to know your members and leaders better, but also to meet other citizens from the community.

“The physical advantages are certainly great, but I just really enjoy the fellowship. And then, that special moment of prayer and Scripture time that we have together is really neat.” ■

Right: Rev. James Wiggins Jr. and his wife, Loretta (third and fourth from left), pose with other “Walk with the Pastor” participants in July on the track at Florida State College of Jacksonville.



LCEF Seeks Congregational Advocates to Assist With Expansion of Vital Ministries



Congregational Advocates have been at the heart of the LCEF ministry since 1902. An LCEF Congregational Advocate is a visible, local LCEF presence in his/her home congregation.

Don Bergwall has been most helpful to the congregation at Savior of All/Cartersville with his knowledge and understanding of how LCEF might be of assistance in various situation: borrowing, building, investing and other planned activities.

If you would like information on how to become an LCEF Congregational Advocate for your congregation, contact Debbie Talbot at the Florida-Georgia District Office.

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