

# LUTHERAN LIFE

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

2017 | Volume 3



*Re-forming*  
LIVING STONES

president's *equip* conference   
September 28-30, 2017 florida *georgia* district

- ✓ **EQUIPPED** with tools.
- ✓ **EMPOWERED** with others.
- ✓ **ENGAGED** in the world.





The Mission of the Florida-Georgia District is to serve, assist, and encourage congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ. People of the Florida-Georgia District are equipped, empowered, engaged in the Master's business ... connecting people to Jesus. *Lutheran LIFE* is the official newsmagazine of the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. *Lutheran LIFE* is designed to inform LCMS church and school members of the activities, personalities and resources offered by the Synod and the District.

*Lutheran LIFE* may also provide a forum for Lutherans to express their views and ideas on a wide range of topics. *Lutheran LIFE* is published bimonthly. News items and photos are encouraged. Please send scanned photos as a .jpg attachment rather than embedded in your emails. Or mail your photo print in a good quality resolution to our address below. Advertising is welcome and encouraged; rates and information are available from *Lutheran LIFE's* office. Changes of address including e-mail changes, additions or deletions should be directed to our office — if possible via e-mail: [LutheranLife@aol.com](mailto:LutheranLife@aol.com)

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## Candidates, Vicars Assigned to District

Both seminaries of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod celebrated call days in April as students received their first pastoral placements, vicarage or deaconess intern assignments.

Coming to the Florida-Georgia District are new pastors:

- ◆ Stephen Fair, called to Our Redeemer/Lake City, FL;
- ◆ Doug Hudson, called to Trinity/Albany, GA;
- ◆ Kevin Ray, called to Redeemer/Stuart, FL;
- ◆ Joseph Warnke, called to Christ Our Savior/Griffin, GA

Serving in District congregations for their vicarages will be:

- ◆ James Ebersole, First Lutheran/Gainesville, FL;
- ◆ Nathan McCarty, Bethlehem/Jacksonville Beach, FL;
- ◆ Paul Radke, Grace/Winter Haven, FL;
- ◆ Timothy Smith, St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL;
- ◆ Bradley Wellik, Mount Calvary/Warner Robins, GA.

"This week we celebrate a significant achievement in the ongoing preparation of these

servants of Christ," said Concordia Theological Seminary President Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. at the April 24-25 services. "And it is just that, one more step. It underscores something that is true for all of us as servants of our Lord Christ. We are always working, we are always learning more."

"It is a great time to be entering the ministry of our Lord Jesus," Concordia Seminary President Dr. Dale A. Meyer told the students at the April 26 services. "It's because it's a ministry of the Lord Jesus. He is alive. He is raising your generation up as ours recedes. Don't let that go to your head. Let it sink deep down into your heart."

Again this year there were more requests from LCMS congregations for new workers than students available to fill those calls and assignments. Just six years ago, that was not the case. In a discussion with Todd Wilken on the radio program "Issues Etc." in the fall of 2011, LCMS First Vice President Herb Mueller reported that there were more seminary graduates than there were open positions, "and the shortfall has grown over the last several years." ■



Florida-Georgia District President Gregory Walton at Concordia Theological Seminary/Fort Wayne with (l-r) Allison and James Ebersole, Paul and Katelyn Radke. Both men will be serving their vicarages in Florida.

Shown at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis are (front, l-r) Karen Fair, Allie Ray, Erica McCarty, Katherine Warnke, (middle, l-r) Stephen Fair, Kevin Ray, Nathan McCarty, Joseph Warnke, (back, l-r) Bradley Wellik, Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton, Timothy Smith.



## Innovative Program Equips Church Leaders

Launched in the fall of 2014, Emergent Leadership has equipped scores of professional and lay ministry leaders with valuable insights and powerful new skills to expand the impact and reach of those ministries.

Emergent Leadership was developed at the request of Florida-Georgia President Greg Walton as part of the District's commitment to grow healthy leaders, utilizing the best training available from spiritual and behavioral science disciplines. The program was developed and is being taught by a team of respected consultants that includes Kurt Bickel, Les Stroh, Sue Easton and Daryl Pichan.

"We believe 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," said Walton.

"Strong leadership equips congregational leaders with a greater ability to serve and also with the skills necessary to reproduce leaders for sustainability of ministry in the place they current serve."

Walton and his executive team were among the 23 participants to complete the inaugural Emergent Leadership class.

Over the course of ten days split into three sessions, Emergent Leadership training includes peer review and evaluation, cohort accountability groups and skill development practicums. Reading and growth assignments between events reinforce the skills honed by the training.

The most recent Emergent Leadership class completed the 65-hour training in May. ■

In photo upper right — Kurt Bickel (lower left) and Les Stroh (lower right) with members of the 2017 Emergent Leadership class.

**DISTRICT CALENDAR**  
IS PAGE 31 THIS ISSUE



## DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

### Calling Congregations

Faith/Dunedin, FL..... Sole Pastor  
Faith/Hialeah, FL..... Sole Pastor  
Lake Oconee/Lake Oconee, GA..... Sole Pastor  
Holy Trinity/Lutz, FL ..... Sole Pastor  
Marco/Marco Island, FL ..... Associate Pastor  
Woodlands/Montverde, FL..... Associate Pastor  
Christ the King/Orlando, FL ..... Sole Pastor  
Live UCF/Orlando, FL ..... Campus Pastor  
Trinity/Orlando, FL..... Senior Pastor  
St Paul/Peachtree City, GA..... Senior Pastor  
Our Savior/Plantation, FL..... Sole Pastor  
Rivercliff/Sandy Springs, GA ..... Associate Pastor  
Beautiful Savior/Sarasota, FL ..... Associate Pastor  
Trinity/Toccoa, GA..... Sole Pastor  
Lakeside/Venice, FL..... Associate Pastor  
Redeemer/Vero Beach, FL ..... Sole Pastor

### Calls Issued

Faith/Dunedin, FL  
Rev. Andrew Sorenson as Sole Pastor  
Faith/Hialeah, FL  
Rev. Arelio Magarino as Sole Pastor  
Holy Trinity/Lutz, FL  
Rev. James Krach as Sole Pastor  
Lakeside/Venice, FL  
Rev. Timothy Eden as Associate Pastor

### Calls Accepted

Grace/Arcadia, FL  
Vicar Anthony Arias as Sole Pastor  
Our Savior/Griffin, GA  
Pastor Elect - Joseph Warnke as Sole Pastor  
Our Redeemer/Lake City, FL  
Pastor Elect - Stephen Fair as Sole Pastor  
Redeemer/Stuart, FL  
Associate Pastor Elect - Kevin Ray Associate Pastor

### Calls Declined

Holy Trinity/Lutz, FL  
Rev. David Faulkner as Sole Pastor  
Lakeside/Venice, FL  
Rev. Brady Finner as Associate Pastor  
Lakeside/Venice, FL  
Rev. Timothy Eden as Associate Pastor

### Transferred to Other Districts

Ms. Kristine K DeBoer..... Michigan (C)  
Mrs. Becky Nelson ..... Nebraska (C)  
Rev. John R Hopkins..... Atlantic (O)  
Rev. Victor J Belton..... Atlantic (O)  
Rev. Billy A Brath..... Missouri (O)  
Ms. Molly E Millard ..... Pacific Southwest (C)  
Ms. Emily Abraham ..... Michigan (C)  
Mr. Caleb JG Abraham ..... Michigan (C)

### Church Changes

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer  
Melbourne, FL *Disbanded*

### Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Rev Karl E Galik, Pastor  
Peace/Naples, FL (O)  
Ms. Elizabeth L Borth, Deaconess  
Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries/Sanford, FL (C)  
Mr. Timothy D Richter, DCE  
Zion/Fort Myers, FL (C)

### Change of Status within the District

Mr. Arthur Swett from Active to Emeritus (C)  
Rev. Ken Fuehler from Active to Emeritus (O)  
Mr. Arthur Swett from Active to Emeritus (C)  
Rev. Eugenio Flor from Candidate to Emeritus (O)  
Mr. Steven W Durheim from Active to Candidate (C)  
Ms. Cynthia Y Tillmann from Active to Candidate (C)  
Rev. Brett N Snider from Active to Candidate (C)

### Called to Glory

Rev. Walter "Mike" Busby (O)



In this 500th Anniversary year of the Reformation, as we commemorate our Lutheran heritage it is wonderful to celebrate with our Synod that it's still all about Jesus. As Lutheran Christians we have so much for which to be thankful.

One of the many things we rejoice in is what Luther called the priesthood of all believers, his teaching that all Christians share Christ's priestly activity by bringing the Gospel to all people. It's the privilege and responsibility of all the baptized to serve Jesus and His people in ministry for the sake of the Gospel. It was not to be reserved only for the clerics.

Luther wrote in "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," *Since those who exercise secular authority have been baptized with the same baptism, and have the same faith and the same gospel as the rest of us, we must admit that they are priests and bishops and we must regard their office as one which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community. For whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, although of course it is not seemly that just anybody should exercise such office. Because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and take it upon himself, without our consent and election, to do that for which we all have equal authority...* [Luther, M. (1999). Luther's works, vol. 44: *The Christian in Society* I. (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 44, p. 129). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.]

The concept of a universal priesthood isn't unique to Luther. In Exodus 19:5-6 we read, 'Now therefore,

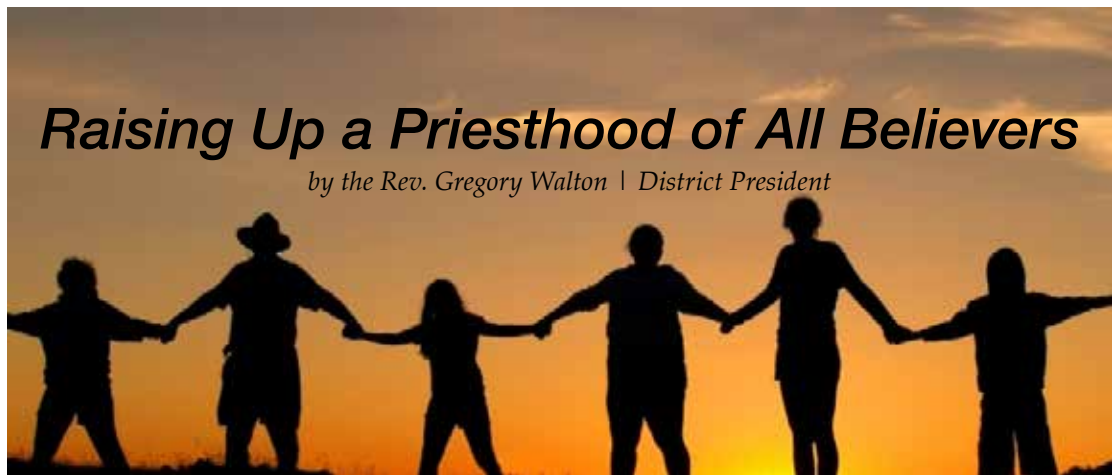
*if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. (ESV)

This was directed to the whole nation of Israel, followers of Yahweh, who would be a kingdom of priests. This wasn't simply based on nationality, but predicated on listening and obeying the voice of God and keeping His covenant.

Through Jesus we are God's treasured possession, not because we've listened well enough or kept God's covenants, but solely through the blood of Jesus that washes away our sin. Now is the time for all who

the Cornerstone Who holds us all together. This spiritual house is built with a purpose, beginning with offering our living bodies to the One who redeemed us. There is no sacrifice we could make that could begin to match the one Jesus made on our behalf at the Cross. His call to us is to live out our faith in Him in the world around us, in what we say and in the things we do in His name.

Peter goes on, *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.* 1 Peter



believe in Jesus and trust in Him for forgiveness, life and salvation, to rise up and live out their faith as the priesthood of all believers.

When we consider the state of the Church it is easy to see the value, importance and need for the priesthood of all believers. God's Word talks about this in 1 Peter 2:4-5: *As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* (ESV)

Excuse the pun, but I believe this was the bedrock of Luther's teaching. The Holy Spirit is at work as we are built into a spiritual house to be holy priests and servants of our Lord Jesus. He Himself is

2:9-10 (ESV) This is a clear statement of purpose. You and I were chosen by grace, made a royal priesthood — something we could not do on our own, made holy by God's sanctifying Spirit and claimed through baptism as God's very own possessions, precious and with great value, SO THAT we might be proclaimers of all that God has done for us. This is the message we are privileged to proclaim! We are His living stones, shaped to work together for the sake of proclaiming Jesus, having shown us His mercy, love and grace!

We see worship attendance declining, churches closing, younger generations not as interested in the church. I don't think we have a complete picture. Many young people have a deep, abiding faith in Jesus. In some cases, they haven't

experienced the love of Jesus in the local congregation.

I recently spoke with a young couple who shared that they met at church and grew up there, but when they came home after college, there didn't seem to be any "room at the inn." They were welcomed for worship and given offering envelopes, yet when they asked to get involved they were rebuffed. After a few months of hearing that their help wasn't needed, they joined a non-denominational church that put them to work. This couple was looking for meaning and purpose in their faith lives. They wanted to put their faith into practice.

Maybe a reason for a decline in church attendance is failure to empower the laity by challenging them with opportunities to serve. Gone are the days of making a general announcement for help on a Sunday morning. A wise pastor will go to specific individuals for help in certain circumstances. Wise laity will make themselves known and available to their congregation. I have also seen uninspired laity resist opportunities to exercise their faith, even when specifically asked.

At times the Church fails to engage and equip people in ministry. When I began in parish ministry, we elected congregational leaders. People were vying for positions to serve the church. In the last decade or so, I have watched as members are begged to serve, and once they agree, receive no training. One church leader told me they had no one to train as the past three presidents and treasurers quit the congregation after finishing their terms! Perhaps they saw too much turmoil without a biblical plan to manage it. That shouldn't be, not if we are grounded in God's Word and seek the face of Jesus! We need to equip our leaders for ministry so they can rejoice in their place in the priesthood of all believers.

One way we are addressing this is the upcoming President's Equip Conference. It is not unusual for the District to provide professional church worker conferences; Synod insists we do so and that workers

participate. In this celebration year we are including, in a new way, an opportunity for laity to be involved. We are targeting lay men and women to provide practical, strategic workshops to equip them for ministry in Jesus' name. When we do this everyone wins. Professional workers may find re-formed partnerships and additional resources in a trained laity, and the laity will find a renewed sense of purpose and passion in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Together they will have a greater capacity to engage in the Master's business to connect people to Jesus.

The theme for the President's Equip Conference is "Re-Forming Living Stones," based on 1 Peter 2:1-10. We who are made living stones through the blood of Jesus can be re-formed as capable servants who confidently and competently serve, each with a ministry to connect people to Jesus. To do that, we have devised a very simple strategy — provide a time to equip people!

The Equip Conference will be at the Marriott Sawgrass (home of the famous TPC Sawgrass golf course) from Thursday, September 28, through Saturday, September 30. We will be done by noon so everyone should be able to get home for Sunday worship! Early bird registration cost through August 11, including a lunch and a banquet, is \$100 for professional church workers and laity. After this date the rate is \$150 until September 1, when it will be \$200. Register early! (See pages 8-10 of this issue for more details.)

As we want to reach as many lay leaders as possible, the first 200 who sign up have an opportunity to be blessed and be a blessing. You will have the chance to get a \$50 rebate for

your congregation if you stay until the end. The cost will be only \$50 for laity who take advantage of the rebate. The rooms at the Marriott are only \$130 per night, a substantial savings from their normal costs.

What excites me about this

conference is that it's an opportunity for celebrating our ministry in the Florida-Georgia District, where we come together, learn and grow as we network, meet new people and share ideas of how to best serve Jesus. The goal is that pastors and educators bring

laity with them and leave as a more cohesive team, primed for ministry in their community to connect people to Jesus.

In the future, based on feedback from this event, we will plan an annual conference focused on equipping laity for ministry. Additional information about the fall conference is all through this edition of *Lutheran LIFE*. I hope you will make the time to be with us. Your small investment could have a huge payout, not only for you and your ministry, but for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

The future of the Church depends on the laity. Each of us is part of the priesthood of all believers. It was true 500 years ago, it is true today. Join us as we build an army of servants equipped, empowered and engaged to connect people to Jesus!

*I wonder if one of the reasons we continue to see a decline in church attendance is because we have often failed to empower the laity by challenging them with opportunities to serve.*



*It's Still All About Jesus!*  
**GREG**



# Living Stones . . . Being Part of the Lord's Army

by Rev. Douglas Kallesen | Executive Director Missions-Outreach

Easter eggs and bunny rabbits are nothing compared to the EMPTY TOMB where Christ abolished death forever by raising from death to life and announcing His resurrection and our victory to the world! He is risen...He is risen indeed!

This good news changes everything! Christ's love compels us to love others as God has loved us. Simply put, in Christ's church we should have no spectators – but participants!

The apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:4-5 that you have a purpose and calling, "You yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." In God's eternal plan He has work that He has prepared for you. (Eph. 2:10) This calling and purpose is not just for pastors but for all the people of God — all believers, in all walks of life.

Scripture tells us that He is building us up as a spiritual house and the work that you and I do is acceptable to God in Christ. Peter even calls it a "spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God..." The young mother who tends to her infant while praying for her child. The teacher who is a Christian role model in the public school setting. They are using their vocations to glorify God! This is also true of the factory worker, sales clerk, secretary and CEO who see an opportunity in their workplace to serve God and their fellow man.

I do a lot of traveling and sometimes I wonder — what if our pastors could train their members who travel on how they could also be a witness and servant of the Lord? What if these members could see themselves as part of the Lord's army? Could this traveling sales force be trained to see that they are also there to conduct God's business?

There is so much that could happen when we see that God gives us the many opportunities to daily

*What if we could find opportunities to serve others by . . .*



Praying for our waiter or waitress!



Striking up conversation and being a Christian witness on a plane!



Bringing a smile to someone's face in an elevator or standing in a line!



Moving from road rage to road prayer!



Just being a good neighbor!

bless others as His ambassador.

As a pastor of a church, one of the goals I set was to have a person in every pew and a place of importance for every person to serve in. That goal kept me and our congregation focused on outreach and stewardship — using the time and talents of all of our members to God's glory. We saw that each

and every person was a living stone, holy and precious in God's sight. They were a part of a holy priesthood whom God had gathered to serve Him and their fellow man.

That's what the President's Equip Conference is focusing on: helping each of us find how to best use our time and talents to God's glory. I hope to see many of you there! ■

# District Students Complete Lutheran Youth Fellowship Leadership Training

Two students from the Florida-Georgia District recently attended the annual Lutheran Youth Fellowship leadership training.



Michaela Kraft, a junior from St. Paul/Weston, FL, and Austin Schubert, a sophomore from Living Hope/Kennesaw, GA, were

chosen by the District Youth Ministry Council to attend and bring back all that they learned to our District!

They will be presenting their findings to both of their home congregations, the District Youth Ministry Council and at a breakout session at the President's Equip Conference.

Students representing their Districts across the country (and Canada!) attended the four-day training held in St. Louis. The training was facilitated by the Lutheran Youth Fellowship executive team, a group of teens elected by their peers.

Being led by teens really empowered our students to feel like they would be able to do the same in their congregations! The theme for the weekend was "Faith During Times of Transition" and was very powerful in this ever changing society. The experience included video sessions, small group discussions, fellowship and group devotions.

Austin and Michaela developed their leadership skills learning how to write their own devotions and how to use the LYF leadership resources to share with their peers. The goal of the training is for these leadership resources to be used to help teens become leaders in their congregations, give them the tools



by Annalisa Fitzsimons  
Youth and Family Minister  
Living Hope/Kennesaw

they need to mature in their faith and to be able to reach others with the love of Christ.

This is an amazing tool we can be using across the District! To hear more about their experience, attend their breakout session at the President's Equip Conference! ■





In Florida and Georgia we are blessed with 56 colleges and universities of higher education scattered though out our two states. Our campuses, for a few years, become home to our children and grandchildren. They have left home for the first time in their lives. Many decisions, including church and church attendance, will be left up to them. This is also a time where many students may be searching and have questions about their faith.

They have questions. Who will help them sort out the swirling questions and lead them to their answers?

I recently interviewed our campus pastors and several themes came through when we were talking. Rev. Greg Michael of Christus Victor in Athens, GA, talked about how he emphasizes our identity as baptized children of God. He said that this emphasis helps ground the students and shape their identity in Christ. This colors, informs and shapes their life and the paths that they take.

Rev. Dr. John Roth of Thrive in Estero, FL, said that about one-third of the students he meets on

campus have no religious tradition, knowledge or background. He also said that campus life is a challenging place because it is pluralistic; your values and beliefs are going to be challenged. Campus ministry allows students to have a safe place where they can process through all their questions, doubts and faith. The fear is that if students are not connected

connect with students. Students from our Florida-Georgia campus ministries have held moving parties that help befriend a new student, host food and gathering events and some churches have “adopt a student” programs for these freshman. They throw out a big welcome. Pastor Winters also said that during the first 40 days all the habits and routines of campus life will be formed. Connecting is the key.

The question is, will the church be a part of this?

Our Florida-Georgia District promotes and financially supports campus ministry through the tithes and offerings of our congregations. This is a large investment in these young men and

women at a critical time in their lives, and it is also a very important investment for the church. Several of our campus ministries tell of a number of pastors, teachers, DCEs and missionaries who have come through their campus ministry. Each of our campus ministries can tell stories about young men and women who have become leaders in their vocation, churches and communities after graduation.

## District Campus Ministry Helps Develop Future Church Leaders

by Rev. Doug Kallesen

District Executive for Mission & Outreach

that they will adopt another world view void of Christ.

Rev. Jay Winters of University Lutheran in Tallahassee, FL, said timing is everything. He thinks that the first 21 days of a freshman's college life are critical. During this time span the student will likely make connections and friendships that will last their entire time on campus. Orientation is a time that is critical for campus ministries to



Laura Blank



Adam Ellsworth



John Glover



Jay Winters

The Florida-Georgia District supports campus ministries at

- ✓ University of Georgia, Athens / Christus Victor, Rev. Greg Michael
- ✓ Florida State University, Tallahassee / University Lutheran, Rev. Jay Winters
- ✓ University of Florida, Gainesville / First Lutheran, Rev. John Glover
- ✓ University of Central Florida, Orlando / LiveUCF, Laura Blank
- ✓ Florida Gulf Coast University, Estero / Thrive, Rev. John Roth and DCE Phil Klopke

Most of our campus ministries have adopted a town and gown model, meaning that the ministry has membership from the community as well as the college. This allows the congregation a bit more stability without the ebb and flow of students coming and going. It also allows a stronger financial support base. LiveUCF focuses only on students and as a chartered congregation is led entirely by members who are students.

I am pleased to report that each of our campus ministries not only receive funding but also are contributing partners to the mission of the District — connecting more people to Jesus. Most undertake special fundraising events such as selling parking spaces for sporting events, alumni, family and friends as well as Thrivent Action Dollars. The District owns property at University of Georgia in Athens, Florida State University in Tallahassee and Florida Gulf Coast University in Estero.

Most campus ministries offer multiple opportunities to gather weekly with a somewhat similar pattern: Sunday worship, mid-week food, Bible study and perhaps

worship. LiveUCF worships only on Wednesday nights to better serve the students' schedules and needs. Servant events, mission trips, leadership training also occur throughout the year as well as tailgating at university sporting events. In many cases, students also serve in leadership roles in the congregation.

A few offer innovative ideas to connect with students, such as Piety by the Pint where, over a glass of beer, students talk about spiritual thoughts; Bible study or book club in the dorm or off campus.

Outreach Minister Laura Blank of LiveUCF said, “Many of our students enjoy Tuesday Trivia at the Mellow Mushroom. It offers a place for students just to hang out and connect in a fun environment.”

There are several other locations across our District where congregations are informally reaching out to university students such as St. Peter/Dahlonega, GA, and the University of North Georgia and Grace/Atlanta with the students from Emory University, Georgia Tech and Georgia State. Rev. Ellsworth of Grace told me they offer uber rides to students who want to come to church, and that he also tries to take students to lunch midweek. He adds that they want to make inroads into the student's life and connect them to our church, but “I am the only one on staff.”

Former Florida-Georgia District President Gerhard Michael, now serving at St. Peter, plans on showing the Luther Movie on the UNG campus and then hosting follow-up events. This would be part of a larger strategy to connect. Each of these ministries are small, worshipping around 50 or less, but they realize there is an opportunity to reach out

to their students.

Laura Blank summed it up for most of the campus ministry leaders I spoke with: “My greatest joy is in the students, seeing them mature, becoming leaders, growing in their faith and service.”

Churches, students and parents — you can help by going to <http://flgadistrict.org/campus-ministries/> and scrolling to the bottom of this page. This form will allow you to provide helpful information that will put your college students in touch with one of these wonderful campus ministries or a nearby church. I encourage you also to stay in touch with your students with visits, cards, calls and care packages from home.

Together we can make a difference! ■

Rev. Greg Michael (far left) with UGA students



Rev. Doug Kallesen (center) with Thrive/Estero Mission Pastor John Roth (right) and College Minister Phil Klopke (left)



# Registration Opens for Innovative President's Equip Conference

Professional church workers and lay leaders of Florida-Georgia churches and schools are invited to register now for the September 28-30 District President's Equip Conference.

Themed "Re-Forming Living Stones," based on 1 Peter 2:1-10, this innovative three-day event is designed to increase knowledge and skill and to deepen spiritual development of all church leaders – professionals and volunteers.

District President Greg Walton described the Conference as "an opportunity to be equipped for leadership roles in the church."

"We are intentionally targeting lay men and women to provide practical and strategic workshops to equip them for ministry in the name of Jesus," Walton continued. "When we do this everyone wins. Professional workers may find re-formed partnerships and additional resources in a trained laity, and the laity will hopefully find a renewed sense of purpose and passion in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Together they will have a greater capacity to engage in the Master's business to connect people to Jesus."

More than 60 workshops are planned with topics for pastors, principals, DCEs, administrators, teachers from the early childhood level up, lay people serving in all areas of church governance, music and worship leaders. Some workshops are specific in audience, while others

are geared to all Conference participants.

Five nationally known speakers will be addressing the conference. Devotions, regional gatherings and an Equip Mall are also on the agenda, as is an optional early morning prayer walk on Friday and Saturday. The Conference will close by noon on Saturday with a worship event.

The Equip Conference will be at the Sawgrass Marriott in Ponte Vedra Beach where amenities include the TPC Sawgrass golf course, a spa, four pools and a variety of indoor and outdoor dining options. The Conference registration fee will include all event programming; a dessert reception on Thursday; lunch, reception and dinner on Friday.

Registration through August 11 is \$100 per person; \$150 per person August 12-31; \$200 per person September 1 and after. ■

## Laity Rebate Offer

*The first 200 laypersons to register for the President's Equip Conference will receive a \$50 rebate, with congregations eligible for up to \$500 in rebates.*

*Rebate forms will be available at the close of the Conference on Saturday, September 30. Rebates will be processed at the Florida-Georgia District office after the conference and will be issued to all qualifying congregations.*

*Only original rebate forms will be accepted and processed. Photocopies will not be considered.*

Five nationally known speakers will enlighten, inspire and entertain participants at the September 28-30 Florida-Georgia District President's Equip Conference.



**David Farrell** — For more than 20 years, Ferrell has shown audiences that comedy can be clean and funny. Named one of five "Hot Acts in America" by Event Solutions Magazine, his audiences include universities, comedy clubs, civic functions and churches. He is involved in fundraisers for schools, hospitals and non-profit organizations.



**Rev. Dr. Robert Newton** — Prior to assuming office as President of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District in 2003, Newton was senior pastor at First Immanuel/San Jose, CA. He was a professor at Concordia Theological Seminary/Fort Wayne from 1985 to 1998 and from 1977 to 1983 was a missionary to the Kankanaey people in the Philippines.



**Dr. Leopoldo A. Sánchez** — The Krause Professor of Hispanic Ministries at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, Sanchez is associate professor of systematic theology and director of the Center for Hispanic Studies. He was the main drafter for the Synod's CTCR report *Immigrants Among Us: A Lutheran Framework for Addressing Immigration Issues*.



**Dr. Dina Vendetta** — A popular speaker and respected educator, Vendetta is Principal of St. John's Lutheran School/Dover, DE. She is a graduate of Concordia College New York, earned her master's in education from Towson University and her Doctorate of Education with a concentration in Innovation and Leadership from Wilmington University.



**Rev. Dr. Bill Woolsey** — Now Executive Director of FiveTwo, a network that helps Christian entrepreneurs launch start-ups, Woolsey is the former Senior Pastor of CrossPoint Community Church. His passion is helping sacramental church leaders strategize how to effectively reach the lost in their communities. ■



David Farrell



Robert Newton



Leo Sanchez



Dina Vendetta



Bill Woolsey

# The choice isn't always obvious!



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## President's Equip Conference Workshops Cover Range of Ministry, Leadership Topics

Some 60 workshops are slated for the September 28-30 President's Equip Conference, with topics geared to helping professional and lay volunteer church workers become better equipped to serve their God and their Church.

Presenters include members of the Florida-Georgia staff; professional church workers and laity from District churches and schools; and Lutheran leaders from around the Synod. Five workshop sessions are planned during the Conference's three days.

### For Professional Church Workers

- ◆ Flooding Children to Life / Exploration of best baptismal practices
- ◆ Worship Beyond the Benediction / Carrying the worship theme into the week
- ◆ Church & School Kingdom Teamwork / Getting baptism talks into school family homes
- ◆ Partnering with Parents: Working Together to Help Our Children Succeed / "Book Buddies"
- ◆ Equipping Teachers for Ministry in the Classrooms & Beyond / Teachers as local missionaries
- ◆ Financial Wellness: Concordia Plan Services & You / Re-forming thoughts on money
- ◆ Classroom Literature & Writing Skills Through Under the Bridge to the Seeds of Light / Based on Christian fantasy novel
- ◆ Worship in a Blender! / Practical & spiritual aspects of blended worship
- ◆ Bridging Church & School Relationships through Athletic Ministry / Bridging the divide with sports program
- ◆ Turning Volunteers into Partners / Recruiting, leading & supporting volunteers
- ◆ Moral Injury & Healing of the Soul: An Existential & Spiritual Crisis at the Juncture of Our Moral Limits / Understanding PTSD

- ◆ PLAY – Pathway to Learning & Academic Yearning / Early childhood classrooms strategies
- ◆ Teaching with Interactive Notebooks / Setting up & using this system in the classroom
- ◆ Exploring the Pastor's Role in Equipping the Whole Priesthood for its Service & Witness in the World / Life in the family, workplace, community
- ◆ Princesses, Knights & Special Events for Families / Reaching church, school & community families
- ◆ An Hour of Code: Facets of a Comprehensive Computer Curriculum / Preparing students to be tech savvy
- ◆ Student-Led Chapel / How to use students to lead school chapel
- ◆ Differentiating reading instruction for early readers / Techniques to encourage reading success

### For Lay Volunteers

- ◆ A Simple Tool to Help Churches Teach Children How to Grow & Go in Christ / Empowering youth to grow in faith
- ◆ Greeter/Usher Ministry / How to establish key volunteer ministries
- ◆ You're the Church Treasurer ... Now what? / Insights for first-time & seasoned church treasurers
- ◆ I once WAS lost / Young millennials & thresholds crossed in becoming a believer
- ◆ PRAYER: Putting the horse before the cart / Biblical teaching on prayer, praying together in group setting
- ◆ The Art of a Financial Review / How to set up & perform a review of the "books"

### For All Attendees

- ◆ Anxiety in Children / Symptoms & how to respond
- ◆ Plan It Right: Meetings & Special Events / Efficient & effective event & meeting planning

- ◆ Empowered by Staying Strong / Small group bodyweight training workout
- ◆ Reaching People in Your Culture / Connecting & engaging with people in changing culture
- ◆ Decline of the Church & what to do about it / Overview of recent study & ideas on connecting to the community
- ◆ Cultivating Youth Leaders / Interactive look at Lutheran Youth Fellowship resources
- ◆ God's Care in Times of Crisis / Preparing for crisis situations on campus & in community
- ◆ Fundraising in the New Generation / Insights on Crowdfunding
- ◆ Spill Over: Practical ways to strengthen personal relationships & positively impact ministry
- ◆ Empowering Volunteers & Staff to Excellence / Coaching staff & volunteers to excellence
- ◆ Christ-like Communication at a Moment's Notice / Making a Christ-like impression as representatives of the Church
- ◆ Church Planting in Mission Field USA / Planting a church in Florida & Georgia
- ◆ Timeless vs Trends: Understanding Today's Youth / Understanding & interacting with adolescents
- ◆ Emerging Legal Issues affecting our Churches & Schools / Understanding changing legal landscape
- ◆ Intentional Interim Ministry / Advantages of intentional interim ministry for congregations
- ◆ Creative Help for Uncreative People / Discovering creative gifts & using them for the Kingdom
- ◆ LWML & Beyooooond / Women's ministry in the congregation
- ◆ The Case for Life – A persuasive pro-life apologetic / Pro-life training
- ◆ Sharing the Hope of Jesus Christ with the Homeless / Connecting with the homeless

- ◆ The Faith Sharing Compass... Navigating conversations His way / Simple, relational, Biblical framework for sharing the Gospel
- ◆ How to Receive God's Missionaries in America / Hearing the voices & stories of new missionaries
- ◆ You Don't Know the Half of it: DCE Ministry in Full View / The many aspects of DCE ministry
- ◆ Cross & Crescent / Christianity & Islam and evangelizing Muslims
- ◆ Evangelism, is that for Children, too? / Teaching children to become ministry leaders
- ◆ Anxiety in Life & Leadership / Recognizing & responding to anxiety in productive ways
- ◆ Strategic Planning for Dummies / A simple strategic ministry planning process
- ◆ Reigniting Your Church & Community / Engage, impact & transform your local parish community
- ◆ Your Youth Minister is sitting in your pew / How to start or restart your youth ministry
- ◆ Finding & Focusing Your Church's Future / A framework for discerning & articulating vision content at right time
- ◆ Social Media for Ministry & Outreach / Detailed social media framework for ministry
- ◆ Next Gen Church / Re-form church culture to disciple the next generation & beyond
- ◆ Master Plan for Outreach / Necessary ingredients for successful outreach
- ◆ Fabulous & Faithful Family Nights / Engaging school & youth families with church worship life
- ◆ Lutheran Hour Prayer Tools for Sharing Your Faith
- ◆ Being a Steward of His Resources / Practical stewardship of all ministry real estate

"That's ok, she's a volunteer. You can't expect much. She's pretty busy with her job and family."

"I'm a volunteer. I don't have time to do a good job, and I don't get paid for it, so what do you expect?"

How often have you heard, or said, a similar statement at church or in your small group? I confess to saying or thinking something very similar in the years I have served on church committees, taught Sunday School or volunteered in other capacities.

But when I heard the statement recently it sounded incomplete. Volunteering didn't seem to be enough.

Where would churches be without volunteers? If we use only paid staff, there is the fear that the church will become too much like a business and less like a place where people serve Jesus. Most churches cannot afford to pay people to do everything. We know they cannot operate without volunteers.

How then do we understand volunteering? While volunteer is not found in the Bible words such as servant, disciple, calling and helper are. In Genesis chapter 2, God saw that Adam did not have a "helper" among the animals and so He created Eve. Adam needed another human to help him, and that need has not faded since creation.

Paul mentions many helpers in his letters to the churches, including Timothy, Silas, Mark, Luke, Aquila and Priscilla — all who traveled worked with him establishing and strengthening the early Christian churches. In Romans 16, Paul mentions at least 18 people by name and acknowledges several

## Just a Volunteer

by Karen Cerny | Faith Lutheran Church | Marietta, Georgia

households of fellow workers who served the Lord with him.

Each of us needs help and a helper, or many helpers. Some things cannot be done alone, nor should they be. Willing people are used by

God to fulfill the mission Christ gave us at His ascension.

That concept of helping, or serving, is woven into other verses throughout the Old and New Testaments. Doing a word search in The New Strong's Concordance finds serve, servant and variations of both listed over nearly two pages.

These Bible passages instruct and demonstrate how to serve first God, and then each other.

Perhaps a favorite personal verse that addresses this is, *Serve the Lord with gladness*, (Psalm 100:2); or *...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*. (Joshua 24:15) There also is, *Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men: knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve*. (Col 3:24)

What is the difference between being a volunteer and being a servant? We need people to do things in our churches and many people are willing. If calling it volunteering

gets the job done, then that's fine, right? Yet if there is a distinction between volunteer and servant, we will inevitably be led to a deeper examination of our Christian walk.

One way to approach this is that the two are not separate concepts.



They are tied together by two actions: the volunteering, which is saying, "I'll do it," and the act of serving. To take this second step we must examine the motivation of our heart, our mindset about why we serve — not volunteer — to lead a class or arrange the banquet or fill a vacant committee spot. In other words, not just getting the job done. The job does need to be done; however, doing it with the mind and heart of a servant who is obeying and giving all of ourselves to a master (Christ), instills the desire to "do it as for the Lord."

The ultimate example, the one that drives us to first volunteer and then to serve, is the one Christ gave us. When answering James and John, who wanted to sit on either side of Him in His glory, Christ described to His disciples what serving truly means. *Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all*. (Mark 10:43-44)

Jesus doesn't stop with what they must do, and as always, He never expects more of us than He is willing to do Himself. He sets the example by telling them how He will serve all of mankind in verse

45: *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many*. He gave His life for us. Serving, helping, volunteering, is not an option. It is a command. Looking out for our own interests takes us away from Christ. Sacrificing our self-interests by serving draws us to Him.

The next time we are tempted to say no to the opportunity to volunteer, let us instead open our hearts to Christ and let Him use our gifts and talents as instruments in His hands. Say "I'll volunteer," and then go and serve. ■

**TO TRY AND OPERATE WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF VOLUNTEERS IS A SUICIDE MISSION FOR CHURCH STAFFS. IN CHURCHES ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, THE VOLUNTEER MODEL OF MINISTRY HAS BEEN USED TO DO SOME WONDERFUL THINGS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. IF ONLY IT WERE BIBLICAL.**



We have little comprehension of how it would feel to be present at a Palm Sunday worship service when a Muslim jihadist blows himself, up killing dozens of fellow worshippers. This past Palm Sunday jihadists blew up two churches in Tantra and Alexandria, Egypt, killing 49 worshippers and wounding dozens. Few of us have any contacts or link with events like this.

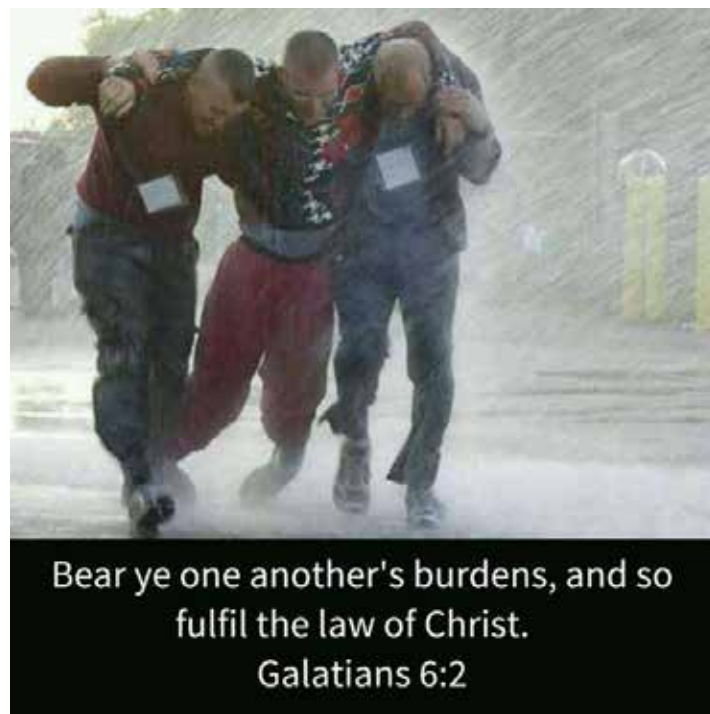
However, a group assembled at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church/Orlando, on April 22 for an authentic Egyptian dinner had the privilege to connect indirectly with persecuted Christians through a presentation by Rev. Ashraf Ibrahim, leader of the Lift Your Eyes ministry. Rev. Ibrahim had recently returned from a mission trip to Egypt.

The dinner, which was sponsored by Burning Bush Ministries, was a fundraiser for Lift Your Eyes ministry which provides aid and encouragement to Christians in Egypt who suffer daily persecution of varying types within this Muslim-dominated country. Rev. Ibrahim spoke soberly and with passion about the persecuted Christians he met and helped in this Muslim-dominated nation.

## Connecting with the Persecuted Church



Prince of Peace Pastor Ken Green (second from left in line) and parishioners enjoy authentic Egyptian food. The dinner was sponsored by Burning Bush Ministries.



## WHY WE SHOULD CARE

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

Born and educated in Egypt, he recounted a personal experience with a professor in an Egyptian college who pressed him for his full name in order to determine his religion. Finally the professor said, "You are Christian aren't you?" After replying "Yes" the professor told Ashraf, "You won't graduate this year." He didn't, and had to remain in school for an additional year.

The evening at Prince of Peace featured a delicious authentic Egyptian meal, including pita bread, salad, baba ghanoush, chicken, rice and oven roasted potatoes.

Rev. Ibrahim spoke of the grief that he shared with persecuted Christians, crying and praying with those who had lost loved ones. On his recent mission trip he also visited underground churches in five of the Gulf states.

Last year Prince of Peace had also affirmed its commitment to cross cultural outreach by hosting a Pakistani dinner, and hearing about the persecution of our brothers and sisters in Christ in Pakistan, another Muslim-dominated nation.

If any of you wish to connect with a ministry of mercy to the persecuted Christians of Egypt, you may reach Rev. Ashraf Ibrahim at [lift\\_youreyes@yahoo.com](mailto:lift_youreyes@yahoo.com). His website is [www.Liftyoureyes.org](http://www.Liftyoureyes.org) ■

The challenge is real. There are vacancies on the council, on the boards, on the committees. People are reluctant to take any of those open spots. You tell about the opportunity. You talk about what the job requires but still you end up with no one wanting to step up.

What's going on?

First, let's admit that it feels like a risk for a volunteer to step into a role with which they are not familiar. "That's silly" you say. No, it is real. No one wants to be embarrassed in front of their friends or their pastor where they come to worship God.

Second, there is a real shift from "marathon runners" to "sprinters." Alan Klaas pointed this out years ago. For example, it used to be that it was normal for people to start teaching Sunday School as a young adult and keep doing it until they were well up in years...decades of service!

Now the young adults and young families are much more willing to serve as "sprinters" who take on short tasks for short periods of time. They would be willing to jump in and promote the Christmas benevolence ministry which lasts about six to eight weeks but not sit on that board or committee for the two- to three-year term.

Third, people are becoming more discriminating how they serve. They want to make a difference and not just attend meetings.

So what to do? How can we fill the vacancies, increase the number of volunteers and get people to do things around here? The coaching leader asks: what is your starting place?

If you start with the vacancy and try to see who can fit you will have a hard time. Yet what if you changed your starting place from the vacancy to the people?

The Bible says the body of Christ is filled with gifted people. Why not start with them? No, we are not talking about

a spiritual gift inventory. That's often hard to translate into concrete volunteering and gets lost in a file.

Rather what if each person, who is valued by God, experiences real care for their spiritual life through an interview process and coaching to find the right fit for them?

What does that look like? Not a catch them at church thing or a

quick phone call. It is a sit down appointment at a coffee shop or a kitchen table. It is a serious, prayer filled conversation about their hopes, their dreams of their relationship with God. It is an examination of what God is doing in their life and what difference they can make that God may have put on their hearts. It is asking how they would like to serve other people and serve God. It is asking how you can help and how you can pray for them. It is then closing your eyes and doing it right then and there.

Change the starting place and change your church. ■



## The COACHING LEADER

by Rev. Scott Gress  
Lutheran Counseling Services  
Leadership Coach

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

## What's Your Starting Place?



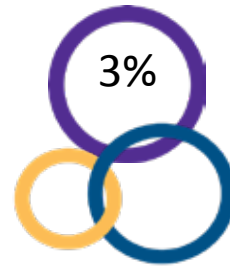


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- >Offer available for a limited time only



# What can LCEF do for you?

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- Gift Planning, Christian Legacy, Estate Planning

## LOANS:

- Buildings, but could be new ministry project
- Rostered Church Worker (RCW) Loans
- Church Improvement Loan

## MINISTRY SUPPORT:

- VisionPath
- Capital Funding Services, Consecrated Stewards, Laborers for Christ
- **FREE:** Architectural Advisory Committee, Demographics, Joyful Response

## TEAM:

- ◇ Daniel J. Reichard, District VP LCEF [dreichard@flgadistrict.org](mailto:dreichard@flgadistrict.org)
- ◇ Laura Zirbel, Loan Consultant, [lzirbel@flgadistrict.org](mailto:lzirbel@flgadistrict.org)
- ◇ Debbie Talbot, Adm. Asst. , [dtalbot@flgadistrict.org](mailto:dtalbot@flgadistrict.org) (877) 457-5556 x4
- ◇ Facebook: LCEF Florida Georgia District
- ◇ Twitter: @LCEFDanR
- ◇ District Website: [flgadistrict.org](http://flgadistrict.org)
- St. Louis: (800) 843-5233 Website: [lcef.org](http://lcef.org)
- LCEF Congregation Advocate: LCEF is looking for an enthusiastic, ministry





# FLORIDAGEORGIA

## REGIONAL NEWS

*Out and About in the  
Florida-Georgia District*

### Belton Farewell Service a Celebration of Ministry and Love

Members and friends of Peace/Decatur gathered on Sunday, April 30, for worship on the final day of Rev. Dr. Victor J. Belton's time as pastor of the congregation. He is now serving Concordia College New York as Vice President of Leadership and Campus Pastor.

"We had a wonderful celebration of ministry and love with many friends from the community, legislature, partners in ministry and our Florida Georgia District President Greg Walton and his lovely wife Edith," Belton said of the April 30 service.

He later noted, "Peace Lutheran Church continues to be very much open for business,



Above — District President Greg Walton with Rev. Dr. Victor Belton, now Vice President of Leadership and Campus Pastor at Concordia College New York.



Left — Rev. Joseph Song of Stepping Stones Mission presenting an appreciation plaque to Rev. Dr. Victor Belton, a longtime supporter and board member for the outreach to the homeless in the Atlanta area.

Holy Ghost anointed, Jesus business. During our closing service we baptized five, get that five children. After service one adult decided he wanted to be baptized as well.

"We had music courtesy of the Homeless Men Choir from our partner Stepping Stone Mission. We had liturgical dance from A Peaceful Reign with some alumni dancers. Best of all we saw the Lord and ate and drank with Him in His supper. Open for business? Yes! Still serving Jesus? Yes! Still engaging community in the garden? Yes! Encouraging people in love for Jesus and in pursuit of the REALITY of the Father." ■



ELIZABETH "LIZZIE" COMFORT DOG of Trinity/Savannah was among those bidding farewell to Rev. John Hopkins and his family before they traveled to their new call in Hicksville, NY. Lizzie is Trinity's comfort dog to be the bridge to aid the congregation in providing mercy, compassion, presence and proclamation of Jesus Christ to the community and people who are hurting or are in need of some comforting. Hopkins was one of the Trinity members who completed training with Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Comfort Dogs when the congregation brought Lizzie into its ministry program. ■

### Academy Opens on Living Hope Campus

Mt. Elizabeth Academy is opening on the campus of Living Hope/Kennesaw in July. Living Hope already operates a School of Fine Arts with vocal, instrument and art lessons.

Founded and operated by lifelong professional educators Rob and Ann Godley, Mt. Elizabeth Academy offers a preschool curriculum designed to prepare "students to excel as young leaders of tomorrow," combining a custom designed curriculum with childcare services. The curriculum is tailored to student's individual needs, incorporating elements of fine arts, science and faith.

The after-school program features tutoring, music lessons, sports, theater and more.

Living Hope offers a variety of ministry programs, including middle and high school youth, family and small groups. The church is led by Pastor John Schubert, who accepted the call to Living Hope in fall of 2010. ■



Living Hope Pastor John Schubert and Director of Children's and Family Ministry Joy Schubert (left of banner) with Mt. Elizabeth founders and directors Annand Rob Godley (right of banner)

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, May 21, was a day of celebration at Our Redeemer/Augusta as four young people were confirmed into their Christian faith during worship by Pastor Roger Schwartz. Confirmands Rhys Bender, Olivia Morris, Miles Williams and Dmitri Bender (l-r in photo to the right) presented their faith stories to the congregation during the service before the Rite of Confirmation and First Communion. The four were guests of honor at a cake reception hosted by the congregation. ■



EIGHTH GRADERS from Faith/Marietta took a class trip to Washington, DC, in May. On the agenda were visits to national monuments and landmarks as well as the opportunity to be greeted by Vice President Mike Pence.



### REGION 1



Vice President:

David Brighton

Mount Calvary/Warner Robbins

Laity Board Members:

Jay Wendland | Living Faith/Cumming

Robert Chambers | Grace/Atlanta

Commissioned Minister Board Member:

Tamie Worthington | St Paul/Peachtree City

NE Georgia Circuit Visitor:

David Wesche | All Saints/Blairsville

Atlanta N Circuit Visitor:

Jeffrey Jordan | Rivercliff/Atlanta

Atlanta S Circuit Visitor:

Larry Townsend | Christ Our Savior/Hampton

E Central Georgia Circuit Visitor:

Roger Schwartz | Our Redeemer/Augusta





# Trinity/Summerfield Welcomes New Director of Music

Dennis Crowley has joined the ministry team of Trinity/Summerfield as Director of Music/Organist.

A native of Brooklyn, NY, Crowley began piano lessons at the age of five. He learned to play the organ in college at St. Bonaventure University/Olean, NY. After college graduation, he taught high school.

Crowley for years served as music director/organist for various churches, including Family of Life/Tampa Palms, FL.

Earlier this year, the LWML of Trinity presented a check for \$1,600 to the Fisher House, a “home away from home” for families of veterans receiving treatment at major military and VA medical centers. Fisher House offers free temporary lodging for families so they can be near their loved ones.

Trinity hosted a baked spaghetti luncheon and charity auction to benefit Fisher House. ■



Trinity LWML President Robbie Myers and Lori Yahr in March of this year presented a check to Patricia Fabiani, Executive Director of the Fisher House (center).



## Easter Celebration!

— Bethlehem Church & Preschool/Jacksonville Beach began celebrating Easter Sunday with a sunrise service, followed by breakfast and an egg hunt. Two addition worship services celebrating Jesus’ resurrection completed the day. ■



## Moving On Up!

Graduation ceremonies marked the end of the school year for members of the four-year-old class at Epiphany Preschool/Tallahassee. These graduates are off to kindergarten in the fall. A nationally accredited, Christian school dedicated to serving children and parents of the greater Tallahassee community, Epiphany offers infant, wobblers, toddlers, 2-year, 3-year and 4-year (VPK) classes. ■



## Ocala Alive With The Sound of Music!

Members of the Saints on Stage drama team of St. John Lutheran School/Ocala brought the “Sound of Music” to life with performances from April 20-22. Saints on Stage is an educational theater program for youth in grades 3 through 12 at St. John School. Founded in the spring of 2006 by Kim Sandstrom and Susan Egle, Saints on Stage presents musical shows each year. This year’s presentation included a new approach to the presentation of The Lonely Goatherd by showcasing living puppets. ■



LCEF Florida-Georgia  
Congregation Advocate  
Lyle Mueller  
Amazing Grace Oxford



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

Lyle Mueller has been most helpful to the congregation at Amazing Grace Oxford with his knowledge and understanding of how LCEF might be of assistance in various situations: borrowing, building, investing, and other planning activities.

If you would like information on how to become an LCEF Congregation Advocate for your congregation, contact Debbie Talbot at the Florida-Georgia District Office: (800) 857-5556 ext. 4 for Email at: dtalbot@flgadistrict.org



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

## REGION 2



**Vice President:**  
Frank Marshall  
St Paul/Jacksonville

**Board Secretary:**

Jay Winters, University Church  
Student Center/Tallahassee

**Laity Board Members:**

Donald Kaufman | St. John/Ocala  
Lois Schaefer | Amazing Grace/Oxford

**Tallahassee Circuit Visitor:**

Mark Schultz | Epiphany/Tallahassee

**First Coast Circuit Visitor:**

Dana Brones | Bethlehem/Jacksonville

**N Central Florida Circuit Visitor:**

James Rocky | Amazing Grace/Oxford





GEORGEFEST PARADE – “One heart, One Land, One Flag” was the theme for the 2017 Eustis Georgefest Parade. Faith Lutheran’s float was decorated with red, white and blue and a sign that reminded people that 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The float was filled with Faith School students who tossed candy to bystanders. Several of the school faculty and church members walked alongside the float and handed out stickers with information about Faith Church & School. A Thrivent Financial Action Team sponsored the float. ■

## St. Paul/Lakeland Members Help Feed the Need

St. Paul was one of three Lakeland churches participating along with Publix stores in the 2017 Feed the Need program to unify the community against hunger.

Through the combined efforts of the participants, \$38,000 was spent in two Publix stores resulting in food purchases that will make 16,900 meals. Recipients of these meals

include Agape Food Bank, Viste food for seniors and Kids Pack weekend food backpack program.

In May, St. Paul celebrated Confirmation for 13 students. ■



At left — St. Paul Pastor Ron Pennekamp with church member Ron Riggs were among the shoppers for the Feed the Need event.



At right the 2017 Confirmation Class of St. Paul/Lakeland

**D.A.R.E.**



DARE GRADS — Members of the Grace Lutheran School/Winter Haven fifth grade graduated from the D.A.R.E. program in May. Launched in 1983, D.A.R.E. is a comprehensive K-12 education program taught in thousands of schools in America and 52 other countries. D.A.R.E. curricula address drugs, violence, bullying, internet safety, and other high risk circumstances that affect students’ lives. ■

## Trinity/Orlando Students Walk Through Holy Week

The morning of Maundy Thursday 2017 was dedicated to walking three-year-old, VPK and Kindergarten students of Trinity School/Orlando through the events of Holy Week in a way that provided a series of hands-on experiences to connect them to that historic time. More than 160 students participated.

The activities began in the courtyard, where Deaconess Liz Borth prayed with the entire group before moving to the music station. The children moved from classroom to courtyard, from the gym to the hallway, back to classrooms and onto the playground.

Then on Easter Saturday, the experience was repeated for families. The 23 families and children who registered in advance for “The Great Easter Surprise” were joined that morning by another 11 children and 38 adults. All of them walked around campus from station to station, participating in activities that underscored the message of Jesus’ resurrection

This was the second annual Easter station event at Trinity. ■



## Woodlands Launches Operation Barnabas Ministry

Woodlands Church on May 28 celebrated Memorial Day with the launch of its new ministry, Operation Barnabas.

Pre-service events included an honor guard, recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and the showing of a video honoring those who died in service to the United States. Worshipers decorated a special memorial wreath with poppies in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Guest preacher was Chaplain Lt Col US Army (retired) Steve Hokana, Assistant Director for the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces. Also participating in the service were the Lake County Sheriff’s Department Honor Guard along with Jim and Juliet Lushetsky with Bugles Across America.

Started in 2007, the LCMS’ Operation Barnabas ministry works with LCMS congregations to care for reserve chaplains and their families and congregations; train and assist local congregations in the care, support and outreach to all military connected people in their congregations and communities; and serve as a resource to other organizations that provide care to military connected people. ■



CONFIRMATION SUNDAY was May 7 for Hope Church/Plant City. The seven confirmands shared their faith stories and artwork crafted to illustrate their chosen confirmation Bible verses. Shown with Hope Senior Pastor Dean Pfeffer and Associate Pastor Shea Pennington (l-r, back) are confirmands Andrew MacDonald, Jules Kinkead, Joslin Kinkead, Scarlett Gembala, Keaira Griffin, Thomas Goethe, Bryan Greatens. ■

### REGION 3



**Vice President:**  
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**Board Treasurer:**  
Renee Varga | Woodlands/Montverde  
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Katie Abercrombie | Prince of Peace/Orlando  
**Commissioned Minister Board Member:**  
Lois Ford | Faith/Eustis  
**Space Coast Circuit Visitor:**  
Gary Held | Risen Savior/Palm Bay  
**Orlando East Circuit Visitor:**  
Ken Green | Prince of Peace/Orlando  
**Orlando West Circuit Visitor:**  
Milan Weerts | Emeritus/Clermont





**EASTER SUNRISE** worship for Bethlehem/Fort Myers began in the dark. "As we worshiped, we watched the sunrise to the east," said Bethlehem Pastor Darrell Stuehrenberg. "A special thank you to our organist Holly Bell, who celebrated her birthday that day." A full breakfast was served in the Fellowship Hall after the sunrise service. A second Easter worship service was held in the Bethlehem sanctuary.



A group of members from **Our Savior/St. Petersburg** spent time recently in the Holy Land. They are shown in Israel before returning to Florida in mid May.

## St. Michael Wins LBAA National Championship

The boys basketball team of Saint Michael School/Fort Myers recently won its first Lutheran Basketball Association of America (LBAA) Tournament of Champions National Basketball Championship.

The boys basketball team consisted of eighth grade students Alan Cedeno, Javian McCollum, Chase Garrett, Holden Gelinas, Ryan Scharlau, Jake O'Connell, Griffin Purse, Evan Sazama; as well as seventh-grade students Scott Edwards, Preston Heben, Will Wiltshire, Michael McAloose, Connor O'Connell. They were coached by Bob Schaaf.

On February 12, in Ocala, the Saint Michael team defeated St. Luke/Oviedo, 37- 25 to claim the Central Florida Lutheran

Athletic Association Tournament Championship. On February 18, in Oviedo, the Saint Michael boys defeated Advent/Boca Raton, 56-17 to claim their seventh state title.

In March the Saint Michael team played in the LBAA Tournament of Champions. on the campus of Valparaiso University, one of 32 teams competing for the Lutheran middle school title. On March 24, Saint Michael defeated St. Marcus/Milwaukee, 44-26. Later that evening the Florida team defeated Immanuel/Seymour, IN, 40-39.

On Saturday, March 25, Saint Michael prevailed over Rockford Lutheran/Rockford, IL, 51-33. On March 26, Saint Michael defeated

Faith Lutheran /Las Vegas, 38-26 in the semi final of the Tournament. Later that day Saint Michael defeated Salem Lutheran/Tomball, TX, 58-49 for their first ever Boys National Basketball Championship in the Tournament Of Champions.

This is only the fourth time a team from Florida has won the Basketball National Championship since 1990 — and three of those teams were from Saint Michael. Saint Michael boys basketball team has one national victory, and the school's girls teams have won two. ■

*Below — Saint Michael Lutheran School boys basketball team was honored on May 15 by the city for winning the LBAA National Championship!*



## Good Shepherd Display Highlights Luther's Ministry

Almost 40 years ago, Aid Association for Lutherans commissioned Thomas M. Dietrich, Artist Emeritus at Lawrence University in Appleton, to do paintings about the life and times of Dr. Martin Luther. Eight of those paintings were crafted into fine porcelain collector plates that were given as Christmas gifts to AAL District Representatives between 1979 to 1984.

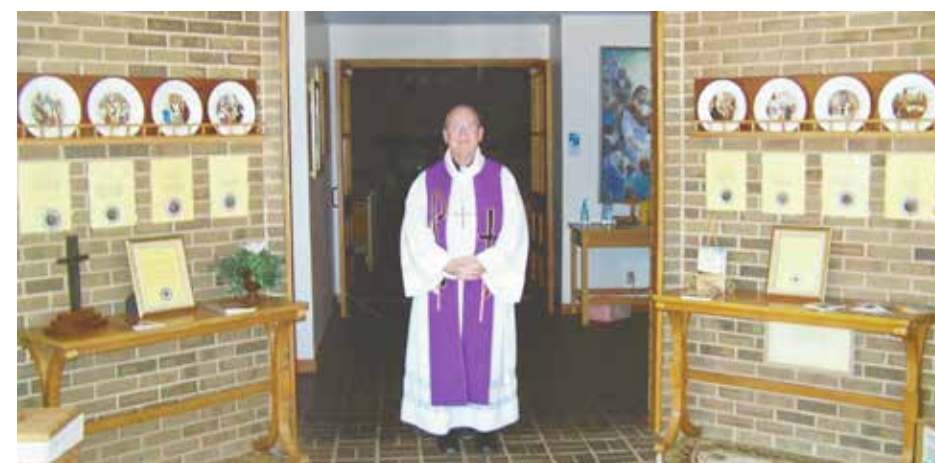
Ronald DeKarske, a member of Good Shepherd Church and School/Sarasota, received a set

of the collector plates upon his 1991 retirement as a District Representative for AAL. They are now displayed at Good Shepherd.

"These plates are especially appropriate during this year, 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation," said DeKarske, who chairs the Good Shepherd Outreach Committee.

Each plate portrays Luther in a different ministerial function which is described on the back. Each plate has a different limited issue amount, ranging from 1,250 to 2,250. ■

*Good Shepherd Pastor Steve Anderson at the church with the display of the Luther collector plates.*



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## REGION 4



**Vice President:**

Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers

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Evita Gonzalez | Beautiful Savior

/Lehigh Acres

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**Suncoast Circuit Visitor:**

David Brockhoff | Holy Trinity/Masaryktown

**St. Petersburg Circuit Visitor:**

Arnold Piering | Emeritus/New Port Richey

**Tampa Circuit Visitor:**

Kevin Yoakum | Christ the King/Riverview

**Sarasota Circuit Visitor:**

Rossetter Leavitt | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota

**SW Circuit Visitor:**

Richard Browning | Hope/Bonita Springs



## Redeemer/Stuart Teams End Year with Multiple Trophies

Redeemer School/Stuart athletes posted various first place wins throughout the 2016-2107 year. Both the boys and girls cross country teams won first place under the direction of Coach Ann Brown, Redeemer's art teacher.

The varsity soccer team, coached by Mike Cilurso and Stacy Le, also won the championship. Redeemer's girls varsity basketball team, coached by Sean McNaughton, came in first place.

And the girls flag football team coached by Rob Hanley won their first championship. ■



## Students Help Lead Worship

Seventh-grade students of St. Paul School/Boca Raton added their voices to the contemporary church service on May 21. They shared the 23rd psalm then led the congregation in singing "Mighty to Save."

Many of the students were part of the cast for the 2017 St. Paul musical presentation of "Sound of Music" on May 19.

A ministry of St. Paul Church, the school provides a Christ-centered

education for students age three through grade eight. Along with daily exploration of God's Word and the Christian faith, St. Paul Lutheran School provides a well-balanced curriculum in the areas of language arts, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, fine arts, computer technology, spanish and physical education. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. ■



A visit from local firefighters was a highlight to end April for students at Faith Child Development Center/Sebring. A ministry of Faith Church, Faith Child Development Center has been honored for having the highest voluntary pre-kindergarten readiness rate in Charlottee, Hardee, Highlands and Desoto Counties. Faith's teachers work to prepare preschoolers for school, with daily activities planned to enhance children's readiness for kindergarten. Faith is served by Pastor Rob Maulella and Preschool Director Yvette Calderon-Lopez.

## St. Paul/Weston Supports, Celebrates Future Leaders

Members and friends of St. Paul/Weston gathered at Woodlands Country Club in Tamarac on April 28 for the 12th Annual Seminarian Endowment Fund Golf Tournament & Dinner.

This annual event raises funds

to provide assistance to individuals from St. Paul who have been called to work as pastors in Christ's Church. The Fund was established to encourage and facilitate the congregation and friends of St. Paul to financially support qualified candidates attending an accredited Lutheran seminary.

Tens of thousands of dollars have been raised in support of these students since the Fund was established

A month later, on May 21, St. Paul celebrated Confirmation Sunday as 23 youth confirmed the faith given to them in Baptism. ■



St. Paul Pastor Tim Hartner (back, far right) and DCE Jeremy Becker (back, far left) with the 2017 Confirmation class.



## REGION 5



**Vice President:**  
Steve Wiperman | Our Savior/Lake Worth  
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Karen Smith | Peace/Okeechobee  
Samuel Ludington | Holy Cross/North Miami  
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Richard Norris | Trinity/Lake Placid  
**Treasure Coast Circuit Visitor:**  
Craig Bode | Trinity/Fort Pierce  
**S Palm Beach Circuit Visitor:**  
James Weist | Epiphany/Lake Worth  
**Gold Coast Circuit Visitor:**  
Timothy Hartner | St. Paul/Weston  
**Monroe-Miami-Dade Circuit Visitor:**  
Alan Sielk | St. Paul/Miami  
**Winter Haven Circuit Visitor:**  
Dean Pfeffer | Hope/Plant City





Above: Palm Sunday service at Bon Berger Lutheran Church in Port-au-Prince



At right: Sending service and lunch for the Haitian Lutheran Educators' Conference.



Tim Hetzner, Mike Kinyon, and Matt Earan are ready to roll out to the Haitian Lutheran Educators' Conference in Port-au-Prince.



Nearly 50 Haitian educators participated in the Conference. Hands-on workshops were part of the agenda.



District President Greg Walton (left) and Executive Director for School Ministries Mark Brink (right) presented congratulations and certificates to Conference participants.



## District Team Shares Insights With Haitian Counterparts

The theme verse for the April 10-12 Haiti Educators' Conference was "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29: 11) The unofficial theme song became "When Jesus Say 'Yes', Nobody Can Say 'No!'"

The team of Florida-Georgia District educators — Karen Smith, Lois Ford, Susan Brockberg, Todd Sickles, Sarah Bevis, Kirsten White, Anne Dobbins, Nurse Jan Voigtman — District President Greg Walton;

Education Executive Mark Brink; Dr. Rick Armstrong, Executive Director of Lutheran Counseling Services; Tim Hetzner, Director of Lutheran Church Charities along with an LCC photographer and videographer; and Mission: Haiti Mission Director Helen Roenfeldt arrived in Port-au-Prince on the weekend before the Conference to prepare for the nearly 50 Haitian teachers and administrators from about 20 Haitian Lutheran schools who attended the two and one-half days filled with workshops, study,

singing and fellowship. Teachers from the countryside stayed at Wall's Guest House in Port-au-Prince with the American team.

At the beginning of the Conference all of the Haitian participants received a canvas bag embellished with the event logo and containing some personal hygiene items, pencils, pens, composition books, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, other supplies and *Luther's Small Catechism* in Creole. All meals and transportation were provided for the out-of-town teachers, and

everyone received lunch and ample bottled water during the Conference day. The Conference started at 9 am on Monday and Tuesday and ended at 5 pm. On Wednesday morning, after a sending service, all of the Haitian participants received a certificate, a Bible in Creole and the congratulations of Walton and Brink.

The Haitian teachers were able to choose from five to six different workshops four times a day, including World Geography, Crisis Management, Teaching the Faith, Creative Math Teaching Methods

for Young Children, Simple Science Experiments, Teaching Health, Hygiene and First Aid, Music and Art for Young Children, Lesson Planning, and other courses. Two Haitian teachers, Madam Laurent and Madam Chloe, who are working on their Masters in Education, led workshops on the Psychological Needs of Children and The Importance of Encouraging the Partnership of Parents in Education.

The Conference was sponsored by a partnership of Mission: Haiti, the Florida-Georgia District and Lutheran Church Charities, who have

been working on the planning for the past year.

"The best news is that besides expressing their appreciation, many teachers and administrators have already conducted seminars and workshops for their teachers and parents at home," Roenfeldt shared.

"We are so grateful to so many congregations, individuals and LWML groups of the Florida-Georgia District as well as Lutheran Church Charities for getting behind this conference and making this an event of such high quality for the dedicated Lutheran teachers of Haiti."

This was the second in-country Haiti Educators' Conference sponsored by Mission: Haiti and the Florida-Georgia District. ■



Mission: Haiti Board Chair Karen Smith (right) was one of the District educators on the presenting team.



The Florida-Georgia teachers and District Executives putting bags together before the start of the Haitian Educators's Conference



Mission: Haiti Executive Director Helen Roenfeldt with one of the Haitian educators and the Conference bag.



Mission: Haiti Executive Director Helen Roenfeldt with one of the Haitian educators (above) and presenting a Bible in Creole to another of the Conference participants (right).



The Conference team included in-country translators.





*The Trinity Reformation mural centers around Martin Luther's nailing of the 95 Thesis to the Castle Church door. In the lower left, Luther translates the Bible into German while in seclusion at the castle of Wartburg. In the background is the Gutenberg printing press, which played an important role in getting Luther's works out to the public. Above the doors is Luther at the Diet of Worms, a defining moment in his life and times. It was here that Emperor Charles V asked Luther to recant. In the peak at the very top is a rendering of Luther's Rose in the style of a stained glass window. Lower right artwork is a view of the world, set to America today showing just how far the Reformation expanded to encompass the whole world with a modern family reading the Bible together.*

## Life-size Mural Celebrates Reformation's 500th Anniversary

As the December 2015 date for the 40th anniversary of Trinity Church/Lake Placid, FL, approached, Pastor Richard Norris began thinking of how to best mark that milestone as well as commemorate the upcoming 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

He decided on a mural as Lake Placid is considered a Town of Murals with more than 40 depicting the town's history and related events. However, the Lake Placid Mural Society "never supports or encourages ecclesiastical murals depicting church history or Biblical accounts or events," Norris shared. "My application was denied, which sent me back to the drawing boards."

Not long after Norris saw Keith Goodson, the artist who had painted 18 Lake Place murals, at work at a nearby building and approached him about doing a Reformation mural. Goodson's immediate positive response that he would undertake the challenge even without the approval of the Mural Society moved the project forward.

Norris agreed to Goodson's cost estimate. "I started nervously talking about this vision for the mural, realizing that we did not have the funds that I thought it would take to finish this project," Norris said.

"God provided an abundance, bringing forward two benefactor families who each were willing to fund the entire mural painting coast. The eventual cost of the mural and preparation of the wall has been totally privately funded."

When Norris began meeting with Goodson on the mural content in October 2016, he discovered that the artist and his wife had been to Wittenberg, Germany, several times and had seen the Castle Church door. "He had for a very long time felt a calling to paint a mural depicting this," Norris shared.

"We started the mural in late January. I wanted people to learn that the Reformation was more than an event in history," Norris emphasized.

"The Reformation period and

the Reformers beyond Martin Luther were liberating all aspects of society. The Roman Church controlled so much more than just religious life — it controlled government appointments, who got an education, commerce and more. The Reformation period truly laid a foundation for modern society."

Designed to highlight key elements Luther's contributions to the start of the Reformation Movement, the Trinity mural centers around the nailing of the 95 Thesis to the Castle Church door.

"We will have a cobblestone pathway up to where Luther is standing," Norris said, "to give the impression that you can walk right up to him and take a selfie as he posts the 95 Thesis."

The mural was completed in mid-May. Landscaping work is under way now, with a formal dedication planned for this fall.

"The Reformation continues and as the Synodical Logo reminds us 'Reformation 2017 ... it is still all about Jesus,'" Norris concluded. ■

## floridageorgia DISTRICT CALENDAR



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

**2017 LWML Convention**  
June 22-25, 2017  
Albuquerque, NM

**LCMS Lutherans  
in Black Ministry Family Convocation**  
July 12 - July 16, 2017  
Birmingham, AL

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

**Interim Pastors Training**  
August 14-18, 2017 & February 5-9, 2018  
Orlando Area

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

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

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

**National Lutheran Youth Workers  
Conference**  
July 8, 2018 - July 11, 2018  
Minneapolis, MN

**2018 District Educators Conference**  
September 26-28, 2018  
Daytona Beach, FL



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