

LUTHERAN LIFE

JOY:FULLY
LUTHERAN

LCMS Convention Edition

REJOICE / PRAY / GIVE THANKS

*The Newsmagazine of the Florida-Georgia
District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
July-August 2019*





CHOSEN WITH
PURPOSE
ABIDING IN
JESUS

Have you made your 70th Anniversary Challenge Gift?

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 e-mails. 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:

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Two-Day First Regional Lay Leadership Summit Draws 70

Approximately 70 people participated in the Florida-Georgia District's first regional Lay Leadership Summit. Held June 7-8 at Faith/Marietta, GA, the event opened Friday evening with worship Led by President Greg Walton followed by an ice-cream social. Saturday contained the bulk of the event with affinity groups and workshops taking place in different areas of Faith's campus.

During the lunch speakers Rachel Hillman, General Manager at Delaware North with Coca Cola Roxy (one of Atlanta's premier music venues), and Gary Engel, owner of Engelheim Vineyards of Ellijay, Georgia, spoke to the theme from 1st Peter 4:10 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

Engel is a new member of Florida-Georgia's Board of Directors.

"There were three breakout sessions for a total of 13 different


workshops encompassing a broad scope of leadership opportunities and six different affinity group gatherings all with a focus of encouraging, equipping and empowering lay leaders in their ministry," explains Cindy Hammerstrom, Florida-Georgia District Communications Coordinator who helped with the logistics for the event.

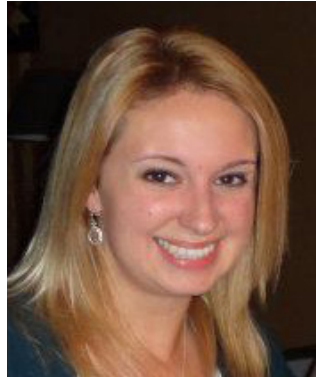
"The affinity groups were important . . . allowing the attendees who volunteered in similar areas to discuss challenges and best practices. There were 13 breakout sessions to choose from."

"Stepping Stones Ministry was the recipient of the summit's servant event," Hammerstrom concludes, "which included backpacks filled with toiletries, food and clothing."

Comments received from those attending, "A quality experience, great information, excellent presenters and good food!" And "this was one of the best district gatherings I have attended!"

The committee is working diligently in planning the next Lay Leadership Summit, Region 2, to be held at Abiding Savior/Gainesville, FL November 15-16, 2019. Regions

3, 4 and 5 summits will take place in 2020 and we hope to see you at your Regions Lay Leadership Summit. 



Rachel Hillman



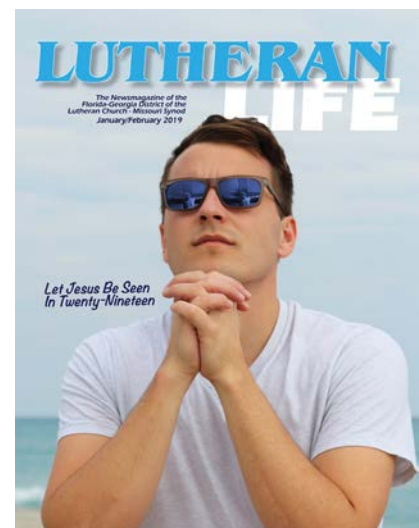
Gary Engel

Did you know?

The Florida-Georgia District
of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has:

- ▲ 184 member congregations
- ▲ 50,130 baptized members
- ▲ 15 new congregation starts
- ▲ 41,264 communicant members
- ▲ 60 preschools
- ▲ 30 elementary schools
- ▲ 2 high schools
- ▲ 1 awesome, bi-monthly news magazine*

*are you sending your congregation and school news and photos to LutheranLife@aol.com? We want your news!



Florida-Georgia District Pleased to Serve as “First-Time” Host to LCMS National Convention

A few weeks ago I was in St. Louis at the Floor Committee weekend for the Synod Convention. The opening worship for the gathering was led by my friend and former roommate, Rev. Will Weedon. He shared the story of Gregory of Nazianzus, one of the great Cappadocian fathers of the fourth century, leader of the Second Great Ecumenical Council held at Constantinople in 381 that gave us basically the final form of the Nicene Creed. He was an esteemed advisor who was being badgered to attend another meeting of church leadership, and he wrote (LETTER 124): “Synods and conventions I salute from afar, since I have experienced that most of them (to speak moderately) are but sorry affairs.”

while we, as a denomination, are a small percentage of the whole of Christendom, our voice still matters and is heard in the world. We must take good care of the message we are communicating.

We are privileged to invite the whole of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to visit the Florida-Georgia District as we play host to the 67th Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, July 20-25, 2019. This is historic as it is the first time in the life of our Synod that a National Convention has been held in the Florida-Georgia District.

We are honored to have this opportunity to show the rest of the world our great desire to equip, empower and engage to connect people to Jesus. As you


representatives in the world, said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” How God’s people treat one another speaks volumes to the world all around us. Many



**LIFE
LINES**
by Greg Walton
District President

in our world will only witness the love of Jesus by seeing it displayed in the lives of His disciples, those who proclaim Him as Lord and Savior. When the love of Jesus is not evident in our lives it sends a confusing message to the unbelieving world and may drive them farther from the church.

I am amazed as I travel around the District to see how God has blessed so many of our congregations with people who are committed to ministry and love Jesus. I see His love being shared among those I gather with, and in so many of the communities where people are actively involved in sharing the love of Jesus. Take a look through the pages of this issue and see how our marvelous God is at work among His people. You also have opportunities to share His love, whether in your own home, your neighborhood, your congregation or your community.

Let’s resolve, in our work together as a District, as a Synod, and as believers in Jesus, to share the blessings of God’s love in Jesus with each other, and with the world all around us. And be it further resolved, that God bless the work of our Synod Convention, that it may not be a “sorry affair” but rather a joyful celebration of our faith in and love for Jesus! And be it finally resolved that we together let Jesus be seen in 2019, especially to the people in Tampa! 



People chuckled, as it seemed to reinforce the way that many in our church approach a Synod Convention. Pastor Weedon said, “No question that it can end up being the sort of sorry affair Gregory the theologian expected. But you know, it need not.”

What really struck me was how accurately Gregory of Nazianzus captured how many in our own church body approach a convention. Weedon is right. It does not need to be a negative thing. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Church to make a bold witness of our faith in Jesus to the whole world. Whether we recognize it or not, the whole world is watching, and

look through this issue of Lutheran Life you will find all kinds of information about the programs, resources and ingenuity of our congregations working together to let Jesus be seen in 2019. We pray it is so during our Synod Convention.

In JOHN 13, Jesus — preparing for His crucifixion — gathered with His disciples to encourage them as His

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.



Heading Into Uncharted Territory As We Connect People to Jesus

In the book, *Canoeing The Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger the author says, “We are heading into uncharted territory and are given the charge to lead a mission where the future is nothing like the past.”

How true! Our culture has changed and continues to change. There was a time



MISSION MINUTE

by Mike Mast
District Mission
and Ministry Facilitator

when it was a cultural expectation that people have something to do with religion, church, and Jesus. That expectation has all but disappeared. Now *church* is barely a choice. People are no longer streaming through the doors on Sunday morning. There is a growing number of people who are checking the box “none” when it comes to their religious choice, as well as a growing number of people, who even — if they claim they believe in Jesus — do not feel they need the church.

That leaves at least one obvious question “How do we connect and engage with people in our communities in the midst of this ever-changing culture that is moving away from church participation?”

In the Florida-Georgia District we have not only been making people aware of our current cultural situation, but also helping people realize they are *everyday missionaries* who can genuinely connect and engage with their family members, neighbors, co-workers, people they meet in stores and restaurants, friends, and anyone else by building relationships as they demonstrate God’s love by being the hands and feet of Jesus. After all, we have been freed from the responsibility of saving people, and given the joy of loving people extravagantly.


How can you respond to the Gospel message and love people extravagantly? Be creative! What words of encouragement can you share with others? How can you build them up? How can you pray for them? In JOHN 15 we are told to love one another as the Lord has loved us. In COLOSSIANS 3 Paul says to put on the clothes of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

We don’t have to be confrontational or pushy. We can love others, develop relationships, and share the precious Good News of Jesus.

Pray daily that God continue to open our eyes so that we take time and notice people and their circumstances, and that He will open up our ears to hear their story and respond with the love of Jesus.

People are not streaming into our churches, but we can be streaming into their lives as the hands and feet of Jesus.

People need Jesus with skin on! The change that needs to happen first is with us and our hearts and our attitude

as we respond to the Good News of Jesus and His death, resurrection, and victory for us and all people! 



The Rev. Michael Mast is a contracted mission facilitator for The Florida-Georgia District. His responsibilities include helping churches come up with and work through mission, vision, strategic planning and management, as well as helping them visualize how our congregations and individuals can be everyday missionaries who develop relationships and serve as the hands and feet of Jesus. He can be reached at hisjoy4u@gmail.com.



DISTRICT CALENDAR

Hearts for Jesus Project
2019 will support the
Lutheran Special
Education Ministries

2019 National Youth Gathering
July 11-15, 2019
Minneapolis Convention Center
Minneapolis, MN

2019 LCMS National Convention
July 20-25, 2019
Tampa Convention Center
Tampa, FL

District Pastors Conference
September 23-25, 2019
Hilton Daytona Beach, FL

District Educators Conference
September 25-27, 2019
Hilton Daytona Beach, FL

Middle School Youth Gathering
November 1-3, 2019
Lake Yale Conference Center
Leesburg, FL

Regional Pastor's Conferences Focus On District's \$3.5 Million Challenge Grant for Future Missions

This is the time of year when pastors hold their regional conferences. Our Florida-Georgia District has five (5) regions. The geographic designations for each region can be found on the District website as well as in the regional section of Lutheran Life.

The pastoral conferences were led this year by one of our three District Mission Facilitators. Pastor Victor Belton serves the state of Georgia, Pastor Scott Gress serves the East Coast of Florida and Pastor Mike Mast serves the West Coast of Florida. Their mandate for these conferences was threefold:

- 1) Encourage Pastoral Leaders regarding the Florida-Georgia District Mission
- 2) Rehearse for Pastoral Leaders the Florida-Georgia District theme
- 3) Encourage pastors and congregations to participate in the District's 70th Anniversary challenge gift.

We spent time in the Greek New Testament translating JOHN 15:16 that reminds us of the grace of being included in the Kingdom agenda of our Father. The Word says, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

So, we asked to be confirmed in the mission and vision of the Florida-Georgia District and we are certain that our Father will give us that grace in this 70th Anniversary year.

We also spent some time refreshing our memory . . . and perhaps you can use a reminder as well. I am sure that you are familiar with the District Mission: *Equipped, Empowered, Engaged ... Connecting People to Jesus!* You have heard these words from our President many times over the years and now it is time to put the words to work so that the Kingdom of God is extended in our territory.

We rehearsed the theme for this year of grace as well. You have heard President Walton and others throughout our district say, "Let Jesus be seen in 2019!" It's on the cover of our District Magazine!

That is our prayer as we live our lives together in the Florida-Georgia District in this 70th year of grace. We remind one another that it is all about Jesus. We lift Christ so that He is seen

and then we strive to connect people to the one who has been lifted on the cross and then out of death and the grave to save us from sin.

We also determined that we would encourage every member of our congregations or every congregation in plenary to find a way to support the 70th Anniversary vision of President Walton. If each of our members gave \$70, those dollars would be placed into a mission fund. That fund would amount to \$3.5 million dollars!

Imagine that! \$3.5 million! The District would be able to use the interest from those funds to endow our mission efforts for many years to come. There is much mission work that our Lord is inviting us to perform and those funds would help support the great work that has been prepared in advance for us.

Every one of our congregations exists today because some faithful disciple sacrificed to give into missions and ensure the advance of the Kingdom of God through the planting of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations in the Florida Georgia District. Now it is our turn to sacrifice for the future of missions and to support the work of coming


generations. We know that in accord with the Word of God "This fruit will be plentiful and this fruit will last."

Prayerfully, you will soon hear your pastor speak of the district mission, vision and the 70th Anniversary goal of a \$3.5 million endowed fund. Prayerfully, you will be gracious and see how our Father



MISSION MINUTE

by Vic Belton
District Mission
and Ministry Facilitator

and our Lord Jesus will Equip, Empower, Engage you to Connect People to Jesus and to lift the Gospel to all those around so that we make Jesus to be seen in 2019. 

The Rev. Victor Belton is a contracted mission facilitator for The Florida-Georgia District. Pastor Belton serves Peace/Decatur, GA. He is also the Regional Representative for Advancement for Concordia University/Bronxville, NY. Belton is a former member of the LCMS board of directors.

THE 70th ANNIVERSARY CHALLENGE

Raise \$3,500,000
for a perpetual
mission fund in the
Florida-Georgia District.

...Honoring the
mission spirit of the
founders in 1948...



CHOSEN WITH
PURPOSE
ABIDING IN
JESUS

WHAT

These donations will be set aside for 0% interest loans for mission starts - to include churches and other ministries who will be the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities. The dollars loaned are repaid directly back to the perpetual mission fund for another ministry to use!

WHY

Starting a mission can cost money. Renting or purchasing a building, buying supplies, creating websites, signage and salaries are real costs. Missions and ministries need money to cover these costs, especially if there isn't a congregation that supports them.

HOW

Each loan requires an extensive application process and will be approved on a case by case basis to ensure good stewardship of this mission fund. Funds to each mission will be disbursed by the District Office. Repayment will begin 6 months after the initial disbursement.

Are You Telling or Asking?

If you are reading this article and this publication then you are probably someone who cares deeply about your church, your district and about Jesus. You also may be in a position of influence (read: leadership) in your church. So, how do you seek to influence? Do you primarily “tell” giving instructions, suggestions, orders, etc.) or something else?



You telling or asking me?

If you primarily seek to influence by “telling” that’s not surprising. When we are born our parents tell us what to do. When we go to school our teachers tell us what to do. When we get our first job our boss tells us what to do. Then when we get in a position of responsibility we default to what we know and have experienced. We “tell” people what to do. You may feel completely comfortable doing that or you may be a bit hesitant or even uncomfortable. Maybe telling people what to do feels like a know it all. It may be like a field general bossing people around. You may like that! Or you think that’s just not me. Why? Often because you know that people don’t like being told what to do. You know that you don’t!

It’s true. Science confirms that when we are told what to do, our amygdala often goes to work and produces resistance. That’s why when your mother told you to clean up your room you often got defensive and even more stubborn.

Yet not just science. St Paul tells us in Romans 7 that “sin, seizing the opportunity” produces resistance to the commandment, or law, or being “told” what to do. Sometimes we are even more eager to be disobedient! That’s our sinful nature at work.

We often see the results of this kind of leadership. People who are told what to do may do things half heartedly. They may be resistant or even drop the ball (accidentally?). It may even produce blaming or dependency on the “teller.” Not very healthy. Yet the coaching leader seeks to influence differently. They seek to help people take ownership, grow in their skills and confidence and depend upon Jesus.

So how do they do that? They lead by asking questions. Questions affirm people as those who might have wisdom to share. They engage the prefrontal cortex of our brains to problem solve and plan for the future. This stimulates creativity and collaboration as well.

So what might that look like? Well, it would depend on the person or group but common questions that

create awareness, nurture ownership and leadership growth may include: What is the most important thing we can accomplish with and for God? What is your dream for this? What can we do? Who should we involve? Who can we invite to participate (member, non-member, friend)? How will this accomplish the desired outcome? What part of this gets you excited? Who can you bring along with you? What steps are involved? When do we need to start? What might get in the way?

Then afterward we are careful to pause and reflect: What went well? What can we celebrate? How close did we get to our desired outcome? What surprised us? How can we improve? How could I have done a better job? What will we do differently next time? How have



COACHING LEADER

by Scott Gress
Lutheran Counseling Services
Leadership Coach

we grown in our faith through this? How will we remember next time? Who do we need to thank? How?

There are certainly many other questions but these may be a healthy start. God bless your “coaching leadership!” ☞

**OUR “DO” AND “TELL” SOCIETY
RARELY PROMOTES INTRINSIC
RELATIONSHIPS.**

**STOP TELLING
AND START ASKING INQUISITIVE
QUESTIONS INSTEAD!**

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



District Continues to Operate Financially Sound

The Florida-Georgia District LCMS continues to enjoy solid financial support and partnership. "Individual members and congregations contribute time, treasure, talents and prayers and are passionate about connecting people to Jesus!" emphasizes Laura Zirbel, Executive Director for Finance and Administration.

"Our year-end 2019 congregational unrestricted support totaled \$2,114,612. This was \$14,612 over our budget of \$2.1 million — an increase of \$40,000 over the prior year," Zirbel explains. "We are humbled and grateful for the continued faithfulness of our district."

According to Zirbel, in 2018 two loan receivable balances were paid in full — adding \$118,000 to the District's cash flow. Expenses for the year totaled \$3,169,179 which was a decrease of \$498,982 from the previous year largely due to variances in disaster response fund disbursements, world and national missions program updates and district staffing.

For the year ending 2019 the FLGA District tithes to the Synod were more than 17 percent (\$368,806) in thankful response to the support from our congregations!

"As we look forward to 2019/2020 we are budgeted for \$2.1 million and are prayerful God will continue to provide in amazing ways as our District plans events and takes new initiatives, such as Regional Lay Leadership Summits, a new partnership with Ministry Safe, the Pastors Conference, Educators Conference, Administrators events, youth leaders and youth gatherings," Zirbel states.

"With unanimous support of the Board of Directors, the budgeted title on congregational support received by the District remains at 20%. This is broken down into two components, Synod (17%) and District Revitalization efforts (3%), such as our Lay Leadership Summits. The Missions budget remains at \$600,000 and includes Mission Grants for three approved District missions as well as ministry support for nine other Lutheran organizations:

- ◆ Lutheran Services Florida
- ◆ Stepping Stone Mission
- ◆ Redeeming Life Outreach
- ◆ Lutheran Services of Georgia

- ◆ Center for Asian Missions & Evangelism
- ◆ Florida Impact
- ◆ Lutheran Social Services of NE FL
- ◆ Lutheran Counseling Services
- ◆ Mission Haiti



BOTTOM LINE
by Laura Zirbel
Executive Director
Finance & Administration

Mission funds will continue to support our Campus Ministries (see page 12 of this issue).

"The District will be offering Mission Loans going forward in place of our Mission Grant program. The FLGA District continues to operate with no real debt and all designated/restricted funds are fully funded. The Board of Directors and District Executive Team continues to monitor expenses closely as all missions and initiatives of the District are funded according to the approved budget," Zirbel concludes. ☞

LCEF Dedicates East Regional Office, Expands

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) formally dedicated its new East Regional office on Monday, June 24, 2019 in Orlando, Florida. This special event marked a new era for LCEF as the organization continues to grow and expand to support ministries and individuals of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The dedication was part of a three-day summit attended by District Vice Presidents, national executives, and the East Regional team. Rev. Bart Day, President and CEO of LCEF, led the dedication ceremony.

Each Regional team includes a Regional Vice President, Regional Administrative Coordinator, and Regional Marketing Manager. Here in the East, Daniel J. Reichard serves as Regional Vice President. Dan has worked with LCEF since 2010, starting as the District Vice President of the Florida-Georgia District. He earned the promotion to Regional Vice President in April 2018 where he supports 11 District Vice Presidents across 13 districts. After Dan's promotion, the Florida-Georgia District was blessed to welcome Jay Wendland as the new District Vice President.

Debbie Arrington joined LCEF in 2012 as the Administrative Assistant to the District Vice President, Dan Reichard. In 2018, she followed Dan to the East Regional office where she now serves as Regional Administrative Coordinator.

most recently as Director of Worship and Media at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Orlando.

Founded in 1978, LCEF now has more than 40 years of strong relationships with individuals and ministries of the LCMS.

Members of the LCMS can invest with LCEF. Every dollar invested helps support LCMS ministries around the world including churches, schools, registered service organizations, and more. LCEF shares the Lutheran beliefs and desire to transform lives through ministry. Additionally, LCEF offers flexible investment options with competitive rates that allow individuals and organizations to maintain access to their funds.

To learn more about LCEF products and service, information is available from Jay Wendland, Florida-Georgia

District Vice President: jay.wendland@lcef.org or 877.457.5556 ext. 4. More information can also be found online at lcef.org. ☞



Austin Wessel, Regional Marketing Manager; Debbie Arrington, Regional Administrative Coordinator and Regional Vice President, Dan Reichard

The newest member of the East Regional office is Austin Wessel, who joined the team in May 2019 as the Regional Marketing Manager. Austin has spent more than six years in professional church work,

District to Launch Initiative to Combat Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse scandals have rocked more than one major Christian church body. Statistics make it clear that no church body, no congregation, no worshipping community, in fact no demographic of people anywhere in this country, is exempt. Consider these statistics:

- One in four girls in the United States will be sexually abused by the age of 18.
- One in six boys in the United States will be sexually abused by the age of 18.
- 90 percent of sexual predators are people the children know and trust.
- 90 percent of the time a child claims abuse, it is true. A sad fact is that a number of children abused will never report it.

“Imagine a classroom of children in your preschool or elementary or high school, or even Sunday School,” queries Mark Brink, District Executive Director for School & Youth Ministries. “Imagine a church youth group, or even a professional sports arena with 20,000 high school students at a national youth gathering. Apply the statistics and the results are shocking. It is a national crisis that does not discriminate.”

As a result, District President Greg Walton has initiated “Not Even One” with



MinistrySafe (www.ministrysafe.com) to better equip those involved in ministry to children, to recognize the signs of Child Sexual Abuse.

“This campaign has been fast-tracked with a passionate desire to protect our children,” Walton explains. “The staggering statistics have called us to action.”

According to Walton, the Florida-Georgia District has entered into a formal agreement that will give every congregation and every school ministry in the Florida-Georgia District, access to MinistrySafe’s dashboard of resources, including the Child Sexual Abuse Training videos and test.

“Our goal, is for every staff member in every congregation having a school to have completed the training by the end of this calendar year. The goal is for all congregations in the District to have completed the training by April of 2021.”

Walton believes this program will help send a strong message to everyone that the LCMS Florida-Georgia District places high values on the care and safety of the children God has entrusted to

congregations and schools through various ministries.

Brink, a member of the District team helping launch this program, explains the training consists of a series of videos followed by a test.

“The entire process should take an individual no longer than 90 minutes. Once successfully completing the test,



EDUCATION MATTERS

by Mark Brink
Executive Director
School & Youth Ministries

individuals will have an opportunity to print a Certificate of Completion the FLGA District Office will receive notification that a successful completion has been accomplished.

“President Walton’s plea is that congregations and school workers will set aside the 90 minutes to work through this important class,” Brink concludes. “There is no cost to the FLGA District congregations and schools.” ☞

Being the Church in the Florida-Georgia District

The Florida-Georgia District churches and schools are filled with loving lay people, dedicated pastors and professional church workers. They gather every Lord’s day to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus who is the Savior of all and the light of the world. Our two states are among the fastest growing in the country. Yet they are also in many places some of the *least churched*.

People are not necessarily inclined to search for a church for worship or fellowship, let alone the comfort and peace that comes from Jesus Christ. This is the perfect definition of both a challenge within an opportunity. The congregations of the FLGA district are responding by not only endeavoring to be a welcoming and loving church should they come but intentionally shifting their efforts at the same time.

The first shift is toward an ever greater external focus. If people are not seeking out a church, nor its programming or people then we as the church need to seek them. Just as Jesus said that He came to “seek and to save the lost” (LUKE 19:10) and urged the church to be “salt”

and “light” (MATTHEW 5), the church will look for opportunities to love people in the name of Jesus. This is increasingly happening through community based servant evangelism. Our churches are leaving their property and preparing meals, feeding hungry people, cleaning up neighborhoods, establishing centers of support and care, volunteering at public schools and other places. They are opening their doors for neighborhood associations and tutoring programs. Our churches and people are not waiting for people to come to them, they are “going” (MATTHEW 28) and carefully and intentionally helping and loving and caring for them.

Then they are experiencing a second shift: Relationships are being formed with people in their communities. Then along the way, through those relationships, the people of our Lutheran churches and schools are introducing people to the most important relationship of all, which is with Jesus. Programs will not attract people who are not looking. Worship and preaching and the sacrament will not appeal to those who see no value in it. Yet as those in our communities are far away

from Jesus, they come near to His love through a relationship with our people. No, not to twist their arms to come to church, but in deed and later also through words, to first introduce them to the love of Jesus and then to introduce them to the person of Jesus. After a time, God willing, they will come to holy baptism and celebrate the resurrection with us.

In the past, when people saw the value of churches and church going, we welcomed them as they came into our doors. Yet now in these days of steady population increases with increased loneliness, our district is turning their attention to how they can be the church. They are loving unconditionally, paying attention to the needs around them and in big ways and small ways making a difference in the lives and eternities of others. It is a shift in how we see and do things, but it is a wonderful way to be the church in a world of challenge and opportunity.

Additional information is available for the FLGA district office. ☞

To Arm or Not to Arm, That is the Question!

Our churches and schools have been under attack since the beginning of time. The only consistent weapon of choice over the years has been attack by words. Thankfully, not all our religious freedoms have been taken away from us.

Those who oppose the church and its teachings will continue to use weapons of words to undercut the foundations of our beliefs — that is likely not to change. However, in recent years, a new more forceful threat seeks to destroy our churches from within. The question being posed across the nation is, “Do we allow guns in our churches?”

We have seen a number of shootings involving houses of worship. Those events, coupled with school shootings across this great country, have caused the laity and leadership to have to deal with the divisive issue of whether to allow guns in church.



The right to bear arms in America is protected by the Second Amendment to the Constitution. Still, does that mean we should allow or even promote carrying a gun in church too? You will not find the perfect answer to this question in this brief article because every one of our 6,000 churches within our LCMS is different and that because we have some two million individual members in our Synod with varying opinions.

Consider these things while making this difficult decision:

◆ **No one person is an island.** The decision to allow guns in your church is not the decision of just the Pastor, Head Elder, Senior Usher, Trustee, or Chairman of the Congregation. Impanel a group of thoughtful and insightful members

of your congregation to help develop a program that best meets the expectations of your congregation. This may, and should, include laity as well as leadership and clergy. Do not select all members of one mindset. Do not select only those who want guns in church or only those to believe guns are evil. You need to hear and better understand the issues on both sides.

◆ **Know your local laws!**

There are federal laws that govern concealed weapons and the right to carry. There are individual state laws that also regulate and provide oversight to the same. However, as the issue of concealed weapons expands throughout our nation, local laws and even some school districts are empowered with the authority to regulate if, when, and how guns are allowed on our church and school properties. It is in your best interest to communicate with local law enforcement to get a better understanding of what that agency would recommend. You need to know how to respond when the police arrive and what, if any, rights you may have if you returned fire during an active shooter event.

◆ **Know what your insurance company requires.** Insurance companies are like fine wines. You think you know what you are buying but you really only know if you will enjoy the taste once you open the bottle. As you develop your weapons policy, reach out to your insurance carrier and ask them if an active shooter event is a covered claim. What you *really* want to know is, if we have an active shooter event in our church, and one or more of our members returns fire and there is collateral damage to other persons or property, will the claim be covered?

If the answer is *no*, ask the company if such coverage is available and if so, what are the *requirements* for that coverage. Once you understand whether insurance coverage is available, you will be better equipped to make a more informed decision and develop a much more comprehensive plan.

◆ **Develop a Life Safety Team.** When my home church first started discussing implementing a weapons policy, we invited our local sheriff to meet with us. What I learned was eye opening and on that day my opinion began to change. I learned that even police officers, who are trained to run toward gun fire, are people too. The Sheriff told us about the first time he had to draw

his weapon and to hear his tale, was a bit frightening. He said while all his training took over, he was still nervous, his hands were sweating and shaking. His voice quivered. He said the adrenaline running through his body was in control.

If this *trained professional* felt like this, how much more intense would an active



LEGAL MATTERS

by Rusty Huseman
President
Lutheran Legal League

shooter event be to a person without adequate training. If your church wants/needs to have armed folks protecting the members, consider hiring off duty police to assist. That can be pricey — especially for a small congregation. If that is not an option, contact your local law enforcement to see if they would be willing to train one of more of your members to respond in an active shooter event. That training should include the use of simulators (depending on the size of the agency) and/or training with a SWAT or other tactical team. The local agency will likely not swear the person into law enforcement, but the information and training they provide would be invaluable.

◆ **Develop a written policy.**

Regardless of whether your church decides to allow guns in church, you should implement a written plan so that every member knows what is expected of him or her. That plan should be reviewed by your local law enforcement and insurance company to make sure it does not conflict with any of their particular requirements/regulations.

◆ **Spend time in prayer.** Before, during and after implementing your written plan ensure the congregation is in prayer at meetings and events. ☞

The Lutheran Legal League is made up of actively practicing attorneys who regularly attend worship in a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. We are a unique fraternal organization of Christ filled attorneys who desire to assist our Synodical churches, schools, ministries, missions and LCMS members with their legal needs. We invite you to go to our webpage www.lutheranlegalleague.org to find L3 members throughout the country and to take advantage of the many policy template available to our churches and schools.

RESIDENTIAL LOAN PROGRAM

FOR ROSTERED CHURCH WORKERS

Buying a home is one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make. As a professional church worker, qualifying for a traditional home loan can be a significant challenge.

It doesn't have to be.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is blessed to offer the Residential Loan Program to Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) rostered church workers. This program is designed to provide financial assistance to LCMS ordained and commissioned ministers, allowing them to effectively focus on their calling—witnessing and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others. Loans are available for the purchase or refinance of a primary, single-family residence only.

Eligibility Guidelines

To be eligible for an LCEF residential loan, the primary applicant must:

- Be a commissioned or ordained minister of the LCMS on active or emeritus status. (Note: Certified lay church workers and individuals currently on candidate status are not eligible to participate in this program).
- Residential loans are available to qualified applicants in approved states (see map).
- Qualify for an LCEF residential loan per the underwriting guidelines established by LCEF.

Benefits of the LCEF Residential Loan Program

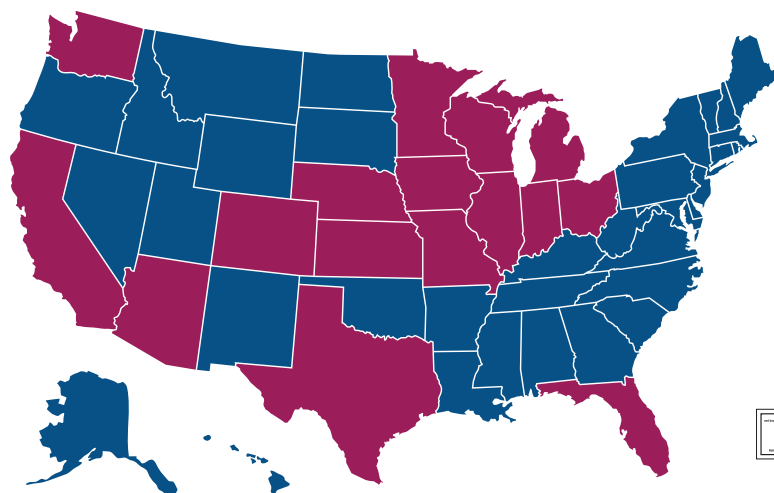
- Competitive interest rates
- Lower down payment obligations
- No private mortgage insurance (PMI) required
- Friendly, knowledgeable loan officers
- Working with a lender who is empowering ministries



Ready to explore a residential loan?

Jay Wendland
jay.wendland@lcef.org
877-257-5556 ext. 4

Availability by State



■ State where Lutheran Church Extension Fund offers mortgage loans.

■ State where Lutheran Federal Credit Union offers mortgage loans.

To get more information, call LutheranFCU at 314-394-2790 or email loans@lutheranfcu.org.



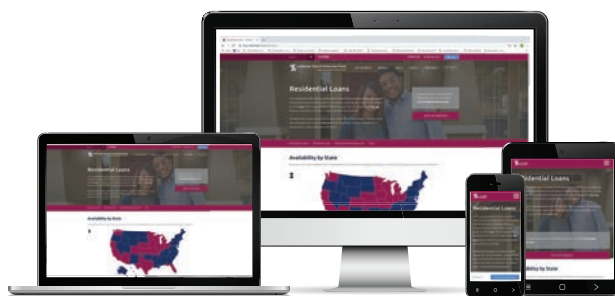
Lutheran Federal Credit Union NMLS #: 1301052
10733 Sunset Office Drive, Suite 406,
St. Louis, MO 63127-1020.

How do I apply?

1. Apply online at lcef.org, or
2. Download the application from the LCEF website at lcef.org, or
3. Contact an LCEF information representative at 800-843-5233 between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. (CT), Monday through Friday.

*Arizona- Specific state regulations apply. Please call and speak with a licensed loan originator today for details (800) 843-5233.

*Texas- Specific state regulations apply. All cash out refinances and straight refinances in excess of 80% loan-to-value are not available. Please call (800) 843-5233 for details!



Lutheran Church Extension Fund

> where investments build ministry

Get started at lcef.org/residential-loans or call 800-843-5233 today!

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks.

LCEF is properly licensed or exempt from such requirements in the states where loans are purchased or offered to LCMS rostered church workers. CA: (DBO) Finance Lenders Law License (6037619); CO: Mortgage Company Registration (3444); FL: Mortgage Lender License (MLD625); GA: Mortgage Lender License/Registration (61615); ID: Regulated Lender License (RRL-651); IL: Illinois Residential Mortgage Licensee (MB.0006057) & Consumer Installment Loan License (CI.0002711-H); IN: (DFI) Mortgage Lending License (11015) IA: Mortgage Banker Registrant (2000-0057) & Consumer Credit Notification/Registration (200009695); KS: Mortgage Company License (MC.0025037) & Credit Notification/Registration (NOT.0026260); KY: Mortgage Loan Company License (MC418770); MD Consumer Loan License (02-900); MI: First Mortgage Broker/Lender/Service License (FL2194) & Second Mortgage Broker/Lender/Service Registrant (SR0016005) & Regulatory Loan License (RL-3037); MN: Residential Mortgage Originator License (MN-MO-20211170); MS: Mortgage Lender License (3444); MO: Residential Mortgage Loan Broker License (19-1885) & Consumer Credit (Small) Loan Company Registration (367-20-8245); MT: Consumer Loan License (3444); NE: Mortgage Banker License (540); ND: Money Broker License (MB100280); OH: Residential Mortgage Lending Act Certificate of Registration (RM.501020.000) & General Loan Law Certificate of Registration (GL.501020.000); OR: Consumer Finance License (0205-001-C); SD: Non-Profit Money Lender License (NMYL.2314); TX: SML Auxiliary Mortgage Loan Activity Company License (3444); UT: Consumer Credit Notification; WA: Consumer Loan Company License (CL-3444); WI: Mortgage Banker License (374BA) and Consumer License; WY: Supervised Lender License (SL-1538).

LCEF LOAN ORIGINATORS: Renee Capehart (NMLS# 1065877), Lori Kuhnert (NMLS#: 14202), Karina O'Neil (NMLS#: 1125389), Michelle Porter (NMLS#: 1675886), Pamela Macinski (NMLS#: 16679)

NMLS IDENTIFYING NUMBER: Lutheran Church Extension Fund-Missouri Synod (NMLS#: 3444), 10733 Sunset Office Drive, Suite 300, St. Louis, MO 63127-1020 (800) 843-5233 | lcef.org

Campus Ministries Remain Active Thro

The Florida-Georgia District continues to prioritize campus ministry. “Campus ministry is receiving some considerable attention this year at the National LCMS Convention,” explains the Rev. Jay Winters, pastor at **University Lutheran Church and Student Center/Tallahassee, FL**, “but it is a ministry that the Florida-Georgia District has always supported and encouraged even when times were tough.

“Counting only state institutions in our district alone there are more than 1 million colleges students attending colleges and universities,” he continues. “Our campus ministries seek to serve those students whether they come from a Lutheran background or still have yet to hear the Gospel.”

Lutheran Life asked Pastor Winters to highlight some of the campus ministries from

north to south — starting at the University of North Georgia to one of the newer programs at Florida Gulf Coast University in Southwest Florida.

University of N Georgia | Dahlonega, GA St. Peter Lutheran Church

Located in America’s first Gold Rush city — Dahlonega, Georgia — where that precious metal was discovered in 1828, St. Peter

has been reaching out to students at the home campus of the University of North Georgia (UNG) since 2014. The only Lutheran church in Lumpkin County, it naturally seeks to welcome students of every background to study, pray, serve and enjoy one another’s company,

but begins that endeavor by reaching out especially to Lutheran students. UNG Dahlonega hosts approximately 8,000 students, with half of them being residential and the other half commuters.

Also noteworthy is that 10 percent of the students are enrolled in the Military College of Georgia, making it the second largest military college in the country

after Texas A & M. Some students have gotten involved with St. Peter’s. During the summer, the congregation will send letters to the approximately 150 Lutheran congregations in Georgia asking them to refer their students in hopes that St. Peter’s may welcome them to UNG and invite them to participate with the congregation and its student ministry.

Committed to campus ministry, St. Peter hosts Sunday Suppers for the students at church, offers a Bible study on campus during the week, and with the students plans Game Nights, servant events, and other activities. The congregation invites students to join in its worship, service and fellowship activities. On occasion its Lutheran Student Fellowship (LSF) group in Dahlonega partners with its sister organization at the University of

Georgia in Athens for retreats and other activities.

Information: pastor.stpeterlutheran@gmail.com or call (706) 864- 6001.

University of Georgia | Athens, GA Christus Victor Lutheran Church

Christus Victor seeks to help students enjoy the identity of being a baptized child of God growing together in Christ, reaching out to the campus and surrounding community with Christ, and developing as leaders for Christ. They are located right in the midst of the UGA campus at 1010 S. Lumpkin Street. They have student-specific activities — such as weekly fellowship/ Bible study nights,

intramurals, retreats, and service projects — but also attempts to incorporate students into congregation life. Students are encouraged to participate in the general congregational activities and events including serving on church council.

“Student leadership development is encouraged through decision-making, leading of events and teaching Sunday



University of Georgia students



UGA Students retreat



UGA students on recent service project

School,” offers the Rev. Greg Michael, pastor at Christus Victor. “Like most student ministries, membership changes on a regular basis. As a result, the dynamics change annually. A major goal is to help students recognize that they are part of the bigger church body. In addition to welcoming students from various congregations, we also seek to engage other campus ministries in the region participating in retreats and service projects.

“As students move on from UGA, we want them to be ready to engage a new



UGA students participate in mission project



FSU students on campus

congregational home equipped to retain that context continuing to serve and grow in Christ’s victory,” Michael concludes. Information pastor.christusvictor@gmail.com.

Throughout the Florida-Georgia District

Florida State University | Tallahassee, FL University Lutheran Church

GO NOLES! One of the longest continually running campus ministries of the District, University Lutheran is located on the campus of Florida State University which built around the church building as the university expanded. Directly across from the Ragans and Wildwood dormitory spaces, University Lutheran seeks to be “a Jesus Centered Community of Scripture, Faith, and Grace” in the midst of a campus that increasingly needs to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and the appeal to living life with the Gospel at the center of one’s life.

University Lutheran provides a non-student as well as a student community



FSU students enjoying swim party

as a part of what it does, preparing students for life in the larger Church when they graduate — something that many other campus ministries struggle to do. “We prioritize leadership training and vocational awareness, seeking to enable students to be leaders in the Church and the world as a result of having been a part of University Lutheran,” Pastor Winters points out. “We gather for worship on Sundays and on Wednesdays we have ‘Go Deep’ conversations about Scripture and the world, a few small group gatherings, retreats, fellowship, service and even game day events.”

Information universitylutheranchurch.org or Pastor Jay Winters at (850) 224 6059.

University of Florida | Gainesville, FL Lutheran Student Fellowship

LSF is a Christian Campus Ministry dedicated to learning more about following Jesus and growing in faith by building strong relationships with one another through a variety of service and fellowship-oriented ministries. The ministry is a combination of students from University of Florida



FSU students from University Lutheran

(#GoGators!) and Santa Fe College. They gather each Sunday during the academic year for College Lunch at 11:00 am (three words: FREE & DELICIOUS FOOD) and Bible Study on Tuesday evenings at the Campus House at 7:30pm.

“We also go on mission excursions, road trips, and more together seeking to follow Jesus in our college years,” offers the Rev. John Glover.

Information pastorjohnglover@flcgainesville.org or (352) 376-2062.

University of Central Florida | Orlando LiveUCF

LiveUCF is the District’s campus ministry to the University of Central Florida. It is a worshiping community that connects students to God’s word and equips them to live as His people on and around campus.



LIVE UCF students meet in the union

This university has more students enrolled on campus than any other U.S. college or university. LiveUCF is a student-led campus supported by various congregations as well as some individual donors. LiveUCF strives to live life with the students while encouraging its members to be active members in the church and to live out their faith in their daily life.

LiveUCF meets on campus in the Student Union. Each semester the room number and times change so students are informed on social media — Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @liveucf. Information liveucf.com or Pastor Raleigh Sims at raleigh.sims@gmail.com or Outreach Minister, Laura Blank at laura@liveucf.com.

Florida Gulf Coast University | Fort Myers, FL Thrive


The campus ministry to Florida Gulf Coast University and Florida Southwestern College is aptly called Thrive. “We meet weekly at 8 PM Wednesdays at Thrive Community Church and schedule various



FGCU students participate in music ministry

hangouts during the week,” explains the Rev. Jon Roth. “Most Sunday nights we share dinner and fellowship at my home.” Small groups include students, faculty and staff of FGCU. Students also serve in music ministry, serve the community through various projects, and serve the world through a Spring Break trip — this year to Mission:Haiti. The Campus Minister is Hunter Keslar. Information: hunter@thrive-fl.org. or Pastor John Roth of Thrive at john@thrive-fl.org.

All of the pastors and leaders of Florida-Georgia District’s campus ministries encourage congregations and members to help connect students — both inbound new ones and existing students at these various campuses. Students might come from home congregations or might be a family member, a neighbor or friend. Whoever they are, they need to hear about Jesus and either begin or continue lives of being His disciples.

There is information on the District website and the individual contact information for the campus pastors is listed above. 

CAMPUSCORNER

Lutheran Counseling Services Continues to Offer Confidential, Professional Services to District Members

Pastor Jim had been struggling for a while. He wasn't sure when the stress and anxiety had gotten so bad. He recently realized that he had not eaten in the past several days and that it feels like he has no true friends to rely on. He is confused by this — he has never struggled like this before. He feels that things are no longer manageable and is not quite sure what to do about it.



HEALTH MATTERS

by Megan Miessler
Executive Director
Lutheran Counseling Services

Those who work in ministry are not immune to mental health issues. According to the Francis Schaeffer Institute, the incidence of stress and depression is actually higher for clergy than the general population. Through its Ministerial Assistance Program (MAP), Lutheran Counseling Services (LCS) has been providing mental health support to church workers for more than 30 years.

“One in five adults in the United States experience mental illness each year,” states Megan Miessler, executive director of Lutheran Counseling Services (LCS). “Less than half — only about 41% — receive mental health services. We are working to change this statistic for church workers by removing as many barriers to care as possible.”

Supported by contributions from

the Florida-Georgia District LCMS, MAP provides church workers who need support up to three sessions at no cost with a licensed therapist experienced in the unique challenges that church workers face.

“It is important to change the conversation, to remove the stigma of seeking support,” Miessler continues, “It’s ok to say you are not ok — and important to understand that you are not alone.”

“We have a committed and highly skilled staff able to respond very quickly to the needs of those working in ministry.” With the experience of growing up in a church worker family and 12+ years as a DCE and therapist, Miessler is well-versed in the toll working in the ministry can sometimes take and offers online support groups for church workers to address stress, anxiety and self-care issues.

Rev. Dr. Rick Armstrong, LMFT, currently serves as LCS Ministry Care Coordinator and has more than 25 years of experience as a pastor and in counseling clergy, individuals, couples and families.

Armstrong has also been instrumental in providing ongoing support in disaster areas and is frequently called to respond to areas impacted by hurricanes and other natural disasters.

In addition to providing support

to those in ministry, LCS offers a safe, caring counseling environment to the community. LCS has nine offices in Florida



Megan Miessler and Richard Armstrong

with therapists who accept a wide range of health insurances. LCS also offers a sliding fee scale to ensure all who need care have access to it, one of the few counseling practices that still does so. In addition to providing therapy to adults, children and families, LCS has counselors in six private schools in Central Florida, providing immediate access to care for children and families in need of support.

For additional information and support, please contact LCS at 407-644-4692 or visit their website at lcsfl.com.



Rev. Dr. Rick Armstrong will be available for conversation and consultation during the upcoming District Pastor's Conference (see below). To schedule an appointment ahead of time, please call LCS at 800-444-2842. Appointments can also be scheduled at the conference.

District Pastors Retreat to Daytona Beach in September

The annual Florida-Georgia District Pastor's Conference will be held **September 23rd- 25th** at the Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort.

“Building upon last year's conference where we discussed the work of Charles Taylor and the Secular Age in which we now live, this year's theme will be ‘Emerging from Irrelevance — The Church in the Secular Age,’” states Rev. Stephen Reynolds, chair of this year's conference. “We will consider how to best move forward as we live in and engage a culture that has ‘moved past’ the church.”

According to Reynolds, the keynote speakers will be Dr. Leo Sanchez, the Werner R. H. Krause professor of Hispanic Ministries at Concordia Seminary/ St. Louis and David Zahl of Mockingbird Ministries. “They will guide discussion about continuing to serve Christ's church and engage the world around us with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.” Save the dates for theological and pastoral reflection, fellowship and worship.



Leo Sanchez
Concordia Seminary



David Zahl
Mockingbird Ministries

October Disaster Response Conference Planned on Concordia Seminary Campus

LCMS DISASTER RESPONSE is a ministry of presence, a presence rich with God's mercy and Word of life.

"The ministry serves the thousands of individuals and families all over the world who are suffering from loss in the wake of disasters like hurricanes,



floods, earthquakes, fires and tornadoes," offers Jay Wendland, the Florida-Georgia District's coordinator for disaster response. "It also provides an opportunity for the church to be visibly active in reaching out in mercy to serve the hurting and homeless with physical and spiritual care."

Disaster preparedness is a priority of LCMS Disaster Response. Mercy in Action — which includes Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) training — is a program designed to help instruct and educate congregations on how to respond when tragedy strikes. To date, LERT has trained more than 16,000 Lutheran volunteers in disaster relief and response. Recovering from any natural disaster is an ongoing task. Prayers, financial donations and trained helping hands go a long way for recovery efforts



even years after a tragedy occurs.

This fall — from October 2-4, 2019 — LCMS National Disaster Response will host a conference, "Joy:fully Lutheran in Midst of Disaster," to be held on the campus of **Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO.**

"The theme of the conference is based on James 1:2-4: 'Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing,'" Wendland explains.

Attendees will learn about practical ways to serve those affected by disasters, as pastors, disaster coordinators and others who have experienced and responded

to significant disasters in the past year share best practices concerning mercy in the church.

Sessions and presenters include:

- Christian Service and Vocation — Rev. Heath Curtis, coordinator, LCMS Stewardship
- The New LCMS Grant Process — Deaconess

Maryann Hayter, manager, LCMS Grant Administration

- Christian Care for People with Dealing with Anxiety and Depression after a Natural Disaster — Rev. Dr. Rick Marrs, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis



DISASTER EARLY RESPONSE

by Jay Wendland
Florida-Georgia District
Disaster Response Coordinator

There will also be updates on the LERT (Lutheran Early Response Training) program and Puerto Rico recovery; case studies on Hurricanes Michael and Florence; and breakout sessions on topics such as:

- engaging youth in service;
- responding to tornadoes;
- connecting with the media and telling your story;
- training, using and sending chainsaw teams;
- caring for children and families during tragedy;
- showing mercy at all times.

Worship will take place each day of the conference in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus on the seminary campus, with communion offered at the opening Divine Service on Oct. 2.

Registration for the conference is \$50/person and includes lunch and dinner Oct. 2-3 and lunch Oct. 4. Breakfast is not included in registration.

Attendees are responsible for their own lodging. A discounted rate of \$74, based

on availability, has been arranged with the Hilton St. Louis Airport Hotel. For reservations, call the hotel at 314-426-5500 and mention the LCMS Disaster Conference room block.

After the conference, a free chainsaw training event will be held off-campus Friday evening, Oct. 4, and Saturday morning, Oct. 5. The Rev. Ed Brashier of Shepherd's Heart Ministry will lead the training, which is limited to 20 registrants.

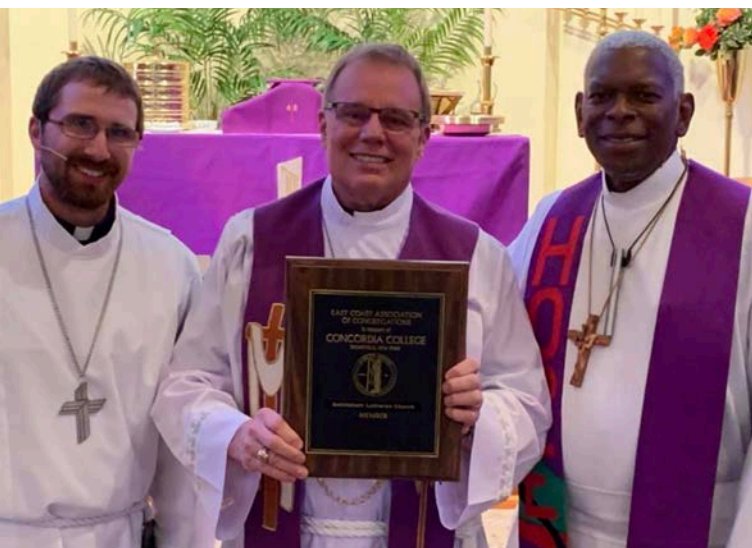
For additional information and a full conference schedule contact LCMS Lutheran World Relief & Human Care Disaster Response, lcms.org/disaster, call (888) 843-5267 or email disaster@lcms.org.





FLORIDAGEORGIA

REGIONAL NEWS

Out and About in the Florida-Georgia District



Timothy/Woodstock, Georgia has a preschool with more than 100 students. Each year at the end of the school term they celebrate with a beach day and picnic. A dump truck full of white sand is brought in and then they decorate and have a beach right in the middle of Georgia! Some of the students are shown above enjoying the end-of-school-year beach day. Barbara Bowler is Timothy's preschool director. 

Bethlehem/ Jacksonville Beach, FL joined the East Coast Association Of Congregations by making a \$5,005 donation to **Concordia University/ New York**. Pictured above are, from left, Vicar Jeremy Steiner, and Pastors Dana Brones (Bethlehem) and Victor Belton, Peace/Decator, GA. Belton is also the Regional Representative for Advancement for Concordia University. 

Dean Pfeffer Recognized For 25 Years of Ministry

On the first Sunday in June, the members of **Hope/Plant City, FL** gathered for their regular morning worship and to give thanks to God for Senior Pastor, **Rev. Dean Pfeffer**, who marked his 25th anniversary in the pastoral ministry of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Pfeffer was ordained into the pastoral ministry on June 5, 1994 at his home church of Grace Lutheran Church, Huntsville, Alabama.

The anniversary celebration was a surprise to Dean and Liz Pfeffer — and was quietly orchestrated by many Hope members. To mark the occasion, Rev. Dr. Gregory Walton, President of the Florida- Georgia District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod served as preacher and led the recognition of ministry during the worship service.

Pfeffer, a 1994 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, came to Hope in June, 1996 after serving as Associate Pastor at **Faith/Sebring, FL**. Under his leadership the congregation has trained many church workers, began a Spanish worship, grown in membership, sent members to serve in various mission fields and is now embarking on a capital campaign for the construction of a new sanctuary.

In addition to serving as Hope's senior pastor, Pfeffer serves on the Boards for the United Food Bank of Plant City, Plant City Chamber of Commerce and the Plant City Family YMCA. He is also a member of the Plant City Daybreak Rotary. Pastor Pfeffer is a former member of the board of directors for the District. ☞

Dean and Liz Pfeffer are the parents three children and three grandchildren and are pictured above right with their family. President Greg Walton with Liz and Dean Pfeffer are shown in lower right photo.



Kristin Becker was surprised in one of the morning chapel services by having **Our Savior/Plantation, FL** Lutheran school dedicate the 2018-2019 yearbook to her. Becker is the middle school Reading and Language Arts teacher. Her students and co-workers say that Becker puts 110 percent effort into everything she does.

Some of Becker's involvement includes the school's Walk-A-Thon, National Junior Honor Society, the Christmas programs, incorporating Chrome Books and Google Classroom into the middle school curriculum, leading MAP testing, coordinating the Spelling Bee — and the list goes on!

The yearbook committee took note of Mrs. Becker's love of Starbucks, and instead of the customary flowers, presented her with her favorite Starbucks drink. In photo above are (left to right) Mikayla Becker, Michael Stock, Judy Stock, Kristin Becker, and Natalie Becker. The Stocks are Kristin's parents who just retired from Lutheran Education last year. Mike taught at North East Wisconsin Lutheran High School and Judy taught at Pilgrim Lutheran in Green Bay, WI. ☞



Redeemer/Stuart, FL son of the congregation, the **Rev. David McCarthy** (shown below on the right), has been deployed to serve as Chaplain in a military hospital in Kuwait for the next 9-12 months. Redeemer is gathering care package items for David and the other soldiers serving with him. McCarthy has been serving two congregations in Nebraska. He is shown in the photo below with his communion assistant. ☞



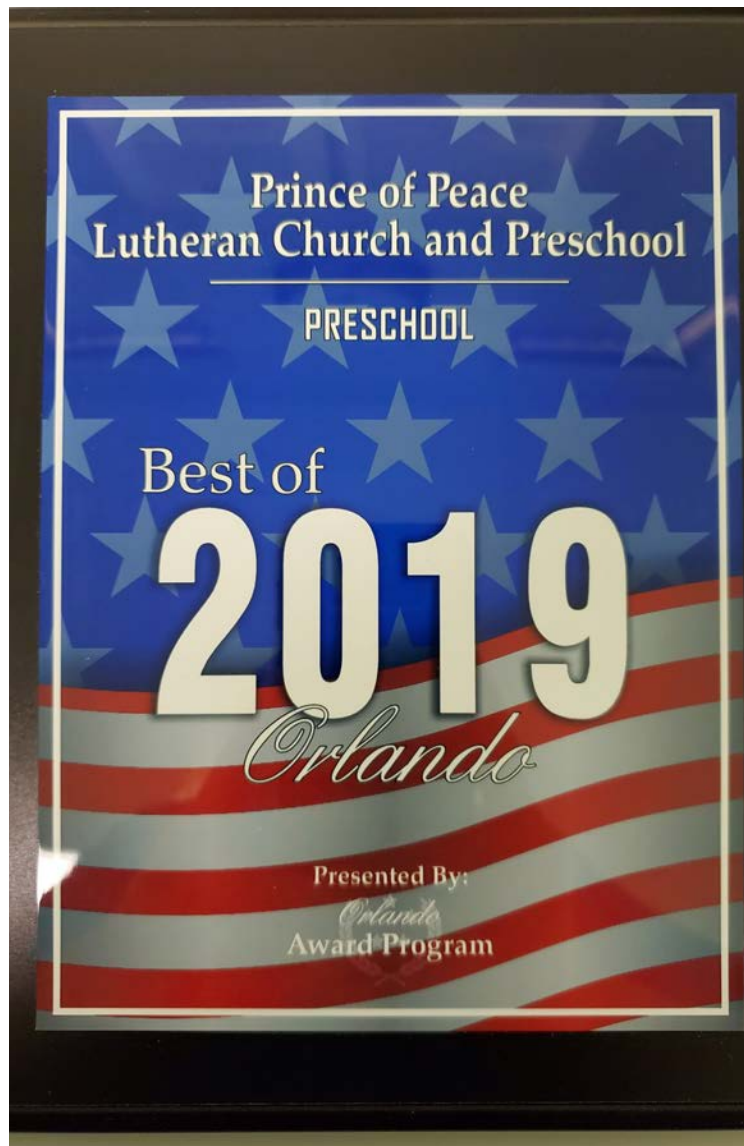
“Best Of Orlando” Awarded to Prince of Peace Preschool

Prince of Peace/Orlando has been selected for the 2019 Best of Orlando Award in the Preschool category by the Orlando Award Program. Each year, the Orlando Award Program identifies companies that achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community. These are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and community. The Orlando Award Program believes these exceptional companies help make the Orlando area a great place to live, work and play.

Various sources of information were gathered and analyzed to choose the winners in each category. The 2019 award focuses on quality — not quantity. Winners are determined based on the information gathered both internally by the Orlando Award Program and data provided by third parties.

The Orlando Award Program works exclusively with local business owners, trade groups, professional associations and other business advertising and marketing groups. The group’s mission is to recognize the small business community’s contributions to the U.S. economy.

Prince of Peace preschool director is **Julianne Wiegand**. Information about the school is available at preschool@poporlando.com



Youth Ministry Resource Now Available on Amazon

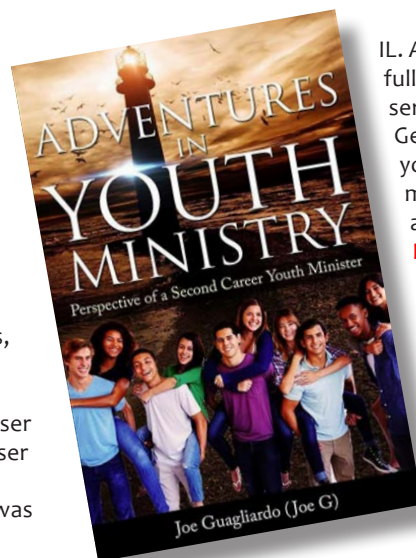
Retired Youth Director, **Joe Guagliardo** recently published a book — “Adventures in Youth Ministry.” The book is the perspective of a second career youth minister. “I wrote this book as someone who served in Christ’s church as a called worker, totally enmeshed in youth ministry for 25 years,” Guagliardo explains. “I feel I bring a unique perspective to these chapters for a couple of reasons.

“First of all, I did not start working with youth until I was 40 years old! Second, my first twenty-eight years in the workforce was spent in the retail food industry, during which time I was exposed to the secular world view. My time living and working in the secular world has given me insight into how to engage the

marginally churchd as well as unchurched.

“In this book, I tried to present church workers and volunteers with legitimate ideas, thoughts, stories, and activities that brought my youth groups closer together and closer to Christ.”

Guagliardo was born in Chicago,



IL. Although he is retired from full-time youth ministry, he serves and consults the Florida-Georgia District in areas like youth gatherings and youth ministry related events. Joe and his wife, Kathy, attend **Faith/Rockledge, FL** where he assists with outreach as well as writing daily devotions for the church Facebook webpage. The publication is available in both paperback and kindle on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Trinity/Toccoa Surpasses Fund Goal for Biblesticks

Around the world the men and women of the U.S. military are defending freedom and helping to fight the war on terror. Many of these soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines live in cramped quarters with other personnel, in very uncomfortable and



Each service member who receives a Military BibleStick also has the option to request a free Audio New Testament or Kids Bible for family back home — although they may be separated

from loved ones, they know they are listening through the Word together.

A kickoff for the “Souls for Soldiers” fundraising drive at **Trinity/Toccoa, Georgia** was held in March. Members of Trinity and daughter congregation, Grace, and members of the



Kevin Brockschmitt holds one of the Biblesticks

challenging circumstances, working hard and putting in long hours every day — too tired to read a Bible, even if they have one.

The Military BibleStick reaches these service men and women, deployed in some of the most dangerous areas of the world, with God’s Word in audio — It can go with them and sustain them in even the most difficult circumstances.

It contains the entire Audio Drama New Testament and selected Psalms chosen specifically for “warriors,” yet it’s only about the size of a pack of chewing gum. Designed to military specifications for safe use in low-light conditions, it features a black finish and red-light-only operation — and runs on a single AAA battery!

Stephens County community were invited to attend.

A barbeque and presentation by Becky and Kevin Brockschmitt helped surpass the original goal of \$2,500.

“Souls for Soldiers” raised \$5,676 and approximately 227 BibleSticks were provided to the military. ☺

Please send all congregation and school news and photos to LutheranLife@aol.com



▲ **Thrive/Estero, FL** had a creative week in Athens with St. Paul as he shared the Gospel and faced dangers so that everyone would come to believe God’s love in Jesus Christ. Dozens of members sacrificed their time, sleep, comfort and finances to make Thrive’s annual VBS program a success. They had 33 children who learned more about Jesus. ☺



▲ **King of Kings/Jasper, GA** dedicated their new building this past May. Shown in the sanctuary are Pastors David Sieg, President Greg Walton and Ernie Knoche. Both Pastors Sieg and Knoch are retired and serving together at King of Kings. ☺

Rockey Father-Daughter Team Completes Mission Trip to Haiti

When the Rev. James Rocky, pastor of Amazing Grace/Oxford/TheVillages, FL traveled to Haiti recently, he did it as a participant and not a leader. His youngest daughter, Julia, had just graduated from high school and wanted to complete a mission trip before entering college.

"We all know the saying, 'Like father, like son' or 'Like mother like daughter.' Rocky explains, "well in my case — with two daughters — mine is 'Like father like daughter!'"



Pastor James Rocky with Julia

The Rockeys have always prayed and sought for their girls to see that their faith is more than a religion — and more than Pastor Rocky's occupation. "I have prayed that they have seen my faith to be intimate and personal." Together they marveled at what

the Lord was revealing to each of them, and together they were humbled at how the Lord used the, and touched them.

They traveled with Trinity Hope-Haiti, a Nashville, TN-based ministry that provides 480,000 meals per month consisting of rice or corn, beans and a nutritious sauce. They also provide 250 Haitian jobs for cooks and regional directors to positively impact the local communities in which they serve.

"The cost of each meal is around \$0.25 and each meal is sourced from local markets, providing further economic help for the surrounding areas," Rocky explains.

According to Rocky, this trip provided a fantastic opportunity to experience all the joys of being a parent. "It begins when they are young, helpless and totally reliant upon us to provide for them; and it continues as they go through their teen years and we seek to keep them safe from the dangers of the world and those who might negatively impact their lives. Our responsibility as parents has many facets, but the most important one is that of teaching them to know and love Jesus. For many years, one of my favorite passages has been DEUTERONOMY 11: 18-19 *Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

"These words record the Lord's instructions through Moses to God's people as He gave them the Commandments. I love how the Lord understands us and our need for reminders of who He is, who we are and to what we have been called. He therefore says, make yourselves reminders by "fixing these words of mine upon your hearts and minds... tying them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your



foreheads.

"God is not just telling us to "take them to worship, but to teach them responsibility . . . our privilege is to pass on our own faith by living it out in every aspect and area of our life. It's not what we do, it's who we are!"



After listening to guest speaker Rev. James Dahlke, a representative of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, the **Immanuel/Brandon, FL** church Friday night dinner and Bible study group held a fund raiser dinner at the home of Ted and Denise Cranmer. Rev. James Dahlke's presentation of the world wide mission to put Lutheran literature in the peoples own language inspired this small group to donate \$200 to provide 40 printed books for LHF's mission work. One of the group's members donated an additional \$250.00 and got THRIVENT to match! Participants in the group include Ted & Denise Cranmer, Richard & Judy Steinbrueck, Tony & BJ Cuchlinski, Barb LaVere, Vicki Aden, Don Case and Jackie Hahn.

Candace Church Recognized for 40 Years Service at the School

Trinity Lutheran Academy Celebrates 85 Years, Countless Memories as Fort Lauderdale School Closes

It was a bittersweet celebration on Pentecost Sunday, June 9th as **Trinity Lutheran Academy** closed their doors after 85 consecutive years offering a Lutheran education to countless students of the greater Fort Lauderdale, Florida area.

Circuit Visitor, the **Rev. Timothy Hartner**, encouraged attendees to “hold to heritage the countless music, songs, faith, teachings, outings and fun that happened during the past eight-and-a-half decades and to remember all those who have been touched by Jesus.” His sermon reminded the congregation and school families that Jesus “continues to hold us in His grip, never letting us go as we have been inscribed like a tattoo in the palm of Jesus’ hand. He’ll never let us go!”



Former 4th grade teacher Gary Groth brings greetings and memories to the luncheon crowd of more than 100 people.

A short video celebrating **Candace Church’s** contribution of 40 years of service included greetings from former principal Marvin Oestmann and teacher Rebecca Beikmann as well as Ms. Church’s two

daughters Rachel and Roxann and her husband Don.

Following the celebratory service was a luncheon in the fellowship hall with a full program and many photographic memories.



Principal Candace Berry Church is flanked by her parents Betty and Clifford — Lutheran education icons in South Florida. Cliff is a graduate of Trinity Lutheran Academy and was a member during the congregations early years with Pastor Dallas and Susan Gibson. Susan started the Fort Lauderdale School. The Berrys have been instrumental in education throughout Broward County including Faith and the former Lutheran High School.



Interim Pastor Dave Kehret presents Candace Church with flowers from the congregation.



Principal Candace Church receives 40 roses and a crystal vase in recognition of her 40 years of service to Trinity Lutheran Academy and Lutheran Central School. She is joined by her teaching staff.

Cornerstone's Emergent Leader Training Continues to Benefit LCMS Nationwide

Emergent Leader training is for both professional church workers and lay persons of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Training takes place in three separate sessions comprised of a total of 10 days. “There are three primary outcomes that emergent leaders acquire from this experience,” explains **Kurt Bickel**, one of Emergent Leader trainers and the Dean of the program. Bickel is a partner in Cornerstone Consulting.

- Emergent Leaders possess significant insight into organizational challenges and opportunities.

- Emergent Leaders have an increasing capacity for personal responsibility. They respond appropriately and effectively to conflict and interpersonal encounters.

- Emergent Leaders engender the development of others.

“Since 2014 we have had 107 individuals go through the training process,” Bickel continues.



Emergent Leader's first class, in 2014, was comprised of both Southeastern and Florida-Georgia District Members

utilizing the best training available to us from both spiritual and behavioral science disciplines. We believe that leadership should equip the whole person as they

develop skills that address issues of organizational dynamics and personal growth to better sustain ministry in a post-church culture.”

“Emergent Leader was an amazing journey of self-reflection, awareness and learning,” offers Renee Varga, Treasurer of the Florida-

Georgia District and a partner in Hayes & Varga, CPA in Orlando. “The material was presented in an immediately usable format. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't or can't use something that I learned at EL.”

Varga was in the first graduating group of Emergent Leaders and is a member of **Woodlands/Montverde, FL.**

“I learned and grew in key areas of leadership, I enjoyed the balance of instruction and instructional activities and practical exercises and continue to appreciate the trainer's availability!” states Bob Boyd, Principal at **St. Paul Lutheran School, Lakeland, FL.**

Emergent Leaders instructors are Kurt Bickel, Les Stroh and Daryl Pichan of Cornerstone Consulting and Sue Easton of Easton and Associates. The Lutheran Church Extension Fund has supported the Emergent Leader training in both Florida-Georgia and Minnesota Districts with the 2017 and 2019 Kaleidoscope grants. More information can be found at www.emergentleader.org or by contacting the Florida-Georgia District Office. ☪



EMERGENT LEADER

by Kurt Bickel
Leadership Trainer

Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton utilizes Emergent Leader training to pursue the District's leadership goals. He stated, “This project is part of our commitment to grow healthy leaders,

Reilly Receives Colloquy, Commissioned at Holy Trinity/Tampa

Kelly Reilly was commissioned and installed at **Holy Trinity/Tampa, FL**. She is the newest rostered worker in the Florida-Georgia District. She has been with Holy Trinity since 2014, but recently finished her colloquy with Cuenet, the Concordia online program that provides the education needed to be eligible for a Call in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The Colloquy program prepares the Lutheran school teacher to carry



the Lord's name and His teachings with faithfulness to the children and their families. Reilly is now a Commissioned Minister of Religion with the LCMS.

Reilly is Holy Trinity's school principal and holds a Masters in Education from Wilmington University. She is pictured with Andrew Schermbeck, pastor of Holy Trinity. Previously he served as a pastor for three years at St. Paul / Chicago, IL. ☪

Who Are the Florida-Georgia District Lutheran Women in Mission?

One of the most enjoyable duties of an LWML district president is to travel around her district and interact with hundreds of women involved in the work of the LWML and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. God has richly blessed us with talents, skills and faithfulness. It is indeed inspiring to see the many different works taking place within our Florida-Georgia District.

This past February I had the opportunity to join a group of 150 ladies from around the U.S. and Canada for Deb Burma's "Extravagant Love Retreat Cruise." Most of the group were Lutherans and most of those were LCMS Lutherans. As president of one of the hosting districts for the 2019 LWML Convention I wanted to personally invite them to the convention. Several were already planning to attend, but I was greatly saddened to learn that many of these LCMS Lutheran women do not have active LWML groups in their congregations and even more unsettling was the fact that many had no idea what LWML is or does!

How can that be? How can a member of an LCMS congregation not know about the Synod's only official women's auxiliary?

For those not in the know, and a refresher for those who are, here's a brief introduction to LWML — Lutheran Women in Mission. From the LWML app: The LWML is the official women's auxiliary of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. For 75 years, the LWML has focused on affirming each woman's relationship with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries and to support global missions. We accomplish this through work at the congregational, zone, district and synodical levels, using programs, Bible studies, mission projects, zone and district events, and especially by collecting mites to fund our work and mission grants.

Currently there are 139 active LWML groups in the FLGA District. What are we doing in the FLGA District?

◆ In September, 2018 300 of us met in convention to elect officers, hear from Mites in Action speakers, take part in on-site servant events, worship and commune together AND to allocate \$103,978.01 to mission grant recipients and \$30,000.00 in scholarships for the 2018-2020 Biennium.

◆ Work has been on-going for quite some time as we prepare to co-host the 2019 LWML Convention in Mobile, AL, June 20-23. Thirty-six members of the 2019 Host Committee are from the FL-GA District, including Host Committee Chair Bunnie Koelsch; almost two hundred ladies, and

men, are signed up as workers for the convention. The official FLGA Delegation consists of voting delegates from our 19 zones, the District President, one Pastoral Counselor and three Young Woman Representatives. One of the voting delegates' major duties is to vote on the selection of Mission Grant Recipients to receive more than \$1,400,000.00 in grants for the 2019-2021 Biennium.

What's ahead for LWML Florida-Georgia District?

◆ The 2019 District Retreat will be held at the Lake Yale Baptist Conference and Retreat Center in Leesburg, FL, September 27-29. Author and speaker Deb Burma will lead the retreat with the theme of "A Woman of Joy." See the ad below for all the information. Register now!

◆ During the next ten months there will be five regional leadership training workshops, Leadership Exploration and Development (L.E.A.D.). Last November as LWML District President, I joined Pastoral Counselor Paul Meseke, Vice President Spiritual Growth Louise Cox and Jamie Bass to attend the LWML's Assembly of Leaders Training in St. Louis, so that they might share the training around the district with the women of the LCMS. Dates and locations will be announced as soon as plans are finalized.



◆ September 2020 will find the Florida-Georgia District doing something which has never been done before: The 2020 FLGA District President's Convocation

FUTURE & HOPE

by Trish Aamoth
LWML District President

AND the 2020 LWML FLGA District Convention will be *one event!* We are Lutherans, but we are going to make a change! This joint event will allow the many parts of our church body to come together for the purpose of learning how each part works and how we can work better together to share the Gospel of Our Lord and Savior!

Please, if you're not already active as a Lutheran woman in mission, come join us! Would you like more information on Lutheran Women in Mission in the FLGA District? Email me, trish.aamoth@gmail.com; go to www.flgalwml.com where you'll find lots of information and the link to sign up for our district mailing list; and check out the LWML website, too, at www.lwml.org.

We can all "Serve the Lord with Gladness" as we work together! ☺

Register Now!

Fri., Sept. 27 – Sun., Sept. 29, 2019

LWML FL-GA District Retreat

Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center,
Leesburg, FL

**\$200 registration fee includes
5 meals & 2 nights lodging**

- Retreat Bible Study Leader, Deb Burma
- Singing
- Outdoor Sunrise Devotion
- Remembrance Ceremony
- Servant Event
- Gifts from the Heart
- Prayer Stations
- Free Time—Walk, Read, Meditate, Relax
- Closing Communion Worship Service

More Information: patpowell912@yahoo.com

Registration form at www.flgalwml.com

*A Woman of Joy
with Deb Burma*

I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13).



Mission: Haiti To Sponsor Community Health Outreach This Fall

There are as many stories from Haiti as there are people living there. Some are stories of triumph over tragedy, sacrifice for others, persevering in poverty. Too many stories are of people struggling and many failing against the terrible hardships of daily life in a country filled with obstacles. Too many children given away to orphanages, parents distraught at the loss of their families, elderly without anyone to care for them, families without the basic needs of life. Sometimes we think that people should be able to rise above, work harder, be more resourceful, but after 20 years of working in Haiti I can attest to the fact that the people of Haiti are very hardworking and tremendously resourceful.

Unfortunately, at times they are resourceful to their own detriment. They build homes, unsteady shelters really, from whatever they can find: tarps, broken cement block, found lumber and plywood, cardboard, palm branches, mud and straw. Mothers make mud cookies using dirt, water, and a little salt or oil if they have it, then dry them in the sun, to fill the stomachs of their children so they don't cry from hunger.

If only we could help every child and every family in Haiti but no organization can be all things to all people. We believe that it is our job to help those God places before us with the resources we receive. We do our best to invest in people so they can invest in their families, communities and churches.

Our great resource is the Love of God shown through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Good News is central and primary in all we undertake. Beyond that we strive to use the resources of talent, time and treasure as the Holy Spirit leads to benefit those God places before us.

In some cases, the support we offer is medical, or educational. Sometimes, the need is food, a community goat co-operative or a business grant. Through the generosity of individual and church partners, Mission: HAITI presently sponsors 22 students in 9 schools and universities in 7 communities. Getting kids in schools and keeping them there is paramount to keeping families together and helping communities help themselves. When we sponsor a child and enroll them in school the family receives a mentor and assistance to become a contributing part of the community. Sponsoring a child in school is only \$30 a month.

Mission: Haiti will sponsor a Community Health Outreach this coming October and 8 to 10 servant teams in 2020 including a conference for 100 Haitian teachers, teams to help complete stucco, painting and the entryway to a church in Colminy, Haiti; set up a water harvesting project for the church and school that was just completed with the help of a dozen different individuals and churches.

We can't do everything, but with the help of the Body of Christ we can make a difference in lives that will build healthier families, churches and communities in Haiti.



**MISSION
MOMENT**
by Helen Roenfeldt
Executive Director
Mission: Haiti

For more information on how you can be part of a servant team, sponsor education, agriculture or water or community building projects in Haiti, see our website missionhaiti99.org, email us missionhaiti99@aol.com or call (954) 868-8218. ☺

