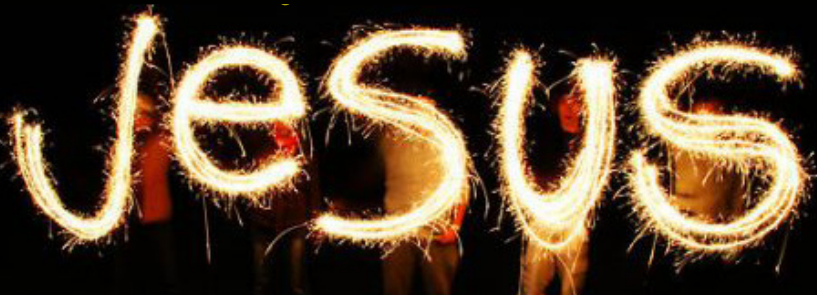


LUTHERAN LIFE

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

2012 | Volume 2

Connecting PEOPLE to



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Every congregation is a church in mission, and every member is a missionary; with all of us working together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, empowered by His Gospel to share His love. Lutheran LIFE is the official communications instrument of the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Lutheran LIFE is designed to inform LCMS church and school members of the activities, the personalities and resources offered by the Synod and the District. Lutheran LIFE may also provide a forum for Lutherans to express their views and ideas on a wide range of topics. We welcome and encourage editorials, emphasizing that the views and opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by Synod or District personnel or by the editors, churchworkers or personnel of the Synod's or District's congregations or schools. Lutheran LIFE is published bimonthly. Editorials, news items and photos are encouraged and should be received at our publication offices no later than the 10th of the month prior to the publication date. We make every attempt to use all submitted information in the next issue of LIFE, space considerations prevent us from guaranteeing that stories will be used immediately. Advertising is welcome; rates and information is available from Lutheran LIFE's office. Changes of address including e-mail changes, additions or deletions should be directed to our production office as well.

Lutheran Life Publishing:
2840 NW Boca Raton Blvd. Suite 205
Boca Raton, Florida 33431
www.LutheranLifeOnline.com
E-Mail photos and news to:
LutheranLife@aol.com

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CAPSULES by Greg Walton District President

Calling Congregations

Trinity/Albany, GA..... Pastor
St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL..... DCE
Ascension/Casselberry, FL..... Pastor
Trinity/Delray Beach, FL..... Senior Pastor
Estero Mission/Estero, FL..... Pastor
Grace/Jacksonville, FL..... Principal
Holy Trinity/Kingsland, FL..... Pastor
St. Paul/Lakeland, FL..... Pastor
Oak Road/Liburn, GA..... Pastor
LC of the Redeemer/Melbourne, FL..... Pastor
St. John/Ocala, FL..... Pastor
Good Shepherd/Sarasota, FL..... Principal
Holy Trinity/Tampa, FL..... Pastor
King of Kings/Jasper, GA..... Pastor

Calls Received

Ascension/Casselberry, FL
to Rev. Thomas Eggebrecht..... Sole Pastor
Gloria Dei/Davie, FL
to Gordon Stoneburner..... Principal
Trinity/Delray Beach, FL
to Rev. Dennis Bartels..... Senior Pastor
Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale, FL
to Stephen Schrader..... Principal
Grace/Jacksonville, FL
to Sean Martens..... Principal
St. John/Ocala, FL
to Rev. Mark Jurkowski..... Sole Pastor
Holy Trinity/Tampa, FL
to Rev. Scott Burmeister..... Sole Pastor
St. Paul/Weston, FL
to Jeremy Becker..... DCE

Calls Accepted

Gordon Stoneburner
to Gloria Dei/Davie, FL..... Principal
Mrs. Laurie Beth Eriksen
to Trinity/Delray Beach, FL..... Teacher
Stephen Schrader,
to Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale ... Principal
Rev. Rodger Meyer
to St. Mark/Tucker, GA..... Interim Pastor
Jeremy Becker
to St. Paul/Weston, FL..... DCE

Calls Declined

Rev. Dennis Bartels
Trinity/Delray Beach, FL..... Pastor

Transferred to Other Districts

1/24/2012 — Betty Johnson, Commissioned-Teacher
to Mid-South District
3/13/2012 — Jennifer Marts, Commissioned-Teacher
to Rocky Mountain District

Transferred from Other Districts

1/17/2012 — Rev. David Horn
Pastor.....from Minnesota South
2/1/2012 — Rev. Craig H. Bode
Pastor.....from Ohio
2/10/2012 — Rev. Larry A. Schaefer
Pastor.....from Southeastern

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Assignments

2/26/2012 — Rev. Aaron Reinking
Concordia Seminary/Fort Wayne
SMP Pastor to Trinity/Athens, GA — Ordained
3/18/2012 — Rev. Albert H. Matlock
Concordia Seminary/St. Louis — Pastor
Trinity/Crawfordville, FL — Ordained
3/11/2012 — Rev. Kevin S. Ogle
Concordia Seminary/St. Louis — Pastor
Miramar/Miramar, FL — Ordained

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

1/24/2012 — Mrs. Laurie Beth Eriksen, Teacher
Trinity/Delray Beach, FL — Commissioned

1/29/2012 — Rev. David Horn, Pastor-Missionary
Bethlehem/Jacksonville Beach — Ordained
2/20/2012 — Mrs. Eunice Mathews - Early Childhood
Director — Hope/Bradenton — Commissioned

Emeritus

1/23/2012.....Rev. Charles Trower
1/26/2012.....Rev. Robert C. Steinke
1/26/2012.....Mrs. Judy Steinbrueck
1/30/2011.....Rev. Paul Rauscher
2/28/2011.....Rev. Richard Lineberger
11/27/2011.....Rev. Ronald Engel
6/30/2010.....Mrs. Carol Hahn
6/30/2009.....Ms. Carole Ann Fletcher
6/30/2010.....Mr. Gary Wasmund

Called to Glory

7/10/2011.....Rev. Carlton C. Spatzek, Pastor
12/23/2011.....Rev. Harold E. Heinlein, Pastor
12/22/2011.....Rev. Robert G. Mueller, Pastor

Change of Status Within the District

1/23/2012.....Marsha Jo Fulmer
from Candidate.....to Non-Candidate
1/23/2012.....Rev. Daniel Ray Fulmer
from Candidate.....to Non-Candidate
1/23/2012.....Rev. Thomas A. Artelt
from Candidate.....to Non-Candidate
1/24/2012.....Shelly Walker
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
2/1/2012.....Sandra Birner
from Candidate.....to Non-Candidate
2/2/2012.....John F. Eriksen
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
5/30/2011.....Erica McCain
from Active.....to Candidate
6/27/2011.....Karen Arndt
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
6/27/2011.....Justin Bangert
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
6/27/2011.....Amanda Bangert
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
6/27/2011.....Dannette Smith
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
5/31/2010.....Jennifer Keller
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
2/7/2012.....Sharon Preston
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
2/7/2012.....Victoria Thomason
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
2/7/2012.....Connie Richberg
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
11/30/2011.....Timothy Guelzow
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
3/14/2012.....Scott Briggs
from Candidate.....to Non-Candidate
3/14/2012.....Rev. Ebengo Bongo
from Candidate.....to Non-Candidate
3/14/2012.....Rev. Paul Hasselbring
from Candidate.....to Non-Candidate
3/14/2012.....Rev. Roger Daene
from Candidate.....to Non-Candidate
4/1/2011.....Sarah Lynn Willig
from Active.....to Non-Candidate
2/14/2012.....Jamie Bass
from Active.....to Non-Candidate

Removed from the Roster

1/24/2012.....Rev. David Sieg
Resigned Voluntarily
2/7/2012.....Mrs. Sandra Hulse,
By Action of the District President
2/19/2012.....Rev. Gary Kindle
Resigned Voluntarily
2/25/2012.....Ms. Rachel Vrudny
Resigned Voluntarily

Reinstated to the Roster

2/27/2012.....Ms. Juanita Hill-Bell

Volunteers Boost Livestock for Life Program

March 17-24 was a week of accomplishment for Mission: Haiti as teams from Faith-Eustis and Gloria Dei-Davie joined forces to complete various projects at Faith Boys Home in Gonaives.

“With a God-ordained mix of Haiti veterans and newbies, this team brought their ‘A’ game,” reported Helen M. Roenfeldt, Mission: Haiti Executive Director. “So many needed projects were accomplished it was amazing!”

A focus for the week was Livestock for Life, a program to provide food, responsibility, business training and income for Faith Boys Home as well as food and income for extremely poor and refugee families in nearby Poto. Volunteers cleared the goat pen area, installed a fence and built a shaded area for the animals. Obsolete wooden bunks were converted into chicken coops.

“Five goats and 30 chickens were purchased to begin the boys with the experience of caring for the animals,” Roenfeldt said. “More animals will be added to the flock later.”

During the week, several team members focused on spending time with the boys at the orphanage. Nurses Linda Paradise and Janet Voigtman gave each boy a complete check-up and provided some medical attention. They also presented two diabetic workshops to more than 100 people and helped with reading glass clinics for Lutheran Church of Haiti Seminary students.



The team employed 10 Haitian workers from Faith Lutheran-Gonaives. The workers were paid enough to provide food for their families for two weeks. Lunch was also provided for the workers.

Headquartered in Gonaives, Lutheran Church of Haiti has 205 churches and 120 schools spread out all over Haiti. For more information on Mission: Haiti visit missionhaiti99.org



Gloria Dei Pastor Tony Masinelli taught two sessions at the seminary each day.



Photo Top — One of the residents of the new goat pen. Pastor Charles of Poto helped the Mission: Haiti in selecting the best animals.

Above left — Nurses Linda Paradise and Janet Voigtman with some of the boys.

At left — Gloria Dei Pastor Tony Masinelli teaching at the seminary.

Reaching Out with Wild Abandon to Connect People to Jesus

The days are quickly approaching for the 31st Florida-Georgia District Convention to be held in Lake Mary, FL, from Friday, June 22, through June 24. While what draws us together is to conduct the business of the Synod, I have always found in this District that this is a wonderful opportunity for worship and fellowship. As brothers and sisters representing the whole District, we gather to focus on our common mission in Jesus Christ.

The theme for this convention comes from 1 Peter 4:10: **Stewards of God's Grace, Empowered by the Word.** We have a wonderful line up of guest speakers, including Synodical President, Rev. Matthew C. Harrison, who will preach at the communion service, and Rev. Daniel Preus, who will be our LCMS Representative. Dr. David Benke, President of the Atlantic District, will be our Essayist, and Mrs. Gretchen Jameson will speak on "branding the church in a post-church world."

Dr. Victor Belton, Peace-Decatur, will be our Bible Study Leader, so be sure to bring your Bibles. Rev. Jonathan Frusti, Grace-Winter Haven, will be our Chaplain and Worship Leader.

It will be a great time of growing together around our missional emphasis, with a focus on empowering our congregations for the days ahead.



There is a great challenge before us as a Church, not just within The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The scope of the issue is much larger, impacting almost all of Christendom in the world, but especially in the United States. Consider these statistics

from US Census Bureau records. Every year more than 4,000 churches close their doors compared to just more than 1,000 new church starts!

There were about 4,500 new churches started between 1990 and 2000, with a 20-year average of nearly 1,000 a year. Every year, 2.7 million church members fall into inactivity. This translates into people leaving the church. Research shows that people are leaving as hurting and wounded victims — of some kind of abuse, disillusionment or just plain neglect!

From 1990 to 2000, the combined membership of all Protestant denominations in the USA declined by almost 5 million members (9.5%), while the US population increased by 24 million (11%). At the turn of the last century (1900), there was a ratio of 27 churches per 10,000 people, as compared to the close of this century (2000) where we have 11 churches per 10,000 people in America. Given the declining numbers and closures of Churches as compared to new church starts, there should have been more than 38,000 new churches commissioned to keep up with the population growth.

The USA now ranks third following China and India in the number of people who are not professing Christians; in other words, the US is becoming an ever increasing "un-reached people group." We are now the third largest mission field in the world! Half of all churches in the US did not add any new members to their ranks in the last two years.

These are alarming statistics, and the LCMS is not immune. In fact, Linda Hoops, writer for Reporter, wrote in October 2011

that baptized membership in the LCMS dropped by more than 33,000 in 2010 while confirmed membership dropped by more than 20,000. There is much work to be done. Even though the States of Florida and Georgia are not growing at the same pace they were several years ago, the fields are still ripe unto harvest if the laborers, God's chosen, will go.



This is how the theme for our convention was selected. During this next triennium we will focus on congregations and transforming them into healthy, revitalized ministries, equipped, empowered and engaged to connect people to Jesus.

This means that we need to look at ministry in a different way, in the context of our current culture. It used to be that the Church set the moral tone for communities, that there were levels and standards that supported a more Judeo-Christian heritage. In case you haven't noticed, that no longer exists, except in the minds of those who cling to the past and treat it as if it were still the current day.

Things change, and we have learned to adapt in most areas of life. For some reason we have a difficult time when it comes to our Church life.

We do a great job at what has always been so familiar to us in how we live out our faith together and function as the Church, but the changes in our culture and society call us to focus more intently on our main purpose that Jesus provided for us when He said, "I came to seek and to save the lost."

That's also His desire for us. He reminds us, ever so gently, but firmly, "You did not choose Me, but

I chose you, and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last." Yet, so often it seems that the church is most concerned about how we serve our own needs first. The early church did everything it could to grow disciples. Sometimes it seems like we want to take care of our own needs, something that seemed somewhat characteristic of the Pharisees. Jesus calls us to more. He calls us to focus our eyes on Him, and His mission to reach the world.

Peter writes in his first epistle: **The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.** (1 Peter 4:7-10) What Peter is focused on here is what we, in the Church, need to focus on once again. It's all about building relationship, isn't it?

Someone has said that when this life is over the only thing that will last into eternity will be our relationships. You won't take your car, your job, your house, your possessions, your bank account or anything else. But the relationships you form with brothers and sisters in Christ, and especially those with whom you share the love of Jesus, will last forever.

As we look to the future I believe God is calling us to examine how we "do" Church in our current cultural milieu. We can't do the same things and expect different results. We need to be sensitive to God's leading, and willing to

listen to the people that God has set all around us who don't know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We need to build relationship because, no matter how you look at it, we are living at the end of all



things. In other words, the time is getting shorter, and the urgency of our calling is increasing.

As I look at my own children and the Mosaic generation of which they are a part, I realize that if we aren't doing everything in our power to reach them with the Gospel we are one generation from the extinction of the faith. Now is not the time to focus on salving the saved; now is the time to reach out with wild abandon to connect people to Jesus.



This is where the Church comes in. Our Synod has adopted a great word and image picture — witness, mercy and life together. These don't point us inward, but rather outward, reaching people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Witness, mercy and life together start first at home. How do we bear witness to the faith among our fellow

members? Do we hold ourselves accountable, practicing, with great generosity, the forgiveness of sins? Do we show mercy to our brothers and sisters? Do we live our life together, in true fellowship, or do we do our church thing and then live our lives the way that suits us best?

Peter says that we should exercise self control, that we should love each other and allow that love to cover over sin. He doesn't say cover sin up, but cover it over like Neosporin on a cut. Our public witness has had more to do with the loss of membership in the church than almost anything else. We can change this ourselves by monitoring how we treat the world around us. We need to become more like Jesus

— servants, filled with His grace. We need to be stewards of that grace, empowered by the Word!

In this season when we continue to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, He says to us, "As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you." Go into world as a steward of His grace, empowered by the Word, and the Sacrament, shining the light of Jesus into the dark places all around us. Look in the mirror and say, "You are God's hope for the church in the world." It's scary, but it's true.

And working together, we can make a difference for Jesus as we proclaim Him in word and deed.

I look forward to the challenge and the partnership in our work together for Jesus. ■

Peace in our Risen Savior,

Greg



The Slippery Slope of Tolerance

“Tolerance” is probably the 11th Commandment of American culture. What could be worse than to be labeled as *intolerant*? Tolerance as a positive value is accented in the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, which dramatizes the results of intolerance as it explores

Florida Pastor Nomination Leads to LCMS Recognition

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Ministry to the Armed Forces was one of 15 organizations named as a 2011 “Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award” nominee for the St. Louis area.

The award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Department of Defense to employers for their support of employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. The Freedom Award is presented

annually to the nation’s 15 most supportive employers from nominees nationwide. Navy Reserve Chaplain Dr. Mark Moreno, pastor of Hope Lutheran-Melbourne, FL, nominated the

LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces for the award. Moreno serves as a chaplain in the US Navy reserves. He and his wife have a full house with three children, and many pets!

Since the Civil War, LCMS pastors have served as military chaplains. Today, the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces supports a total of 207 chaplains. ■

historical racism and prejudice with a special emphasis on the Holocaust of WW II. However, “tolerance” is a double-edged sword, a social medicine that can kill or can cure.

I have been reading the book *Bonhoeffer*, by Eric Metaxis, which weaves the history of Nazi Germany around the biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a courageous Lutheran pastor who resisted Nazism. He helped Jews escape the Holocaust, was a leader in the Confessing Church and trained pastors in an illegal seminary. Nazism grew slowly in German culture in the 1930s as the German people slowly compromised their principles, and except for a few, did not speak out publicly against the anti-Jewish laws, the extermination of the mentally handicapped or the hanging of swastikas on the altars of Lutheran churches. The German people tolerated Nazism until it was finally too late.

What false and destructive ideologies are we tolerating today as Christians? In the days of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther and the other reformers spoke out publicly in sermons and writings against theologies and ideologies that were false, destructive and evil. The Augsburg Confession is filled with words like “condemn” and “contrary to the Gospel.” Truth was contrasted with error so that people might be warned.

But today we are reluctant to say that a theology, or idea, is false or destructive lest we be labeled as *intolerant*. Recently my wife and I attended an “interfaith prayer service for justice and peace” in a local Orlando synagogue. Participants included a rabbi, a Muslim imam, Buddhist monks, two Christians and three Sikh drummers. While we can appreciate the desire for “peace” the impression that was given was that all religions are equal. We listened and read the elaborate bulletin carefully. The word “Jesus” was never spoken, nor was it printed. In this inclusive event, only Jesus was excluded.



BURNING BUSH

by Bruce Lieske

Lutherans In Jewish Evangelism

I have a specific concern: the evil, destructive and intolerant political-religious system known as Islam. This religion, with its sharia law, continues to creep into our banks, schools, laws and politics. The historical track record of Islam, beginning with the warrior-prophet Muhammad, is one of deception, intimidation, military conquest, beheadings, fear and mistreatment of women. Yes, fear. Even today in this free United States comedians are reluctant to joke about Islam, and major publishers fear to offend Muslims. Are we afraid to say the truth about this false political-religious system? And are we tolerating its slow, steady growth into American culture?

It is important to separate the religion of Islam from individual Muslims. We do not want to attack Muslims. We want to treat them with love, respect and share the good news of the Savior Jesus with them. But we are cruel if we do not warn them – and others – about the bondage of Islam as contrasted with the freedom, love and grace of God in Jesus.

Want more information? Contact us at bliске7@bellsouth.net or pastorrickenberg@yahoo.com ■

Our Savior-Orlando, responds to the above question with a joyous, “Very well, thank you!”

As a matter of fact, Our Savior has named its garden: Rebecca’s Garden of Hope. The chief gardener is a well-experienced Sanya Parson and can be reached at 407-256-4393 or by email at wsparson@eventsbydedesign.com.

What grows in Rebecca’s Garden of Hope? Not carrots and corn, but kids! Kids who live in the Washington Shores community of Orlando, where Our Savior congregation gathers for worship and then deploys for its most unique ministry of “tending the crops.”



Lawyers and accountants, nurse’s aides and administrators of all kinds, serve as mentors and tutors and encouragers and meal-preparers and referees for sports activities. They tend the plants every Wednesday afternoon and evening of each week of the year. They fertilize (teach) and prune (correct) and water (pray for and with) so that the child who is struggling with academics as a 3rd grader or a 12th grader or any grade in between can grow and thrive.

Academic skills are learned, confidence is built. Love is shared. Who are these kids planted in Rebecca’s Garden? They are children in unstable home situations, whose young lives have been disrupted by a variety of stresses and strains, even

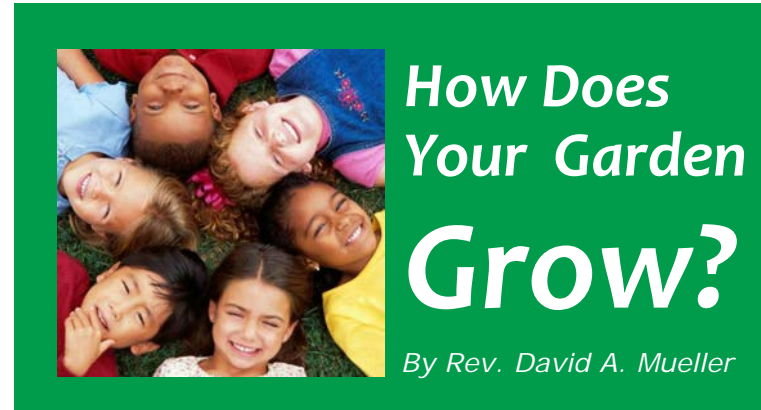
trauma, that stretch coping skills to the max. They are children living in situations that are sometimes unsafe. They are sometimes from religious families, but more often than not from families that are so overwhelmed by survival issues that Jesus is distant and unapproachable.

Frequently, they are moved from school to school, with a single-parent mother who is unable to help with their homework. And thus they fall further and further behind.

So on Wednesdays of each week, the gardeners from Our Savior gather up the children. They mentor them in social skills. They learn to effectively manage at the “Bonus Buck Store.” They tutor

them in reading and math, using homework assignments as points of contact. Reading is learned not only from school books but from the books of the Bible. They laugh and sing as kids are prone to do. They learn and experience and thus they grow in confidence.

Surrounded by love, they see



How Does Your Garden Grow?

By Rev. David A. Mueller

that Jesus is not far off, but close and caring and that it was He who bore the Cross for them.

United together in this ministry of human care are the pastoral energy of our Florida-Georgia District’s Veteran of the Cross, Pastor Harold Storm (ordained, 1948), and Pastor Larry and Carol Schaefer, both of whom have educator backgrounds;

the energy, vision and persistence of Sanya Parsons, and the great desire of Our Savior congregation members to serve as mentors for the child planted in their midst in need of some personal and special attention for a while.

Rebecca’s Garden of Hope is “growing kids in the Name of Christ,” enabling a better life for them as they prepare for success.

Oh, by the way, the “kids of the Garden” come to Sunday School. And joyously, during worship, as a group, they kneel at the Communion Rail, receiving a blessing from Pastor.

Is there a Garden in the outreach ministry of your congregation or school?

“Ask the Lord who gives the harvest to send workers to harvest his crops.” St. Luke 10:3 ■



INASMUCH is a regular article sponsored by the Florida-Georgia District’s Human Care Advisory Council in which various district human care endeavors are shared for information with a view toward replication by other district congregations and ministries.

LWML to Meet in Orlando in September Will Shine Like Stars

The LWML Florida-Georgia District's Executive Committee and Board of Directors held their annual winter meeting at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church- Orlando the weekend of February 18. The major topic was the 2012 District Convention; other business included rotation of convention and retreat sites, selecting zones to host the 2013 retreat and exploring the possibility of on-line meetings.

This year's convention is set for Friday, September 28 through Sunday September 30 at the Orlando Airport Marriott. Exhibits open on Friday at 1:00 p.m. and Servants Events at 1:30 p.m. Sunday morning worship and installation of officers will conclude the weekend.

Keynote speaker Virginia Von Seggern served as LWML President from 1999-2003. She served as a board member for Lutheran Hour Ministries Foundation, Lutheran Bible Translators, Nebraska District Board of Directors and the Lutheran Ministry Foundation of the Nebraska District.

Representing the LWML at the Convention will be Carolyn Blum, Vice President of Organizational Resources. Active in LWML since 1996, she has served as District President, Associate and News Editor of the Lutheran Woman's Quarterly and as a Mission-Ministry Vision Consultant.

Guest speaker Cynthia Khan was born and raised in Pakistan, has lived in four countries and now resides in Michigan. She serves as Director of Women and Youth Ministries through human care services.

Lunch & Learn speakers and topics include Virginia Von Seggern, Shining for the Future; Carolyn

Blum, Involving More Women to Become Shining Stars; Cynthia Khan, Hold Out the Word of Life to Muslim Women; and Pastor Greg LeSieur, Celestial Navigating



Convention participants are asked to bring shoes and clothing, toilet articles, towels, sheets and household items for the Gifts from the Heart/Ingathering benefiting Matthew's Hope, Orlando. All cash donations will go to Lutheran Services of Georgia.



LWML Zone Presidents met recently to work on plans for the year.

Convention information and registration form are available in the 2012 Spring Evangel and on-line at www.flgalwml.com. Registration is now open; early registration fee of \$135 through June 30.



As of January 26, the Florida-Georgia District mite collections totaled \$117,794.93 toward the biennium goal of \$163,000 with five months to collect the \$45,205.07 balance. The goal is for all District mission grants to be fully funded (25% of the mite offerings go toward the national LWML mission grants, too, which we want to fully fund).



The Atlanta North, East Central and Northeast Georgia Zones will host the 2013 District Retreat at The Lodge at Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center in Norcross—about 35 miles north of Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport. Mark your calendars now for the weekend of September 27 – 29, 2013! ■

Revolutionary Message of Jesus Christ Engages District's Senior Youth

Cutting edge music and videos, an innovative servant event and a powerful message energized Florida-Georgia District youth at the 2012 High School Gathering.

More than 300 youth and their leaders came together under the theme *Unlimited: Revolution* from March 2-4 in Orlando. Drawing from John 17, Gathering host and speaker Rev. Billy Brath of Trinity-Orlando and other voices from around the District proclaimed a "message of redemption and purpose for those under Jesus' name."

A powerful opening event set established the high energy and pace of the three-day event. DJ James Anthony of Chicago led the gathered community in praise and worship songs by popular artists specially remixed and remastered for the Gathering.

On Saturday morning, the youth separated into three groups and traveled to different work sites around Downtown Orlando.

The afternoon's "mass breakout time" provided students a change to gather in specially sorted peer groups to discuss opportunities to

Brath described the Gathering as "not simply a fun event for youth groups but a time to refocus on their purpose as God's family in the world. We are here to do His work – to proclaim His Gospel – to spread His love – to break through the world's culture – to bring His Revolution." ■



further the revolution in their own life context.

An evening worship with Holy Communion followed Saturday dinner. Free time options afterward included a dance, games or movie.

On Sunday morning, Gathering participants came together for the final mass event before the event concluded at noon.



Above — Joe Guagliardo, Youth Director at Faith-Merritt Island, FL, and Pastor Billy Brath, Urban Missionary at Trinity-Orlando, were key organizers of the 2012 High School Gathering.



Left — Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton on stage at the opening event.

LLL To Convene in Saskatchewan, Canada

The International LLL is going to the Great White North to meet for their 94th International Convention. The convention city of Saskatoon in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, is known for its extensive hours of daylight in summer – thus the convention theme of “Sonrise to Sunset.”

The theme is taken from Psalm 113:3: “From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord be praised.” The convention dates are July 26-28, and there are several inspirational and fun events scheduled, including children’s outings and activities.

The area will provide attendees who want to spend a few extra days with a variety of places to go and experience. For the adventurous there is even a pre-convention trip to Vancouver that includes sight-seeing and a train ride through the Rockies enroute to Saskatoon.

There are two grand hotels that are the official accommodations for the convention, and both are four blocks from the TCU Center and offer regularly scheduled busing to the center. Participants are responsible for booking the hotel of their choice; both are charging \$129 and offer many amenities.

If you register for the convention prior to May 15 the cost per person is \$95; after that date the cost will be \$125. Delta and United Airlines are offering a 5% discount when booking fares by using a special code. For more information go to www.lhm.org and link to International LLL Convention.

One of the most important items needed for the trip is a valid U.S. Passport for re-entry into the U.S. If you have to renew your passport and need information go visit: <http://travel.state.gov/passport>. ■



Something New Has Been Added

The International LLL is undergoing some significant changes, both structurally and operationally. One key change is that members of Lutheran Hour Ministries in the U.S. and Canada now have the opportunity to cast ballots for candidates for International LLL Officers, Board of Directors and key by-law issues. The election is scheduled for April 20 - May 30 of this year and will be conducted via mail-in ballots.

In the past, elections and other changes were made only by the members in attendance at the convention site. An independent firm will tabulate the votes, and has yet to be chosen.

Biographies and pictures of the candidates currently appear in the March-April edition of *The Lutheran Layman* newspaper. When the ballots go out in late April, additional information and instructions will be included. ■

Something Fishy Going On at the Men’s Network

Get your rods and reels ready for the 4th Annual Men’s Network North American Fishing Tournament kicking off April 30 and concluding September 2. Action will take place on lakes, rivers, ponds and creeks all across North America.

Registration is a mere \$10. Everything related to the tournament can be found on www.lhmmen.com. There will be weekly prizes and a Grand Prize of \$500. Eleven fish categories are eligible for weekly prizes such as Men’s Network

fishing T-shirts and \$10 gift cards for Bass Pro Shops. Even if you catch “a strange non-fish thing,” there are cash rewards for that category.

There are an abundance of lakes and rivers in our Florida-Georgia District, so let’s go fishing and get the kids involved. ■



Thrivent Financial Reports Third Consecutive Year of Strong Results

Not-for-profit membership organization also reports more than \$175 million given to communities in 2011.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans’ 2011 results led to the third consecutive year of financial growth for the Fortune 500 membership. Sales, revenue, assets under management and total adjusted surplus all rose in 2011 and have continued to rise since 2008 despite turbulent economic and market conditions.

Thrivent Financial’s statutory revenue climbed to \$7.9 billion, up six percent over 2010, and assets under management rose to \$75.8 billion, up almost four percent from the previous year.

Life, health and annuity sales continued to be a major factor in helping Thrivent Financial attain strong results, rising five percent from 2010. Thrivent Financial’s life insurance in force now stands at \$170.2 billion, two percent higher than in 2010.

Ongoing Strength and Stability

Thrivent Financial continues to be one of the strongest and most stable financial services organizations in the industry. Its total adjusted surplus grew seven percent to \$5.4 billion in 2011. Fitch Ratings recently affirmed Thrivent Financial’s AA rating, the third-highest of 19 categories, and gave the organization a stable outlook. Earlier in 2011, A.M. Best gave Thrivent Financial an A++ rating with a stable outlook, the highest of A.M. Best’s 16 ratings categories.

Community Giving And Outreach

In 2011, Thrivent Financial and its members gave \$175.5 million in direct support to charitable organizations, schools, congregations and individuals in need. The Thrivent Financial Foundation awarded \$15.1 million in grants to Lutheran institutions nationwide and

nonprofits in Minneapolis/St. Paul and the Fox Cities (WI) area.

Thrivent Financial members and non-members volunteered more than 10.8 million hours in support of organization projects in 2011. Thrivent’s 3,000 employees gave more than 71,000 volunteer hours in in the Twin Cities (MN) and Fox Cities (WI). Through the Thrivent Gift Multiplier program, employees’ and financial representatives’ donations were matched by the Foundation for a total of \$4,646,222.

Thrivent Choice

Thrivent Financial distributed more than \$62 million to more than 20,00 Lutheran congregations and organizations through its Thrivent Choice Dollars program in 2011. Members recommend here to distribute a portion of the organization’s charitable funds.

Thrivent Builds

Through Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity, Thrivent Financial will give \$9.2 million to fund the construction and rehabilitation of 142 homes in 32 states and an additional \$1 million to support teams building homes around the world in 2012. With this contribution, Thrivent Financial will have contributed \$160 million since the program began in 2005, constructing more than 2,600 homes here and around the world.

“For more than 100 years, Thrivent Financial has helped its members achieve financial security and give back to their communities,” said Brad Hewitt, president and CEO of Thrivent Financial. “Our ongoing strength and stability will allow us to be there for them for another 100 years.” ■

Let's thrive: Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Have a vision

What inspires you?
These inspirations can help define your values and your vision for family, health and wealth.

For more information, contact:
Florida-Georgia Regional Financial Office
866-380-0558

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For additional important disclosure information, please visit Thrivent.com/disclosures.

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LCEF Services: *Building & Believing Weekend*

Pastor Ben Haupt, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church-Gainesville, GA, shares his congregation's experience:

Recently we hosted a Building & Believing Weekend with Rev. Stephen Wagner. What a weekend! Your pamphlet describing the weekend states that "CFS is proud to make available a team of renowned and inspiring speakers from which partner congregations can choose for a weekend of leading, teaching, and preaching." It was that and much more. Allow me to share a few results from our time together.

Passing on the torch of leadership:

Part of the workshop had focused on developing a leadership

pipeline, and had particularly spoken to one of our leaders struggling with passing the torch.

The session on leadership touched her in a powerful way. She is now focused on developing the next leader, and is excited about developing a new area of ministry for our congregation.

Emphasis on outreach:

Another member was particularly moved by the emphasis on outreach. Throughout the weekend, Pastor Steve kept us focused on Christ's mission of reaching the lost through the local church; our entire congregation is to be outward focused with a mission to the lost as our primary reason for existence.

I was amazed as I recognized the Lord's hand in bringing us His particular Word for us through the Building & Believing Weekend.

The Holy Spirit was mighty as He once again called, gathered, enlightened, sanctified and focused us on the mission of Christ Crucified.

Throughout the weekend, we heard over and over that our building project and the collection of more than 50% of our pledge in the first 10 months were certainly great things to celebrate, but were really just tools to help the congregation remain engaged in Christ's mission to the nations.

With groundbreaking right around the corner, our congregation is more focused than ever on the Great Commission, and healthier through leadership development.

May the ministry of the Building & Believing Weekends continue to be used by the Lord for His mission!



LCEF Loans: *Congregations & Church Workers*

Congregation

Faith Lutheran Church-n Lecanto, FL, is a rural community church located off of a "not so easy to find" back road. They built a new church and dedicated the building in 2005, but because of the location, they have never been able to place a sign on the main highway that runs very close to the church.

Recently the church found out that 3.5 acres of land between the church and busy Highway 41 was available for purchase. Not only would this provide additional land for growth, but the opportunity for signage and an entrance off this busy highway would now provide visibility of the actual church building.

Faith's secretary, Wanda Malphurs, contacted LCEF to check on the possibility of a loan for the purchase of this land. After much discussion with Wanda, the Florida-Georgia District Loan Staff and the St Louis Loan Staff, and based on Faith's existing credit with LCEF, it was determined that the best option for the land purchase would be an unsecured loan request

providing Title Insurance copies for the new land purchase.

Had the new funds been added to Faith's existing mortgage loan, they would have had to pay mortgage tax, closing costs, title insurance costs and potential attorney fees on the entire combined loan amount. The alternative provided a substantial savings of time, paperwork and most importantly, money!

The new land will provide access from the highway and with God's help, provide opportunity to attract new members who would never have known the church was there. Partnering with congregations with funds and services to expand ministry continues to be a mission of Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

Rostered Church Worker

Younger "me" didn't think too much about current "me." He was a fun kid, did lots of awesome and exciting stuff -- but racked up lots of credit card debt. I thought back then: "Future me will make lots of money and can pay these credit cards off quick!"

Well, now I'm a rostered church worker - and although the good gifts of God are abundant in my life -- they don't include a large salary to pay down debt. I could make minimum payments on my credit card debt, but could never really make a dent in the principle balance.

Moreover, the credit cards were still my only source of rainy day funds because I was not able to save money each month - all my money was going to the massive minimum payments. I know there are church workers out there like me.


Then I was blessed with a perfectly timed conversation with my LCEF rep.

LCEF's Debt Consolidation program for rostered church workers has reduced my monthly debt payments by HUNDREDS of dollars, and I will pay off all of my credit card debt in less than seven years - instead of the 30+ year plan the credit card companies had me on.

My loan interest rate is ridiculously low - and I feel much better paying interest to LCEF to fund ministries and missions rather than a massive bank (turns out they are doing fine without my money!)

You know the best part of the loan process? It was quick, confidential, and EASY. No lie - from filling out the form to a deciding phone call from LCEF took less than two days! It took me 10 min to fill out the form!

My fellow church workers who are mad at their younger selves like I was, take advantage of the blessings LCEF has to offer. Stop making ridiculous payments to credit card companies and let LCEF help you out of debt. Experience the joy of using God's resources wisely. And join me in finally thinking about "future me."



Are you prepared for life's financial emergencies?

Be prepared. Open an LCEF Family Emergency StewardAccount®.

You never know when there may be a need for funds not allocated in your monthly budget.

The **Family Emergency StewardAccount** is an investment that builds over time with automatic deposits and interest earned. And if there is an urgent need, your funds can be easily accessed.

Financial emergencies are inevitable, but you can be ready for them. Find out more at www.lcef.org.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund
10733 Sunset Office Drive, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63127
1-800-843-5233

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LCEF Investments *Building is Simple*

Five Minutes and \$25.00. That is all it takes to begin an account that can be used for the events of your life.

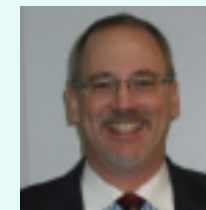
- ✂ Vacation
- ✂ Christmas
- ✂ Quarterly Tax Payments
- ✂ School
- ✂ Emergencies
- ✂ Home
- ✂ Account for Children or Grandchildren

With Lutheran Church Extension Fund's Family Emergency StewardAccount you can financially prepare for the events of your life. Unexpected or planned - we can help. www.lcef.org or 800 843-5233.

Your investment with Lutheran Church Extension Fund provides the funds for loans and services to LCMS churches and schools. We build ministry not branches; partner with us and be part of the ministry story.



LCEF Investments *Your Ministry Partners* 877 457-5556



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Veteran Servants Honored at Annual Retreat

More than 200 participants gathered in Leesburg in early March for the Florida-Georgia Veterans of the Cross Retreat, an annual event started in 1979 by late District President Rev. Dr. Lloyd Behnken.

Designed for retired church workers and their spouses, the gathering attracts participants from within and outside of Florida-Georgia. This year's theme of "Hope for a Hopeless World" was expounded upon by keynoter Rev. Greg Seltz, speaker for The Lutheran Hour, and Bible study leader Rev. John Roth of First-Gainesville, FL.

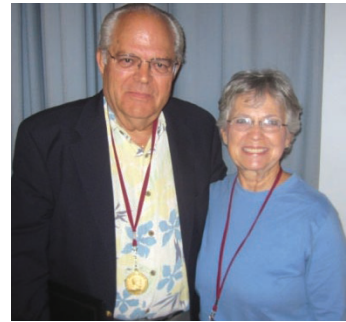
Holden Evening Vespers were led by David Ludwig Jr., with participation of the liturgical dance group from Woodlands Lutheran-Montverde led by Kathy Keene, a member of the Florida-Georgia District staff.

A highlight of each year's retreat is the presentation of the Behnken Medallion in four categories for service to Christ's Church. Honorees this year were:

Pastor - Rev. John Frerking, pastor emeritus Faith-North Palm Beach, whose varied involvement with social and outreach ministries includes service as past chairman of the Lutheran Services Florida board;

Commissioned Minister – Audrey Roglitz, a retired teacher whose second career as a short-term missionary has taken her who to locations around the globe:

Church at Large – Betty Duda, whose service resume includes tenures as President of the International Lutheran Women's Missionary League, member of the boards of directors for various organizations, including The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and the Walt Disney Company.



Left: Rev. John Frerking with wife Eileen

Below: Jim Ingersoll (right) with Rev. David Ludwig.



Layperson – Jim Ingersoll retired Darden Restaurants Vice President of Internal Audit, long-time treasurer for the Florida-Georgia District and an active leader of Prince of Peace-Orlando.

This Retreat is sponsored by the Florida-Georgia District in appreciation of the spiritual leaders in the District and Synod. ■

Middle photo, right: Audrey Roglitz with family members



Below: Betty Duda (seated, left) with husband John (seated right), daughters (back, l-r) Jennifer LaGrange, Leslie Schnake, Pam Jovaag, Linda Nichols, Beth Wareham; and sister MaryLou Nash.



When I attended seminary, a young man would complete high school and then head off to one of our Concordia's for pre-seminary courses. This would be the first step in some eight years of training to become an LCMS pastor. This meant that many potential pastors were passed over due to how impossible it would be for them to leave an income, pack the family up and head off either to St. Louis or Fort Wayne seminaries. (In previous eras pastoral candidates could not enter the seminary married but were expected to delay marriage until they completed their pastoral training.) This excluded many of the second-career candidates.

Today much of this has changed; however, our seminary students in both the residential and distance learning programs still receive very rigorous and thorough training. Three Florida-Georgia men graduated from Concordia Seminary-St. Louis from a program called DELTO, or Distance Education

assigned parish while at seminary and one year of vicarage. The DELTO program also allowed each of these men opportunity to keep their jobs and to not relocate their families. Kevin worked for DELL, Burt is a retired Florida Highway Patrol officer and Tony is a former law enforcement officer. The DELTO program allowed each of these men to enter into the ministry while the traditional route probably would have excluded them.

We are proud to have them serve our Savior in our Florida-Georgia District, and we warmly welcome each of them.



Much has been said about the coming pastoral shortage, which will happen due to the number of pastors who will be retiring and entering into glory in the coming years. This will characterize nearly 50% of our LCMS clergy at a time when fewer students are being prepared for church work despite new training

MISSIONMOMENTS

by Doug Kallesen
Executive Director Mission & Outreach

Leading to Ordination. They are being ordained and installed as Pastors into their respective ministries. Kevin Ogle serves at Miramar Lutheran Church-Miramar, FL; Burt Matlock serves at Trinity-Crawfordville, FL; and Tony Durante serves at Trinity-Delray Beach, FL.

These men received training which took more than eight years to complete with seminary professors on line. These men also had a mentor LCMS pastor who worked with them on their course work while supervising them in actual parish ministry experiences. These men received more practical or parish experience during this time than the traditional route of the residential seminary program.

The residential seminary program packs all practical parish experience into field work at an

programs such as DELTO and SMP.

Today, however, many are puzzled by and question if there truly is a pastoral shortage when there are fewer than 300 calling congregations for the entirety of Synod. Pastors seeking calls sit idly by waiting many months if not years before entertaining another call. Many pastors are also unable or unwilling to move because of the housing market in their region, saying they cannot move if they can't sell their house.

My answer to those questioning if there is truly a pastor shortage is this: The pastoral shortage is coming but has not yet arrived.

We dare not be lulled into a false sense of security. Our church body must take seriously the shortage that will be upon us in the near, but not a too-distant

future. I am optimistic in what I see in our seminaries. They are willing to work with changing models to meet the church's needs of today for tomorrow. I also see students



who are excited about serving in ministry even with little or no pay. They want to serve our Savior!

God is blessing and is providing for His Church! God's mission moves forward.



The DELTO program (see following pages) has been replaced with a similar program called SMP, or Specific Ministry Pastor, and is offered in much the same format. This is the last graduating DELTO class. The Florida-Georgia District also works with many ethnic students who wish to become pastors, teachers and church workers, have limited English skills and who also need a distance learning model.

We are in partnership with Concordia Seminary-St. Louis and the Center for Hispanic Studies for our Spanish speaking students. We actually have a satellite seminary located at Messiah Lutheran Church-Tampa, FL. The seminary professors fly in to teach more than one dozen students. We also are in partnership with the Mission Training Center and the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology to provide training. These programs are in English but are distance model training.

If you are interested in or considering becoming a pastor or church worker in the LCMS please contact the District Office at 407.857.5556 ■

Final LCMS DELTO Graduating Class

Among the recent graduates of the DELTO (Distance Education Leading to Ordination) program of Concordia Seminary-St. Louis were Florida-Georgia District members Kevin Ogle, Bert Matlock and Tony Durante. They will be serving at District congregations.

Kevin Ogle

On Sunday, March 11, after beginning the DELTO nine years earlier, Kevin Ogle was ordained into the pastoral ministry of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and installed as the Pastor of Miramar Lutheran Church-Miramar, FL. He had served Miramar Lutheran as their DELTO Vicar for the past six years.

Officiating Ogle's ordination was Florida-Georgia District President Rev. Greg Walton. Preaching was Rev. James Weist, pastor of St. Peter Lutheran-Shaker Heights, OH. Weist was a Vicar, and later Associate Pastor at Gloria Dei Lutheran-Davie, FL, when Ogle and

his family were members there.

Both Weist, in his sermon, and Ogle, in remarks at the end of the service, talked about the many, many people who had greatly influenced and impacted the newly ordained pastor. Many of those people were among the more than 200 people attending the worship service.

A catered dinner was followed the service on the Miramar Lutheran church grounds. Rev. Darrell Stuehrenberg, who had been Ogle's pastor at Gloria Dei and also served a number of years as his DELTO Vicarage Mentor, shared written messages from two of those who were not able to attend: Rev. Jay Mason and Rev. James Vehling. Mason, pastor of Our Savior Lutheran-Albuquerque, NM, and Director of the LCMS' Lift High the Cross Hot Air Balloon Outreach Ministry, had been a layman at Gloria Dei along with Ogle before becoming a Lutheran Pastor. Vehling, a semi-retired LCMS Pastor who serves on the

staff at Concordia University-St. Paul, MN, was Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran-Hollywood, FL, had given much encouragement to Ogle when he was at Gloria Dei. ■



Tony Durante

Members of Trinity Lutheran-Delray Beach will officially welcome their new Outreach Pastor on April 15, the date for Tony Durante's Ordination and Installation service.

Florida-Georgia District President Walton will officiate at the 4pm service. Trinity Pastor Vince Putman and area pastors will participate in the service. A reception for Durante and his family follow.

Durante has served Trinity as Director and Discipleship and Vicar as well as an active lay leader before entering the DELTO program. In addition to being a former member of the District Board of Directors, Tony is also a former missionary to Japan, where he met his wife, Junko. They have three daughters. ■

Has Grads Serving in Florida-Georgia

Bert Matlock

Some 11 years after beginning his preparation, Bert Matlock was ordained and installed as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church-Wakulla on Sunday, March 18. Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton was the preacher. Among those participating in the service was District Second Vice President Dr. Dennis Glick, Matlock's pastor when he attended St. Paul-Boca Raton.

Matlock began his theological studies at the District level in 2003 with the Concordia House of Studies-Orlando and continued with pre-seminary classes at Concordia College-Mequon. In October 2007 he entered the seminary through the DELTO program.

Matlock, a second career pastor who grew up in Cocoa Beach, had been serving Trinity in a vicar capacity since November 2008.

After graduating from Cocoa Beach High School in 1974, Matlock enlisted in the United States Army and served as a chaplain assistant. In 1977 he completed his tour of duty in the army and was employed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington, DC.

He remained in a reserve status and served in the Washington, DC National Guard in the 257th Army Band. In 1978 he joined the ranks of the Florida Highway Patrol, where he held the position of trooper until being promoted to sergeant in 1987.

In 1992 Matlock served in the aviation section as an airplane and helicopter pilot, retiring from FHP in 2005.

Matlock and his wife Ingrid, have two children: Erik 10 and Annika 7. ■



Participating at Bert Matlock's ordination and installation service were Pastors (front, l-r) Bernie Kurzweg (Emeritus, Trinity-Wakulla), District President Greg Walton, Bert Matlock, Russ Johnson (Church of the Redeemer-Vero Beach), Earl Stefens (Peace-Tifton) Jay Winters (University Lutheran-Tallahassee), Bruce Alkire (Our Redeemer-Lake City), (back, l-r) Richard Pieplow, District Executive for Outreach Doug Kallesen, Dennis Glick (Emeritus, St. Paul-Boca Raton), Joshua Brown (Messiah-Valdosta), Mark Schulz (Epiphany-Tallahassee)



Participating in the Kevin Ogle ordination and installation service were Pastors (front, l-r) Tony Masinelli, Gloria Dei-Davie; James Weist, St. Peter-Shaker Heights, OH; Kevin Ogle, Miramar Lutheran-Miramar; Greg Walton, Florida-Georgia District President, Douglas Kallesen, Florida-Georgia District Mission Executive; (back, l-r) Thomas Hackett, Trinity-Fort Lauderdale; Josque Vilsaint, Trinity Haitian-Fort Lauderdale, James Tino, Director of the Global Lutheran Outreach Mission Organization; Darrell Stuehrenberg, Bethlehem-Fort Myers; Daniel Czaplewski, Shepherd of the Coast-Fort Lauderdale; Scott Gress, Transforming Congregations Network; Timothy Hartner, St. Paul-Weston. Not pictured are Pastors Dennis Bartels, Holy Cross-North Miami, and Edwin Nicklas, Our Savior-Plantation

What is Specific Ministry Pastor Program?

Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) is the newest LCMS program for preparing pastors to fill an identified need in a congregation, cultural setting, or other ministry. SMP uses distance education, local pastors as mentors, and an annual week of study on a seminary campus. It replaces the DELTO program.

Last fall the two LCMS seminaries enrolled their first students in the program, which involves close collaboration between congregations, districts, and the seminaries. Beginning with an identified need, a congregation, a circuit, or a district may invite a man with the scriptural qualifications to apply for the SMP program. The district examines the application and submits a completed application package to the seminaries.

Before being admitted, a man must demonstrate basic competencies in the Old and New Testaments, Lutheran doctrine, worship, preaching, teaching, and Christian witness. These competencies can be acquired through lay training offered by districts, Concordia universities, and our seminaries.

Once admitted, an SMP student serves as a vicar during his first two years in the program. He takes instruction (mostly by Internet) and meets with an assigned pastor-mentor. After completing eight seminary courses during that period, he will be eligible for ordination and a call to his vicarage site. During the next two years, he completes eight more courses while continuing under the supervision of a pastor-mentor. Even after completing the program, he continues under the supervision of a general pastor.

Earlier this year, both seminaries received preliminary approval from the Association of Theological Schools for a comprehensive distance-education program and may now offer courses for academic credit. This enables SMP students to receive credit for their work if they choose to continue study toward a master of divinity degree.

Information: Rev. Doug Kallesen dkallesen@flga-lcms.org ■

Oxford Mission to Purchase Site

Members of the mission congregation Abiding Grace-Oxford have unanimously approved the purchase of approximately 10 acres of land on CR472 (Rainey Trail) to be used for future construction of facilities for congregation ministries.

The site was selected for its excellent proximity for Village residents as well as for residents living in and around the communities of Oxford and Wildwood.



Plans for Amazing Grace began in 2005. After many hours of meeting, discussion and prayer, a call was extended to Rev. James Rockey to be the first pastor.

He was installed in July of 2007. The first worship service was held on November 11, 2007.

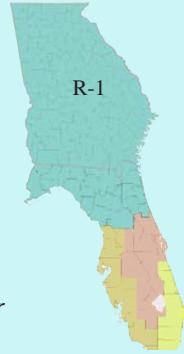
Steady growth has characterized Abiding Grace, where in the fall of 2010 a second, more traditional Lutheran style of worship was added for the fall, winter and spring seasons. ■

PIE SUPPER SUCCESS – The 14th Annual Pie Supper to benefit the Preschool at Abiding Savior-Gainesville, FL, raised more than \$2,800. Those attending the early February event bid on donated pies. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans matched part of the proceeds. A portion of the proceeds will be used to buy a portable “smart board” for the classrooms. ■



REGION 1 NEWS

The largest geographic sector of the District, Region 1 encompasses all of the State of Georgia and approximately the upper third of the State of Florida. Representing Region 1 on the District Board of Directors are Rev. Frank Marshall of Jacksonville, FL, who recently retired as pastor of St. Paul-Jacksonville; Jean Weinrich, a member of All Saints-Blairsville, GA; and Bill Gaik, a member of Trinity Lutheran-Toccoa, GA.



Partners in Mission

The Outreach and Sunday School ministries of Bethlehem-Jacksonville Beach are partners in the congregation’s Mission of the Month program. Field trips, supply drives and education opportunities fill the mission schedule in this year-long pursuit of God’s Great Commission. The goal of the joint venture is to not only support the selected ministries monetarily, but also to educate Bethlehem’s children on these missions and why they exist. ■

Our Redeemer Opens Hearts to LSG Ministry

Providing office space for the Augusta FACES office of Lutheran Services of Georgia has fostered a special relationship between Our Redeemer Lutheran-Augusta and the agency, with both groups working together to bring about hope, healing and strength for those in the area.

FACES – Facilitating, Advocacy, Care, Education and Shelter – focuses on programs for people with developmental disabilities. The goal of the outreach is to keep adults, adolescents and children with disabilities in their communities.

Our Redeemer has been “very welcoming to LSG from the beginning, making LSG’s staff feel like a part of the administrative staff of the church,” said agency representatives.

Our Redeemer’s church bulletin includes LSG staff names as part of the administration staff, and the congregation has welcomed the individuals that LSG serves. Congregation members have helped in making LSG’s clients lives better, especially around the holidays, by providing them with gifts at Christmas time and baskets for Easter. Our Redeemer has also allowed the LSG staff to use its classroom space for training programs and meetings.

According to Our Redeemer’s Pastor Roger Schwartz, the collaboration with LSG has helped both parties better serve the needs of the community.

“We’re very happy to have them because they’re not just a voice on the phone, but actually a real-life presence,” he elaborated. “We view our support of them as an extension of our mission to the community, and continue to learn from each other and lean on each other.” ■

Stirring the Pot to Connect People to Jesus

Members of Hope-Plant City in mid-February hosted the 18th Annual Whole Hog Sausage Supper, an annual event featuring fresh whole hog sausage, homemade mashed potatoes, corn, green beans, sauerkraut, slaw, biscuit, gravy and dessert.

Among the 447 diners this year were area firefighters who received complimentary tickets in appreciation for their service to the community.

“This year was a great opportunity for us to once again put legs on our congregation’s mission statement of Connecting People to Jesus,” said dinner co-chair Mark Stefanos.



“We look forward to these events as moments that God gives us to invite people to our campus and share the joy we have in our Lord.”

Following congregational custom, 10% of the proceeds will benefit Hope’s mission work. This year the funds were designated to Hope volunteers who make quilts for the Pregnancy Center of Plant City and have made quilts for Haiti earthquake relief, Migrant Ministries and Lutheran World Relief. ■

At left — Stirring one of the many pots of fresh homemade gravy is Whole Hog Sausage Supper co-chair Hal Anklam.



GRACE-WINTER HAVEN, FL, family, friends, pastors, vicar and church staff were part of a joyous birthday celebration for church members over 90 years of age. The celebration included a rendition of the birthday song by Grace School third grade students as well as words of welcome and congratulations from Pastor Jonathan Frusti. Comments from each of the attendees resonated with appreciation for their church family. Birthday celebrants attending the festivities were Florence Bringe, Ken Cumming, Raymond Flanagan, Jane Freitag, Ruth Gallagher, Rose Johansson, Bill Grubbs, Herschel Melvin, Dorothy Noelle, Earl Parker, Gerald Pohl, Beatrice Salow, Louise Schutt and Donald Strickland. There were several other members of this elite club who were unable to attend. ■

Redeemer Garden Impacts Those in Need

The Garden at Lutheran Church of The Redeemer-Sanford is beginning its second spring season as requested by many community members.

According to the congregation’s communications manager Norma J. Powell, the ministry was originally created to build relationships between church family members and their neighbors as well as to provide a source of fresh vegetables to the needy of our community. The Garden has supplied produce to the Christian Sharing Center, the Rescue Outreach Mission and Lion of Judah, organizations that either

feed or supply food directly to the needy.

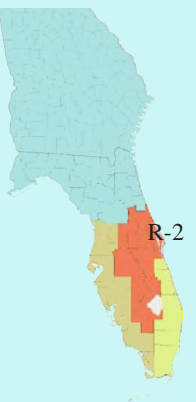
“Hundreds and hundreds of pounds of fresh vegetables have been donated thus far,” Powell reported.

More information is available at The Garden at Lutheran Church of The Redeemer on facebook. ■



REGION 2 NEWS

Region 2 is the only one to share borders with the District’s other three regions as well as with the Atlantic Ocean. Representing Region 2 on the District Board of Directors are Rev. Brian Kneser, pastor of Woodlands Lutheran Church, Montverde, FL; Karen Smith, a member of Peace-Okeechobee, FL; and Jon Brazee, a member of Christ Lutheran-Cape Canaveral, FL.





VALENTINE'S DAY was a good day for a pastors' meeting in Southwest Florida. Sixteen pastors attend the circuit Winkel on February 14 at Grace Lutheran-Naples – one of the largest meetings in months. Shown here are (front, l-r) Karl Petzke (retired-attends Zion-Fort Myers), Jim Eggert (Zion-Fort Myers), Fred Kohler (recently retired from Christ the King-LaBelle), Jon Zehnder (St. Michaels-Fort Myers), Carl Zahrte (retired-attends Marco-Marco Island), Mark Gaertner (retired-attends St. Michaels-Fort Myers).

(back, l-r) Darrell Stuehrenberg (Bethlehem-Fort Myers), Kevin Koenig (Marco-Marco Island), Robert Selle (Amigos in Cristo-SW FL Circuit), Aaron Nuegebauer (Beautiful Savior-Lehigh Acres), Paul Koepchen (retired-attends Zion-Fort Myers), Keith Lingsch (Grace-Naples), Nick Moskovites (Christ the King-LaBelle), Jerry Lawson (Good Shepherd-North Fort Myers), Dennis Lebich (Peace-Naples), Richard Browning (Hope-Bonita Springs). The Circuit Counselor area is Rev. Jon Zehnder, pastor of St. Michael Lutheran-Fort Myers.

Forest Oaks Installs New Leaders

Forest Oaks Lutheran-Spring Hill Pastor Glenn Fischer installed members of the church council during the February 5 worship.

Installed were Stan Benmore, President; Russ Norris, Vice President (and Properties Chairman); Gerry Ellis, Evangelism Ministry; Lonnie Benmore, Church Life Ministry; Ed Wright, Head Elder; Judy Ward, Congregational Secretary; Anne Porter and Kathy Roberts, Christian Education Ministry.

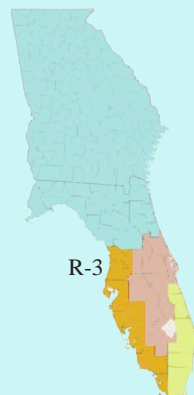
The congregation recently started the "Blessings in a Backpack" with People Helping People in Hernando County to help assist in feeding young school children over the weekends. Other outreach programs already active at the church include the quilting group, which furnishes quilts for the Dawn Center, the Body and Soul Food Ministry.



A new fundraiser was just coordinated by the women's group to assist the Body and Soul Food Pantry: a Strawberry Festival. For just \$10 per person, participants enjoyed homemade strawberry shortcake followed by a Christian movie. Children under the age of 18 were admitted at no cost. ■

REGION 3 NEWS

Region 3 covers the lower southwestern sector of Florida, with much of its area bordering the Gulf of Mexico. Representing Region 3 on the District Board of Directors are Rev. Jim Guelzow, pastor of Messiah-Tampa, FL; Jeff Richards, a member of Hope Lutheran-Bradenton, FL; and Maggie Bowles, a member of Peace-Naples, FL.



Messiah Ministry Designed to Wake the Dead

Members of Messiah Lutheran-Tampa come together each Thursday night to Wake the Dead.

This ministry offers members a weekly opportunity to come together for fellowship, study, worship and service.

The first Thursday of the month is a pot luck dinner. Messiah members come together as a family to dine for fellowship.



On the second Thursday of the month, Messiah members come together for an in-depth Round Table-Bible Study.

The third Thursday of the month is all about worship as Christian music artists share during worship. Messiah Pastor Scott Burmiester shares a brief message.

On the fourth Thursday of every month, Messiah members go out into the community to help service others at the Hyde Park Hot Meal For the Homeless. ■



ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
– On Sunday, March 25, Bethlehem-Fort Myers celebrated the 63rd wedding anniversary of Arlene and Ronald Mueller. The celebration, which was three days in advance of the actual anniversary date, included an after-service reception. The Muellers provided the altar flowers for the worship service.

REGION 4 NEWS

District Teacher Celebrates Milestone

Monika Walcheski of St. Paul-Boca Raton was honored recently on her 25th anniversary as a teacher in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod's Florida-Georgia District.

A graduate of St. John's College-Winfield, KS, Walcheski taught at St. Matthew's-Miami from 1987-1989 and at Faith-Fort Lauderdale from 1989-1990.

When Walcheski and her husband, Jeff (also a longtime St. Paul educator) welcomed son Benjamin in 1990, she planned to "stay home and be a mom," she said. "But St. Paul needed a

teacher's aide for 3-year olds so I stepped in and then became a teacher's aide for two years in the four-year old classroom."

Walcheski moved into the teaching position for pre-Kindergarten four-year-olds in August 1993 and has served at that level since then.

She currently is a cheerleading coach at St. Paul, helps set up events such as Homecoming and Parent's Night, is a member of the Booster Club and serves on the Religion Committee,

which involves setting up curriculum, service projects and worship for the student body.

Once a year she heads a team of volunteers to bake several hundred cinnamon rolls to raise



funds for mission. Most recently the proceeds have been dedicated to flood relief efforts in Minot, ND, where St. Paul congregation has an ongoing outreach effort.

"I am happy to have reached this milestone at St. Paul and to be a part of the family of God where blessings are revealed daily," Walcheski said at her celebration. ■

Pictured above: St. Paul Lutheran School-Boca Raton Principal Dr. Jeff Krempler congratulates Monika Walcheski on her 25th anniversary as an LCMS teacher.

Famine Event Feeds Hungry Children



Youth and their leaders from Our Savior-Plantation joined peers from two area churches for World Vision's 30 Hour Famine event.

The 45 South Florida youth joined students around the globe for the effort. Each year thousands of students do the 30 Hour Famine, learning about hunger and raising funds to help save lives.

The \$3,500 raised by the Our Savior youth and their fellow Famine participants will feed 10 children for a year.

This was the first year that Our Savior participated in the effort. They have already established a goal for 2013: raise \$7,000 to feed 20 children for a year. ■



THE PASSION OF CHRIST – Members of the youth group from St. Paul-Weston once again reenacted the Passion of Christ on Good Friday. The costumed youth traveled to stations of the cross on Good Friday. The event, which was open to the public, was staged at Peace Mound Park.



The Extreme Makeover Team from Redeemer-Stuart recently completed renovations on two houses, working throughout the week and Saturdays as available to help the homeowners finish the projects.

Volunteers spent hours cleaning, painting, repairing, and landscaping at the two homes. And when those efforts were complete, Redeemer members replaced two old chairs, repaired fences, caulked, put down ant and wasp killer, added new mail box numbers, installed new wiper blades and cleaned the headlights on one owner's car, and spread red mulch donated by Redeemer's Board of Outreach.

Each week, Redeemer's volunteers brought all the equipment needed to do the work. The congregation donated \$1000 to the project. ■



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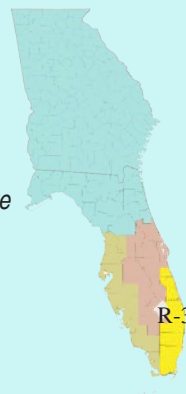
CALL US ABOUT OUR SHORT TERM GUEST HOUSE RENTAL PROGRAM

This 4'x8' stained glass image of Jesus is in the lobby of Lutheran Haven's nursing home.

REGION 4 NEWS

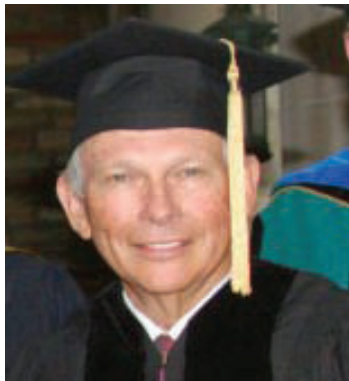
Region 4 covers the lower southeastern sector of Florida, with much of its area stretching along the Atlantic Ocean and down into the Keys.

Representing Region 4 on the District Board of Directors are Rev. Stephen Wiperman, pastor of Our Savior-Lake Worth; Diana Geiger, a member of Trinity Lutheran-Delray Beach; and Nancy Volz, a member of Our Savior-Plantation, FL.



Hubert Temme Honored

Rev. Hubert H. (Hu) Temme is the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary-St. Louis. The honor was bestowed at commencement ceremonies last May.



Now a resident of New Port Richey, FL, Dr. Temme has served in ministry positions around the world. His first call after completing pastoral training was as a missionary to the Australian Aborigines. He then served as a mission planter and pastor of other congregations.

Temme, who was an Australian Army Reserve Chaplain, chaired the Board of Aboriginal Missions. He was also a guest speaker on the *Australian Lutheran Hour*.

After relocating to the United States Temme served as pastor at Trinity Lutheran- Centralia, IL, and Immanuel Lutheran-Baltimore, MD. In 1988, he accepted a call to serve as Vice President of Development from Wheat Ridge Foundation (now known as Wheat Ridge Ministries). He left that position when he accepted a call to Lutheran Church in Hong Kong.

In recent years, Dr. Temme and his wife, June, served as representatives of Concordia Seminary in the advancement division. They have visited with pastors, church workers and donors in Florida and elsewhere to keep the visibility of the Seminary strong and to encourage financial and other support.

Most recently the Temmes were among the workshop leaders at the Florida-Georgia Veterans of the Cross Retreat. ■



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Collected Quarters Feed 575 Kids

As part of their celebration of National Lutheran School Week, Faith-Eustis, FL, students engaged in a coin war to raise funds for Kids Against Hunger.

Four-year-old Oliver Miller brought the coin war flyer home -- and inspired a family mission. Amazed to learn that a quarter would feed a child, Oliver's mother, Melinda Miller, started to ask for donations --- and talked to her son about the effort

One night on the way to a restaurant for a family dinner, Oliver asked his mom is the hungry children had cars.

"I, of course, told him, 'No,' but took the opportunity to talk to him about the homeless and poverty stricken," Mrs. Miller said. "He then asked me to go and pick up all the children so we could give them their quarters and they could go eat with us.

"At that point I knew he understood. After that, our passion grew and we asked everyone we knew to give at least one quarter."

The night before the coin wars contributions were due back at Faith, the Miller family



rolled the quarters and counted how many children would be fed.

"We had collected 575 quarters," reported Mrs. Miller "Oliver could not believe that all

of those children would eat because of our determination.

"When we brought the money to school, I heard him tell his teacher, 'This will feed five hundred seventy-five children!'"

Added Faith Principal Corrine Hoffert, "Wish we could all witness that way!

Kids Against Hunger is a humanitarian food-aid organization whose mission is to significantly reduce the number of hungry children in the USA and to feed starving children throughout the world. Donation bags for the organization have been filled at Faith-Eustis, and the school's sixth grade students have gone to the local KAH facility to help fill bags. ■

THE Back Page