

LUTHERAN LIFE

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

2017 | Volume 5



thanksgiving
gather
thankful family
blessed grateful
together
blessings
november

**GIVING THANKS
AND
EQUIPPING
THE NEXT
GENERATION**



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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In Memorium:

Woodlands Camp Founder Pastor Harold Storm

Rev. Harold Storm, 93, passed away at his home on July 26.

Pastor Storm's ministry was served in the Florida-Georgia District, beginning with his first call to Redeemer Lutheran Church/Miami. His next call was to start Woodlands Lutheran Camp in Montverde, FL, where over several decades he developed a variety of ministries from the traditional church worship to summer youth programs, winter retiree offerings and Horses for the Handicapped.

Pastor Storm was the driving force behind Woodlands, both the camp and the congregation. The camp served thousands of people of all ages during its history. Woodlands congregation continues today as a thriving parish.

After retiring from Woodlands in 1994, Pastor Storm served as a vacancy pastor throughout Florida and Georgia. His last call was as pastor of Our Savior/Orlando, where he preached his final sermon in May of 2017. Pastor Storm was preceded in death by his wife Virginia (Ginny) Storm and his son Timothy Paul. He is survived by his sons David (Lana); Walter (Margaret) and Eric. He also leaves behind 10 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service celebrating Pastor Storm's life was held on August 3 at Woodlands Lutheran Church with Rev. Dr. Brian Kneser officiating. ■



Derek Broten Named New National Youth Gathering Director

Rev. Derek Broten is the new associate director of Youth Ministry for the LCMS.

In this position, Broten will be responsible for overseeing the National Youth Gathering and its attendant programs. He already has experience with the Gathering, having served on the Concert, Community Life and Dome Event teams in the past.

Broten has served as a director of Christian education in Wichita, KS, and Woodbury, MN, and as a pastor in Stillwater, MN. In addition to degrees in ministry and Christian education, he has a master's degree in Parish Administration and Education from Concordia University Minnesota

The associate director position was vacated by Rev. Mark Kiessling in January 2016 when he was appointed director, taking over the role from the retiring Rev. Dr. Terry K. Dittmer. Since that time, Kiessling and the rest of the Youth Ministry staff have been covering the associate director responsibilities. ■



DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

Calling Congregations

Faith/Hialeah, FLSole Pastor
Lake Oconee/Lake Oconee, GASole Pastor
Holy Trinity/Lutz, FLSole Pastor
Marco/Marco Island, FLAssociate Pastor
Christ the King/Orlando, FLSole Pastor
LiveUCF/Orlando, FLCampus Pastor
St Paul/Peachtree City, GASenior Pastor
Our Savior/Plantation, FLSole Pastor
Rivercliff/Sandy Springs, GAAssociate Pastor
Redeemer/Stuart, FLMissionary to Port St Lucie
Trinity/Toccoa, GASole Pastor
Lakeside/Venice, FLSenior Pastor
Redeemer/Vero Beach, FLSole Pastor

Calls Issued

Lake Oconee/Lake Oconee, GA, called
Rev. Dr. David Brockhoff as Sole Pastor
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran/Orlando,FL, called
Rev. Douglas Kallesen as Sole Pastor
Redeemer/ Stuart,FL called
Rev. James Jobst as Missionary
Trinity/Toccoa, GA called
Rev. Curtis De Coste as Sole Pastor

Calls Accepted

Rev. Douglas Kallesen as Sole Pastor to Trinity
Evangelical Lutheran/Orlando, FL

Calls Declined

Rev. James Jobst as Missionary to Redeemer/Stuart,
FL
Rev. Curtis De Coste as Sole Pastor
to Trinity/Toccoa, GA

Transferred to Other Districts

Mrs. Daisha L. ThomasNebraska (C)

Transferred from Other Districts

Ms. Brittany E StrohscheinMinnesota North (C)
Ms. Cynthia ButtSouth Wisconsin (C)
Ms. Katie WorthingtonMinnesota South (C)
Ms. Heather LowingNorthern Illinois (C)
Mrs. Kimberly A CluckMissouri (C)
Mr. Andrew J CluckMissouri (C)
Rev. John S TurnerRocky Mountain (O)
Rev. Roland D VegaKansas (O)
Ms. Lisa M JaegerKansas (C)
Mr. Thomas O MenkeTexas (C)
Ms. Stephanie A KarolusMinnesota North (C)

Church Changes

Lamb of God/Lithia, FLClosed

floridageorgia

DISTRICT CALENDAR



2018 Hearts for Jesus Project
Flood Bucket Program which
has been helping families, churches and
schools in times of natural disasters.

Interim Pastors Training
February 5-9, 2018
Orlando Area

**500th Anniversary
of the Protestant Reformation**
October 31, 2017

**2017 Middle School Youth Gathering –
What's Next?**

November 3-5, 2017
Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center,
Leesburg, FL

**2018 High School Youth Gathering –
What's Next?**

February 2-4, 2018
Marriott Sawgrass Resort,
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

School Music Festival
February 23, 2018
Grace Lutheran Church,
St. Petersburg, FL

Veterans of the Cross Retreat
March 5-7, 2018
Life Enrichment Center
Fruitland Park, FL

Florida-Georgia District Convention
June 22-24, 2018
Orlando, FL

2018 Educators Conference
September 26-28, 2018
Hilton Resort,
Daytona Beach, FL

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Assignments

Rev. Anthony A Arias, Concordia Seminary/
St. Louis — Pastor, Grace/Arcadia, FL (O)
Mr. Nathan DeYoung, Concordia University/
Texas — DCE, St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA (C)
Mr. Joshua T Eckstein, Concordia University/
St. Paul — DCE, Our Redeemer/Augusta, GA (C)
Rev. Kevin D Ray, Concordia Seminary/
St. Louis — Pastor, Redeemer/Stuart, FL (O)

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Ms. Katherine G Vogel, Teacher, Holy Trinity/
Tampa, FL (C)
Ms. Amanda Bell, DCE, Beautiful Savior/
Sarasota, FL (C)
Ms. Diane I Frusco, Teacher, Holy Trinity/
Tampa, FL (C)
Ms. Katherine M Larson, Teacher, Holy Trinity/
Tampa, FL (C)
Mr. Thomas O Menke, Teacher, Grace/
Jacksonville, FL (C)
Ms. Lisa M Jaeger, Teacher, Grace/
Jacksonville, FL (C)
Ms. Rebecca Schaffer, Teacher, St. Paul/
Boca Raton, FL (C)
Rev. Joshua Pettit, Pastor, Woodlands/
Montverde, FL (C)
Ms. Cynthia Butt, Teacher, Grace/
Winter Haven, FL (C)
Ms. Heather Lowing, Teacher, Trinity/
Delray Beach, FL (C)
Mrs. Kimberly Cluck, Teacher, Trinity/
Delray Beach, FL (C)
Mr. Andrew Cluck, Teacher, Trinity/
Delray Beach, FL (C)
Ms. Cynthia Y Tillman, Teacher, Grace/
Winter Haven, FL (C)
Mrs. Katie M Lane, Teacher, St. Paul/
Peachtree City, GA(C)
Ms. Stephanie A Karolus, DCE, First/
Gainesville, FL (C)
Rev. Hiruy Gebremichael, Sole Pastor, St. Mark/
Tucker, GA (O)

Emeritus

Mrs. Sally J Mennicke (C)
Rev. Dr. Randy Winkel (O)
Rev. Francis J Cantwell (O)
Rev. Kenneth P Redmann (O)

Called to Glory

Rev. Harold Storm (O)

Removed from the Roster

Mr. Daniel DeHoyos, By action of the President (C)
Rev. Kevin S Ogle, Resigned Voluntarily (O)

Change of Status

Rev. Andrew L. Schroeder, from Active to
Candidate (O)



Back in 1982, I was among the thousands of Harrison Ford fans who made my way to see him in the movie *Blade Runner*, a story showing a dystopian Los Angeles in 2019 (doesn't seem so far now as it did then). In the movie genetically engineered "replicants," which look exactly like humans, are manufactured to work on off-world colonies. Some escape and come back to earth and are hunted down by special police operatives known as *Blade Runners*. What I really remember about the film is it gave a very alarming view of the future.

Now, the movie industry is releasing a sequel only 35 years later, with some of the very same stars that were featured in the first movie. Apparently in *Blade Runner 2049* conditions haven't improved much. The premise of the new movie is that a new *Blade Runner* discovers a dark secret that could bring an end to humanity.

An end is coming to humanity. In fact, some thought that with the arrival of Hurricane Harvey coupled with a Tsunami in India and an earthquake in Mexico, topped off by Hurricane Irma, maybe we were seeing God's judgment on the earth. This much we know for certain: while we may not know what the future holds, we are confident of WHO holds our future. Our faith in Jesus gives us great comfort, even in the midst of the storms of life. That's why we can look to the future with great confidence.

I believe that the future is ours to see. God has chosen each of us for such a time as this to shape the future for the sake of the Kingdom of God. He reminds us, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for

evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Je 29:11). We have an awesome future because God planned it!

What if Martin Luther had backed down and simply determined that nothing could be done to address the abuses in the Papacy of his day? He wasn't afraid of the future. He eagerly pushed toward it. He took a huge risk, stepped out in faith, with fear and trembling, and led a revolution that would be known as the Reformation

to do was point people back to Jesus and keep the GOSPEL at the heart and center of life. In Theses 62 Luther wrote, "The true treasure of the church is the most holy GOSPEL of the glory and grace of God." So Luther stood on his convictions, and he worked to reform the Church of his day without compromise.

Recently I heard about a fascinating theory which states that every 500 years or so the Church goes through a reformation. This is being suggested by people like Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt and Phyllis Tickle, who was a member of the Episcopal Church and an author and popular speaker. She writes that her book *The Great Emergence*, is "intended to provide a practical, positive vision of the church as it steps into the future." Tickle says the book will discuss the development of

the emerging church, what she calls the "Great Emergence," placing it among the other great phenomena in the history of Christianity, including the Great Schism and the Great Reformation. "Every 500 years," Tickle said, "the empowered structures of institutionalized Christianity, whatever they may be, become an intolerable carapace that must be shattered so that renewal and growth may occur. Now is such a time."

While I don't know a lot about the so-called "Great Emergence" movement, I do know that it is a great time for a Reformation. Five hundred years ago Martin Luther didn't seek to reinvent the church or to destroy it. He sought only to correct the abuses that had come about in his day. The issues then are not necessarily the same issues the church faces today. The struggles faced by the church today are more akin to apathy. Oh that people would fight today for the truth of God's Word! Instead, we



so that the Church could have a better future.

This year we celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. While there are numerous celebrations planned, some that have already happened and many yet to come, this is not simply a time for us to put on lederhosen and raise a toast to Martin Luther. It was never about Luther but was always about the GOSPEL. Although Luther did not always mind that people called his followers "Lutherans," he preferred to think of all believers as "Christians." In German-speaking areas, the usual designation is "evangelisch" — that is, people oriented toward the gospel.

The term "Lutheran" was first used by his opponents during the Leipzig Disputation in 1519, and soon afterwards became popular to identify those who held to his views. It was first used in a derogatory sense. Luther never could have imagined what the Church, bearing his name, has become. All he wanted

fight to maintain our rights as non-profit organizations. We fight to maintain a roster of members. We fight to be noticed and recognized for positive contributions to our communities. Often we are looked down upon as a "crutch" for those too weak to handle the rigors of life by themselves. Or we are placed on a pedestal and kept at a distance because "those religious people are a bit judge-y..."

David Kinnaman, head of the Barna Research Group and author of several insightful books about the dynamics of the church in the world today, says that how the church views itself and how the world views the church are often very different and distinct. The church sees itself as a welcoming community of hope-filled believers sharing the love of Jesus. The world often sees the church as hypocritical, homophobic, overly political, unforgiving and a private club. In many places we find church attendance dwindling and fewer have a passion to share the story of how Jesus has touched their life.

Following Hurricane Irma I was privileged to speak with people across the Florida-Georgia District and hear heroic stories of survival and God's blessings. Even among our staff we had testimonies of the goodness of God. Debra Talbot told of her daughter's home that had a "strange phone pole" in the backyard. It was that very phone pole that prevented a huge tree from shattering the roof of the home; that tree, held back several other trees that threatened severe damage had they hit the house. This is our marvelous God, and we aren't afraid to share those stories. So why do we hesitate to tell the world all around us about how Jesus died on a cross, saving us from our sins?

This good news is what the disciples fought for and gave their lives to proclaim. This good news is what Luther fought to restore to prominence when the church had lost its way. This is the same good news that you and I get to share

LIFELINES

with a world that seems to drift farther and farther away from the knowledge of the One who loves us all with an everlasting love. I don't know what the future holds. I don't know if we are at some magical 500 number where it's time for a new reformation. I do recognize, and so



As someone has said, the main thing is to keep the main thing (Jesus) the main thing! The future is ours to see! And here is what I see: people boldly stepping out of their shells and telling more and more people about how Jesus transformed their lives. I see people excited to be trained, to learn and grow in their faith, and see God at work in their midst. I see people who love Jesus, and love the people that Jesus loves by serving them in His name. I see churches that are filled with people who are eager to praise Him and tell others about Him. I see people in our churches, touched by the Holy Spirit, and equipped, empowered and engaged connecting people to Jesus!

I can tell you what the future won't be. There likely won't be "replicants" of the *Blade Runner* type. What would be truly awesome is people who replicated Jesus in thought, word and deed, and truly shared His love and forgiveness with others all around them. May we be those who run around telling people about Jesus as we look to the future, and especially as we celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, remembering that "It's still All About Jesus!" ■

do you, that if things remain the same for the church, the church as we know it will continue to struggle. The Church isn't an institution — it's about people gathered around the gospel! Any needed changes will only happen when God's redeemed people step up to impact the future because that future is ours to see and to shape! It's almost like "back to the future..."



In the grip of His grace!
GREG

Florida-Georgia Leaders Gather to be Re-formed as Living Stones



More than 700 professional and lay leaders from congregations and schools throughout Florida and Georgia came together September 28-30 at the innovative President's Equip Conference in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.

The newly named conference was designed "to raise up leaders by intentionally focusing on equipping people, both among our professional church workers and laity," District President Greg Walton told participants.

"Equipped leaders are better able to reach out to connect people to Jesus!"

Equipping elements of the PEC included inspirational keynote speakers; a range of workshops with topics targeting interest areas for professional and lay leaders; and affinity groups for those targeted areas. Worship, fellowship

and devotional time were integrated into each of the three days.

Walton thanked participants for attending the event.

"By being here you are, in effect, saying that you want more in your life as a believer, that you want to make a difference for the sake of Jesus — that you want to enhance your skills and even share your experience with others."

The theme for the conference was based on I Peter 2:1-5 — **Reforming Living Stones** — "So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation — if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God

chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Referencing that theme Walton noted, "Each stone matters; each stone has a role. Each person matters, and each baptized believer has a role."

"We are chosen with purpose to abide in Jesus! We are chosen to engage in the Master's business and connect people to Jesus!"

LCEF District Vice President Daniel J. Reichard presents drawing winner Wendy Kirin of Grace/Winter Haven, FL, with her new iPad.



Several firsts distinguished the PEC:

- registration filled up more than a month before the event.
- all-time high for lay participation with 238 registered.
- active social media team offered daily challenges. ■



Gretchen Jameson, Senior Vice President, Strategy and University Affairs for Concordia University Wisconsin & Ann Arbor, with District President Greg Walton. She was the leadoff speaker for the PEC.



Representing Lutheran Counseling Services at the PEC were Dr. Rick Armstrong, Megan Miessler and Rev. Scott Gress. All three were workshop presenters.

PEC Offering Benefits Hurricane Relief

Just weeks before the President's Equip Conference was scheduled to open in Ponte Vedra Beach, Hurricane Irma roared through Florida and Georgia, leaving a damaging imprint on virtually every area of the District.

"Some participants had to cancel because of the effect of Irma," District President Greg Walton said. "They needed to be at home to address problems and issues and could not afford to take any additional days off."

Those who did attend the PEC were encouraged to write notes of support to fellow District members recovering from serious hurricane damage.

Financial support was also gathered at the PEC, including

- 437 gift cards ranging from \$15-\$500 and totaling \$17,090
- LCEF contribution of \$2,000
- Checks and cash in the PEC offering totaling 10,600.55

In all, \$29,690.55 was gathered to be used for hurricane relief in the District. ■



Rev Tom Eggbrecht, pastor of Ascension/Casselberry, FL, headed the social media team.



President Greg Walton thanked members of the District staff for their efforts in helping make the PEC a success. Shown on stage with Walton are (l-r) Debbie Talbot, Laura Ziebel, Cindy Hammerstrom, Mark Brink, Dan Reichard, Kathy Keene, John Elliott and Lynda Voss.



District President Greg Walton was among those celebrating an anniversary — 30 years in the pastoral ministry. District First Vice President David Brighton — a 35-year honoree — presented Walton with his certificate.



Keynoter Heather McGinness, Vice President for Advancement at Concordia College-New York, focused on recruiting, motivating and keeping volunteers. “Our kingdom work is always growing,” she said. “The work is never done.”



Jacksonville resident Erik Dellenback, President & Executive Director of the Tim Tebow Foundation, was the final PEC speaker. Emphasizing that it is all about Jesus, Dellenback said, “If we don’t recognize that we are unimpressive, we can’t get to where Jesus is taking us.”



Speaking on the power of hospitality, Keynoter Rev. Dr. Leo Sanchez said, “Without the Gospel, there is no church. But right after that is hospitality. Your faith moves you to welcome.” Sanchez is Professor of Systematic Theology, Systematic Theology; Director of the Center for Hispanic Studies, Ministerial Formation; and Werner R.H. Krause and Elizabeth Ringger Krause Professor of Hispanic Ministries, Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis.



“We need to launch new expressions of the Gospel to bring it to the community,” emphasized Keynoter Bill Woolsey, executive director and president of FiveTwo Network. He noted that in the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus went beyond the what and focused on the who when He told His disciples, “You give them something to eat.” Woolsey is shown with his caricature done by Orlando artist Kent Hammmerstrom, who did one for each keynoters as a gift from the District.

Many Anniversaries Celebrated at



Jane Anderson and Rev. Dr. Dennis Glick of St. Paul Lutheran Church & School/Boca Raton, FL, were both celebrating 45 year anniversaries.

10 Year Anniversaries

Pam Bailey, Educator, St. Luke’s Lutheran Church & School/Oviedo, FL
Joyce Bardiil, Educator, Epiphany Lutheran Church/Tallahassee/FL
Adolfo Borges, Pastor, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church/Orlando, FL
Trisha DePasquale, Educator, Our Savior Lutheran Church & School/Plantation, FL
Eric Eichinger, Pastor, Bethel Lutheran Church/Clearwater, FL
Debra Kraft, Educator, Trinity Lutheran Church & School/Fort Lauderdale, FL
Kami Jo Mogelvang, DCE, Grace Lutheran Church & Preschool/Naples, FL
Rochelle Nickerson, Educator, Our Savior Lutheran Church & School/Plantation, FL
Christina Nugent, Educator, St. Luke’s Lutheran Church & School/Oviedo, FL
Christopher Patterson, Pastor, Concordia Lutheran Church/Miami, FL
Jessica Thompson, Educator, St. Luke’s Lutheran Church & School/Oviedo, FL

15 Year Anniversaries

Bruce Alberts, Pastor, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church/Titusville, FL
Jennifer Bier, Educator, First Lutheran Church & School/Clearwater, FL
Cindy Brandel, Educator, Peace Lutheran Church & School/Okeechobee, FL
Shirley Dauphine, Educator, Holy Cross Lutheran Church & School/North Miami, FL
Tim Droegemueller, Pastor, Living Faith Lutheran/Cumming, GA
Tina Eaton, Educator, Hope Lutheran Church/Orlando, FL
Marie Innocent, Administrative Staff, Holy Cross Lutheran Church & School/North Miami, FL

Jeffrey Jordan, Pastor, Rivercliff Lutheran Church/Sandy Springs, GA
Ann Leimer, Educator, Grace Lutheran Church & School/Jacksonville, FL

20 Year Anniversaries

Kenneth Green, Pastor, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church/Orlando, FL
Yonggil Hur, Pastor, Living Faith Lutheran Church/Cumming, GA
Chang Soo Kim, Pastor, Living Faith Lutheran Church/Cumming, GA
Robert Maulella, Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church/Sebring, FL
Kip Sandersfeld, Educator, Faith Lutheran/Eustis, FL
Beverly Thompson, Educator, Holy Cross Lutheran Church/North Miami, FL
Paul vonWerder, Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church/Orlando, FL
James Weist, Pastor, Epiphany Lutheran/Lake Worth, FL

25 Year Anniversaries

Debra Beck, Emeritus, Our Savior Lutheran School/Plantation, FL
Beverly DeLomos, Educator, St. Luke Lutheran Church & School/Oviedo, FL
John Glover, Pastor, First Lutheran Church/Gainesville, FL
Wendy Niska, Educator, Our Savior Lutheran Church/St Petersburg, FL
Amy Ryan, Educator, Grace Lutheran Church & School/Saint Petersburg, FL
Jeffrey Shanks, Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church and School/Ocala, FL
Jeffrey Skopak, Pastor, Grace Lutheran/Jacksonville, FL
Donna Swift, Principal/Director, Our Savior Lutheran School/Plantation, FL

District President’s Equip Conference

Thomas Wenndt, Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church/New Port Richey, FL

30 Year Anniversaries

Blair Clark, Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church/Summerfield/FL
Curtis Deterding, Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church/Fort Myers, FL
Stephen Gaulke, Pastor, Concordia/Sarasota, FL
Hiruy Gebremichael, Pastor, St. Mark Lutheran Church/Tucker, GA
Juan Gonzalez, Pastor, Beautiful Savior/Lehigh Acres, FL
Wendy Kirin, Educator, Grace Lutheran Church and School/Winter Haven, FL
Susan Norris, Educator, Trinity Lutheran Church/Lake Placid, FL
Peggy Rankin, Educator, Immanuel Lutheran School/Brandon, FL
Anette Shanks, Director of Family Life Ministry, St. John Lutheran Church & School/Ocala, FL
Don Stier, Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church/Tavernier, FL
Greg Walton, District President, Florida-Georgia District/Orlando, FL
James Wiggins, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church/Jacksonville, FL

35 Year Anniversaries

Paul Schwan, Educator, St. Michael Lutheran Church & School/Fort Myers, FL
Dave Wesche, Pastor, All Saints Lutheran Church/Blairsville, GA,
Sue Schwan, Educator, St. Michael Lutheran Church & School/Fort Myers, FL
Brenda Sorren, Principal/Director, Shepherd of the Coast Church & School/Fort Lauderdale, FL
Russell Frahm, Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church & School/Merritt Island, FL
Janice Pisieczko, Educator, Our Savior Lutheran Church & School/St Petersburg, FL

David Brighton, Pastor, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church/Warner Robins, GA
Sarah Nowicki, Educator, St. Luke’s Lutheran School & School/Oviedo, FL
Carl Schneider, Pastor, Faith Church & School/Marietta, GA
Dennis Bartels, Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church & School/North Miami, FL

40 Year Anniversaries

Kenneth Larson, Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church & School/Delray Beach, FL
Craig Mathews, Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church/Bradenton, FL
Laurie Wahner, Emeritus, Hope Lutheran Church & School/Hudson, FL
Beth Walters, Educator, Grace Lutheran Church & School/Winter Haven, FL
Ruth Westol, Librarian, St. John Church & School/Ocala, FL

45 Year Anniversaries

Frank Ahrens, Educator, Faith Lutheran Church & School/Hialeah, FL
Jane Anderson, Emeritus, St. Paul Lutheran Church & School/Boca Raton, FL
Dennis Glick, Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church & School/Boca Raton, FL

50 Year Anniversaries

Gerhard Michael, Jr, Emeritus, St. Peter Lutheran Church/Cumming, GA
Larry Schaefer, Pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church/Orlando, FL

55 Year Anniversary

Karen Johnson, Educator, Faith Lutheran Church & School/Hialeah, FL



Mark Brink welcomed professional church workers marking milestone anniversaries to the stage. He tried to call Karen Johnson, a retired educator with Faith Lutheran Church & School/Hialeah, FL, and left a congratulatory message on her answering machine.



Pastors' wives gathered for a photo at the PEC.



Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL, lay members Wanda Pierce and Lois Schaefer with President Greg Walton at the conference cross. Schaefer is a member of the District Board of Directors.



This interactive booth/display was a popular stopping place for PEC participants.



Jay and Julie Dass of Voice of Faith flank Living Faith/Cumming, GA, Senior Pastor Tim Droegemueller. Voice of Faith is a ministry dedicated to sharing the Gospel through a cultural approach with Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities.

Taking a break from Conference events ... District DCEs and youth leaders share their joy.



Giving President Walton a much needed break from all the paparazzi — and winning one of the daily social media challenges — is Laura Blank of the LiveUCF team.

Below: An exhibit area featured information and products from various organizations and vendors. Helen Roenfeldt (far right), Executive Director of Mission: Haiti, is shown with Rev. Darrell and Linda Stuehnenberg of Bethlehem/Fort Myers.



Dr. Robert Newton, President of the LCMS' California-Nevada-Hawaii District, delved into the concept of Royal Priesthood during his keynote address.



St. Paul/Boca Raton PreK-3 teacher Susan Franskousky with a 30-foot-long grapevine used in a student led chapel. Franskousky and St. Paul First Grade Teacher Susan Merritt led this popular workshop.



The praise worship team from Bethlehem/Jacksonville Beach led singing throughout the conference. Shown with them (far right) is District Administrative Assistant Lynda Voss on the violin.



Rather than purchase gift items for PEC participants, the District LCEF team made the decision to donate the funds to the Florida-Georgia hurricane relief effort. LCEF District Vice President Dan Reichard presented Florida-Georgia President Greg Walton with a check for \$2,000.



Rev. Dana Brones, Pastor of Bethlehem/Jacksonville Beach, was the chaplain for the PEC.

Synod Leaders Share National Updates with District Board

Convening in Orlando from August 18-19, members of the Florida-Georgia Board of Directors met with District Circuit Visitors and with Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod President Matthew Harrison and LCMS 6th Vice President Christopher Esget. Esget is Florida-Georgia's regional vice president.

Synod Visit

The Synodical officials met with both the Circuit Visitors and the Board, providing “an opportunity for us to learn from them and to share with them the wonderful things God continues to do among us in the Florida-Georgia District,” said District President Greg Walton.

According to Harrison, the “purpose of our District visitations is to encourage one another to even greater faithfulness — both to our confession of Christ and to the mission of Christ to make Him known before the world. These are challenging times in which we live, but we have Christ’s own promise, ‘Upon this rock,’ this confession of faith.

“He says, ‘I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’”

Circuit Visitors and Board members were given a book that included resources “that shed light on our common life together in Synod and District,” Harrison noted. Some of that information was reviewed at the meeting, including the overall decline in LCMS membership and

the need for pastors to serve in Missouri Synod congregations.

District Board

Discussion in the Board meeting centered on the critical targets of leadership and outreach adopted in April 2014. Board members reviewed these targets and the success indicators at their meeting and will do so again at the November meeting.

Leadership:

District leaders show an annual increase in the number of objective continuing education benchmarks completed. Demographic and generational diversity among leaders in the District to increase annually.

Emergent Leaders

The fourth round of Emergent Leaders Training was held in April, May and June, with 15 graduates including Board members Katie Abercrombie and Lois Schaefer. Four others were from outside Florida-Georgia, with a mix of pastors, educators and laity. “We have seen wonderful things, including strong relationships and networking, through this training,” Walton said.

National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors

Florida-Georgia is sponsoring a training session for those interested in Intentional Interim Training through the National Association of Intentional Interim Pastors. There are 12 participants in the course, which is the first

step in qualifying to serve as an Intentional Interim Minister.



BOARD ROOM
by John List
District Communications Director

Accreditation

The following schools were recently either accredited for the first time or reaccredited by the National Lutheran School Accreditation Commission at its annual meeting in July: Faith/Marietta, GA; Redeemer/Stuart, FL; Immanuel/Brandon, FL; First/Clearwater, FL; Our Savior/St. Petersburg, FL; Bethel/Hobe Sound, FL; Grace/St. Cloud, FL.

PLI Missional Leader Learning Community

With a focus on raising and strengthening leaders, the third session of the PLI group happened October 2-5 at Prince of Peace/Orlando. The focus was on building missional communities and reaching more specific people with the love, grace and forgiveness of Jesus. The fourth and final session is planned for April of 2018.

C2.4 Task Force

This group is charged with developing a process for non-Lutheran workers in District schools to be orientated to the LCMS understanding of the key tenants of our faith. The task force is led by Louise Weber, former teacher and

administrator at Hong Kong International School and founding Head of School at Concordia, Shanghai,

China. The task force, which includes District Executive for School Ministries Mark Brink, is on target to meet an April 1, 2018 deadline to complete the new resource.

Young Adult Leadership Training

A group from Christ the King/Largo under the leadership of Josh Blankenship with support from Pastor Joe Adams is exploring the possibilities for congregations to intentionally and purposefully engage young adults (post high school to age 35). The group is working with District Executive Mark Brink to determine how Florida-Georgia can be a supportive partner in the effort. Joe Guagliardo, recently retired Certified Lay Minister and Youth Leader from Faith/Merritt Island, is spearheading plans to provide leadership training to lay leaders engaged in youth ministry.

2018 District Convention

Plans are under way for the June 22-24, 2018, Florida-Georgia Convention. The theme is from John 15:12-17: Chosen with a Purpose —

to Abide in Jesus. Each day will have a focus relevant to the theme.

Outreach:

District congregations report at least 3,500 adult confirmations and professions of faith annually.

Hearts for Jesus

The 2017 Hearts for Jesus project raised \$11,117.07 to benefit the Comfort Dogs Ministry of Lutheran Church Charities, who stood with the District during the difficult days after the Pulse shootings in Orlando in June of 2017. Most of the schools in the District designated their chapel offering from February to Hearts for Jesus.

2017 Middle School Gathering

Middle school students and their adult counselors will be at Lake Yale Baptist Assembly from November 3-5 for this annual event. The Gathering is expected to draw more than 500 middle school youth from congregations throughout the District. Jeremy Becker, St. Paul/Weston DCE, is leading the planning team.

School Closing

After 62 years of ministry to the Fort Lauderdale area, Faith Lutheran School closed its doors. The faculty and staff at Faith served faithfully during some very challenging times. “A once all-Anglo ministry became a predominantly Haitian/African American ministry that provided a Light in the lives of many children who attended Faith,” Walton said.

District Mission Advisory Council

Four emerging missions are under way in the District: Lake Wood Ranch is in an area adjoining Sarasota and Brandon. The District is partnering with Beautiful Savior/Sarasota on this mission. Naples, where a new Haitian start sponsored by Amigos en Cristo began in the home of Pastor Andre Mezilus and has already gathered as many as 40 people. More space is being sought at Pelican Community Church/Naples. Port St. Lucie Cornerstone Mission is the daughter of Redeemer/Stuart, whose Pastor David Albers is working with local representatives to move the mission forward. Missionary at Large Hispanic Atlanta will serve six partner congregations who will host ministry in their areas offering space and help in launching the ministry. The District will offer a two-year tenured call which is renewable with measured success.

Outreach Initiative

The Outreach Initiative with Lutheran Hour Ministries is being reshaped and will primarily provide resources on the web through a portal. The new director, Rev. Tony Cook, has said that he would like Florida-Georgia to serve in the beta testing section of this new format and material. ■

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for November 3-4 in Orlando.

Concordia NY Reports Record Enrollment

Concordia College New York in September announced a record enrollment of 1,466 for the 2017-2018 academic year, a 26% increase over last year.

The impressive increase is attributable to a series of creative partnerships and business realignments executed as part of the College’s reorganization plan. Positive impacts have been noted externally as well: Concordia College was just named a top-20 Best North Regional Liberal Arts College in the 2018 U.S. News Best Colleges Rankings. The College was also named a top-10 Best Value School in the North Region, and regionally ranked third in Ethnic and Economic Diversity and second in percentage of International Students.

Innovative educational partnerships have boosted both international and domestic enrollment, and new academic programs mean that Concordia now offers a wide variety of academic majors, minors, concentrations and pre-professional studies, plus graduate programs in subjects from Business Leadership to Digital Marketing and International Education, many of which are also offered online. Small class size and a dedicated faculty are key to making Concordia a standout choice, along with international study, academic fieldwork and meaningful internships. Thriving Division II sports programs have drawn many student-athletes.

Concordia has been serving students since 1881. ■

Valparaiso Honored as a Top University

For the 29th consecutive year, Valparaiso University has been identified as one of the best universities in the Midwest by *U.S. News & World Report* magazine. In the 2018 edition, Valpo is the No. 1 Best Undergraduate Teaching University, No. 1 Best Value in the Midwest and the No. 4 Best Regional University in the Midwest, among more than 160 universities in the category.

Valpo’s ABET-accredited College of Engineering is the No. 14 best undergraduate engineering program in the country, while the AACSB-accredited College of Business is included as one of the Best Business Programs in the nation.

This fall, the University opened the Center for the Sciences: Chemistry and Biochemistry, a 55,000-square-foot science laboratory facility. The recently dedicated Innovation Hub at Clyde H. McMillan Hall offers opportunities for both campus and community leaders to advance entrepreneurial efforts. ■

Recently I dusted off my 1944 edition of Scout Field Book and reminded myself of the Boy Scout slogan: “Do a Good Turn Daily.” The Girl Scout slogan is identical: “Do a Good Turn Daily.” The phrase is a bit archaic, but who can argue against it?

Today we might say “Commit a random act of kindness.” And even our secular culture understands the story of “The Good Samaritan” even though they might be clueless as to where it came from, or who a Samaritan might be.

But herein lurks a trap. One of the ways our culture defines “nice” is to never offend anybody — even if the truth is at stake. Thus we have words like “homophobia” and “Islamophobia” which preempt any meaningful conversation, much less sharing biblical truth.

One aspect of this sociological dysfunction is the popular phenomenon of interfaith dialogue between pastors and Muslim imams. So we ask what could be wrong with pastors and imams meeting together to “talk faith?” The problem surfaces when the unspoken rule of “never offend anybody” becomes the arbiter of conversation.

deceive — rather than to “promote understanding.” The Christian, out of “niceness,” will concede his viewpoint. And it is not unusual for church members to give their spiritual leaders affirmation and praise for doing what they think will lead to unity and peace. What pastor wouldn’t want a few “atta boys” from his parishioners?

In November 2014, the Washington National Cathedral — our country’s iconic Christian “house of prayer” — was the venue for just such an interfaith event. The Muslim community was invited to offer prayer to Allah. Prayer carpets were arranged diagonally so the Muslim worshippers



The Washington National Cathedral invited Muslims to lead their own prayers at the cathedral for the first time Friday (Nov. 14, 2014). Photo courtesy of Lisa Helfert/Washington National Cathedral



COURAGE FOR TODAY

by Rev. Bruce Lieske
District Chairman of Task Force
on Muslim Evangelism

He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” (LUKE 9:26) The woman in the cathedral was not ashamed of Jesus and His words. Nor should we be ashamed when we interact with Muslims who are offended by the cross and by our belief in Jesus death and resurrection. We should welcome, and even seek, the opportunity to dialogue with Muslims.

But we owe it to them, and in obedience to our Savior, to not silence ourselves about the Gospel in the mistaken view that thereby we are being nice and tolerant. Let us speak as the Apostle Peter said: “Be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give reason of the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ...” (1 PETER 3:15).

Fearless, gentle and wise, we must imitate Paul who said, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (ROMANS 1:16). And that includes the Muslim. ■



An unidentified female heckler briefly interrupted the Muslim prayer service, shouting, “America was founded on Christian principles. ... Leave our church alone!” She was quickly removed by security.

Public dialogue with Muslim imams is problematic because they have a different world view than the usual pastor or rabbi. They see the dialogue experience as an opportunity to proselytize and

sanctuary because she spoke the very reason for the existence of the cathedral.

Jesus said: “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when

Often busy church leaders wish that others would volunteer a little bit more. They invite people, they make announcements but no one seems to step forward to help. Aargh!



The COACHING LEADER

by Rev. Scott Gress
Lutheran Counseling Services
Leadership Coach

It can be frustrating! Then after a while an existing leader may even get a bit of a chip on their shoulder and conclude that no one wants to help! That might be one conclusion, but another insight might be that the current way of recruiting others isn’t working. In last issue’s article we talked about how to pick leaders. In this article we will talk about recruiting leaders.



“Volunteer? Pastor I thought you said to come over and bring beer!”

What can be done?

The first key for the coaching leader is not to start with the vacancy or need but start with the person. Then find the need or niche that they can fill by God’s grace.

Years ago our District’s former mission executive, Rev. Jerry Seaman, talked about how to recruit people. He said it was a simple three step process:

• 1) Give people meaningful things to do.

• 2) Support them along the way.
• 3) Celebrate the results. Simple yet brilliant! Unfortunately, many elements of those three steps are missing from current

recruiting practices. So let’s take a brief look at each step and understand what they mean.

1. Give people meaningful things to do. Meaningful to whom? To them,

not to the recruiter. Recruiting can’t be done on the phone with the church directory. It needs to be done in person, sitting down, leisurely, asking someone about their hopes and dreams for serving God and people. Only then can a coaching leader serve that person in finding their niche in making a difference to the kingdom of God.

It may involve existing ministries at a church, it may involve something outside the church in the community or it may involve a new ministry that can be started. The key is that they are gifted and passionate about this thing that can be done in the name of Jesus. Then go find how they can get plugged in.

2. Support them along the way. This is not smothering them with attention nor abandoning them to go it alone. A good coaching leader will keep in touch, ask how they are doing, ask how they can support them and what good support looks like for them.

A good leader will then listen and do what they say they will do. No absentee support here.

3. Finally, they will celebrate the results. No one likes a Monday morning quarterback who criticizes and tears down after the fact. Rather, stop and give thanks and praise to God for whatever happens. There is always something good to celebrate, even if it is a painful lesson. Yet the point is to pause, affirm people and



their efforts and sacrifice and give praise to God. Then stop also to reflect and learn from what happened. Serving God can be fun! We get to spend time with great people, make a difference for people both now and for eternity! Throw a party!

Follow these steps intentionally and you will be surprised how many new people will serve. Contact me and let me know how I can serve you as you recruit others. ■



“My job as a welcome center volunteer is to tell everyone where to go. This position is perfect for me!”

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.

LCEF Shared Blessings Rebate Program Rewards Active Congregations

Through God's continued blessings, Lutheran Church Extension Fund

distributed Shared Blessings rebate checks totaling \$929,380.34 to 257 congregations

across the Synod who qualified for an interest rate rebate from July 2016 through June 2017.

The Florida-Georgia District distributed \$137,000 to 17 congregations.

Recipient of the largest check was Trinity Lutheran/Orlando — \$61,197.02. ■



Christ the King Largo, Florida
Shown from Christ the King/Largo (l-r) Pauline Pereira, Colleen Rabe, Leslie Sullivan, Jessica Miller, Rev. Joe Adams, LCEF Congregation Advocate Jon Boeche

Trinity Downtown Orlando, Florida
LCEF Congregation Advocate Bruce Hahn with Ted Lange and Rev. Larry Schaefer.



Immanuel/Brandon, Florida
Bonne Faherty (left) and Lisa Talbott



St. Paul Lakeland, Florida
Bob Boyd; LCEF Congregation Advocate Paul Sicca; Nick Moss



Trinity in Pasco County, Florida
Trinity is located in Trinity, Florida. LCEF Congregation Advocate Christene Nauman



Amazing Grace Oxford, Florida
Pastor James Rockey with Vice President Daniel J. Reichard



Trinity Summerfield, Florida
Trinity/Summerfield Senior Pastor Dan Kelm, LCEF Congregation Advocate Joyce Moote, Trinity Associate Pastor John Clark, Jr.

Saluting Rich Robertson

Lutheran Church Extension Fund staff on September 27 celebrated Rich Robertson's eight years as the organization's President and CEO. With his wife Cindy by his side, Robertson shared a heartfelt thank you: "I really salute all of you for the work and quality that's been done and that will continue to be done in the years ahead."

The Robertsons are members of St. Paul/Peacetree City, GA.

Reflecting on his affiliation with LCEF, Robertson said in a farewell blog, "God's hand is what brought me to LCEF. After a successful career in corporate America, I had decided to share some of my time with organizations that aligned with my faith, and LCEF rose to the top."

"As background, LCEF provided funding for my congregation's school – the first Christian school in the town. A significant loan, for a relatively small group of individuals who heard the calling and acted. I know of no other financial institution that would have taken the risk. Like many schools, you have the ups and the down years, but now after 20 years, they have a solid, respected footprint in our community and this year's enrollment is more than 230 children — children hearing the good news of eternal life through Jesus Christ!"

"The hand of God at work! Mind you, this school is in Peachtree City, GA — not a mecca for LCMS Lutherans, yet they come! Nothing stops God's hand to make things happen. The impossible always becomes possible." ■



FLORIDA GEORGIA

REGIONAL NEWS

*Out and About in the
Florida-Georgia District*



VBS Field Trip (above) — On the agenda for the middle school groups in the Trinity/Savannah Vacation Bible School was a trip to St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church. The church was built as an opera house in the 1800s. Sundaes and discussions of the day and week followed the tour.

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:

Tamie Worthington | St Paul/Peachtree City

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



Members of Good Shepherd/Gainesville were part of Mule Camp Market 2017, a local fall festival and craft exhibition. The annual three-day event held in October draws crowds of up to 75,000. Good Shepherd hosted a booth featuring colorful handmade jewelry, with all proceeds going to efforts to stop human trafficking.



Sixteen members of Christ Lutheran/Perry were among the 50 participants in the recent Gulf Shores Servant Event. After daily devotions, Camp Dixie Lutheran activities included painting a house, repairing a trailer, installing soffit, repairing shelving units, picking up branches in the woods and a dozen other projects. The youth also enjoyed canoeing, kayaking, time at the beach, board games, and more.



Members of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church/Augusta filled 102 flood buckets that in mid-September were ready to be sent to Florida to assist those recovering from Hurricane Irma.

The congregation also sent \$3,000 to the Florida Recovery Effect led by the Florida-Georgia District and another \$3,000 to the Texas District to assist with recovery efforts there are Hurricane Jarvey. Above — Robert A. Holland, Diane Chutka and Felton Harvey Butch Bohannon with the flood buckets headed to Florida.

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School News & Photos!**

**LUTHERAN
LIFE**

LutheranLife@aol.com



Above — Rivercliff Lutheran/Sandy Springs hosted its annual Taste of Habitat this past September 25. The event raised more than \$25,000 — an all-time high.



Vic Belton Installed as Concordia NY Vice President

Rev. Dr. Victor J. Belton was installed as Concordia College New York Vice President for Leadership and Campus Ministry on Sunday, September 24 at Village Lutheran Church/Bronxville.

Florida-Georgia District President Gregory Walton was the guest preacher. Officiants also included Atlantic District President Derek Lecakes and Host Pastor Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell, Senior Pastor of Village Lutheran.

Belton is the first full-time Campus Pastor at Concordia College in the last seven years. He will also serve as the Executive Director for the Center for Contextual Leadership.

Prior to returning to his alma mater, Belton served as Pastor of Peace/ Decatur, GA.

Shown above at the installation (l-r) Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton; Atlantic District President Derek Lecakes; Concordia College Vice President for Leadership and Campus Ministry Victor Belton; New Jersey District President Anthony Steinbronn; Village Lutheran/ Bronxville Pastor Robert Hartwell.



The Human Care Ministry of Amazing Grace/Oxford provided 120 new polo shirts to Wildwood Middle High School in August. More than 80% of the students at WWMHS live in poverty and at times have outgrown school appropriate clothes or just lack the ability to buy what they need. AGLC's Clothed in Christ's Love is a project of the Human Care Ministry. "These new shirts helped to stock the school's clothing closet and is a simple way that we can share Christ's love and provision," said Amazing Grace Pastor James Rockey. "Each shirt also had a label saying 'A Gift to You From Your Friends at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church.'"



Hope/Jacksonville (above) recently hosted an LCEF Sunday, welcoming LCEF District Vice President Daniel J. Reichard and his wife Andrea Reichard for worship. Shown here with Reichard are Hope Pastor Patrick McKenzie and Congregation Advocate Rick Charlton, who helped share LCEF resources that empower ministries in Kingdom work.

Trinity Downtown Welcomes Pastor Doug Kallesen

Rev. Doug Kallesen was installed as senior pastor of Trinity Downtown/Orlando during a special afternoon service on October 4.

Trinity's sanctuary was filled to overflowing with more than 400 worshipers joining in the celebration — including many seated in the gym to view the live-streamed service. Approximately 30 visiting pastors were at the service, including Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton.

Music for the service included special selections by the Parish, VPK and K-8 choirs, as well as the Bell Choir, instrumentalist Jaron Kallesen, vocalist Jen Byce Kallesen and David Ludwig on both the organ and piano.

Most recently Kallesen served as executive director in the Mission-Outreach Department for the Florida-Georgia District, a position he held for 16 years. Previously, he

served the LCMS as dean of coaching for Mission Planters Institute (MPI). His pastoral work includes ministry to churches in Michigan and Montana, as well as new mission starts in Iowa and Tennessee.

He served on the Montana District's Mission Board-Native American Ministry and in the Mid-South District on its evangelism committee, among other positions. He completed his M.Div. at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1983. ■



Rev. Doug and Desiree Kallesen



Right — Hope Lutheran/Melbourne began its 2017 Mission Week with a potluck on July 9. Many members wore their Hope T-shirts to worship. A love offering was collected for missionary Rev. Jacob Gaugert, who is serving in Africa. Every day of the week congregation members served the community, an annual tradition for the congregation.

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:

Frank Kinast | Messiah/Valdosta

First Coast Circuit Visitor:

Dana Brones | Bethlehem/Jacksonville

Central Florida Circuit Visitor:

James Rockey | Amazing Grace/Oxford



More than 30 volunteers from St. Paul/Lakeland on October 6 served about 900 people. The volunteers — including children and adults — helped older and disabled people get 10,400 pounds of donated food to their transportation. A nutritionist was on site offering help on food preparation. Most of the distributed food was fresh vegetables, fruits and meats. This special distribution was in addition to St. Paul's regular food bank open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday each week.

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



Woodlands Welcomes Pastor Joshua Pettit

Rev. Joshua Pettit was installed as Associate Pastor of Woodlands Lutheran Church/Montverde on July 30. Just three weeks earlier, he and his family were the guests of honor at a farewell luncheon at Our Redeemer/Ocala, when Pettit was on the pastoral staff.

While engaging in all aspects of pastoral ministry, his primary focus at Woodlands will be to and with the youth and their families.

"It was an exciting and overwhelming weekend for Pastor Pettit as wife Elizabeth gave birth to their third daughter, Amelia, the day before the installation," reported Dr. Brian Kneser, Woodlands Senior Pastor. She joins sisters Katherine and Natalie.

"As one of the pastors mentioned during the clergy laying on of hands, 'Pastor Pettit has already lowered the average age of the congregation!'"

Pettit will serve side-by-side with Kneser and Assistant to the Pastor Milan Weerts. ■

Below — Participating in the installation were Pastors (bottom row, l-r) Gerald Schultz, Kenneth Schamens, Stephen Schroeder, Dennis Glander, Joshua Pettit, Kenneth Green, James Rockey, Douglas Kallesen, (back row, l-r) Paul Sutterer, Marc Kappel, Brian Kneser, David Hilgert, Milan Weerts, Joseph Adams, Ronald Biel, Richard Armstrong.



Prince of Peace/Orlando during its summer VBS program collected supplies for Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries. RLOM operates a maternity home that offers safe, Christ-centered place for single women in crisis pregnancy. Located in Sanford, FL, RLOM was founded by Pastor Ed and Sheryl DeWitt.

Faith Students Witness Eclipse

Faith Lutheran School/Eustis gazed in wonderment of God's creation on August 21. The day of celebration was kicked off by 6th graders participating in a Bible study that focused on how an eclipse is awesome, but is even better because God made His creation because He loves us.

In the afternoon, students joined together as PK3-8th grade school to witness the total eclipse streamed from Oregon. Breaking into eight stations, the students read the story of creation. Cream-filled cookies modeled the phases of the moon. Using



block towers and flashlights students studied how light can be blocked forming shadows. Rockets were launched, marshmallow constellations were built, and marble craters were made.

The capstone was being able to wear fashionable eclipse glasses and actually view the partial eclipse.

"What an experience for our students," said Marcy Kappel of Faith's Admissions Department.



Grace Welcomes Cynthia Tillman as New First Grade Teacher

Cynthia Tillman has joined the faculty of Grace Lutheran School/Winter Haven as the second first grade teacher.

A lifelong member of the LCMS, Tillman grew up in Alabama where she attended parochial schools from kindergarten through high school. She is a graduate of Concordia University Chicago.

Tillman has served as a teacher/principal in Michigan, Alabama, Illinois, Georgia and Tennessee. She was an Admission Counselor at Concordia College Alabama.

She has also served as Director of Early Childhood in Maryland and in Florida, where she started

an early childhood center in Naples beginning with 40 students and had more than 65 students after her four years there.

She has two children — Timothy Jason and Jeniece Yvonne Tillman — as well as three grandchildren, two girls and one boy.

"I am a child of God," Tillman said.

"He has chosen me and continues to bless me to work with His children. My purpose is introducing Christ in the lives of children and grow with them in their personal relationship with God!" ■





Can a small Fort Myers church with a weekly attendance of 50 in the summertime and whose average member's age is over 70 pull off a successful VBS?

According to Bethlehem Pastor Darrell Stuehrenberg the answer is a resounding "Yes!" He added, "We had more than 50

children and volunteers on our first day of Barnyard Roundup VBS on Monday, July 17 and the numbers stayed strong all week."

Beautiful Savior Welcomes New Director of Family Ministries



Amanda Bell was installed as the Director of Family Ministries at Beautiful Savior/Sarasota on July 30.

Bell graduated in May 2007 from

Concordia University Austin, with majors in Director of Christian Education and

theology. Her focus at Beautiful Savior will be to work with the families and youth of the church by encouraging their spiritual growth. She will also be working with various groups in the church to create outreach programs for the community surrounding Beautiful Savior.

Since graduating from Concordia, Bell has held positions of Director of Youth and Family Ministries at Good Shepherd Lutheran/Fremont, NE, and at St. Paul's/Columbia, IL. She was the Director of Christian Education at Christ Lutheran/Norfolk, NE. ■



Rev. Andrew Sorenson was installed as pastor of Faith Lutheran/Dunedin on Saturday, July 8. He had previously served at Faith Lutheran/Groton, CT. Participating in the installation service were Pastors (from, l-r) Charles Jaki; Greg Walton, President of the Florida-Georgia District; Andrew Sorenson, Pat O'Brien, Jim Guelzow, (back, l-r) Eric Eichinger, Jared Hartman, Edward Krauss.



Holy Cross/North Miami hosted a meet and greet in October for LWML Sunday. Everyone was encouraged to wear some shade of purple and after church there was a reception with plenty of goodies. There was a special event for the ladies with prizes. During worship the congregation had a quiz!



Pastoral Anniversary — Pastor Tony and Junko Durante renewed their wedding vows at a special September 21 prayer circle at Trinity Church & School/Delray Beach. They met when Pastor Durante was on a mission trip to Japan and have been married 23 years.



Rev. Kevin Ray was installed as Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Outreach of Redeemer Lutheran Church & School/Stuart on July 30. Participating in the service were area pastors; Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton performed the rite of installation. Ray is a 2017 graduate of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis.



Principal Larry Ueltzen leads the opening chapel at Shepherd of the Coast Christian School/Fort Lauderdale with 104 students (K-8) and parents in attendance.



Peace Lutheran Church & School/Okeechobee summer camp students collected money to produce 54 flood buckets. The men's Tuesday morning Bible study assembled the buckets, which were ready for distribution in time for Hurricane Irma.

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:

Philip Rigdon | First/Clearwater

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

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



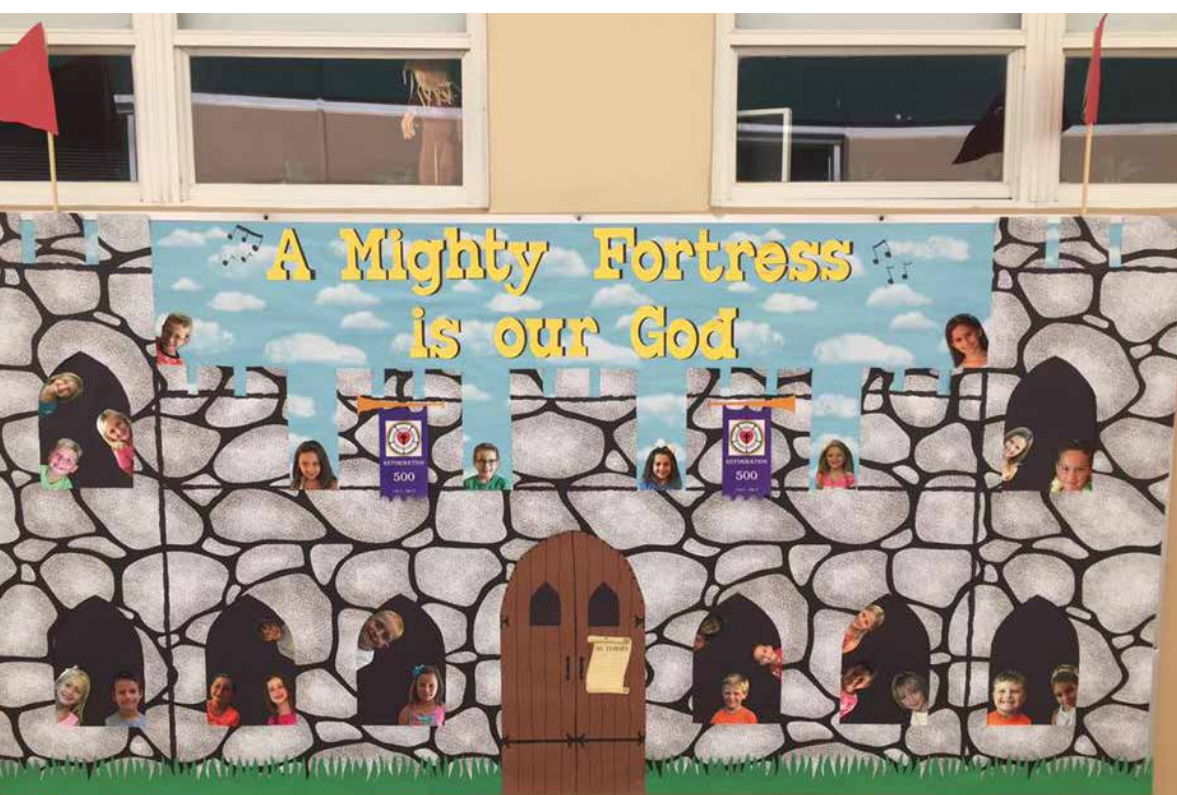
Weston Members Experience “Luther 500” Festival

This past June, a group of 49 friends and family from St. Paul Church & Preschool/Weston traveled to Wittenberg, Germany to participate in the “Luther 500” Festival.

“Travelling to the places where Martin Luther lived, studied and preached brought the Reformation to life for me,” said participant Kris Pascoe. “The tactile experience of walking the same cobblestones,

sitting in the same pews, touching some of the same walls and hearing the same word of God was powerful.

“It reminded me that each of us can be re-formers with a purpose of proclaiming the Gospel in its truth for future generations.” ■



St. Paul/Boca Raton first grade teachers Sue Merritt and Jessica Claxton worked with their students to create this Reformation bulletin board to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. The congregation celebrated with three festival worships including multiple choirs and brass plus a special screening of the movie, “Martin Luther — The Idea That Changed the World.” The movie was shown on the athletic field lawn. Saturday evening the congregation hosted a Reformation Oktoberfest with beer, German foods and music.

Klaus, Meyer Featured on LHM Weekly Broadcasts



Beginning November 5, the weekly broadcast of The Lutheran Hour will feature Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Klaus and Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer, former speakers for the radio program from 2002 to 2010, and from 1989 to 2001, respectively. The Lutheran Hour is sponsored by Lutheran Hour Ministries, part of the International Lutheran Laymen’s League, an LCMS auxiliary. The regular appearances of Klaus and Meyer are part of a transition plan being implemented following Speaker Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz’s acceptance of a call to serve as the first executive director of the LCMS Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty in Washington, DC. Since his retirement from the full-time speaker role in 2010, Klaus has been recording monthly sermons for The Lutheran Hour and writing many of LHM’s Daily Devotions. During his time as speaker, Meyer — president of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, since 2004 — also was host of LHM’s On Main Street weekly television program. ■

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Hurricane Irma Has District-Wide Effects

as reported by District President Greg Walton

Hurricane Irma barreled through Florida and Georgia on September 10th and 11th wreaking havoc and destruction in many places. As bad as the storm really was, loss of life was minimized by people who



Dedicated volunteers spent hours cleaning up the campus of Christ the King/LaBelle.

took reports seriously and heeded the warnings to hunker down or evacuate. All this while people were still trying to figure out how to help our brothers and sisters in Houston in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

The news carried stories of power



With no power on the Holy Cross Church & School/North Miami campus and thousands of dollars' worth of food thawing in the freezer, Rev. Dennis Bartels and his team decided to power up the gas appliances and the charcoal grill and feed a free lunch to their neighbors and passersby. "We ended up serving nearly 1,200 people," reported Bartels, shown here manning one of the grills. "The best part was to see how people come together in times of crisis," said Spencer Owen, DCE intern. "Local media gave us great coverage and some people who were just driving by saw what we were doing decided to come back and drop off cases of water, food from their own homes, and so many other things to give out. The Lord is good!"



outages, water systems shut down, limited gas, and continuous lines of traffic — first heading north, and then, once the storm passed, heading south again. People were anxious to get to their homes to assess the damages. Many places had to wait more than two weeks to get their electricity back as they struggled with stifling heat. It was a scary storm. In spite of all this, God was at work and we have heard some tremendous stories of God's blessings in the midst of the storm.

Hear some of the stories we have heard.

-Holy Cross, North Miami has a school with more than 400 children, most of whom eat both breakfast and lunch there. As a result their freezers were packed with food. When the power went out they had some decisions to make. They could



Florida-Georgia President Greg Walton (from left) and District Business Manager & Disaster Response Coordinator John Elliott confer with Rev. Michael Meyer and Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson of LCMS Disaster Response. The quartet met in the District office on September 12 after Irma has passed through Florida and Georgia.

let the food go to waste, or find a creative way to use it. So they began to cook it all up and made signs to hold on the roadside inviting people in for a hot meal. Hundreds of people took advantage of this opportunity,

and Holy Cross had dozens of volunteers! -The pastor of one of our churches knew they wouldn't be able to hold worship on Sunday morning so he prepared a devotion for his members and included an emergency order of baptism just in case. That Sunday morning,

as families gathered in the fellowship hall of this congregation a grandfather was able to baptize his teenage granddaughter, giving her the comfort and peace in the midst of a very tense time of life.

-One of our staff told of how at her daughter's home there was an old phone pole in the back yard. It looked out of place. It turns out God had a plan. When the hurricane came through it knocked a tree over that would have crushed the home. That tree had branches that branched off into a Y formation, and wouldn't you know that the Y landed right against that phone pole so that it couldn't reach the house. Later, when they went to look at the damage they discovered two additional trees leaning on the tree against this old phone pole. Coincidence? I don't think so!

-Grace Lutheran Church in Naples pulled together some supplies to hand out to the community. When they were well stocked they figured they would need three days to hand it all out. However, when their doors opened it was gone in the afternoon. The pastor put out an appeal to

[continued page 30]



Messiah/Tampa opened their doors to the community offering power and water — and a cool place to just rest. The congregation's Disaster Response Ministry went into the community and cleared some downed trees.



Christ the King Lutheran Church/Largo, served by Pastor Joe Adams, delivered several loads of supplies to Pelican Lutheran/Naples. Pelican Lutheran Pastor Mark Eisold arranged for distribution into the community.



Rev. Bob Selle, executive director of Amigos en Cristo, with Rev. Michael Meyer and Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson of LCMS Disaster Response in the trailer used by the mission on the Hope/Bonita Springs campus. The trailer was damaged in Irma.



Members of Holy Trinity/Macon packed cookies to deliver to Florida evacuees staying at a local campground.



Jack Proctor, DCE at Saint Michael/Fort Myers, and Tim Richter, DCE at Zion/Fort Myers, dislodge a tree from the Zion bell tower as part of the Hurricane Irma cleanup.



The sign at Faith Lutheran/Naples on September 13 was surrounded by Irma debris.



Volunteers working to unload and transport the 25 pallets of water and supplies that came to the District from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Manchester, NH.

[from page 28]

his “northern” friends and people responded.

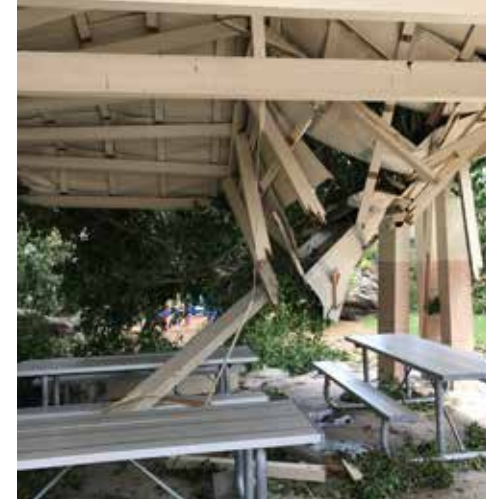
—One of our pastors rode out the storm even though his family had evacuated. He stayed behind to help some who couldn’t leave. As they prepared for the storm there was no plywood to be had, so they improvised and took apart the man’s deck to cover the windows.

I’ve heard stories of volunteers coming from all over the country, bringing generators and water, food and supplies. We have had a great response with flood buckets — so thank you to all who have supplied them. There is much to be done and especially in Southwest Florida and the Keys it will be a long and arduous recovery.

Stories from the storm are all around us. God presented us with tremendous opportunities to share the love and grace of Jesus. What I discovered is that many of the things that divide our nation, even things that divide our denomination, mean very little in times of crisis. At those times our focus becomes clearer, and what matters most is safety and well-being. We begin to see that despite all the diversity around us, we are all God’s children and that often our actions will speak far louder than our words. When we live in the love of Jesus and actively practice it, not to gain favor with



Pastor Steve Carretto (in the tree) quickly assembled a team of teachers, youth, congregation members — and new Vicar Tim Smith — to move around the neighborhoods helping with downed trees, fences. St Paul/Boca Raton’s campus had minimal damage although they lost a lunch pavilion and some playground equipment.



God or man, but simply because of God’s calling on our lives, this has a powerful impact on those who don’t yet believe. It opens doors for conversations as it peaks the curiosity of those who may have a preconceived notion.

Life is filled with storms—some are weather related; others we create ourselves. We may lose our electricity but no one can take away our power! That power, and its promises, were given to us in baptism, and even when the wind is whipping up, we can be confident of the One who will never leave us nor forsake us. He is Lord of the wind and the waves, and He is the Lord of our lives.

We’re still hearing great stories, and hope you might share yours too. Go to our website and you can share it there! ■



Luke and Sasha — Comfort Dogs arrived in the Bonita Springs area on October 16. They will spend the week bringing their distinctive comfort and compassion to those still affected in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

Below — Pastor Mark Eisold from Pelican Lutheran in Naples, FL, pulled together some volunteers to separate and prepare for distribution some of the supplies that came in from New Hampshire.



The Florida-Georgia District was able to help North Carolina last year with their flooding disaster. The favor was returned this year.



Birmingham, Alabama Hosts Black Ministry Family Convocation

More than 540 people from all across the country — and as far away as Kenya, East Africa — converged in Birmingham, AL, July 12-16 for the 2017 LCMS Lutherans in Black Ministry Family Convocation.

During the five-day gathering, attendees spent time together in worship, learning and fellowship under the theme “All for Jesus — Know Him. Confess Him. Serve Him.”

“We had Africans, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Anglo-Americans there,” said Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray Jr., director of LCMS Black Ministry. “This was an opportunity for Black Ministry to be more inclusive and to begin to celebrate who we are as Lutherans across cultures. It’s just an exciting time to be in ministry in the 21st century.”

The convocation celebrated two historic anniversaries: the 500th anniversary of the

Lutheran Reformation and the 140th anniversary of Black Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which started just 30 years after the Synod was formed.

During the convocation, Gray unveiled a new award — the Servants of God and of His People Award — which was given to the seven living pastors who graduated from Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in Greensboro, NC, which closed 56 years ago. Rev. Dr. William H. Griffin (class of 1951), Rev. Dr. Frazier N. Odom (1960), Rev. Dr. Bryant E. Clancy Jr. (1961) and Rev. Dr. James B. Marshall (1961) received the award in person. Not in attendance were Rev. Dr. Simon Bodley (1957), Rev. James Wiggins Sr. (1959) and Rev. Arthur Bodley (1961).

Some future church leaders participated in the convocation. While their parents attended workshops and keynote addresses, some 120 children and teenagers had their own schedule

full of speakers, servant events, devotions, field trips and games.

Approximately 20 different workshops were offered, with topics ranging from raising up future leaders and campus ministry to outreach to Muslims, community development and responding after a disaster.

Three keynote speakers spoke to the convention theme: Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor, pastor of Redeemer/Bronx, NY, and first vice president of the Atlantic District; Rev. Dr. Leopoldo A. Sanchez, the Werner R.H. and Elizabeth R. Krause Professor of Hispanic Ministries at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis; and Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, outgoing speaker of The Lutheran Hour and new executive director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty. ■

The mass choir, composed of church members from all over the country, sang during the LCMS Lutherans in Black Ministry Family Convocation





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The BACKPAGE

Saturday Night LiveUCF a Night to Remember

Supporters and friends of LiveUCF, a church on the campus of the University of Central Florida, gathered on October 7 for the annual gala to celebrate the work of the ministry.

Prince of Peace/Orlando hosted the dinner gala. Rev. Tom Eggbrecht, pastor of Ascension/Casselberry, was the guest speaker. Emily Harkins was the caterer.

LiveUCF's board of directors assisted with the planning, as did the students involved in the campus church. Various auction items raised funds for LiveUCF.

LiveUCF has its roots in a UCF Campus ministry from the early 2000s called Lutheran Student Fellowship. LSF was one of many groups around the campus attempting to adjust to the growth of the campus and the new budding

on-campus life. By 2010, a handful of the original LSF crew, now working for ministries in Orlando, began to work out a new way to do campus ministry at a University unlike any other in the nation.

By the Fall of 2013 the ministry started gathering on campus, spending the next year meeting for devotions, prayer and planning. Often members would wander campus praying in various spots and talking as they strolled.

In the Fall of 2014, after years of planning and a full year of gathering on campus, LiveUCF became an official UCF student organization and began Wednesday night worship in the Student Union. ■



LiveUCF Vice President Lauren Webb and President Charles Allen address the crowd.

District President Greg Walton shares a Gala message.

Rev. Tom Eggbrecht was the Gala's guest speaker.

