

LUTHERAN LIFE

2016 | Volume 6
The Newsmagazine of the
Florida-Georgia District
of The Lutheran Church -
Missouri Synod

PREPARING FOR THE NEW YEAR





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

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Boldly Engaging the Culture Registration Opens for Annual Veterans of the Cross Retreat

Retired church workers and their spouses will be gathering at the Methodist Life Enrichment Center, Leesburg, FL, from March 6 - 8, 2017, for the annual Church Workers Retreat - Veterans of the Cross.

The retreat was established in 1979 by the late Florida-Georgia District President Dr. Lloyd Behnken to stimulate retired professional church workers with relevant ministry and senior presentations while helping people connect with friends from years past.

The theme for the the 2017 retreat will be "Boldly Engaging the Culture."

Rev. Dr. John Nunes, President, Concordia College/ Bronxville will be the keynote speaker.

Concordia will be the representative of the Concordia University System at the retreat.

Rev. Dr. Andrew Bartelt, Professor at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, will be the Bible study leader.

An evening of entertainment will be provided by Rev. Gary Schuschke, a member of the pastoral team at St. Luke's/Oviedo, as he dramatizes Martin Luther.WW

Rev. James Guelzow, former Vice President of the Florida-Georgia District and pastor emeritus of Messiah/Tampa, will be the preacher at the Tuesday evening communion service. Rev. Dr. Brian Kneser, Third Vice President of the Florida-Georgia District and pastor of host congregation Woodlands Lutheran/Montverde, will be involved in the service.

A highlight of each retreat is the presentation of Behnken Medallions to "veteran servants" in four categories: pastor, teacher, church at large and lay person.

Retreat registration is available online through the District website at <http://flgadistrict.org>. Newly retired workers are encouraged to contact the Florida-Georgia District office at 407-857-5556, ext. 8 with any questions. ■



John Nunes



Andy Bartelt



Gary Schuschke



Jim Guelzow



Brian Kneser

CALENDAR

Hearts for Jesus
January-June, 2017
District Schools and Churches

K-12 Administrators Conference
January 30-February 2, 2017
DaySpring Retreat Center/Ellenton, FL

Early Childhood Directors Conference
February 3-4, 2017
Faith Lutheran School/North Palm Beach, FL

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

School Music Festival
February 24, 2017
St. Luke/Oviedo FL

Veterans of the Cross
March 6-8, 2017
Life Enrichment Center/Leesburg, FL

2017 LW/ML Convention
June 22-25, 2017
Albuquerque, NM

High School Youth Servant Event
July 16-21, 2017
Atlanta, Georgia Area

President's Equip Conference: Reforming Living Stones
September 28-30, 2017
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

500th Anniversary of Protestant Reformation
October 31, 2017

DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

Calling Congregations

Faith/Dunedin, FL Sole Pastor
Our Savior/Griffin, GA Sole Pastor
Faith/Hialeah, FL Sole Pastor
Holy Trinity/Lutz, FL Sole Pastor
Marco Island/Marco, FL Associate Pastor
Woodlands/Montverde, FL Associate Pastor
Peace/Naples, FL Sole Pastor
Trinity/Orlando, FL Senior Pastor
Redeemer/Stuart, FL Associate Pastor
Trinity/Toccoa, GA Sole Pastor
Lakeside/Venice, FL Associate Pastor

Calls Issued

Christ the King/Largo, FL
called Rev Joseph Adams as Sole Pastor

Grace/Port St Lucie, FL
called Rev. Cris Escher as Sole Pastor

Redeemer/Stuart, FL
called Rev. David Gaddini as Associate Pastor

Trinity/Toccoa, GA
called Rev. Thomas Beaverson as Sole Pastor

Calls Accepted

Christ the King/Largo, FL
Rev Joseph Adams as Sole Pastor

Grace/Port St Lucie, FL
Rev. Cris Escher as Sole Pastor

Lutheran Church of the Cross/Port Charlotte, FL
Rev. Raymond Stolarczyk as Associate Pastor

Calls Declined

Christ the King/Largo, FL
Rev. Mark Mueller as Sole Pastor

Redeemer/Stuart, FL
Rev. David Gaddini as Associate Pastor

Transferred to Other Districts

Rev. Edwin T Harkey to New England (O)

Transferred from Other Districts

Ms. Kimberly A Newman to Michigan (C)

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Assignments

Ms. Sarah E Germain, Concordia/Ann Arbor
Teacher, Grace/St. Petersburg, FL (C)

Ms. Ellen J Reikowski, Concordia/Austin
Teacher, Immanuel/Brandon, FL (C)

Rev. Karl P Glander, Concordia Seminary/St. Louis
Pastor, Amigos en Cristo/Immokalee, FL (O)

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Rev. John Blair Clark, Jr
Associate Pastor, Trinity/Summerfield, FL (O)

Rev. James P Martin
Pastor, St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA (O)

Rev. Jeremy Allen Davis
Chaplain, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces/
St. Louis, MO (O)

Rev. Andrew J Ritchie
Associate Pastor, St. Paul/Lakeland, FL (O)

Rev. Christopher Escher
Pastor, Grace/Port Saint Lucie, FL (O)

Called to Glory

Rev. John P Jackson (O)
Rev. Richard Wertz (O)

Removed from the Roster

Rev. Paul Stark, Resigned (O)

Change of Status within the District

Rev. Ronald R Mueller from Active to Emeritus (O)
Mr. Donald L Rousseau from Candidate to Emeritus (C)
Ms. Barbara Phillips from Active to Candidate (C)
Ms. Erica von Ebers from Active to Candidate (C)
Ms. Sharon K Preston from Candidate to Emeritus (C)

LIFELINES

The only thing worse than moving is having to pack everything up and *not* move! We recently replaced flooring in our home. It wasn't like going out and purchasing a new area rug, or even carpeting. This was a major investment which required a great deal of preparation. In order to replace the flooring we had to pack up the entire first floor of our home. Every drawer in my desk had to be emptied, every book on the bookshelves had to be boxed

year ago it was suggested that we just replace it all. Like most dutiful husbands, I continued to put it off. Finally Edith convinced me in September to look at flooring, and before I knew what was happening it was happening! It was time to take action. Timing, of course, is everything. I mentioned to the installers that I had a very small window of opportunity and only certain dates would work.

The installers informed me that replacing flooring is apparently a very common thing before the holidays. Fortunately our timeframes matched, and having the floors complete

vacation prepare by getting things lined up at work and anticipate going to a special place, or perhaps just staying home in solitude.

Throughout the next year we are celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Preparation has begun across the District and Synod, and the focused theme is "It's Still All About Jesus!" The Synod has offered resources on their website, and I know that various celebrations are planned all over this District. Keep in mind, if you haven't already made plans — it's not too late. Also keep in mind that you don't have to celebrate only in October, but spreading this

on the blessings of our theology and practice, that certainly wasn't Luther's focus. He was preparing the Church for a time when people would have to stand up for their faith in Jesus. He wasn't looking at the next year. His focus was on eternity with Jesus.

Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation. The Prophet Isaiah writes: *"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'" (Is 40:1-5 ESV).* We have often seen this fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus, who came to prepare the way for Jesus. However, John was neither alone, nor was he the first to have pointed people to Jesus. He stands in a long line of the prophets, who for centuries, proclaimed the promise. And you and I also stand in that line as ones who are called on to prepare as we anticipate the Advent of Jesus.

Advent isn't a season to cause us to look back on some ancient event of long ago. The Jesus who once came to a manger in Bethlehem is coming again. Our job is to engage in business until He returns. We are to be engaged in the Master's business, even, and especially, during the weeks leading up to the celebration of Christmas!

Did you know that Christmas is one of the most opportune times of the year to share the good news of Jesus? Even non-believers are a little more open to hearing the good news. It's all around us in familiar carols of faith to the magnificent mimic of God's grace in giving gifts to one another.

Almost everything about this season points us to Jesus. Are you prepared to share the reason for the season and how He's filled your life with His joy?

My granddaughter turned two on December 11. I still get as excited to tell people about this little bundle of Noelle Joy as I was on the day she was born. That's the thing about good news. We don't mind sharing it. Just ask the fans of the winning team, and see if they aren't happy to tell you about the victory! Ask the recipients of an award, and they will likely tell you how grateful they are for receiving that kind of honor. The truth is, we were created with this intense desire to share good news. Why is it that many lose some of that intensity when it comes to sharing about Jesus?

+++

Looking beyond the season to the year ahead, how will God use you to prepare the way as we anticipate the advent of Jesus as His servant?

You have been chosen in Jesus. In fact, He says that He chose you before the foundation of the world! What an amazing truth. In fact, Peter reminds us, "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you might declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9).

It's not just pastors or professional church workers that

are chosen and called to prepare the way. Every one of us has been chosen and called. Luther called this the Priesthood of all believers. Through the blood of Jesus you have been declared a priest for God. He has entrusted you with the privilege and responsibility of sharing what He means to your life.

Let's make it a year of celebration, not just for the Reformation, but for how God will use us to connect people to Jesus. Let 2017 be a year to rejoice that in His grace Jesus has called you to be part of His priesthood of all believers. Let 2017 be a year to challenge ourselves to grow in His Word, to edify His church, to support His Kingdom by being a representative of His presence in the world. God has called you to prepare the way in 2017. He's encouraging you to anticipate all that He desires to do through you. So be a forerunner for Jesus, not just in anticipation of Advent, not just during the season of Christmas, but throughout 2017 and beyond. Engage in the Master's business to connect people to Jesus!

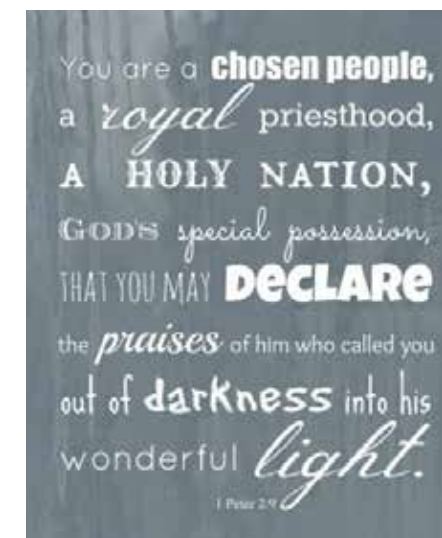
As for me, it will be a new beginning, and with a new beginning comes new opportunities. Just like the year ahead, it is filled with endless possibilities. Now is the time to prepare and anticipate!

God's blessings to you for a joyous celebration of Jesus' birth! May you be prepared as you anticipate His presence in all of your celebrations and as you discover opportunities to share His love!

All of God's best for a healthy and



happy new year, remembering that Jesus is the reason for the season!



In His Peace!
GREG



up, and every piece of electronic equipment had to be unplugged and packed away. Every cabinet had to be emptied, every piece of furniture removed, every picture taken off the walls, all so that the experts could come in, demolish and then replace the flooring. I have taped and filled more boxes than I care to count. I have lugged more furniture, along with those boxes, to overstuffed bedrooms on the second floor. We felt as if we could be featured on the show "Hoarders."

It all started with some cracked tiles we couldn't replace. Over a

before the holidays will be an added bonus. However, that meant that all the preparations had to be done in a very short span of time, and I had to be home to help accomplish them, or else ... We are anticipating, with excitement, how things will look when it's complete. Life is filled with preparing and anticipating.

Many medical procedures require preparation, as well as anxiety, and people are filled with anticipation of getting back to normal. Students looking to the end of their studies prepare for their tests and anticipate graduation. Workers getting ready for

celebration throughout the year will have a greater impact. In fact, I'm aware of a celebration already in January 2017. This is a wonderful opportunity to let your community know you're there and that all are welcome. It might be a clothing drive or food drive, it may be special worship opportunities

I know of several congregations that have spent the last few years anticipating and preparing for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and have plans for every month of the year. While it is good to take pride in our heritage and to reflect

District Educators Delve into becoming

“All Things 2 All People” at 2016 Conference

Educators from 38 Florida-Georgia District schools gathered at Orlando’s Wyndham Orlando Resort from September 28-30. Some 64 of the 450 participating registrants were new workers in the 2016-2017 school year.

The theme — All Things 2 All People — was based on I Corinthians 9:22: “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.”

“Lutheran schools in Florida and Georgia are instant opportunities for congregations to engage the incredible diversity of our communities,” said Mark Brink, Executive Director School Ministries. “The greatest impact will come when we strive to be as St. Paul said... ‘all things to all people that by all possible means I might save some.’”

Conference components included plenary sessions, workshops, worship and fellowship. The 73 workshops covered a range of topics relevant to the theme, with sessions geared to educators according to student age and subject matter.

Plenary Speakers Offer Insights, Challenges

Four plenary speakers with impressive credentials and varied backgrounds offered insights and encouragement to the educators.



Yared Halche

Dr. Yared Halche, Facilitator for Mission Engagement for the Southeastern District, was born and raised in Ethiopia, where he started serving in the Lutheran Church of Ethiopia as a youth leader during the difficult communist era. He studied in Ethiopia, Norway and the United States, where he earned his PhD in missiology from Concordia Theological Seminary/Fort Wayne.

After service as a seminary teacher in south Ethiopia, Halche came to the States and became a missionary and mission developer. He was a regional director for African Immigrants Ministry on the west coast, and pastored an Indiana congregation whose members hail from 17 different countries.

“Dr. Halche shared the powerful story of how God used people in his life to bring him to Christ,” Brink said. “He is a strong representative of the ‘many nations’ that come to our Lutheran schools daily, in need of the saving grace found only in Jesus Christ.”



Paul Taylor

Speaker Paul Taylor, Executive Vice President of Special Projects at the Pew Research Center, “helped paint the picture of what our country and the rest of the world will look like demographically between now and 2060,” Brink reported.

A former newspaper reporter whose career included 14 years as a foreign correspondent, Taylor has authored several books, including *The Next America* and *See How They Run*. He graduated from Yale University with a degree in American Studies. Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about issues, trends and attitudes shaping America and the world. In his position with Pew Research Center, Taylor oversees demographic, social and generational research.

District educators “were challenged to consider how they can best prepare today’s students for lives of discipleship in the world they will live and work in as they grow to adulthood,” Brink said.



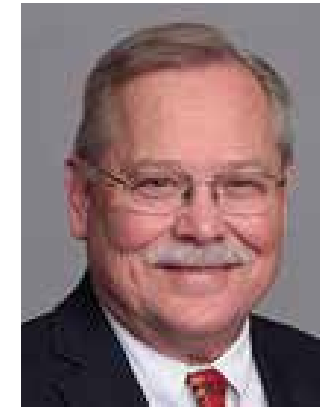
Sam Ludington

Sam Ludington, Deputy Director of Children of Inmates in Miami and a research associate with Justice and Security Strategies, is an active member of Holy Cross/North Miami as well as member of the Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors. He graduated with a degree in economics from Northwestern University before completing a Master’s in biomedical sciences at Barry University.

Ludington is a graduate of the Leadership Miami Program for emerging leaders in Miami, Leadership Florida’s Connect Florida for the top 40 under 40 in the state and is now in Miami Fellows, an intensive leadership program for the 16 most promising leaders in Miami. For the past 15 years, Ludington — a Haitian-American — has traveled to Haiti to coordinate a Christmas party for the children in Carrefour.

“Sam shared the captivating story of how being part of a Lutheran church school ministry has dramatically

impacted his life,” Brink noted, adding that Ludington’s affiliation with Holy Cross began as a kindergarten student. “He encouraged teachers to always be prepared to be excellent, because young lives are influenced by them every day.”



Terry Schmidt

As Director of Schools for the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Terry Schmidt functions as the chief advocate for 2,068 Lutheran schools serving more than 190,000 students. He emphasized his conviction that the future success of the LCMS is directly linked to the health and vitality of Lutheran schools, which are “located on the front line of the North American mission field and strategically positioned for

teaching and reaching.”

Schmidt served Lutheran schools in Illinois and Wisconsin after starting his teaching career in Papua, New Guinea. He has been honored with the Lutheran Education Association’s Christus Magister award and its Outreach Leader award as well as with the Ablaze Partner award from LCMS World Missions.

“Terry is truly passionate about his love for Christ and for sharing that love with children and families through Lutheran school ministries,” Brink said. “He is a great encourager of Lutheran school educators as those on the front line as they engage families for the sake of the Gospel.”

Devotions, Worship Integral Part of Conference



Greg Walton

As chaplain for the conference, Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton led daily devotions and was the preacher at the worship service. He shared “an outstanding, encouraging and challenging message to equip, empower and



Glenn Gerber (left), Executive Director of Schools for the Southern District LCMS, with Florida-Georgia District Executive Director School Ministries, Mark Brink and more than 250 gift cards for Baton Rouge Lutheran School staff and families affected by flooding in Baton Rouge, LA

engage others in our efforts to connect them to Jesus through Lutheran school ministries,” said Brink.

Prince of Peace/Orlando Pastor Ken Green designed the worship service and was the officiant.

The Educators Conference worship service offering is typically around \$1,000. “This year, we asked those attending to bring gift cards to assist staff members and school families from Baton Rouge Lutheran School in Louisiana,” Brink said. “Their homes were flooded late this summer. The outpouring of generosity was overwhelming as the offering totaled nearly \$11,000!”

Brink delivered the gift cards and a check to the Southern District Office in Slidell, LA. The offering was then delivered to Baton Rouge Lutheran where distribution of the gift cards took place.

“What an incredible response by God’s people to help others in a great time of need,” Brink added.



Some of those honored at this year's Educators Conference with their awards.

Outstanding Educator Awards

A highlight of every Florida-Georgia Educators Conference is the presentation of the Ben Eggers Outstanding Lutheran Educator Awards, named in honor of the District's first Parish Services Executive. Educators are nominated for the award by their peers, with final selections made by a committee of colleagues.

Honored this year were:

- ❖ Sherry Lane of Holy Trinity/Tampa, FL, where she serves as Reading & Math Intervention specialist and in the library. She earned both her B.S. in elementary education and her M.S. in Education, Reading Specialist from Florida State University. Lane holds Florida Department of Children and Families Credentials.
- ❖ Cathy Douglas of Holy Trinity/Tampa, where she is VPK Director/Admissions Director. Douglas is a Child Development Specialist and state certified in the area of Early Childhood Development and Education. She holds Florida Department of Children and Families Credentials.
- ❖ John Glanzer of St. Luke's/Oviedo (SELC) where he is a middle school teacher. He holds both a B.S. in History and an M.A. in Education from Concordia/Seward.
- ❖ Marty Zabel of Trinity/Delray Beach, where he serves as Staff Mentor. He graduated from Concordia/Saint Paul with a B.A. in Elementary Education.

The Barnabas Award

Barnabas, Son of Encouragement, Awards are presented by the Educators Conference to recognize pastors who demonstrate their zeal for ministry through Lutheran schools as integral members of the school ministry team. At this year's conference, an individual pastor and a pastoral ministry team were honored.

- ❖ Pastor Paul Burtzlaff of Our Savior/St. Petersburg. Burtzlaff has been Our Savior's Senior Pastor since 2006, when he and his family relocated to Florida from Cleveland, OH, where he had been Associate Pastor of St. Paul Church & School/Westlake.
- ❖ The St. Luke's/Oviedo (SELC) Pastoral Ministry Team of Rev. Wally Arp, Rev. Brian Roberts and Rev. Gary Schuschke.



Cathy Douglas, VPK Director/Admissions Director at Holy Trinity/Tampa, and Sherry Lane, Reading & Math Intervention Specialist at Holy Trinity, with their Ben Eggers Outstanding Lutheran Educator Awards.



The LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs getting ready to greet Florida-Georgia Educators Conference attendees. From left, Jacob, Luther, Ruthie, Sasha and Hannah

Accreditations Awarded

During the Conference, the following schools received National Lutheran School and Florida-Georgia District Accreditation:

- ❖ Family of Christ/Tampa, FL, Jennifer Snow, Administrator
- ❖ Woodlands Preschool/Montverde, FL, Emma Loughrey
- ❖ Timothy Preschool/Woodstock, GA, Barbara Bowler, Director
- ❖ St. Luke's/Oviedo, FL, Greg Register, Administrator (SELC)
- ❖ Loving Arms PS/Largo, FL, Jessica Miller, Director
- ❖ Prince of Peace PS/Orlando, FL, Julianne Wiegand, Director
- ❖ Holy Trinity/Tampa, FL, Kelly Reilly, Administrator
- ❖ Gloria Dei/Davie, FL, Sharon Vonada, Administrator
- ❖ Trinity/Orlando, FL, Kevin Brockberg, Patty Moser, Administrators (Also, AdvancEd Accreditation)



Ministry Anniversary Milestones

10 Years

Tanya Barfield
Heather Bleier
Carol Covington
Crislyn Grubb
Gabrielle Liebertz
Shannon Lingley
Terri Monsees
Abby Moss
Paulette Mueller
Rochelle Nickerson
Erica Rojas
Tammy Sojka
Anna Stapleton
Jessica Wittcop

15 Years

Ileana Barbari
Maydelline Barrioneubo
Susan Brockbert
Jan Campbell
Dorothy Costley
Cathy Douglas
Amanda Hurm
Sherry Lane
Debbie Pahl
Kelly Reilly
Brenda Spieler
Jodi Tucker

20 Years

Joseph Guagliardo
Tim Schmidt
Julianna Wiegand

25 Years

Carla Adams
Kristi deBoer
Laurie Exner
Anita Glanzer
Steven Hoffschneider
Peter LeBorious
Dave Leimer
Sally Mennicke
Steve Mennicke

30 Years

Linda Fernquist
Kathy Lisi
Joy Reitsma
Bill Vollman
Monika Walcheski

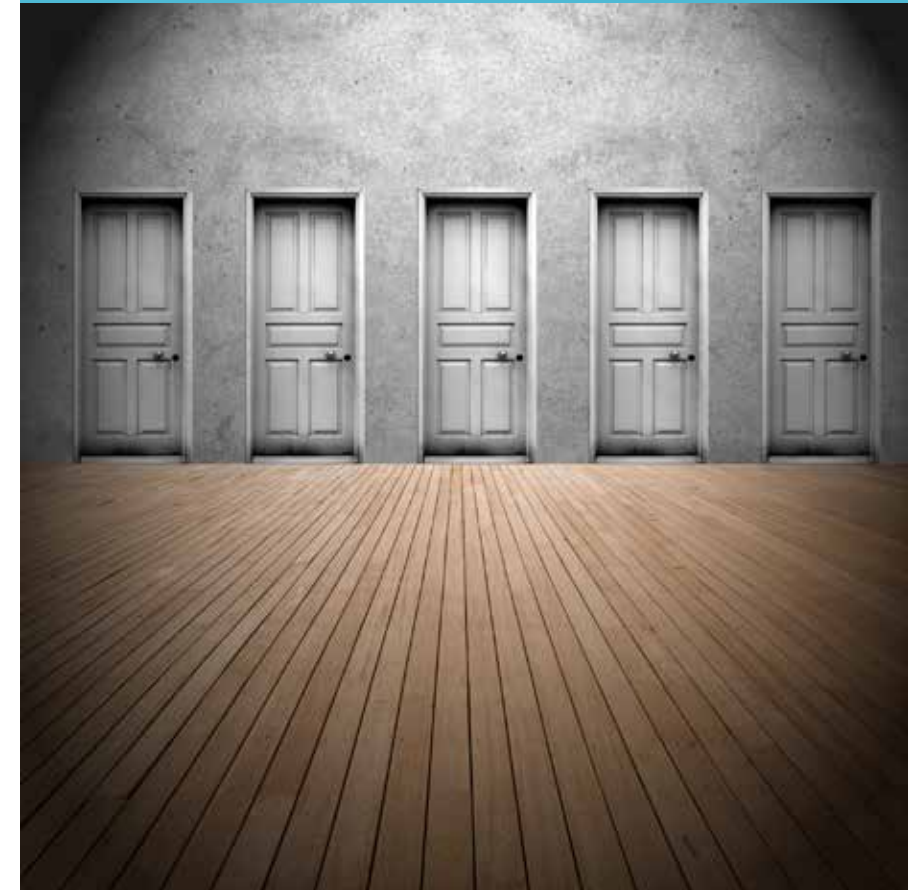
35 Years

Sonja Gorwood

40 Years

Beth Ahrens
Karl Floetke
Ruth Wiedenmann
Jeff Wittcop

The choice isn't always obvious!



Sometimes the right property isn't easy to identify.

Real estate broker John List expertly guides clients through myriad challenges to secure the home that meets their needs. He knows and understands market conditions, the importance of being near excellent schools, churches, retail, recreational, financial and business centers. John takes the time to learn each client's goals before researching available properties and connecting them to those that best answer their needs. His personalized service continues through every step of the process until a successful closing. John is equally adept at selling homes, offering 30 years of proven experience backed by a powerful marketing program and an extensive broker network. If you're considering the purchase or sale of a home, call John today.



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Ken Krueger to Quarterback Credit Union

The Board of Directors of the Lutheran Federal Credit Union recently announced the appointment of Rev. Ken Krueger as its new CEO, effective November 14, 2016.



Krueger is filling the vacancy left when founding CEO Tom Buuck resigned earlier in 2016 due to personal health concerns. Krueger, who transitioned to his new role from his position as pastor of Grace Celebration Lutheran/Cordova, TN, has served as the vice chair of the LFCU board of directors, where he chaired the governance committee.

"Ken is an exceptional leader and a committed Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod member with energy, vision and demonstrated success," said LFCU Chairman Michael Kzirian said. "We are blessed to have him on the team!"

Prior to earning his M.Div. and being ordained, Krueger received advanced degrees in law (JD) and business (MBA) from the University of Virginia, as well as in public health (MPH) from Boston University. Among other roles, he served in executive positions at the Universities of Wisconsin and Arizona State, as well as serving as CEO of the American Red Cross Grand Canyon Chapter, in Phoenix, AZ. His leadership was instrumental in helping the chapter receive the 2008 Nonprofit Team of the Year Award sponsored by Arizona Business magazine.

Reflecting on his appointment, Krueger said, "I am honored and excited to have been selected to lead this wonderful organization. I thank everyone who has helped to make LFCU what it already is and am determined to build upon LFCU's momentum by letting every LCMS Lutheran know they have their own credit union — one that stands ready to serve them and the church!"

first place. It happens. Good things don't always get done by good people. False starts, blind spots, unknown or other frustrations.

The cycle continues. Can this cycle ever be short circuited? Sure we can be intentional about recruiting apprentices and helping newcomers and that might work. But it is a job that requires constant diligence. As a coaching leader you are sensitive to helping others succeed. You have your ear to the ground for opportunities to work with people and encourage them. But could there be another way?

Yes! How about a small operations committee or ministry support committee that is the repository of all things known and needed to make ministry happen at your church? How about they become the internal "leadership coaches" for ministry programs and projects? What does that look like?

First it consists of a small group of people, perhaps your experienced mature servants who have the gift of service. They don't have to do the job but they take joy in helping others do the job. They like to work with others and support them. They have a humble knack for keeping in touch and recognizing when and how and how much to help. They are the people with the savvy to capture the best practices at your church. They know the best ways to

recruit, communicate, promote, get resources, money and permission for certain things. They don't do it but they coach other groups and ministries at the church to take responsibility and do it. Plus it gives those who may not be as physically capable anymore a way to make a huge contribution.

Along the way they celebrate other people's success. They encourage, they guard the mission and vision

of the ministry and help the desired culture of mission and ministry to be embedded in an ever growing number of servants in the church. They keep the pastor in the loop and work with the pastor for their own continued learning and development. Finally an end to the cycle of losing momentum, because it's their job to share the wealth! ■

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

The COACHING LEADER

by Rev. Scott Gress
Lutheran Counseling Services
Leadership Coach



Now you are left with recruiting someone to take their place but also to somehow get them up to speed to where this valued person who left used to be. It is a tough job. We often hope and assume they will "figure it out" on their own or with the help of that elusive "someone."

So the cycle continues: find the new person, get them up to speed through the rocky road of not knowing or making the same mistakes that have been made before. Then finally, God willing, getting in the groove and doing a great job. Yet there will be the life event, the health issue, the family issue or other thing that yet again takes them away from that place of serving.

Not a big deal? How many times does a new ministry or enthusiasm for accomplishing something stumble or fail because someone forgot to get something announced or forgot the newsletter deadline or didn't think of posting to the website or Facebook page or the church Twitter account? How many times does someone drop the ball because they forgot to get a key to the fellowship hall or even reserve the space? How many times is there frustration because people felt overwhelmed and just didn't know what do next or they didn't want to be embarrassed or were afraid to fail? They felt stuck and so just did nothing — or didn't even want to volunteer in the

Share The Wealth



Stepping Stone Mission Changing

-Doug Kallesen, Florida-Georgia Executive Director Missions & Outreach

Pastor Joseph Song tells of his journey into homeless ministry and how it has changed his life and also many others. A pastor in the U.S. for many years, he was serving as a mentor during a youth mission trip to Washington D.C. in 2009 when the Holy Spirit began calling him to serve the homeless in America. During this trip, a day was spent "living" with the homeless.

Following the trip, Pastor Song felt led to be one of our Lord Jesus' vessels for love, mercy, grace and hope for the homeless, a call the Lord confirmed in the heart of his wife, Sharon. Stepping Stone Mission was launched in July of 2009.

The mission simply put is: "We love because He first loved us!" (1 John 4:19) Weekly, Pastor Song, Sharon and many local Lutheran congregations and pastors volunteer to feed, lead worship, pray and serve

homeless people at five locations in the downtown Atlanta area. Stepping Stone Mission is helping homeless, men, women and children take the appropriate steps to advance their lives. They are given a hand up not a hand out. They are loved and cared for with dignity and respect. This ministry is much more than a feeding program.

Stepping Stone Mission feeds 500 or more homeless people on Saturdays and Sundays in the neighborhood parks and streets. Here they are given food, clothing, the chance to worship in the great outdoors with prayer, song and a sermon. There, they become a worshipping people gathered around the Word of God. Most of Pastor Song's congregation would not be welcomed in many churches, but at his church they are embraced, welcomed and cared for.

Over the past years the ministry has grown to provide midweek gatherings for Bible study, prayer, memorization and catechism instruction — 29 baptisms have resulted. On Wednesdays, homeless leaders are further trained with a specific goal of reaching out to the

more than 10,000 homeless people in Atlanta through small group ministry.

Pastor Song indicated that homeless people welcome the opportunity to learn from God's Word and find hope in their world. Stepping Stones has also established a homeless choir, and people are challenged in the mid-week to read either one chapter a day out of the Bible or seven in a week. They are also assigned memory work and given a test at the beginning of the next week. If they pass the test they get a \$5 gift card. That's a big deal to someone who has no job!

Stepping Stone Mission through an LCEF loan was able to purchase a center at 748 Gary Road NW in Atlanta near one of the parks where the homeless community gathers. The Mission is rehabbing the building and currently does hold one of their worship services, feeding, etc. from this site. They also teach midweek Bible class midweek there. It's a base of operation now even with rehabbing going on. The homeless also pitch in to help.

In the future Pastor Song said they will be able to offer a shelter, job training, health checkups and

Lives of Atlanta's Homeless

routine medical care, counseling, legal assistance and other help focused on the homeless community. The Mission is supported by many volunteers, including local LCMS pastors who offer instruction in the catechism, evangelism and meet mercy needs. It's a team effort with all hands on deck including some of our retired pastors!

Stepping Stones is a mission in the Florida-Georgia District that is partially supported through congregational mission offerings to the District. Thank you for your support! The same day that Pastor Song was interviewed for this article he was meeting with members of Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL, who were dropping off 650 emergency medical kits for the homeless. District congregations also brought items to the President's Convocation to bless this ministry. Stepping Stones Mission is our mission and we can all help!

Recently, the 14th annual Spiritual and Leadership retreat was held at Daniel's Prayer Garden in Alpharetta, GA. Pastor Song offered special thanks to Rev. Dr. Victor Belton, Rev. Ray Borchelt, Rev. Gary Dehnke, Rev. Tim Droegemueller, Rev. Adam Ellsworth, Rev. Kevin Elseroad, Rev. Tom Kenny, Rev. Anthony Lee and Rev. George Murdaugh for teaching sessions on getting closer to God, feeling blessed in the midst of stress, changing how we think and feel and facing our fears and giants. The retreat trained a total of 24 people who will be charged with caring for, loving and serving their fellow man. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you...in My Father's house are many rooms."

What a glorious day that will be when Jesus returns giving rest to the restless and home to the homeless! (John 14:2)

For more information, please visit steppingstonemission.net. ■



Amazing Grace/Oxford members Marilyn Harris, Joy Wilkins, Lois Schaefer with Sharon and Pastor Joseph Song of Stepping Stones Mission.



Some of the participants from the 14th Annual Spiritual and Leadership Retreat



Stepping Stones Ministry Notes

The Stepping Stone Choir is available to come to your church and tell your congregation about their ministry. Hosts are asked to cover travel costs. Heavy jackets (mostly for men) are needed with the onset of Winter. Pastor Song said these coats are available at Walmart however it may be easier to just send gift cards for Walmart. Back Packs are needed by March 2017. Marta Transportation Cards are needed for the homeless to travel to the Stepping Stone Center. Servant Events — if your church wants to do a servant event let Pastor Song know. Monthly Support from individual and church donors are greatly appreciated and needed to help underwrite this ministry.

LWML Stands Firm in Faith at PGA National Resort & Spa

-Joan Koch, District LWML Communications

What a fantastic convention the LWML Florida-Georgia District had in Palm Beach Gardens, FL! The PGA National Resort and Spa was a perfect place for all of our fun ... convenient location, great restaurants and even a Publix close by,

The opening worship service on Friday evening was wonderful. We were so blessed to have two pastoral counselors leading us in worship and sermon. We enjoyed meeting the new candidates for office along with the outgoing officers after worship; and we cannot thank our exhibitors enough for coming and sharing their ministries with us.

+++

Saturday was our work day. We put lots of hard work into picking mission grants for the 2016-2018 biennium. The Mission Grant Committee showed a PowerPoint which gave us all the information about the mission grants that we were about to vote on. It was a difficult decision, but we voted on ten grants and one partial grant to be funded; \$104,192.01 is our new Mission Grant

goal. The following are the grants that will be funded in the 2016-2018 biennium:

- Financial Aid for Concordia Theological Seminary Good Food Co-Op/Fort Wayne, IN
- Concordia Seminary/St. Louis – Food Bank
- Brevard Rescue Mission – Casa Carol and Julia’s House
- Emergency Housing Assistance for Samaritan Ministries
- NLS Cartridges for the Lutheran Library for the blind
- Support for Completion of Medical Degree
- Rebecca’s Garden of Hope 2017 Connecting Congregations
- LCS Ministry Enhancements at Faith Lutheran Church and School/Eustis, FL
- Good Shepherd LC/School Classroom
- Bigger Wheels for Good Shepherd
- Partial grant for Community Resource Center

Next, we voted on new officers. The candidates were top notch. It, again, was a difficult decision. So many wonderful candidates to choose from. Our new LWML Florida-Georgia District officers are:

- President Patricia “Trish” Aamoth;
 - Vice President Mission Grants Juanita Bagnall;
 - Vice President Spiritual Growth Louise Cox;
 - Financial Secretary Linda Peters;
 - Junior Pastoral Counselor Rev. Alan R. Koch;
 - Nominating Committee for 2016-2018 — Lori Dorman, Chairman, Elaine Stier and Peg Henderson.
- We are very blessed to have these ladies and pastor as our new leaders.

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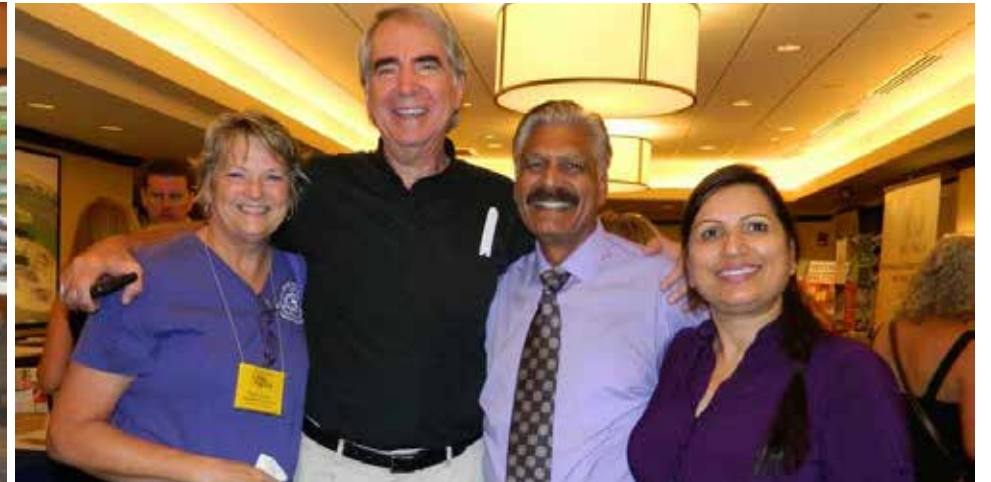
Saturday evening was the time for our banquet. It was so much fun. The Chobee Steelers, a steel drum band from Okeechobee, FL, is an alternative to violence program for young people ages 12-17. The objective of this program is to provide an outlet where young people can learn how to play the steel drums and take part in helping prevent violence of any form. They learn healthy relationships, team building, leadership, self-esteem and positive thinking. I must admit that they were the hit of the night. What a fantastic group of young people and can they play the steel drums!

Sunday morning worship was the end of this convention. Time to close. President Greg Walton preached a

at PGA National Resort & Spa



Convention Host Chair Gayle Caruso with her daughter Ashley.



Mary and Pastor Michael Zwemke with Jay and Julie Dass.



Lois Ford plays her flute during worship

wonderful sermon to end out our time at the PGA. Installation of officers was presided over by Pastor Tod Shouse, Senior Pastoral Counselor. Seeing friends that we normally do not see, must come to an end for this year.

Our Executive Committee will begin its work on the 2017 Retreat. So, start planning to join us at Jekyll Island, GA, next September. Come and see those special people that you only get to see once a year at retreat. “For The Lord Is A Great God” will be our theme!

But don’t forget that the LWML Convention will be held in June 2017. We will be in Albuquerque, NM. “Jesus Christ Above All” is the theme. Look for the Winter Quarterly to get the registration information. Register early and get your hotel very early! ■



Our fantastic Young Women Representatives.

Below — Joan Koch (far left) and Karen Bowers (right) with newly elected Florida-Georgia District LWML President Trish Aamoth



Lori Dorman and Marilyn Treanor

At left — Rev. Alan Koch, newly elected Junior Pastoral Counselor; Pastor Tod Shouse, Senior Pastoral Counselor; Rev. Michael Zwemke, outgoing Pastoral Counselor; Rev. Greg Walton, President of the Florida-Georgia District LCMS

LCEF Conference Encourages Living Boldly in Christ

A lineup of powerful speakers, uplifting worship and inspirational breakout sessions were once again core components of the annual Lutheran Church Extension Fund Fall Leadership Conference. Meeting just outside Chicago from November 18-20, 2016, Conference participants gathered under the theme "Live. BOLDLY!"

Speaking on the theme, Rich Robertson, President and CEO of LCEF, said "Small things matter in a life lived boldly."

One of the first Conference events was preparing meal packages formulated for malnourished children of Haiti to help with the Hurricane relief effort. Attendees packaged more than 14,000 meals in two hours. This project was hosted by Feed My Starving Children - Schaumburg, a Christian non-profit organization committed to feeding God's children hungry in body and spirit.

Guest Speakers Inspire

Leading off the conference on Friday evening was speaker Dr. Ben Carson —neurosurgeon, author, philanthropist and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient. Carson holds more than 60 honorary doctorate degrees and has received hundreds of awards and citations.

His inspiring message detailed an amazing life, from overcoming difficult challenges as an inner-city youth to bold adventures as the first neurosurgeon to successfully separate

conjoined twins to a run for one of the most prestigious jobs in the world.

"When the Lord fixes a problem, he doesn't do a paint job," Carson said. "He fixes it from the inside."

Also on Friday's agenda was Col. Jeff Williams, a retired United States Army officer and a NASA astronaut. He is a veteran of four space flights and holds the American record for the most days spent in space.

"Everything we do is not about us," Williams emphasized. "It's about what is given to us, how we steward, and how we carry the Gospel on."

Speaking Saturday was *New York Times* best-selling author, radio host and lecturer Eric Metaxas. His biographies — *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* and *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery* — explore two incredible Christians who

lived boldly in spite of adversity, rejection and persecution.

Keynote speaker John O'Leary took the stage on Sunday to share his inspirational life story. At the age of nine, he was severely burned on 100% of his body and not expected to survive the first night. He endured months in a hospital bed, dozens of surgeries and years of therapy. Before his tenth birthday, he lost all of his fingers to amputation.

Sharing his story of going from near death to an extraordinary life, O'Leary's message encouraged participants to live boldly. "In crisis, we either become more bitter or more compassionate," he said.

District Church Honored

Among the awards presented at the 2016 Fall Leadership Conference was the LCEF Partnership Award. This is presented to recognize the collaborative relationships LCEF shares with LCMS congregations and individual members. Congregations receiving the award engaged with LCEF across a range of service areas, including investments, loans and ministry support.

One of the honored congregations was St. Paul Church & School/Peachtree City, GA. ■



Florida-Georgia District participating members: Billy Brath, Mark Brink, Dean Pfeffer, Rusty Huseman



Ben Carson



Jeff Williams

LCEF Partnership National Award Winners



Members of the Florida-Georgia District who attended the LCEF Conference



Edith & Greg Walton

Rich Robertson Announces Retirement

On Saturday, November 19, at the 2016 Fall Leadership Conference, Rich Robertson announced he will step down as LCEF President/CEO effective October 1, 2017.

He shared, "It will be eight years of service when I leave – eight incredibly rewarding years serving The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and being part of an agency of the church that has been a beacon of light since its inception in 1978."

Robertson is here with his wife, Cindy. ■



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REGIONAL NEWS

Out and About in the Florida-Georgia District



Living Faith / Cumming members have enjoyed a busy fall with activities for members of all ages. Among those: elementary children put together personal care item bags for homeless children during a Wednesday Unwired session; middle school youth shared fellowship and fun during a lockin; and members of all ages learned more about the Reformation in late October. ■



Student Collections Help Community

Students at **St. Paul School/Peachtree City** collected 693 books for the Real Life Center, a community agency that helps residents going through difficult times. St. Paul followed up that effort with an October 17-28 drive to collect gently used coats for the Real Life Center.

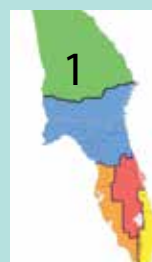
The Real Life Center focuses on developing relationships with community members in difficult times, connecting them to programs and other resources within the community, providing accountability, assisting with goals and walking alongside to promote long-term change.

At left — St. Paul students with a few of the books collected for the Real Life Center. ■

Bethlehem Preschool Jacksonville Beach hosted a Thanksgiving Feast in November. It was a successful, full house dinner. ■



REGION 1



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

St. Peter Searching for Luther, Reformation Books

Books on Luther and the Reformation are being sought by **St. Peter/Dahlonega**. This mission is the only Lutheran presence in Lumpkin and Dawson Counties. The books will help the congregation reach out to its community, including the home campus of the University of North Georgia, where some 7,000 students are studying.

“Depending upon the response that is received, we may be able to make a donation of books to the library at UNG, since at this point it has only one volume on Luther, an anthology of some of his seminal writings,” said Rev. Dr. Gerhard Michael, Jr. missionary pastor of St. Peter.

“Some readers of *Lutheran Life* may be unaware that in Georgia only .6% of the population is Lutheran, which translates into three people out of every 500. In the mountains of North Georgia, the percentage is most likely lower.”

According to Michael, “The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 gives us the opportunity to share the treasures of Lutheran theology more widely — that one is saved by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ, as attested in Holy Scriptures. It will undoubtedly also help us in our witness to the Lord Jesus.”

Please contact Rev. Dr. Michael with resources you may have available: pastor.stpeterlutheran@gmail.com, or call him at 407-353-8420. ■



Amazing Grace / Oxford members gathered for a festive Oktoberfest on October 30. Participants enjoyed a menu of German food and the challenge of a Reformation quiz and trivia contest. Among the prizes awarded was a Katie Luther bobblehead, won by Marla Adrian. ■



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

Festival Worship Caps Abiding Savior Anniversary Celebration

Abiding Savior/ Gainesville, FL, culminated its 25th Anniversary celebration with a festival worship service on Sunday, November 13.

The sermon — “Leaving a Legacy of Faith...the Legacy That Lasts,” based on 2 Corinthians 4:13-18 — was delivered by Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour*, the world’s longest-running Christian outreach radio program. Abiding Savior Pastor Alan Struckmeyer served as liturgist.

The anthem, “Make a Joyful Noise,” was specially composed for this occasion by Dr. John A. Behnke, Emeritus Professor of Music, Concordia University/Mequon. The piece was performed by the church’s combined choirs, along with brass and hand

chimes, and was directed by Stephanie Smith, Abiding Savior’s Director of Music, and accompanied by Art Swett, Minister of Music (retired), First Lutheran/Gainesville.

Three banners depicting the theme of the anniversary, “Celebrating 25 Years of God’s Grace — Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,” graced the sanctuary. Based on Mark 16:15 and Hebrews 13:8, the banners were designed and made by members of the congregation.

The service was followed by a luncheon attended by 200 guests. A special child-friendly lunch was held simultaneously for the youngest guests.

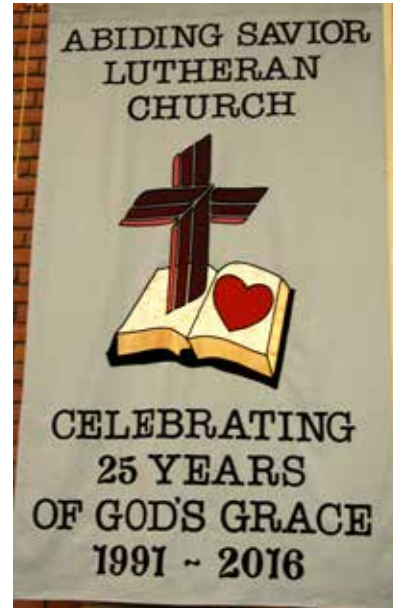
The anniversary was celebrated over a six-month period commencing in June. The second Sunday of

each month was set aside for “mini-celebrations,” with former congregation pastors Rev. David Bernthal (vacancy pastor), Rev. Enwood Nevis, Rev. Charles Reich and Abiding Savior’s founding and emeritus Pastor Kenneth Schamens, delivering the sermons. Special attention was focused each month on one or two of the church’s ministries and their roles in connecting Jesus to people’s hearts.

Another important emphasis of the celebration was to reach out to the local community in thankfulness for the many blessings the Lord has bestowed upon the Abiding Savior family. This was accomplished by undertaking three outreach projects: cooking for and feeding the homeless at the St. Francis homeless

shelter weekly during the month of June; raising almost \$2,000 for SIRA, the local crisis pregnancy center, in July and August; and raising money and collecting household goods, clothing, food and toiletry items for VETSPACE and the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program, both of which support local homeless veterans transitioning into temporary housing and reestablishing themselves back into the community.

The members of Abiding Savior envision this anniversary celebration both as a means of recognizing 25 years of history as well as an opportunity to look to the future. ■



Hope Members Help School Nurse, Students

For the second consecutive year, the members of **Hope/Plant City** have come to the aid of the school nurse and the students of the city’s Knights Elementary School.

Led by Hope’s Missions and Outreach Ministry Team, church members donated many needed items to assist school nurse Joy Alvarez as she comes to the aid of students and staff.

“Naturally, band aids are an item that elementary schools always need along with tissues, disinfecting wipes and many other items that quickly run low as the nurses tends to the many bumps, bruises and runny noses throughout the year,” said Hope Senior Pastor Dean Pfeffer.

“Knowing this, Hope members have come to the aid of Nurse Joy in helping to care for the many children at Knights. It truly is a great opportunity for us to share from what God has given us with those in need.

“The members of Hope truly enjoy helping Nurse Joy and doing what they can in this way to share the love of Jesus,” concluded Pfeffer. ■



Pictured receiving some of the donated supplies are (l-r) Mala Jaipersad, Abigail Hernandez, Hope Senior Pastor Dean Pfeffer, Joy Alvarez, Hope Associate Pastor Rev. Shea Pennington and LeAnne Smith, Knights Assistant Principal.

LC of Providence Initiates New Outreach Program

Lutheran Church of Providence/Deltona is now a “food drop” of the Second Harvest Bank.

The first such delivery was on August 31, when the congregation received 15,000 pounds of food intended for needy families in the community. The delivery included bakery items, chips, watermelon, strawberries, cabbage, apples, snow peas and various juices. Families were welcome to take as much as they could use.

Served were 147 families, which encompassed 509 individuals.

“All that was required from us was that we had enough volunteers to help with the distribution,” said Rev. Dr. Robert Weikart, LC of Providence pastor. “Needless to say, the majority of our members were there to help and clean up.

“A surprise to us was that there were also volunteers who heard of the Food Drop and came to help us.”

The congregation would like to do this mission several times a year, according to Weikart.

“We are also thinking of our homeless and are packing bags of food which consist of water, juice, canned fruit, vegetables, soup or meat with flip tops,” he continued. “Our members are encouraged to take a bag or two to hand out. Reports came to use that those who received a bag were overwhelmed.” ■



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

2016 Lady Saints



State Champs — The Lady Saints of St. John School/Ocala were the victors in the 2A state championship volleyball match on November 11. It was their second FHSAA Class 2A state championship in the last three years. Three players from the 2016 championship team recently signed letters of intent with recruiting colleges: Yomaris Villegas with College of Central Florida, Leah Wilcox with Santa Fe Community College and Kaylee Thomas with Alabama. ■



Pastors participating in the installation service included (front, l-r) Tod Shouse, Tom Block, Charles Reich, Andy Ritchie, Ron Pennekamp, Zong Yang, Ed Trinklein, (back, l-r) Mark Adrian, Tony Douches, Brian Kneser, Mark Harris, Chaplain Peter Herbert.

St. Paul Welcomes Associate Pastor

Rev. Andrews Ritchie was installed as Associate Pastor of **St. Paul Church & School/Lakeland** during a festive afternoon service recently.

Rev. Edgar Trinklein, St. Paul's Pastor Emeritus, was the preacher. Rev. Dr. Brian Kneser, Third Vice President of the Florida-Georgia District and pastor of Woodlands Lutheran/Montverde, performed the rite of installation. St. Paul Senior Pastor Ron Pennekamp led the service.

Ritchie is a 2002 graduate of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Akron.

Area pastors participated in the service, which was followed by a reception with a beach theme in contrast to the climate of Alaska where Ritchie served before accepting the St. Paul call. ■

Winter Haven Circuit Celebrates Reformation Together

Reformation Sunday, October 30th, found many of the pastors of the **Winter Haven Circuit** gathered for the annual Reformation Festival. This year's Festival took place at St. Paul/Lakeland and featured Rev. Roosevelt Gray, Director of LCMS Black Ministry, as the guest speaker.

Participating in the service were the pastors of Winter Haven Circuit congregations along with a combined Circuit Choir. Choir directors and organists from the Circuit churches joined together to make the 499th Anniversary of the Reformation a festive prelude to Reformation 2017 and the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

As a part of his message, Gray emphasized that the work of Martin Luther and the Reformers cannot stop with us. "In a world that is broken and hurting God has given us the ministry of reconciliation in Jesus to bring to a sin sick and darkened world," he said.

Following the worship, a traditional German dinner was hosted by St. Paul members. ■

Pastors pictured following the Winter Haven Reformation service are (front, l-r) Shea Pennington, Tod Shouse, Zong Yang, Ron Pennekamp, Dean Pfeiffer, Jonathan Horsmann, (back, l-r) Charles Reich, Mark Harris, Roosevelt Gray, Tony Douches and Andy Ritchie.



On Sunday, November 13— the Sunday nearest to Veterans Day — **Bethlehem/Fort Myers** recognized the eleven men in worship who had served their nation in the military. Shown here are (front, l-r) Paul Nystrom, Stan Fitzi, John Wittenberg, Gary Bell, Kurt Laser, Jeff Kirsch, Harrison Kimbrell, (back, l-r) Roger Lewandowski, Ron Mueller, Rollin Duckwitz and John Roush. ■



Lakeside/Venice— Members and guests of Lakeside Lutheran participated in an Oktoberfest on October 20 at the church (lower left photo). Attendees listened and danced to the music of The Steinswingers and enjoyed a German meal that included bratwurst, sauerkraut and potato salad. The church hosts this event yearly along with its Country-Western party in April.

Also shown here are a few of the Lakeside quilters, (l-r) Maggie Murphy, Holly Watson and Elaine Burr, along a few of the more than 30 quilts the group made in last year for Lutheran World Relief. These, along with the more than 330,000 quilts made by other groups, will be shipped to 19 different countries, including hurricane-stricken Haiti. ■



REGION 4

Vice President:

Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers

Lay 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

Karl Glander Ordained, Installed in Immokalee

Rev. Karl Glander was ordained and installed into the pastoral ministry during a special service on October 16 at **Amigos en Cristo/Immokalee**. He is the third pastor that Amigos en Cristo has trained, ordained and called into the ministry in the past three years.

Working with the Executive Director of Amigos, Rev. Bob Selle — who leads worship in Spanish — and Rev. Andre Mezilus — who leads worship in Creole — Glander leads English language worship and ministry.

Participating in the service were 17 Lutheran pastors, including Glander's father, Rev. Dennis Glander,

a retired pastor from Orlando who preached for the service; and Rev. Keith Lingsch of Grace/Naples, who was the newly installed pastor's SMP mentor. Florida-Georgia District Region 4 Vice-President Jon Zehnder of St. Michael/Fort Myers officiated the Ordination and SW Florida Circuit Visitor Rev. Richard Browning of Hope/Bonita Springs officiated. Florida-Georgia District Executive Director of Missions and Outreach Doug Kallesen also participated in this service.

Serving as acolyte for the service was Matthew Glander, Pastor Glander's son.

Jonathan Birner of Grace/Naples was the organist. The Women's Choir

from the Amigos Center presented several choral selections.

A celebration dinner followed the service. ■



Shown after the installation service are (seated, l-r) Geoff, Matthew, Ginny and Karl Glander of Amigos en Cristo; Dennis Glander, Orlando; (back, l-r) Mark Eisold, Grace/Naples and The Pelican/Golden Gate; Larry Kudart, Grace/Naples; Ken Fuehler, Peace/Naples; Don Treglown, Faith/Naples; Fred Kohler, retired; John Roth, Thrive/Estero; Doug Kallesen, Florida-Georgia District; Keith Lingsch, Grace/Naples; Bob Selle, Amigos en Cristo; Jon Zehnder, St. Michael/Fort Myers; Darrell Stuehrenberg, Bethlehem/Fort Myers; Juan Gonzalez, Beautiful Savior/Lehigh Acres Richard Browning, Hope/Bonita Springs; Charles Kanefke, Trinity/Cape Coral; Andre Mezilus, Bethlehem Haitian/Immokalee; Jerry Lawson, Good Shepherd/N Fort Myers. ■

LC of the Cross Welcomes Associate Pastor Stolarczyk

On Sunday, November 13, **Lutheran Church of the Cross (LCC) /Port Charlotte** celebrated the installation of new Associate Pastor Rev. R. Brian Stolarczyk. He will serve in that capacity until Rev. Kenneth Redmann retires on August 31, 2017.

The congregation felt it would be beneficial to have an Associate Pastor who could get to know the congregation and get involved with the church's efforts to reach out to the community prior to Redmann's retirement.

The presiding minister for the installation service was Rev. Jon Zender, Florida-Georgia Region 4 Vice President and pastor of St. Michael/Fort Myers, who was assisted by Rev. Rossetter Leavitt, Sarasota Circuit Visitor and pastor of Beautiful Savior/Sarasota. Guest Preacher was Rev. Stephen DeMik, Associate Pastor at St. John/Cypress, TX. Serving as officiant and liturgist was LCC Pastor Redmann.



Rev. Dr. James Cotter, retired pastor and LCC's former Winter Assistant Pastor, read the selected lessons. Also participating were other pastors from the Sarasota Circuit.

A reception followed the installation service in the church's Fellowship and Ministry Center.

Stolarczyk and his wife, Sarah, have two sons: Raymond, age 8, and Luke, age 6. Stolarczyk most recently served Trinity Lutheran Church & School/ Merrill, WI. Stolarczyk received his Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis in 2005. ■



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



The PK4 class of **St. Paul School/Boca Raton** was asked to get involved with an outreach project and need after Hurricane Matthew swept through Haiti. "A special letter was sent home to all the parents in PK4 classrooms," said Monika Walcheski, one of the PK4 teachers. "The response was excellent. Each class in our school was given a box to fill. Our classrooms enthusiastically responded. We didn't fill one — we didn't fill two — we filled three boxes. There were even some cans to start a fourth box. God is good," she concluded. "We talked about how we have so many good things. We prayed about the boxes and the hope they bring to a family in Haiti." ■

Honoring Veterans—
On November 13,
**Christ Lutheran/
Avon Park** honored
military veterans,
their spouses and
mothers of veteran and
active duty military.
Pastor Scott McLean
presented the veterans
with certificates of
appreciation and
pins, and he gave the
spouses and mothers
a star from retired “star
spangled banners.” ■



Rain and lightning didn't dampen
the enthusiasm for participants in
Family Fun Night hosted by **Peace/
Okeechobee** early this fall. The
bounce house was left unused—
but there was plenty of food and
fellowship! The book fair had a
pirate theme, and some of the
children came in costume. Clifford
the Big Red Dog had a good time,
too. ■



Two special events highlighted fall activities at **St. Paul/Weston**: Fall Festival and blessing of the animals. Games, food, fellowship and fun were all elements of the Fall Festival, which attracted a large crowd. St. Paul Pastor Tim Hartner was kept busy at the blessing of the animals, with members bringing pets ranging from birds to dogs. ■



Congregation's Prayer Shawl Ministry Expands Community Outreach

When it began 11 years ago, the Prayer Shawl Ministry of St. Paul/Boca Raton had as its mission crafting prayer shawls for members who were ill, facing medical procedures, grieving, serving in the armed forces or celebrating a joyous event.

“Every year our ministry continues to expand,” shared Janie Lester, who heads the outreach program. “We began sending prayer shawls to seriously injured soldiers evacuated from their theaters of operation.

“We made and distributed shawls to families of our ‘Fallen Soldiers’ covering the southeast coast of Florida, working with the group Prayer Shawls for Fallen Soldiers. We also make prayer cloths for soldiers being deployed around the world.”

Much smaller in size than prayer shawl which are too big and cumbersome for deployed soldiers to carry, prayer cloths can be pinned inside a helmet or a uniform “to remind the soldier that prayers are always with them.”

St. Paul prayer shawls are in Norway, South America, Australia and even Kyrgyzstan. “We sent prayer shawls to the Manos Air Force Base in Kyrgyzstan,” Lester said. “Some of these shawls were given to The Society of Elder Babushka Ladies, a group of Muslim women.”

One of the Prayer Shawl Ministry's newest projects is crafting Baptism Blankets for St. Paul. Each white blanket

features a large cross in its center.

“All of them are very delicate and beautiful as our shawl makers are very artistic, creative and special caring creators,” Lester said. “At a baptism at St. Paul, each baby receives a blanket, a candle and a banner to commemorate the special day.”

A \$250 grant from Thrivent Financial through its Action Team program helped fund purchase of the materials for the baptism blankets.

The group's biggest current endeavor is in response to a request from Miami's Veterans Hospital, which asked for 90 USA flag lap robes. “These are for our veterans who are ill or in wheel chairs or receiving chemotherapy,” Lester said.

Faced with a substantial cost for materials needed for the lap robes, one of the Prayer Shawl Ministry members contacted her son, who works for Walmart.

“God bless Walmart,” said Lester. “They donated all the red, white and blue yarns to make 90 lap

robes at absolutely no cost to us. This mission is well under way, with not only our Prayer Shawl Ministry members but also friends and family helping us to knit these lap robes.

“Even some crafters from other churches have joined us in this huge effort. When completed, all the lap robes will be given to our vets at Miami Veterans Hospital, letting them know they are always in our hearts and each lap robe is filled with many prayers.

“We haven't forgotten them.” ■



Above — Loretta Wortman, Janie Lester, Gail Fritsche and Val Biegler with one of the lap robes being crafted for American veterans.



At left — A Thrivent Action Team helped with the purchase of yarn for the baptism blankets being made by the ministry. Shown here are Prayer Shawl Ministry members (front, l-r) Gail Fritsche, Lilli Ferrari, Wilma Napoleone, (back, l-r) Judy Hinsch, Loretta Wortmann, Sally Glick, Bonnie Lowther, Janie Lester, Val Biegler, Kean Rey, Deborah Bigbee

District Flood Buckets Aid Hurricane Matthew Victims



When Hurricane Matthew hit the eastern shore of the USA in late October, Lumberton, NC, was one of the hard hit areas.

The Florida-Georgia disaster preparedness team went into action under the leadership of coordinator John Elliott, a member of the District staff. Responding to the call for help were volunteers from St. Paul/Lakeland, FL; Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale, FL; Messiah/Tampa, FL; Hope/Plant City, FL; and Faith/Marietta, GA.

They helped load 709 flood buckets onto two trucks that were delivered to Messiah Lutheran/Wilmington, NC, where they were offloaded by church volunteers and members of the city's fire department.

From there, the disaster supplies were sent to Lumberton, NC, as well as to a staging area at Our Redeemer/Fayetteville, NC. Distribution to those affected by the flooding followed.

"Many thanks to all the volunteers who served their neighbors by preparing, storing, loading and unloading all these buckets," said Elliott. "We in the District office would like to express our most sincere thanks. It is heartening to see the love and dedication of the people of God in caring for their neighbor." ■

Above left — Volunteers in Florida helping to load two trucks with 709 flood buckets included Pastor Mark Adrian, Bruce Noyes, Vic Riveiro, Bill Reimers, Ron McKay, Kyle Elliott, John Elliott, Pastor Shea Pennington, Paul Sicca, Robert Kutsch, Mack Goethe, Dodie Walker and Jeff Reaume.

Lower left — Distribution of some of the District flood buckets that reached their final destination in Lumberton, NC.



Operation Barnabas Lauches in District

At the 2015 Florida-Georgia District Convention, a resolution was passed to establish an Operation Barnabas Task Force and to Encourage Circuit and Congregational Support and Participation. Rev. Dr. Mark Schreiber, retired director of the Synod's Ministry to the Armed Forces, serves as Chair of the task force.

One of the first focuses of the group was the celebration of Veterans Day in November. Congregations were urged to reach out to veterans in their churches and beyond to the community.

"This tribute recognizes the millions of men and women who courageously accepted the responsibility to defend our nation and its constitution from all enemies both foreign and domestic," read the notice from Chaplain Craig G. Muehler, Director, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces. "Their willingness to put themselves in harm's way and the innumerable hardships and sacrifices that they and their families endured in order to preserve our freedoms and way of life, are always to be remembered and cherished.

"Their contributions are deeply woven into the fabric of country's life and legacy allowing us to pursue our daily lives in safety, enriched by the opportunities and freedoms that we have come to expect and, sadly, often take for granted."

Schreiber coordinated a Veterans Day observance in the Jacksonville area, one that included an outreach to local sheriff, fire and EMT professionals. Also participating was Elizabeth, the K9 Comfort Dog from Trinity/Savannah, GA.

"Both the Sheriff and the Deputy Chief from our fire department spoke at the service," Schreiber reported. "The church was almost completely full, and the free luncheon drew in about 150 plus people. I recruited a USMC color guard from Jacksonville to begin the service."

For more information about Operation Barnabas visit www.facebook.com/MinistryArmedForces.LCMS or www.lcms.org/armedforces. ■



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LLL/LHM Celebrating a Century of God's Blessings with an Eye on Future Gospel Proclamation

In 1917, a group of 12 men attending the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod convention in Milwaukee met to settle a \$100,000 debt (more than \$2 million in today's buying power) incurred by the church body. They accomplished that goal, and in the process formed the Lutheran Laymen's League.

"These men retired a debt, but I don't think that was the only thing they intended to do," says Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour*. "Why did they retire the debt? They didn't want Christ's message to die. They wanted that message to be publicly proclaimed and went out church to church to raise the resources so that the message would not be silenced."

"The strength of this organization has always been the called, equipped and SENT people," added LHM President & CEO Kurt Buchholz. "These individuals took ownership of the mission of Jesus Christ by coming together to find new ways to move forward with Gospel proclamation."

The vibrant history of laity-driven ministry and the bold vision for future sharing of the Gospel were common themes as around 900 people participated in the centennial kickoff at Union Station in St. Louis, October 21-23, to help the International Lutheran Laymen's League / Lutheran Hour Ministries launch its celebration of 100 years of mission and ministry. The weekend highlighted many blessings that God has bestowed on LHM, including past and present volunteers, leadership, staff, and radio hosts; the impact of the *This is the Life* television program; and a chance for attendees to visit with LHM ministry center representatives from more than 30 nations.

In addition to Seltz, presenters included Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus, Speaker Emeritus of *The Lutheran Hour*; Rev. Matt Popovits, pastor of Our Saviour/New York, a family of parishes in Manhattan and Queens; Rev. Greg Finke, author of the book *Joining Jesus on His Mission* and founder/executive director of the

Dwelling 1:14 nonprofit ministry; Cindy Steinbeck, a retired director of Christian education in the LCMS who now owns and operates Steinbeck Vineyards and Winery; and Rev. Mike Newman, mission and ministry facilitator for the Texas District.

"Twenty percent of the unchurched today do not even know one Christian," said Finke. "There are people within 50 yards of where you live ... within 50 feet of where you work ... and within five feet of your grandkids at school who don't know Jesus."

"Your neighbor has changed, but the remedy has not," said Popovits. "Throughout this ministry's history, faithful men and women have embraced technology to love their neighbor and get into their ears and hearts. This is how we must share the Gospel today. We must be creative, innovative, and understanding of the needs of our new neighbors. The more things change—the more they stay the same."

Attendees heard motivators for getting out of their comfort zones to respond to God's call and follow in the footsteps of the lay leaders who paved the way for the ministry.

"Every one of us is called by God," said Seltz. "LHM is here to equip and resource you to be the best you can be so that other people will come to know Jesus because they got to

know you. There will be people in heaven who got to know Christ because they got to know you."

"Go out with the same courage, confidence and commitment as those who preceded you, and set an example of proclamation for those in generations coming after you," said Klaus. "This day is your day; this moment is your moment. If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"

To see more photos from the 100th Anniversary Kickoff Celebration, visit www.lhm.org/100years. ■

Top Photo — Rev. Greg Seltz, Speaker of *The Lutheran Hour*, addresses the celebratory gathering.

Lower Photo — Special music added to the celebration.



NYG Run Benefits LIRS Programs

The "Run for Welcome" sponsored by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services at the 2016 LCMS National Youth Gathering raised \$30,000.

Director of LCMS Youth Ministry Rev. Mark Kiessler presented a \$30,000 check to Linda Hartke, CEO and president of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, at an October 26 "Walk of Courage Gala" in Washington, DC.

"LCMS congregations and their young people are becoming aware of the challenges faced by refugees and immigrants," said Kiessler. "God has provided us a wonderful opportunity to welcome new friends from across the globe into our neighborhoods, schools and churches."

LIRS led NYG participants through a Syrian-refugee simulation activity with youth led through different rooms signifying the various parts of a refugee's journey.

"The Syrian-refugee simulation brought to life the dangerous and desperate situations from which millions of Syrian refugees are attempting to escape," said Amanda Sheldon, LIRS manager for Congregational Outreach.

"The youth were stunned into near silence each time we told a group that the average amount of time a refugee spends in a camp is 17 years. ... This was extremely sobering to most of the kids who were not even 17 years old, as they considered the isolation, lack of hope and dire circumstances refugees face in these camps."

To learn more about the mission and ministry of LIRS, visit lirs.org. ■



District Pastors Conference — Approximately 200 pastors from around Florida and Georgia gathered in Orlando this fall for the annual District Pastors Conference. Participants included pastors actively serving churches and ministries as well as retired pastors. Shown here (l-r) are pastors Dennis Glick, pastor emeritus St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL, and former District Vice President; Dana Narring, Faith/Punta Gorda, FL; Karl Glander, Amigos en Cristo/Immokalee, FL; Darrell Stuehrenberg, Bethlehem/Fort Myers, FL; Victor Belton, Peace/Decatur, GA; and Juan Gonzalez, Beautiful Savior/Lehigh Acres, FL. ■

In Memoriam

Remembering Bruce Sommerfield



Peace Valley Lutheran/Wauchula, FL, was filled with family and friends of Rev. Bruce Sommerfield for a November 13, 2016, memorial service. Pastor Sommerfield spent 48 of his 55 years in LCMS pastoral ministry serving Florida-Georgia congregations. Officiating at the memorial service was Rev. Richard Norris, Heartland Circuit Visitor. All of the pastors of the Heartland District were in attendance, including (l-r) John Hirst, Peace/Okeechobee; Ben Schroeder, former pastor at St. Peter/Belle Glade; Darrell Stuehrenberg, Bethlehem/Fort Myers; Richard Norris, Trinity/Lake Placid; Anthony Arias, Grace/Arcadia; Robert J. Maulella, Faith/Sebring; Scott McLean, Christ/Avon Park; Angel Ramos, Faith/Clewiston. ■



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The BACKPAGE

Thrivent Members Helped with Hurricane Matthew Relief

Hurricane Matthew caused millions of dollars of damage in the Caribbean and along the USA's eastern seaboard when it hit in late October.

Thrivent Financial, a financial services organization that helps Christians be wise with money and live generously, highlighted ways for its members to help Hurricane victims.

Thrivent matched up to \$250,000 in personal donations made on Thrivent.com to selected nonprofit organizations responding to those affected by Hurricane Matthew. This matching opportunity was open to anyone and ran until the \$250,000 match was met or until December 15.

Proceeds were distributed to Lutheran World Relief, Baltimore, MD; Orphan Grain Train, Norfolk, NE;



Americares, Stamford, CT; Convoy of Hope, Springfield, MO; and Feed My Starving Children, Coon Rapids, MN.

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For more information, visit thrivent.com. ■



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Meet LCEF District Congregation Advocate Bruce Hahn



Congregation Advocates have been at the heart of the LCEF ministry since 1992. LCEF Congregation Advocates are NYG Run Generates \$30,000 for LIRS

The "Run for Welcome" event sponsored by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services at the 2016 LCMS National Youth Gathering raised \$30,000 for the organization. Roughly 3,000 youth and adults participated in the race, each paying a \$10 registration that went to LIRS.