

# LUTHERAN LIFE

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

**2017 | Volume 4**

*ANNUAL REPORT*



**Reformation**  
Five Hundred Years 1517-2017





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)

## LUTHERAN LIFE

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Finance/Administration, Dan Reichard  
Business Manager, John Elliott  
Legal Counsel, Rusty Huseman

## DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

### Calling Congregations

Faith/Hialeah, FL ..... Sole Pastor  
Lake Oconee/Lake Oconee, GA ..... Sole Pastor  
Holy Trinity/Lutz, FL ..... Sole Pastor  
Marco/Marco Island, FL ..... Associate Pastor  
Christ the King/Orlando, FL ..... Sole Pastor  
LiveUCF/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

Marco/Marco Island, FL  
to Rev. Jason Taylor as Associate Pastor  
Woodlands/Montverde, FL  
to Rev. Joshua Pettit as Associate Pastor  
Our Savior/Plantation, FL  
to Rev. James Krach as Sole Pastor

### Calls Accepted

Faith/Dunedin, FL — Rev. Andrew Sorenson  
as Sole Pastor  
Woodlands/Montverde, FL — Rev. Joshua Pettit  
as Associate Pastor

### Calls Declined

Holy Trinity/Lutz, FL — Rev. James Krach  
as Sole Pastor  
Marco/Marco Island, FL — Rev. Jason Taylor  
as Associate Pastor

### Transferred to Other Districts

Rev. William F Caughey .....  
Iowa West (O)  
Ms. Ann M Greinke .....  
English (C)  
Rev. Scott Holder .....  
Missouri (O)  
Ms. Melynda E Stackhouse .....  
Southeastern (C)

### Transferred from Other Districts

Mrs. Judith E Cunningham ..... CID (C)  
Ms. Diane I. Frusco ..... New Jersey (C)  
Rev. Rodney E Zwonitzer ..... Missouri (O)  
Rev. Andrew J Sorenson ..... New England (O)

### Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Assignments

Stephen Fair ..... Concordia Sem/St. Louis  
Pastor — Our Redeemer/Lake City, FL (O)  
Jack Michael Proctor ..... Concordia/Austin, TX  
DCE — St. Michael/Fort Myers, FL (C)  
Doug Hudson ..... Concordia Sem/St. Louis  
Pastor — Bethlehem/Jacksonville, FL (O)  
Joseph Warnke ..... Concordia Sem/St. Louis  
Pastor — Christ Our Savior/Griffin, GA (O)

### Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Rev. Andrew J Sorenson — Pastor,  
Faith/Dunedin, FL (O)

### Emeritus

Rev. Mark Schulz from Active to Emeritus (O)  
Rev. Robert Steinke from Active to Emeritus (O)

### Change of Status within the District

Ms. Dorothy C Wiencke  
from Active to Candidate (C)  
Ms. Jennifer A McKnight  
from Active to Candidate (C)

## President Greg Walton Celebrates Ministry Milestone

Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton on June 14 marked the 30th anniversary of his ordination into the ministry. During those three decades he has served in the Florida-Georgia District.

A 1983 graduate of Concordia College New York,



Walton received his Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis in 1987. His first call was to Trinity Church/Toccoa, GA, where he served from 1987 until 1999. He served as pastor of Faith Church & School/Marietta, GA, for the next ten years, leaving that call to assume the responsibilities as President of the Florida-Georgia District in 2009. He is in his third term as District President. ■

*Rev. Greg Walton was ordained by then Atlantic District President Ron Fink on June 14, 1987. Fink, who passed away in late 2014, served as pastor of Trinity Church/Orlando from 1989 until 1999.*

## Reformation 500th Anniversary Website Established

The LCMS has established a special website — [Lutheranreformation.org](http://Lutheranreformation.org) — for this 500th Anniversary year of the Reformation.

Available on that site are:

- ✓ Calendar of Reformation celebration events throughout the LCMS;
- ✓ Reformation timeline;
- ✓ Reformation Celebration Congregation Kit;
- ✓ Resources, including bulletin inserts; Luther quotes; one-session Bible study: It's Still All about Jesus; children's and Spanish materials. ■

## Bart Day Named New LCEF Head

Rev. Bart Day, Executive Director of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's Office of National Mission, will be the next President and CEO of Lutheran Church Extension Fund.

He succeeds Rich Robertson, who in November 2016 announced that he would retire on October 1, 2017. Day's start date is September 1, 2017.

Day will oversee LCEF's investments, loans and ministry support activities, communicate to and with partner organizations and assist the Board of Directors in establishing the course and direction of the organization.

In his six years of directing the Office of National Mission, Day's primary responsibility was implementation of the policies of the Board for National Mission. This work included overseeing 20 ministries that supported LCMS districts, congregations, schools and workers.

Day served as the interim Chief Mission Officer from 2014 to 2015. From 2015 to 2016 he was interim Executive Director of Pastoral Education. He began his career in 1997 as an associate pastor at Memorial Lutheran Church/Houston, TX. From 2005-2011 he served concurrently as headmaster at Memorial Lutheran School. ■



## floridageorgia DISTRICT CALENDAR



**Flood Bucket Challenge**  
Through mid August 2017  
District Wide

**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

**500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the Protestant Reformation**  
October 31, 2017

**Interim Pastor Training**  
Fall 2017 & Spring 2018  
Orlando Area

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

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

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





Edith and I had the joyous opportunity to welcome our new grandson, Zac, in June. We arrived on the day of his birth and once again saw God's wondrous handiwork. Every baby is a marvelous creation of God, and ours is no exception! As I spent time with this little guy, I was captivated by his tiny fingers and toes, so delicate and perfectly formed. The nurses were captivated by his long eyelashes and his peaceful spirit. The birth of a baby is a joyous experience worthy of celebration!

All births are worthy of celebration. Most of us celebrate our birth annually. More importantly, we get to celebrate our rebirth into Jesus. Paul writes, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." [2 Cor 5:17]

In the waters of holy baptism, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we were re-formed by grace into the image of Jesus. He places His own indelible mark on us, cleanses us and claims us as His very own. We are set apart to be made holy by His hand and always with purpose. This is God's reforming work.

To be re-formed implies that we take something already formed and form it once again. We re-purpose it and use it in a new way. Such was the case 500 years ago. The Gospel of Jesus Christ hadn't changed, but over time, with perhaps the greatest of intentions, that Gospel got lost and covered up in the pageantry and legalistic requirements that rose, especially during the Middle Ages. The desire to protect and venerate the Gospel got lost in the shuffle. How easy it is to lose sight of what is really of value.

The nation of Israel in the Old Testament had a sacrificial system that pointed to the future promise of a Savior. When Jesus came it was difficult for many to understand that the old system was no longer necessary. They were used to their practices and waiting for the

promised Messiah, not recognizing the truth before their eyes. Many missed out on the true gift that God had provided as they continued to sincerely strive after what they thought God wanted from them. The writer to the Hebrews sums it up like this: "According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation." [Heb. 9:9-10]

We live in a time of reformation. God is reshaping His Church once again for our day, looking toward the future. History bears out the fact that transition is part of the life of the Church. While there is a continuous thread and the law and

changes we've experienced as we have progressed. The truth is, we are innovative and creative people — God given gifts, mind you — always looking to invent the newest time saving device or find a more efficient way to do things. We like to improve on the past successes.

For us to accept that how we "do church" should never change is just not realistic. Surely we don't need to lose the essence of the biblical foundations or the traditions that we hold dear. However, if church is only all about us and getting our needs met, we've somehow missed the mark. Like in the days leading up to the Reformation, we allow the Gospel to get lost and covered up by our agendas. We should always be concerned with how we can best reach a world lost in sin and use the

sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant..." In the original Greek the word for sufficient (ικανός) means "enough," implying that God has given each of us everything necessary at a minimum to be His ministers. The word "minister" (διάκονος) literally means to serve. God has fashioned us not only as those who come to church to receive, but to take His Word to heart and to serve Him by serving others.

This is modeled in the early Church, and those who were part of it had a great passion to serve each other and the world around them in the name of Jesus. They saw themselves as missionaries who were privileged to be chosen by Jesus with a responsibility (the ability to respond) to reach others in His name. God has placed this same calling on each of our lives.

We live in a time of transition, and that necessarily impacts the Church, even as it did in Luther's day. Part of Luther's concern was how the Church had become so institutionalized that wielding influence was more important than the One they had been called to serve. Whenever we take God's forgiveness, which is a free gift (cf. Romans 3:23-24 and Romans 6:23) and make it a for-profit venture, as in selling indulgences, we betray God's Word and drive people from the Church. This pushed Luther to publishing his 95 Theses, seeking to begin discussions that would drive scholars back to God's truth.

It seems we face a much more subtle danger. Many believe that if we only replicate what once was, back in the so-called "golden age" of the Church, we would see congregations grow like they once did. The truth is, and I think most of us know this, you can't relive the past nor can you change it; however, together we can influence the future for the better. This will require a reformation of thinking and action!

As I look at the state of the Church, it is clearly time for another Reformation. Today's Church faces new challenges and, as in Luther's time, educating and empowering the priesthood of all believers will

impact our world for the Gospel. Lutherans firmly believe in the power of the Word, and each of us has the privilege of making that proclamation in whatever circumstance God has set us.

God has placed upon each individual a call through the waters of Holy Baptism, where He claims us and empowers us to be His witnesses to the world. Surely the Church, as a community of believers, has a role in this, but it is individual Christians, pastoral or lay, actively living out their faith in the public forum that makes a difference.

The Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 2, "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." This process is an ongoing event; it isn't complete or finished. God takes many individuals and puts them together in His own arrangement. Each of us are continually being built into a spiritual house to serve our God, engaging in the Master's business, connecting people to Jesus! Just as stones are shaped over time, maybe slightly, maybe in a major way, we change and grow in the manner of connecting people to Jesus, but God's purpose always remains the same. His desire for us is to connect people to Jesus!

I'm not certain how the Church will look in the future, but I think it will look different than what we have come to know as "Church." What is important is that the Gospel of Jesus is proclaimed in its power, and whatever that may look like, God has given us sufficiency,

## LIFELINES

everything necessary, to be His ministers, to connect people to Jesus no matter what!

In fact, Peter declares, "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 2:9-10] We could add that each of us are consecrated Re-formers, chosen with a purpose to ensure that the Gospel is proclaimed in its truth and purity for future generations.

Jesus tells us that His Church will never pass away, so whatever form it may take in the future, of this much I am certain — it will need pastors and teachers, as well as laity, and will rely heavily on each of you being willing to live out your faith and celebrating your role in the priesthood of all believers! An engaged laity, unified in the Gospel and passionate about Jesus, will be able to tear down the walls of hell. God is certainly in a process of re-forming His Church to meet the needs of a new generation.

May He make us bold to step up to lead the charge for the sake of Jesus! ■

*Martin Luther was committed to connecting people to Jesus without compromising his faith, but also unwilling to settle for how things had always been done.*



*Your partner in ministry,*  
**GREG**



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I thank God for you, the Congregations of the Florida-Georgia District, and for your wonderful support of the District with your time, talent, treasure, and prayers. It is with this thanksgiving for your partnership in the Gospel that I offer this summary of District Financials for FYE January 31, 2017.

### Overview

Last year the District mission was challenged a bit as revenue did not meet projections. Yet, the District continues to operate with no real debt and all designated/restricted funds are fully funded. Expenses are closely monitored, the missions of the District are funded and moving forward, and we have about one month of operating expenses in reserve.

### Statement of Activities

Unrestricted support from congregations totaled \$1,966,918 — a \$62,077 decrease from the prior year and \$133,082 under the budgeted \$2.1 million. Net assets released from restriction decreased by \$348,432 year over year. This change is due to the very large Soli Deo Gloria Fund released the prior year. Assets released from restriction fund specific projects or needs and are not utilized to fund operating expenses or ministries. Their usage is determined by project need or donor restriction and can vary greatly from year to year. Convention/Conference income increased by \$13,281 year over year as this past fiscal year there was a Synod Convention.

Total expenses for FYE 2017 were \$3,411,640 versus \$3,707,385 for FYE 2016, a decrease of \$295,745. This overall change, as reflected in the Congregational Services line item, is mainly due to the distribution of the Soli Deo Gloria Fund. For the FYE 2017 we increased our overall tithe to Synod (\$331,576) from 16% to 17% of unrestricted revenue. The increase in the Preparing Church Workers line item is due, much like last year, to the District Emergent Leader program and the increase in use of the Pastoral Leadership Institute. The increase in Ecclesiastical Administration is due to the reconciliation training, funded by a financial gift, provided to all Circuit Visitors to facilitate and streamline that work within the District.

The total change in Net Assets for the past fiscal year was an increase of \$34,857, largely due to an anonymous gift received late in the year. Per the donor's instructions, this gift was divided up to support long-term efforts to fund Student Aid and short-term efforts in Missions and School Ministries. It is the District's intention to always model good stewardship with the funds entrusted to us and use them in a manner that follows the donor's direction and meaningfully benefits and supports ongoing ministry.

### 2017 Work Program

Highlights of the 2017 work program are as follows:

- s Congregation support continues to be budgeted at \$2,100,000.
- s Net Assets Released from Restrictions is projected to be \$150K lower this year versus 2016.
- s Through unanimous support of the Board of Directors, the budgeted tithe on Congregational Support is set at 20%. This 20% tithe is broken down into two components: Synod support remains at 17% and the remaining 3% funds District Revitalization efforts.
- s The Mission Grant budget remains at \$600,000 and supports 12 approved missions throughout the District. The overall Missions budget also includes support for 7 other Lutheran organizations (e.g., Lutheran Services Florida and Mission Haiti), as well as taking care of several large maintenance items for buildings at two Campus Ministries.

We believe this work program is fiscally responsible, within current funding forecast and enables the District to continue its mission to serve, assist and encourage congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Board of Directors and District Staff monitor expenses and will make necessary adjustments. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me in the District office. May God continue to bless our work together as we reach out to connect people to Jesus!



Respectfully Submitted,

*John Elliott*  
Business Manager

# 2017 DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

Florida-Georgia District The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Statements of Financial Position Audited Results			
	January 31, 2017	January 31, 2016	
<strong>Assets</strong>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 2,712,314	\$ 2,408,075	
Accounts Receivable	71,548	56,624	
Prepaid Expense	59,872	86,858	
Contributions Receivable			
From Split-Interest Agreements	170,604	169,087	
Loans Receivable	220,000	240,000	
Installment Sale Notes Receivable, net	224,030	233,354	
Property and Equipment, net	576,277	677,179	
Advance Sites	492,969	485,286	
Long-Term Investments	1,845,387	1,957,539	
Other Assets	681,548	796,942	
<strong>Total</strong>	<strong>\$ 7,054,549</strong>	<strong>\$ 7,110,944</strong>	
<strong>Liabilities and Net Assets</strong>			
Accounts Payable	\$ 220,372	\$ 291,068	
Notes Payable	230,442	253,200	
Other Liabilities	258,288	256,089	
<strong>Total Liabilities</strong>	<strong>709,102</strong>	<strong>800,356</strong>	
Undesignated	1,369,737	1,380,779	
Net Investment in Land, Buildings and Equipment	576,277	677,179	
Board Designated	1,409,409	1,410,859	
Temporarily Restricted	1,249,316	1,208,341	
Permanently Restricted	1,740,708	1,633,429	
<strong>Total Net Assets</strong>	<strong>\$ 6,345,447</strong>	<strong>\$ 6,310,588</strong>	
<strong>Total</strong>	<strong>\$ 7,054,549</strong>	<strong>\$ 7,110,944</strong>	

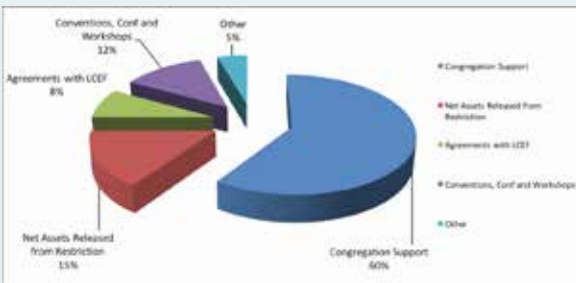
Florida-Georgia District The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Statements of Activities Audited Results			
	For The Years Ended January 31, 2017	2016	
<strong>UNRESTRICTED REVENUES</strong>			
Congregation Support *	\$ 1,966,918	\$ 2,028,996	
Net Assets Released from Restriction	506,317	854,749	
Agreements with LCEF	266,165	255,681	
Convention, Conferences and Workshops	410,680	397,399	
Other	148,162	120,226	
<strong>Total revenues</strong>	<strong>3,298,242</strong>	<strong>3,657,051</strong>	
<strong>EXPENSES</strong>			
Synod	361,648	331,576	
Congregational Services **	746,353	1,357,450	
Preparing Church Workers	171,673	102,107	
Missions	880,152	635,705	
Ministry Support	847,793	941,647	
Ecclesiastical Administration	404,021	338,900	
<strong>Total expenses</strong>	<strong>3,411,640</strong>	<strong>3,707,385</strong>	
<strong>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</strong>			
Unrestricted	(113,398)	(50,393)	
Temporarily restricted	40,975	(584,883)	
Permanently restricted	107,279	(88,618)	
<strong>Total change in net assets</strong>	<strong>34,857</strong>	<strong>(723,893)</strong>	
<strong>NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR</strong>	<strong>6,310,588</strong>	<strong>7,034,481</strong>	
<strong>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</strong>	<strong>\$ 6,345,445</strong>	<strong>\$ 6,310,588</strong>	

\* Includes Congregation Support Over and Above Pledge

\*\* Includes School Ministries, Conferences, Convocation, Conventions, Human Care, Church Worker Family Care

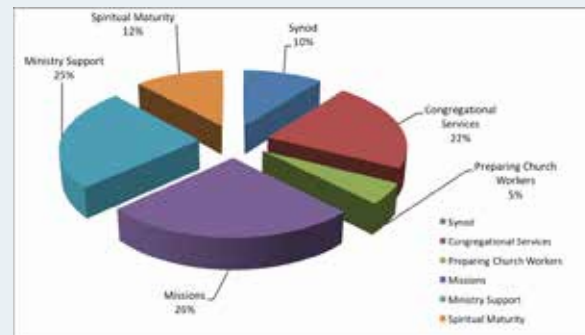
### Unrestricted Revenues for FYE January 31, 2017

Congregation Support	\$ 1,966,918
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$ 506,317
Agreements with LCEF	\$ 266,165
Conventions, Conf and Workshops	\$ 410,680
Other	\$ 148,162
<strong>Total</strong>	<strong>\$ 3,298,242</strong>



### Expenses by Critical Target for FYE Jan 31, 2017

Synod	\$ 361,648	11%
Congregational Services	746,353	22%
Preparing Church Workers	171,673	5%
Missions	880,152	26%
Ministry Support	847,793	25%
Spiritual Maturity	404,021	12%
<strong>Total</strong>	<strong>\$ 3,411,640</strong>	





# Congregational Support Enables Florida-Georgia Mission & Ministry

In this issue you'll find the Annual Report of our District. Our goal is always to maintain transparency with the congregations of the District and validate to all our ministries and members that we are, to the best of our ability, wisely using the assets that God has supplied through our ministries in the most efficient and effective ways as good stewards of His gifts. Leaders in our District are often surprised when they learn how congregations support the missions of the Florida-Georgia. God has blessed our District through our partnership with congregations, and we can only imagine the marvelous things that could be accomplished if all our congregations participated.

Despite the challenges, the District remains debt-free and all our restricted accounts are fully funded. This has enabled us to more freely engage in the Master's business to connect people to Jesus. All expenses are closely monitored, and a thorough audit is



*This summer's Florida-Georgia Servant Event in the Atlanta area brought together youth to serve children and homeless in the area. The event was crafted and directed by the District Youth Ministry team, which also plans annual youth retreats.*

completed each year to help us evaluate the District's financial situation. I am pleased to say that the audit firm has cited no issues.

The Board of Directors of the District has committed to tithing 20% of the funds we receive. Of that, 17% goes to Synod to support the work of mission and ministry nationally. The remaining 3% is used in the District for revitalization efforts in congregations. All of these funds come from you, and you have entrusted them to us to employ in ministry in the Florida-Georgia District. We take your trust very seriously as we strive to be a model of good stewardship.

As in the past fiscal year, congregational giving is down. Many of our congregations joyfully, sacrificially and regularly support the work of the District, for which we are so grateful. We thank you for making our ministry a joy, and not a burden (Hebrews 13:17). All of us are well aware of the decline

in membership across the Synod, and our District is not immune. Some congregations are experiencing financial struggles of their own, and there are always exceptional circumstances.

We daily pray for our workers and congregations, that God would fill each with renewed passion and vision for ministry in their community. The District Office exists to support the vital work that you do on the "front lines" of ministry. We have discovered there are some congregations who simply have chosen to keep more at "home," or choose not support the work of the District because they see little value in this partnership. When a congregation fails to realize the benefit of stewardship, and that when healthy stewardship is modeled it motivates members to greater stewardship, benefitting the whole, they miss out on some great blessings that God has for His people. Together we make up the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in this place, and the value, while not always visible, is essential to our proclamation of the Gospel to the World.

You may wonder just what the Florida-Georgia District does with the funds received.

▲ Much of it is used for mission, to assist congregations as they start or restart.

▲ The District provides scholarships for students studying to serve the church, whether as a pastor or teacher. I have been told that our District is among the

most generous in supporting seminary students.

▲ In addition we have created, implemented, and invested in programs that strengthen our workers. We developed the Emergent Leader program which provides leadership training for pastors, other church workers and laity.

▲ The District is directly involved with the planning and execution of vibrant youth events for our middle and high school students. These are critical as we energize and connect with our church leaders of tomorrow.

▲ Through our work together we have persuaded ministries like Grace Place Wellness, DOXOLOGY, PLI, and Intentional Interim Ministry training into our District and have provided scholarships to make it easier for our people to participate and grow.

▲ The Florida-Georgia District has trained many of our Circuit Visitors and others in Ambassadors of Reconciliation to assist in conflicted situations in ministries across our District.

▲ We work directly with congregations and schools in placing workers to serve.

This is just a short list of the things we are privileged to do to strengthen local ministries. We are able to do these things because of the partnership we share as we work together for the sake of Jesus. He is the center and focus of all we do.

There is great power in working together.

▲ Together we plant new missions and call workers to serve.

▲ Together we provide resources and encouragement to congregational ministries and schools in the District.

▲ Together we encourage workers to better care for themselves in mind, body, and spirit through our District Wellness Network.

▲ Together we support social service agencies that are touching thousands both within and outside of our congregations of lives every day.

▲ Together we make ministry happen well beyond our own congregation and community into the world around us.

For that we say thank you! We want to do our best to represent you, as part of the LCMS, well. More than that, we want to connect people to Jesus. And we do — because of our shared partnership. So thank you, and may God continue to bless our work together as we



*The District office was instrumental in bringing the Lutheran Charities Chicago, sponsor of the K-9 Lutheran Comfort Dogs, to Orlando in the aftermath of the Pulse nightclub shooting. "Bringing hope and reflecting the love of Jesus in the community is an important part of who we are as a church," emphasized District President Greg Walton.*

equip, empower and engage in the Master's business, to connect people to Jesus.

*Greg Walton*

President, Florida-Georgia District, LCMS



*Shown at a 2016 District Stewardship Summit. This series of events brought the Florida-Georgia executive team to each region of the District for no-charge stewardship conferences with national speakers.*



## DISTRICT SUPPORT BY CONGREGATION FOR FYE JANUARY 31, 2017

City/State	Congregation	Financial Support	Confirmed Members	Support/Member
<b>01 - Northeast Georgia</b>				
Athens, GA.....	Christus Victor	15,283	71	215.25
Athens, GA.....	Trinity	11,000	260	42.31
Blairsville, GA.....	All Saints	22,177	180	123.21
Clarksville, GA.....	Grace Mission	600	1	
Gainesville, GA.....	Good Shepherd	12,458	248	50.23
Lilburn, GA.....	Oak Road	31,343	332	94.41
Toccoa, GA.....	Trinity	1,378	106	13.00
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>94,239</b>	<b>1,198</b>	<b>78.66</b>

<b>02 - Atlanta North</b>				
Atlanta, GA.....	Grace	6,000	78	76.92
Atlanta, GA.....	Rivercliff	50,738	360	140.94
Atlanta, GA.....	Living Faith Korean	2,000	32	62.50
Atlanta, GA.....	St. Mark Eritrean	0	1	-
Cartersville, GA.....	Savior of All	12,000	335	35.82
Cumming, GA.....	Living Faith	28,080	174	161.38
Dahlone, GA.....	St. Peter	5,745	24	-
Jasper, GA.....	King of Kings	0	40	-
Kennesaw, GA.....	Living Hope	3,715	294	12.64
Marietta, GA.....	Faith	13,200	407	32.43
Rome, GA.....	Holy Trinity	2,700	130	20.77
Tucker, GA.....	St. Mark	7,645	147	52.01
Woodstock, GA.....	Timothy	18,750	349	53.72
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>150,573</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>63.51</b>

<b>03 - Atlanta South</b>				
Columbus, GA.....	Bethlehem	6,000	69	86.96
Columbus, GA.....	LC of the Redeemer	2,942	197	14.93
Decatur, GA.....	Peace	500	87	5.75
Douglasville, GA.....	Prince of Peace	0	70	-
East Point, GA.....	Christ	0	60	-
Hampton, GA.....	Christ Our Savior	7,801	59	132.22
Peachtree City, GA.....	St. Paul	13,549	337	40.20
Stockbridge, GA.....	Holy Cross	0	77	-
Stockbridge, GA.....	Lord of Life	2,500	72	34.72
Tucker, GA.....	Incarnate Word	500	32	15.63
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>33,792</b>	<b>1,060</b>	<b>31.88</b>

<b>04 - East Central Georgia</b>				
Augusta, GA.....	Our Redeemer	46,824	419	111.75
Eatonton, GA.....	Lake Oconee	18,965	168	112.89
Macon, GA.....	LC of the Holy Trinity	0	33	-
Milledgeville, GA.....	Hope	900	21	42.86
Perry, GA.....	Christ	3,300	144	22.92
Savannah, GA.....	Trinity	39,250	368	106.66
Statesboro, GA.....	St. Paul's	1,120	59	18.98
Warner Robins, GA.....	Mount Calvary	70,000	633	110.58
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>180,359</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>97.76</b>

<b>05 - Tallahassee</b>				
Albany, GA.....	Trinity	2,600	72	36.11
Crawfordville, FL.....	Trinity	750	56	13.39
Lake City, FL.....	Our Redeemer	1,100	164	6.71
Tallahassee, FL.....	Epiphany	26,169	361	72.49
Tallahassee, FL.....	University	8,125	71	114.44
Tifton, GA.....	Peace	3,807	37	102.89
Valdosta, GA.....	Messiah	6,500	190	34.21
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>49,051</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>51.58</b>

<b>06 - First Coast</b>				
Jacksonville, FL.....	Grace	800	487	1.64
Jacksonville, FL.....	Holy Cross	0	79	-
Jacksonville, FL.....	Hope Mission	3,000	51	-
Jacksonville, FL.....	Our Redeemer	0	163	-
Jacksonville, FL.....	St. Paul	10,583	193	54.83

City/State	Congregation	Financial Support	Confirmed Members	Support/Member
Jax'ville Beach, FL.....	Bethlehem	20,000	538	37.17
Kingsland, FL.....	Messiah Mission	0	17	-
Kingsland, GA.....	Holy Trinity	3,508	119	29.48
Middleburg, FL.....	St. Peter's	11,617	232	50.07
St. Augustine, FL.....	Christ Our Savior	1,200	62	19.35
Starke, FL.....	Good Shepherd	0	25	-
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>50,708</b>	<b>1,966</b>	<b>25.79</b>

<b>07 - North Central Florida</b>				
ChiefLand, FL.....	Good Shepherd	500	61	8.20
Dunnellon, FL.....	Peace	2,367	66	35.86
Gainesville, FL.....	Abiding Savior	21,250	196	108.42
Gainesville, FL.....	First	35,880	443	80.99
Inverness, FL.....	First	70	305	0.23
Lecanto, FL.....	Faith	10,165	199	51.08
Ocala, FL.....	Our Redeemer	7,498	416	18.02
Ocala, FL.....	St. John	12,360	456	27.11
Oxford, FL.....	Amazing Grace	32,714	172	190.20
Silver Springs, FL.....	Forest Ev. LC	3,035	42	72.26
Summerfield, FL.....	Trinity	36,000	906	39.74
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>161,839</b>	<b>3,262</b>	<b>49.61</b>

<b>08 - Space Coast</b>				
Cape Canaveral, FL.....	Christ	6,500	80	81.25
Holly Hill, FL.....	Trinity	0	225	-
Melbourne, FL.....	LC of the Redeemer	5,806	144	40.32
Palm Bay, FL.....	Zion Haitian	0	15	-
Merritt Island, FL.....	Faith	5,500	570	9.65
Merritt Island, FL.....	Grace	3,000	105	28.57
Palm Bay, FL.....	Risen Savior	1,000	49	20.41
Rockledge, FL.....	Trinity	0	115	-
South Daytona, FL.....	Holy Cross	0	270	-
Titusville, FL.....	Good Shepherd	5,787	274	21.12
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>27,593</b>	<b>1,847</b>	<b>14.94</b>

<b>09 - Orlando East</b>				
Casselberry, FL.....	Ascension	29,846	465	64.18
Deltona, FL.....	LC of Providence	0	87	-
Orlando, FL.....	Esperanza Viva	120	46	2.61
Orlando, FL.....	Hope	5,025	212	23.70
Orlando, FL.....	Journey of Life	6,919	52	133.06
Orlando, FL.....	LiveUCF	50	30	1.67
Orlando, FL.....	Prince of Peace	3,100	733	4.23
Orlando, FL.....	Trinity	46,037	1,071	42.99
Sanford, FL.....	LC of the Redeemer	3,500	88	39.77
St. Cloud, FL.....	Grace	300	115	2.61
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>94,897</b>	<b>2,899</b>	<b>32.73</b>

<b>10 - Orlando West</b>				
Apopka, FL.....	St. Paul	0	42	-
Eustis, FL.....	Faith	41,667	607	68.64
Winter Garden, FL.....	Zion New Life	0	69	-
Leesburg, FL.....	Bethany	6,459	73	88.48
Montverde, FL.....	Woodlands	25,856	618	41.84
Orlando, FL.....	Christ the King	12,000	389	30.85
Orlando, FL.....	Our Savior	1,000	129	7.75
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>86,982</b>	<b>1,927</b>	<b>45.14</b>

<b>11 - Winter Haven</b>				
Bartow, FL.....	Redeemer	0	68	-
Lake Wales, FL.....	Lake Wales	417	110	3.79
Lakeland, FL.....	Christ	26,000	214	121.50
Lakeland, FL.....	St. Paul	0	1171	-
Plant City, FL.....	Hope	30,304	357	84.89
Winter Haven, FL.....	Grace	41,130	1,147	35.86
Zephyrhills, FL.....	Our Savior	8,796	162	54.30
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>106,647</b>	<b>3,229</b>	<b>33.03</b>

## DISTRICT SUPPORT BY CONGREGATION FOR FYE JANUARY 31, 2017

City/State	Congregation	Financial Support	Confirmed Members	Support/Member
<b>12 - Heartland</b>				
Arcadia, FL.....	Grace	600	20	30.00
Avon Park, FL.....	Christ	6,238	36	173.28
Belle Glade, FL.....	St. Peter's	600	25	24.00
Clewiston, FL.....	Faith	3,360	26	129.23
Lake Placid, FL.....	Trinity	2,500	157	15.92
Okeechobee, FL.....	Peace	1,200	260	4.62
Sebring, FL.....	Faith	17,417	95	183.34
Wauchula, FL.....	Peace Valley	4,000	30	133.33
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>35,915</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>55.34</b>

<b>13 - Suncoast</b>				
Brooksville, FL.....	Christ	2,500	245	10.20
Hudson, FL.....	Hope	2,457	183	13.43
Lutz, FL.....	Holy Trinity	8,715	170	51.26
Masaryktown, FL.....	Holy Trinity	16,984	195	87.10
New Port Richey, FL.....	Faith	10,000	255	39.22
Spring Hill, FL.....	Forest Oaks	2,500	216	11.57
Trinity, FL.....	Trinity	3,600	128	28.13
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>46,756</b>	<b>1,392</b>	<b>33.59</b>

<b>14 - St. Petersburg</b>				
Clearwater, FL.....	Bethel	1,000	821	1.22
Clearwater, FL.....	First Ev.	2,500	376	6.65
Dunedin, FL.....	Faith	10,070	140	71.93
Largo, FL.....	Christ the King	2,700	536	5.04
St. Petersburg, FL.....	Grace	10,410	629	16.55
St. Petersburg, FL.....	Our Savior	65,197	841	77.52
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>91,877</b>	<b>3,343</b>	<b>27.48</b>

<b>15 - Tampa</b>				
Brandon, FL.....	Immanuel	0	441	-
Lithia, FL.....	Lamb of God	0	65	-
Riverview, FL.....	Christ the King	1,679	75	22.39
Tampa, FL.....	Holy Trinity	3,000	144	20.83
Tampa, FL.....	Messiah	60,889	659	92.40
Tampa, FL.....	Messiah Hispanic	1,625	102	15.93
Tampa, FL.....	Zion	1,800	31	58.06
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>68,993</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>45.48</b>

<b>16 - Sarasota</b>				
Bradenton, FL.....	Hope	44,640	324	137.78
Englewood, FL.....	Redeemer	0	221	-
Parrish, FL.....	Faith	13,058	266	49.09
Port Charlotte, FL.....	LC of the Cross	0	253	-
Port Charlotte, FL.....	Trinity	0	91	-
Punta Gorda, FL.....	Faith	9,000	224	40.18
Sarasota, FL.....	Beautiful Savior	50,983	452	112.79
Sarasota, FL.....	Concordia	22,250	204	109.07
Sarasota, FL.....	Good Shepherd	2,000	236	8.47
Venice, FL.....	Lakeside	17,336	709	24.45
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>159,267</b>	<b>2,980</b>	<b>53.45</b>

<b>17 - Southwest</b>				
Bonita Springs, FL.....	Amigos en Cristo	550	9	61.11
Bonita Springs, FL.....	Hope	8,000	400	20.00
Cape Coral, FL.....	Trinity	11,375	215	52.91
Estero, FL.....	Thrive	5,000	1	-
Fort Myers, FL.....	Bethlehem	1,200	145	8.28
Fort Myers, FL.....	St. Michael	39,417	894	44.09
Fort Myers, FL.....	Zion	33,000	748	44.12
Immokalee, FL.....	Immokalee	1,110	7	158.57
LaBelle, FL.....	Christ the King	1,200	40	30.00
Lehigh Acres, FL.....	Beautiful Savior	0	61	-
Marco Island, FL.....	Marco	58,401	448	130.36
Naples, FL.....	Grace	45,500	388	117.27
Naples, FL.....	Peace	0	223	-
North Fort Myers, FL.....	Good Shepherd	2,805	115	24.39
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>207,558</b>	<b>3,694</b>	<b>56.19</b>

City/State	Congregation	Financial Support	Confirmed Members	Support/Member
<b>18 - Treasure Coast</b>				
Fort Pierce, FL.....	Trinity	2,200	174	12.64
Hobe Sound, FL.....	Bethel	0	46	-
Lake Worth, FL.....	New Alliance	0	9	-
N Palm Beach, FL.....	Faith	25,751	213	120.90
Port St. Lucie, FL.....	Grace	12,000	177	67.80
Stuart, FL.....	Redeemer	68,821	495	139.03
Vero Beach, FL.....	LC of Redeemer	4,500	135	33.33
W Palm Beach, FL.....	Redeemer	0	111	-
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>113,272</b>	<b>1,360</b>	<b>83.29</b>

<b>19 - South Palm Beach</b>				
Boca Raton, FL.....	St. Paul	13,333	1,556	8.57
Boynton Beach, FL.....	Son Life	14,969	366	40.90
Delray Beach, FL.....	Emmanuel Haitian	900	50	18.00
Delray Beach, FL.....	Trinity	35,742	450	79.43
Lake Worth, FL.....	Epiphany	0	136	-
Lake Worth, FL.....	Our Savior	21,994	303	72.59
Lake Worth, FL.....	Salem Haitian	0	125	-
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>86,938</b>	<b>2,986</b>	<b>29.12</b>

<b>20 - Gold Coast</b>				
Davie, FL.....	Gloria Dei	1,432	460	3.11
Fort Lauderdale, FL.....	Faith	1,200	46	26.09
Fort Lauderdale, FL.....	Good Shepherd	0	40	-
Fort Lauderdale, FL.....	Shepherd of the Coast	8,245	240	34.35
Fort Lauderdale, FL.....	Trinity Haitian	0	1	-
Fort Lauderdale, FL.....	Trinity	2,200	145	15.17
Hollywood, FL.....	Prince of Peace	3,600	46	78.26
Lauderdale Lakes, FL.....	Tabernacle	0	150	-
Miramar, FL.....	Miramar	0	35	-
Fort Lauderdale, FL.....	Tabernacle De Grace	0	205	-
Plantation, FL.....	Our Savior	6,500	412	15.78
Weston, FL.....	St. Paul	52,840	934	56.57
<b>Circuit Totals/Average</b>		<b>76,017</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>28.01</b>

<b>21 - Monroe-Miami-Dade</b>			
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# LWML Celebrates 75 Years of Mission, Outreach, Service

The June 22-25 LWML Convention in Albuquerque, NM, was absolutely fantastic! This historic event marked the LWML's 75th Anniversary.

Have you ever been to one? If not, you have no idea of what you are missing! Besides the business part that every convention must have, there were times when we just broke out in laughter! For example, our humorous interrupter, Katie Luther, a.k.a. Jan Struck, had us laughing regarding her life with Martin. Only Jan Struck can tell a story in such a gentle, humorous way.

Have you ever heard anyone speaking about

mites in action? We had some wonderful grant recipients share how the funds helped their ministries. The Adelante Ministries of



LWML's new logo was unveiled at the convention.

Ysleta Lutheran Mission Human Care not only gave a wonderful witness of how our grant worked for them, but introduced us to the Mariachi San

Pablo. This musical group is an outreach and care ministry of Ysleta Lutheran Mission in El Paso, TX. Much of their music is sung in Spanish and English in order to serve, unite and reach others through song.

Or how about Vicar Tim Norton speaking to us on his ministry serving the Navajo Indians in Navajo, NM. These are the things that we just love about the LWML. Our grants go so far and impact so many. Hearing how our mission grants bless people truly gives you a different perspective on how we impact ministries.

And the LWML really knows how to celebrate! On Saturday evening, we began with

a parade of all districts coming in from different directions, with Florida-Georgia led by President Trish Aamoth. When we saw our District coming down the aisle, we rang our cow bells and blew our whistles for them!

A PowerPoint presentation showed highlights of all past conventions. Skits represented the various decades and illustrated the most important aspect of that decade. It was fantastic!

More than 3,400 people attended the convention, including 81 Young Woman Representatives, 850 first-timers and 10 Heart 2 Heart Sisters.

And let's not forget the exhibitors! A life-size Martin Luther cutout stood ready for photos at the LWML Gifts of Love. At the Concordia University Chicago booth we shared that two of our granddaughters were alumni. The young ladies manning the booth knew them both. What a small Lutheran world! Speaking of small worlds, my husband and I ran into our granddaughter's in-laws, who were exhibiting. Then we shopped till we dropped in the LWML and CPH stores!

Happy Birthday LWML, and thanks for sharing your birthday with all of us! ■

— This report is from  
Joan Koch, Florida-Georgia  
District LWML  
VP Communications

## District LWML Retreat Update

Registration is now open for the Florida-Georgia District retreat on September 30 – October 1 at Jekyll Island, GA. Villas by the Sea is also accepting reservations for the retreat. There are lots of wonderful things planned for this event, from Bible Studies to "Homegrown Entertainment."

Please go online to [www.flgalwml.com](http://www.flgalwml.com) and register for this amazing weekend. You will also find the latest *Evangel* there with lots of information pertaining to the retreat. ■

### Convention Offerings as of 7/7/17

✓ Pledge Walk.....	\$72,683.06
✓ Golf Outing .....	\$15,255.78
✓ Convention Offering #1 .....	\$48,818.52
✓ Convention Offering #2 .....	\$51,959.84
✓ Convention Offering #3 .....	\$31,964.81
✓ Convention Offering #4 .....	\$33,710.56

### 2017-2019 Mission Grants — \$2.075 Million Goal

✓ Mercy Meals of Siouxland .....	\$40,000
✓ Mercy House/Franklin Avenue Mission, Flint, MI .....	\$100,000
✓ LCMS Ministry of the Armed Forces .....	\$27,750
✓ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania .....	\$25,000
✓ LCMS International Mission .....	\$100,000
✓ Lutheran Heritage Foundation .....	\$100,000
✓ LHM Christian Hope Through Mass Media in Egypt .....	\$100,000
✓ Christian Families United for Progress .....	\$100,000
✓ Lutheran World Relief Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund .....	\$80,000
✓ Christian Eldercare Home in Haiti .....	\$100,000
✓ Biblical Orthodox Lutheran Mission .....	\$93,000
✓ Lutheran Church Uganda .....	\$48,000
✓ Lutherans for Life .....	\$25,000
✓ Lutheran Braille Workers .....	\$100,000
✓ Bethesda Lutheran Communities .....	\$100,000
✓ Education Loan Repayment Assistance Grants/Ministry Focus .....	\$100,000
✓ LCMS Office of International Mission .....	\$25,000
✓ Lutheran Indian Ministries .....	\$75,000
✓ Circuit 28 – Texas District .....	\$50,000
✓ Prison and Jail Ministry 2018 Synod-wide Conference .....	\$36,500
✓ Family Scholarships for Short Term Mission Trips/MOST Ministries .....	\$60,000
✓ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia .....	\$97,000



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At the convention, Lutheran Hour Ministries President/CEO Kurt Buchholz presented LWML President Patti Ross with the Luther Seal from the Lutheran Hour float in the 2017 Rose Parade. He said, "It is an exciting time as you are celebrating 75 years and we are celebrating 100 years to look back at what this combined effort has done but more importantly looking forward ... to what God will do through His people in bringing Christ to the nations and the nations to the church."

Katie Luther, a.k.a. Jan Struck, shared stories of her life with Martin.



Shown below: The Florida-Georgia District contingent at the Convention





God's exhortation to Joshua as the Israelites approached the promised land was "Be strong and courageous," (Joshua 1:6) — and then He emphasized it by saying "Be strong and very courageous." (Joshua 1:7) Courage is the clear call to all of God's people. The Bible chronicles a parade of courageous men and women through the ages. Abraham left his comfort zone and migrated to a strange land. In spite of his poor speaking ability, Moses confronted pharaoh. Joshua led the Israelites into battle. David battled Goliath. Jeremiah spoke God's truth to civic power — and suffered because of it. Stephen spoke God's truth to the religious establishment and was martyred.

These are all fascinating Bible stories but do they have anything to do with us? Yes.

Jesus said, "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 14:20) Most of us are familiar with the stories of Christians being thrown to the lions in ancient Rome because they would not recognize Caesar as a god.

But today the persecution of Christians is far greater. Christians in Iraq are given the choice to convert to Islam or die. Canon Andrew White, known as the "Vicar of Baghdad" relates the story of a Christian father who was told to convert to Islam or die. Then he was told that his three sons would be killed if he didn't. So he said the conversion shahada: "There is no god but Allah and

Muhammad is his prophet" in order to save his sons. The Muslim jihadist then asked the three boys to convert. They took courage, refused to say the shahada, and were executed.

Rev. White notes that 30 years ago there were 1.4 million Christians in Iraq. Today there are less than 250,000.

Similar conditions exist elsewhere. Christianity is forbidden in Iran. Church buildings are burned to the ground in Egypt, Syria and China. The North Korean Church has been driven underground, and known Christians are executed or worked to death in slave camps. This is tragic because Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, was known as the "Jerusalem of the East" from 1895 to 1942.

History records consistent persecution of Christians in many lands under different anti-Christian ideologies — just as Jesus predicted.

In the 16th and 17th centuries Jesuit missionaries boldly travelled to Japan in wooden sailing ships to evangelize. The church grew to about 400,000 until a new leadership assumed power in Japan. Brutal persecution — similar to the atrocities done by ISIS — martyrdom was common, and the church was almost exterminated. All this is



## COURAGE FOR TODAY

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

opposition to what God has said, our culture has moved the ancient boundary stones (Proverbs 23:10) of pro-life, pro-marriage of one man and one woman and respect for Godly sexuality. Do we stay silent? Or do we speak up and perhaps lose friends, disrupt our church or even cause a lawsuit? All of this requires courage. Christians have been willing to die for the Gospel. Are we willing to bear the pain of social censure or perhaps financial loss for the Gospel?

Jesus died for us to pay our sin debt. This is good news for our dark, deceitful, despairing culture. Jesus is light, truth and hope! He is needed by all people, even though they do not always realize it and frequently resist Him and His people. Life is a battle. But we have the final victory in Christ, so like courageous soldiers we confront our culture with God's Word and march onward with the cross of Christ going on before. ■

where possible for today's persecuted Christians. They are the Body of Christ. Paul reminds us, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26) All these hurting brothers and sisters in Christ are our family. They are also examples of courage in the face of adversity and evil.

There is an old hymn titled "Faith of our Fathers" which carries the line, "Faith of our fathers, living still in spite of dungeon, fire and sword." Unlike the Iraqi Christians, we do not face dungeon, fire and sword.

But until physical persecution comes to us in the United States we, too, must show courage. Courage to confront civic idolatry even though it might mean social censure. In

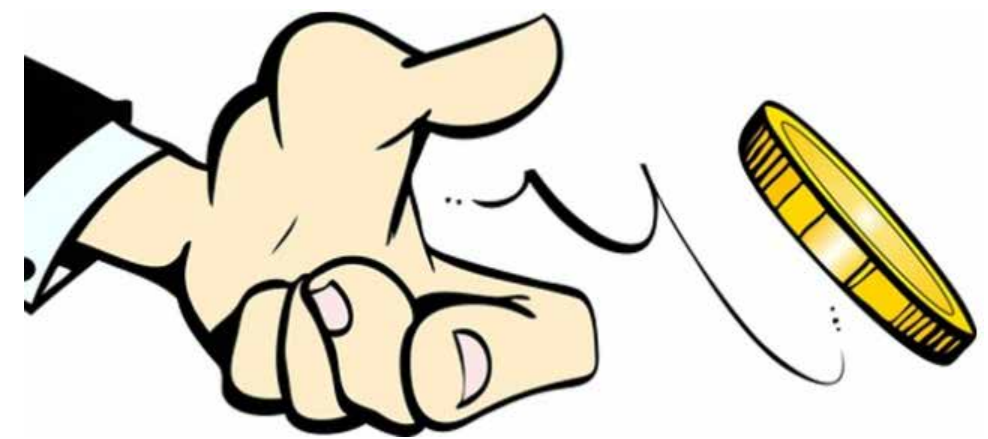
"Come on John, I was chairman for the last three years, now it's your turn." Is filling the leadership positions in the church a game of musical chairs? Sometimes it feels that way. Perhaps that's why it seems like things don't change very much. The same group always seems to fill the positions of responsibility. On the other hand, perhaps you've heard someone say, "We need some new blood around here." That might be true. Or it might be that "John" just doesn't want to come to meetings any more.

In a previous article we talked about your starting place in filling leadership vacancies. Typically, we start with the open spot and try to fill it, rather than starting with the people first and then finding the places where they will best fit. In this article we're addressing a different aspect of filling leadership positions: qualifications.

Perhaps your constitution says they need to be members. Yet you know in your gut that these opportunities to serve (vacancies) shouldn't just be filled with a "warm body" and you don't want play musical chairs anymore. So how can you be more intentional about picking leaders?



Some have advocated a Bible study, worship and giving requirements. On the other hand, perhaps those are not the only or the best indicators. So what other qualities may be important for inviting people to take the next step in serving the Lord through a leadership role?



## "Flip a Coin? Roll the Dice? Cast Lots?" How to Pick Leaders.

Here are four categories that are suggested as additional indicators that one may be ready to take on more responsibility in the Lord's church.

1-Spiritual trajectory. These are the people who have a hunger to grow closer to Jesus and are serious about

their faith. This may be compared those who have stalled or are not interested in growing.

2-Teachable. People who are teachable are open to grow, will accept feedback and are willing to be challenged. This is compared to those who know it all and want their way.

3-Relational Intelligence. These

are people who care about others and want to help them grow closer to Jesus, whether they are church members or their neighbors. They are good with people and you like being around them. They pass the "caller ID test" in that when you see their name show up on your phone, you actually



## The COACHING LEADER

by Rev. Scott Gress  
Lutheran Counseling Services  
Leadership Coach

want to answer it. 4-Passed the Step Up Test. People with a critical spirit like to be critical and complain and point fingers. Those who pass the step up test will notice the needs but will not stop there. They will step in to do something about it, and with a servant's heart.

There are times and seasons when people are not ready for leadership. Of course, leadership is not for everyone, yet we all are to be on the pathway of growing in Christ. Thus serving people by supporting their development in the body of Christ is a gift. It requires prayer, discernment and loving care. It will no doubt make an eternal difference. ■

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).





# Consecrated Stewards Instructors Ready to Assist District Congregations

Designed to energize members in their ongoing giving, the Consecrated Stewards program of the LCEF is not tied to the church budget. The focus is instead on members' desire to give. Many participating congregations have reported increases in annual commitments of 15% to 30%.



Benefits and features of the Consecrate Stewards program include:

- The commitment process is tied to the Sunday morning act of worship
- Members do not need to ask each other for a financial commitment
- Can be used at any time throughout the year
- Includes Lutheran Bible study materials and sermon outlines
- Includes publicity and communication aids

- Includes an optional workshop for leaders
- Offers guidance for stewardship witness talks
- Lays out a process for celebrating congregation ministries
- Your ministry works with an LCEF-trained and certified Guest Leader

Recently Florida-Georgia Stewardship Advisory Council Chair Rev. Dennis Bartels let a stewardship training session at the District office. Nine individuals were trained to lead Florida-Georgia congregations in stewardship:

George Murdaugh,  
Larry Schaefer,  
Bernard Julmiste,  
Nickolas Delien,  
Dean Pfeffer,  
James Wiggins Jr.,  
John Glover,  
Mark Abram,  
Ron Biel.

For more information on how Consecrated Stewards can positively impact your church, contact Debbie Talbot: [dtalbot@flgadistrict.org](mailto:dtalbot@flgadistrict.org), 877-457-5556, ext. 4. ■



Participating in the stewardship training were (left to right) Rev. George Murdaugh; Gerald Kirk, LCEF Chief Credit Officer; Rev. James Wiggins Jr.; Rev. Ronald Biel; Rev. Dean Pfeffer; Rev. Larry Schaefer; Nicholas Delien; Rev. Bernard Julmiste; Rev. Dennis Bartels; Rev. Mark Abram; Daniel J. Reichard, LCEF District Vice President; Rev. John Glover.

## Understanding the Dynamics of Stewardship

The stereotypical understanding of "stewardship" describes a process of giving, encourages generosity and seeks to inspire sacrificial giving.

In my seven years in stewardship consulting, I came to see "stewardship" and "generous giving"



as a likely a second dynamic to "receiving" (yes, receiving). The grace to receive, the acceptance of God's Gifts in whatever sacrificial fashion, is directly related to the ability to give them away.

You can't give away what you don't have. You won't give away what you believe isn't there.

Although the impulsive desire of human nature may want what every greedy person desires – just a little more. There is great potential for the maturing disciple to recognize the greater Truth. Overflowing abundance stirs the Spirit-given calling to give back to the Author of Plenty. Divine-induced recognition of abundance can wade into the River of Life and float on its current.

In your preaching, teaching and conversing, be quick to point out God's immeasurably more; marvel at the spiritual gifts that are poured into your lap; shake your head in wonder of the grace that keeps coming in easy times and hard. Weave into your family and into the liturgy of the family of God wonder at baptismal identity. Create a tapestry of blessed images of forgiven freedom in Christ.

All this is to say always be prepared to respond to anyone about the hope that is within you, which, incidentally fuels the generous and sacrificial giving that supports the Message of God's overflowing abundance.

Yes, giving begins with receiving.

*Karl Galik*  
Karl Galik,

former Vice-President for Capital Funding Services and author of "The Love Paradox," was installed as Pastor of Peace/Naples this past April

## Responding to God's Abundant Blessings

Today we are faced with a society and a church culture that is not living up to the purpose for which our Lord has called us. According to a recent Gallop poll 50% of all church members have no interest in serving in any ministry at all in God's Kingdom. Think about that! Half of



all church members say they simply want to be spectators.

But our Lord has great expectations for His body the church. He expects every one of us whom He has saved to be actively

using the gifts and talents that He has given for ministry.

That is what Stewardship is all about: not just money but our whole life and what we are doing to connect people to Jesus. Consecrated Stewards is just one of many programs to assist congregations to use their gifts for ministry. It is an educational, Bible-based process designed for small and large congregations alike that has become very cost effective.

Have an active Stewardship plan. Last year more than half of the congregations in the Florida-Georgia District did nothing in the area of Stewardship. Let's change that! As we are told in Ephesians 2:10, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

God has prepared things for each one of us to do. Let's do it!

*Dennis Bartels*  
Dennis Bartels, Chair

Florida-Georgia District Stewardship Advisory Council



### Christ/Perry Expanding Facilities

Construction is under way on the new education wing at Christ Lutheran/Perry.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund is providing ministry assistant to the congregation

congregation in the Perry/Kathleen area. The first Sunday worship for Christ was held in 2006 in the chapel of a Perry funeral home.

Mount Calvary Vicar Steve Schave served as the Mission Developer for Christ Lutheran and was called as the congregation's first pastor on June 4, 2006. Christ chartered as a mission outreach of Mount Calvary and the Florida-Georgia District on June 18, 2006. The congregation met in rented facilities for several years.

Schave accepted a call to Ohio in August of 2008 — the same month that a building committee began meeting. For the next year, the congregation planned, raised funds and investigated potential church sites. By late 2009, the building fund totaled \$40,000 that was used as a land purchase down payment.

Rev. Dr. David Bernthal served as Christ Lutheran's Interim Pastor from October 2008 to June 2009. Rev. John Lehenbauer was installed as Christ Lutheran pastor on July 26, 2009.

In late 2009, the congregation purchased nine acres of land several miles north of Perry. Funding was provided by LCEF, and Laborers for Christ were on site to do construction. The congregation moved into the new facility on June 17, 2012.

In March 2013, the men of the congregation built a picnic shelter next door to the church for use for Vacation Bible School and outdoor picnics and events. Christ Lutheran has an active youth group, works with Perry Volunteer Outreach Center to provide a weekly free meal to the community, leads weekly devotions in four different wings at a local senior care facility and supports the work of Children of Love Lutheran orphanage in La Paz, Honduras. ■

with a construction loan and with its Laborers for Christ team on site to work on the building.

Volunteer Laborers for Christ from around the country arrived in Perry early June and were commissioned for service before starting construction the week of June 11th.

Christ Lutheran began in 2005 when a group of members from Mount Calvary/Warner Robins and Pastor David Brighton began discussing the establishment of a daughter



Youth group members from Living Hope/Kennesaw enjoyed a night out at Christian skate night at Sparkles on June 5. That same month the youth gathered at the church for a lock-in and ended the month with a scavenger hunt activity.

Ken Wedell has taught Sunday School for 35 years at Our Redeemer/Augusta. On Sunday, June 25, the congregation celebrated this long-time service. Wedell was recognized as one of God's servants impacting many through his love of the Lord and for children.



### Rivercliff Members Trek to El Salvador

A ministry team from Rivercliff Lutheran/Atlanta traveled to El Salvador in June for a multi-faceted mission trip.

For much of their time the group focused on a build project, first tearing down an old structure and preparing the site for new construction. Work on the

house was completed in a matter of days and dedicated to the family.

The Atlanta team hosted several King's Table Feeding Programs for area children. They participated in the Seeds of Hope children's program by performing a skit about Jesus feeding the 5,000.

During their time in El Salvador, Rivercliff team members visited an area hospital to hand out sweet bread and coffee, providing the opportunity to meet and pray with families as well as handing out cards made by Rivercliff VBS students. Mission team members also spent time in the El Salvador mall, evangelizing and praying with the people there. ■



#### 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



# Love Ocala Youth Stay Mission a Success

Youth of St. John Church/Ocala and their counselors and other volunteers put their love into action the week of June 18-23. During that seven-day Love Ocala Youth Stay Mission the St. John contingent partnered with different community organizations in a variety of service projects.



The week opened with a Sunday morning car wash to benefit North Marion Ministries Food Bank, with the afternoon dedicated to preparing and serving a meal at Interfaith. An ARC training session and volunteering at Kimberly’s Cottage — Marion County Children’s Advocacy Center — were on the agenda for Monday. Tuesday found the St. John teens and other volunteers working at a domestic violence shelter. Acts of Kindness in Ocala along with playing bingo were part of the group’s Wednesday. Thursday the St. John campus was transformed into a free neighborhood community carnival for all ages. Capping the week was an ARC cookout on Friday.

## 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:**  
FrankKinast | Messiah/Valdosta  
**First Coast Circuit Visitor:**  
Dana Brones | Bethlehem/Jacksonville  
**N Central Florida Circuit Visitor:**  
James Rockey | Amazing Grace/Oxford

# New Minister of Music Serving Our Redeemer/Ocala

After many months of serving as guest organist, Bob Short is the new Minister of Music for Our Redeemer Church/Ocala. Short began his second career as a church musician after retiring from a career in computer science, revisiting his love of music and the organ with the help of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod’s organist workshops. Prior to serving as guest organist for Our Redeemer on a weekly basis, he helped several area churches as a substitute organist. Short began his musical training on the piano at the age of seven. He was taught music composition, theory and harmonization. He transitioned to the organ in high school and also plays the trombone.

# Our Redeemer/Lake City Welcomes New Pastor

Rev. Stephen Fair was ordained and installed as pastor of Our Redeemer Church/Lake City during a June 17 service led by Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton. Attending were clergy from North Florida and South Georgia congregations. Fair graduated from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis in spring of 2017 and received his first call to Our Redeemer in April. The first congregational meeting for Our Redeemer was on May 10, 1964, when First Lutheran/Gainesville Pastor Bob Besalski and a small group met at St. James Episcopal Church. In attendance that day were 41 worshippers. Later that year the fledgling congregation adopted the name “Our Redeemer Lutheran Church” and continued to meet at St. James until the spring of 1965.

Lutheran Church Extension Fund helped the Our Redeemer congregation purchase a church building on U.S. 441 on Alligator Lake. Services were held there from May 16, 1965, until May 3, 1987, when the new sanctuary was completed on Our Redeemer’s 5056 SW State Road 47 campus.



Groundbreaking for a new sanctuary took place in September of 2008, and this Worship Hall was dedicated on October 25, 2009. The original sanctuary is now the Fellowship Hall.

Stephen & Karen Fair



Participating in the ordination service were (l-r) Rev. Dr. Jim Balke, Rev. Frank Marshall, Rev. Bob Jacobs, Rev. Dana Brones, Rev. Keith Bicknase, Rev. Doug Hudson, Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton, Rev. Earl Steffens, Vicar Devin Murphy, Rev. Weston Wildauer, Rev. Dr. Joel Meyer.

# Doug Hudson Installed at Trinity/Albany

Rev. Doug Hudson is the new pastor of Trinity Church/Albany, the congregation he served as vicar for the past year. He was placed as Trinity’s pastor during April call services at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis. Hudson was ordained at his home parish of Bethlehem Church/Jacksonville Beach on June 25 and installed as Trinity’s pastor at his calling parish on June 28. Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton presided at the ordination service; District Fifth Vice President Frank Marshall presided at the installation. Participating in the services were clergy from area congregations.

Participating in the installation service were (l-f) Deacon Richard Boyd, Rev. Jay Winters, Rev. Earl Steffens, Rev. Doug Hudson, District Vice President Rev. Frank Marshall, Rev. Stephen Fair, Rev. Richard Pieplow







Hope/Melbourne members on Saturday, June 24, partnered with Thrivent Financial, Family Promise of Brevard, Children's Home Society and Children's Hunger Project to assemble more than 300 First Aid Kits for families. The congregation was able to provide the containers for this impactful ministry.



# ESOL Ministry Reaches Community

Prince of Peace-Príncipe de Paz/Orlando members have for many years offered English as a Second Language Classes (ESOL) to the community. This ESOL ministry does not simply seek to equip people with language skills, it also provides an opportunity for students to experience Christian hospitality, receive genuine care and compassion and connect with other tangible ways the Prince of Peace-Príncipe de Paz ministry reaches out to the community.

Associate Pastor Adolfo Borges and Deaconess Ligia Borges lead the ESOL classes. A number of students have come to the church to worship and a few families have become members. Several students have volunteered in Prince of Peace-Príncipe de Paz community outreach programs.

Over the past year as demand for English language classes has grown, the Prince of Peace-Príncipe de Paz ESOL ministry has increased. Additional classes have been added to the schedule, and classroom space has been configured in the Family Life Center to accommodate the additional students.

This spring, more than 40 students completed the Prince of Peace-Príncipe de Paz ESOL training. ■



# Liz Borth Joins RLOM Team

Deaconess Liz Borth was installed as Director of Program Ministries for Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries in a morning service at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/Sanford on June 11.



Deaconess Liz Borth with one of the gifts presented by Trinity/Orlando at her farewell reception.

Redeemer Pastor Ed DeWitt officiated.

RLOM is the governing body for Redeeming Life Maternity Home, which is located walking distance from the church. The Home was founded by DeWitt and his wife Sheryl to reach out with the love of Christ and offer hope and opportunity to single, expectant women in crisis. Pastor DeWitt is President and Chairman of the Board for RLOM; Mrs. DeWitt is the Executive Director.



Rev. Ed and Sheryl DeWitt with Deaconess Liz Borth at her installation service as Director of Program Ministries for Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries.



The Angels of Prince of Peace/Orlando set a goal and accomplished it by completing and delivering 120 Lapghans for the Veterans of Lake Nona from March through June. Each lapghan had a heart attached and a card which read: "With one strand of yarn this lap robe was created while saying a prayer of gratitude for the bravery and time you spent defending our country and keeping us safe. Thank you for your service." Thrivent Financial provided financial assistance for the project. "The feedback from these brave men who served in our military and kept our country safe has made this labor of love even more meaningful," said Lu Burchfield, Angel coordinator. Other members of the group include Marge Estes, Peg Henderson, Mary Ellen Branneky, Joyce Miller, Sheila Dean, Lois Stanhope, Kay Ann Richards, Nancy Plotnikoff, Marlene Browne, Kathy McCartin and Connie Lechern. The group's next project is crafting hats for homeless school children in Orange County.

Most recently Borth served as Deaconess for Trinity Church & School/Orlando. The congregation bid a heartfelt farewell to Borth on June 5, sharing love and appreciation for her for her service to Trinity and the downtown community.

Borth in 1995 earned her bachelor of arts degree from Lindenwood University/St. Charles, MO, with a major in business administration. In 2005, she was awarded a master of arts degree by Concordia Seminary/St. Louis with a major in systematics and a minor in church history. She received her deaconess diploma with a major in spiritual care from Concordia University Chicago in 2007. ■

## REGION 3



### Vice President:

Brian Kneser | Woodlands/Montverde

### Board Treasurer:

Renee Varga | Woodlands/Montverde

### Liaity Board Members:

Tom Reagin | Hope/Plant City

Katie Abercrombie | Prince of Peace/Orlando

### Commissioned Minister Board Member:

Lois Ford | Faith/Eustis

### Space Coast Circuit Visitor:

Gary Held | Risen Savior/Palm Bay

### Orlando East Circuit Visitor:

Ken Green | Prince of Peace/Orlando

### Orlando West Circuit Visitor:

Milan Weerts | Emeritus/Clermont

### Winter Haven Circuit Visitor:

Dean Pfeffer | Hope/Plant City

## LUTHERAN LIFE

Please send your congregation and school news — including your photography — to [LutheranLife@aol.com](mailto:LutheranLife@aol.com)





The annual Granny's Attic sale sponsored by the Social Ministry team of Messiah/Tampa provides members with a way to empty their houses of extra things and donate them to a worthy cause. Funds raised help elementary school children and families in the community. The June 24 event raised \$2,580.00 that will be used to feed local families.

## Hope Welcomes DCE Intern Caleb Haack

Caleb Haack was inducted as the Director of Christian Education Intern for Hope Church/Bradendon during worship services July 15 and 16.

Haack graduated in May 2017 from Concordia University Nebraska with majors in DCE and theology and a minor and emphasis in worship arts. His focus at Hope will be to lay a foundation and bolster a strong children's and youth ministry, as well as to conduct a ministry of educational outreach



with children and youth within a one- to two-mile radius of the church campus.

Haack has been involved in many church programs and mission trips, including traveling to Hong Kong three separate times to assist with VBS in Lutheran schools. He spent two summers working at Camp Omega on Horseshoe Lake, Waterville, MN, teaching children about Jesus. He has been involved in a praise band, intramural sports, improv club and various theatre productions. ■

## Zion/Fort Myers Celebrates Graduating Seniors

The Lydia Quilters of Zion Church/Fort Myers took on a new project this past winter to recognize the congregation's 2017 graduating high school seniors. Four graduating seniors were identified for this recognition: Faith Deterding, Syndey Hummel, Haley Yankovich and Parker Wunderlich.

"With many creative ideas and hands, various beautiful and unique quilts were made," said Connie Junghans, one of the Lydia Quilters. "The seniors and their parents were invited to select one of their liking from this group. Their identified quilt was then held for the particular student to receive during the Sunday recognition service."

Zion Pastor Curtis Deterding and Family and Youth Minister Tim Richter, honored each student during that Sunday's 9:30 am recognition service. Karen LaCroix, a Lydia Quilter, presented each student with their prior chosen quilt.

"The mission of this new project was to celebrate our students, remembering their faith journey at Zion and that the quilt would be a reminder of God's love and guidance wherever life would take them," Junghans added.

"Lydia Quilters anticipate with pleasure this ongoing outreach mission in the future." ■



Faith Deterding, Syndey Hummel, Haley Yankovich and Parker Wunderlich — 2017 high school graduates from Zion Church/Fort Myers — were honored during a special recognition service by (back, l-r) Zion Family and Youth Minister Tim Richter, Pastor Curtis Deterding and Karen LaCroix, representing the Lydia Quilters.

## Florida-Georgia District Launches Flood Bucket Drive

In cooperation with the LCMS Disaster Response program of Synod, the Florida-Georgia District has issued an invitation for congregations to join the third joint effort to prepare Flood Buckets to share mercy with those affected by flooding.

The first two such efforts netted more than 1,600 buckets that were delivered to South Carolina and North Carolina to aid victims of flooding. While there is no set limit to the number of Flood Buckets congregations may prepare, each participating church is asked to assemble at least 10 of the relief containers.

"The program is being announced now to give all Florida-Georgia congregations time to plan and execute this effort," said John Elliott, District Disaster Relief Coordinator. "If you have a School ministry, this should allow time to plan so you can get the school children involved after the start of the school year if so desired. Personal notes of love from school-aged children are always a boost to one's morale."

The target date for the rally of buckets will be on or near September 16, 2017. Congregations can sign up at [flgadistrict.org/floodbuckets](http://flgadistrict.org/floodbuckets). Carl Brul is the District's point person for this effort and can be reached at 678-953-9064 or [carlkatrina@hotmail.com](mailto:carlkatrina@hotmail.com). ■



Members of Beautiful Savior/Sarasota celebrated the 15th anniversary of the dedication of the church sanctuary on Sunday, June 25. The worship services included a special children's message by Senior Pastor Rusty Leavitt. Robert Schwanke and Dan Najjar shared their memories of the sanctuary construction. A cake reception was part of the celebration.

### REGION 4



Vice President:

Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers

Laity Board Members:

Jeff Richards | Hope/Bradenton

Evita Gonzalez | Beautiful Savior

/Lehigh Acres

Commissioned Minister Board Member:

Jesse Crosmer | Our Savior/St. Petersburg

Suncoast Circuit Visitor:

David Brockhoff | Holy Trinity/Masaryktown

St. Petersburg Circuit Visitor:

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



## New Music Teacher Coming to St. Paul

Rebecca Schaffer will be joining the faculty of St. Paul School/Boca Raton this fall as the music teacher.



Most recently serving in that same capacity at St. John School/Ocala, Schaffer graduated from Concordia University/Saint Paul, MN in 2001 with a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education/music education and a minor in Lutheran confessionals. She earned her master of arts degree in music education from the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul in 2010. ■



Trinity Church & School/Delray Beach hosts a SunFun summer camp program. During a recent camp day, the pre-k students enjoyed making art with their names. Trinity School serves students from PreK to eighth grade

Graduation ceremonies were a highlight of the academic year at Peace Lutheran Preschool/Okeechobee. Shown presenting a diploma to one of the graduates is Director Karen Smith. Peace School implements the SCEWD curriculum which is a developmentally appropriate curricula designed for Christian schools. The SCEWD plan — Spiritual/Social, Communication Arts, Wellness and Discovery — allows for a variety of resources.



## Yearlong Celebration Marks Our Savior/Lake Worth's 90th Anniversary

Our Savior Church/Lake Worth is continuing its yearlong 90th Anniversary celebration entitled "90 years of Grace."

The celebration launched in March with History Sunday. A special pot luck was enjoyed after the service during which a photo video of past and present ministries was shown.

On June 18, Our Savior members gathered at John Prince Park for a combined picnic with daughter congregations Epiphany/Lake Worth and Salem Haitian/Lake Worth. The celebration included fellowship and Holy Communion as well as choral and band music.

Capping the celebration will be a December 3 worship service and dinner. Plans are under way for a history book, cookbook and trivet memento to be available at that time.

"All former members and friends are invited to praise God with us at our special services," said Rev. Stephen K. Wipperman, who has

served Our Savior since 2005.

After worshipping in various places from the early 1900s, a small group of Lutherans got together and chartered Our Savior Lutheran Church in December of 1927 with Rev. W. Meyer as the first called pastor.

"Through the years, buildings and communicants grew, and with God's blessing we were able to help daughter congregations grow," Wipperman said. "We have opened our facilities to the community by supporting a Christian school, Cross Ministries, the Alzheimer's Association and Alcoholics Anonymous.

"Today we serve our Lord by sharing His love through Family Promise, homeless family ministry; Rebecca's Garden of Hope, tutoring and mentoring; Soccer Saturdays, devotional athletics; and quilting hundreds of blankets for people around the world. Annually we host huge crowds at an oceanside Easter Sunrise Service on Lake Worth Beach.

"God's grace blesses us to be a blessing to many others," Pastor Wipperman concluded.

Our Savior's history has included some significant challenges, including the destruction of the sanctuary in 2005 by Hurricane Wilma's 100-mile-per-hour winds. One piece of furniture from the sanctuary survived intact: the baptismal font.

Wipperman, who had only been in South Florida for two months when Wilma paid her visit, was driving to Our Savior right after the storm passed. He received a call from the local police, telling him that the church was "in the street."

Six days after Hurricane Wilma hit, Wipperman led Sunday worship on the Our Savior campus. Services have continued every Sunday as Our Savior serves members and the surrounding community. ■

*Below — Ladies of Our Savior with the special banner celebrating the congregation's 90th Anniversary.*



## REGION 5



### Vice President:

Steve Wipperman | Our Savior/Lake Worth

### Laity Board Members:

Karen Smith | Peace/Okeechobee

Samuel Ludington | Holy Cross/North Miami

Heartland Circuit Visitor:

Richard Norris | Trinity/Lake Placid

Treasure Coast Circuit Visitor:

Craig Bode | Trinity/Fort Pierce

S Palm Beach Circuit Visitor:

James Weist | Epiphany/Lake Worth

Gold Coast Circuit Visitor:

Timothy Hartner | St. Paul/Weston

Monroe-Miami-Dade Circuit Visitor:

Alan Sielk | St. Paul/Miami



Rev. Jim Weist and Norma Lan were married at Epiphany Church/Lake Worth on June 10. Weist is Epiphany's pastor and serves as the Florida-Georgia District's Gold Coast Circuit Visitor. The new Mrs. Weist is a pre-school teacher at Epiphany. Pictured at the wedding are (l-r) Norma and Jim Weist with Darrell and Linda Stuehrenberg. Weist was Associate Pastor at Gloria Dei/Davie during Stuehrenberg's time there as Senior Pastor.





# Holy Cross Installs DCE Intern Spencer Owen

Spencer Owen was installed as Director of Christian Education Intern at Holy Cross Church & School on July 16. He is a student at Concordia University Nebraska and a member of the Iowa East District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.



Holy Cross is one of the 32 LCMS congregations to be assigned a DCE intern for the upcoming year. Owen, who is from Arcadia, IA, will be working under the leadership of Holy Cross Pastor Dennis Bartels.

On Pentecost Sunday, Holy Cross members surprised their pastor. Following

that day's worship, Elder Sam Lundington made an announcement. As he spoke, a picture of a bright red, 2010 Ford F-150 truck appeared on the sanctuary screen. The keys to that vehicle were presented to Bartels, who was overcome with emotion and at a complete loss for words.

The congregation had started a truck fund to replace the truck that Bartels was driving. That truck, a 2003 Ford F-150 with 350,000 miles on it, had been well used for many

moves of families and their furniture, building materials for the church and school and numerous trips to the dump over the years.

"The new truck has continued that same ministry, and in its first month of operation more than 25 loads of various materials for a variety of ministries has been accomplished," Bartels reported.

The gift presentation coincided with Bartels' anniversary for 35 years in the Ministry and serving 30 years at Holy Cross. ■



# Grace/Arcadia Welcomes Andrew Arias



Participating in the installation service were (back, l-r) Rev. John Hirst; Rev. Scott Mclean; Rev. Benjamin Schroeder; Rev. Richard Norris; Rev. Mark Stein; Rev. David Nabinger; (front, l-r) Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton; Rev. Anthony Arias; Rev. Robert Maulella.

Anthony Andrew Arias was ordained into the ministry of the Lutheran Church -Missouri Synod and subsequently installed as Pastor of Grace Church/Arcadia on July 9.

The former blueberry farmer is a graduate of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis. Established in 2007, this four-year distance education program supplemented by periodic short-term residential courses prepares men for pastoral ministry in the LCMS.

"It has been my joy to serve as Pastor Arias' primary mentor through the first half of this training," said Rev. Richard Norris, pastor of Trinity/Lake Placid and Heartland Circuit Visitor. "He still has two more years of rigorous classes." ■

# Martin Luther Explains The Significance Of His "Luther's Rose" Logo



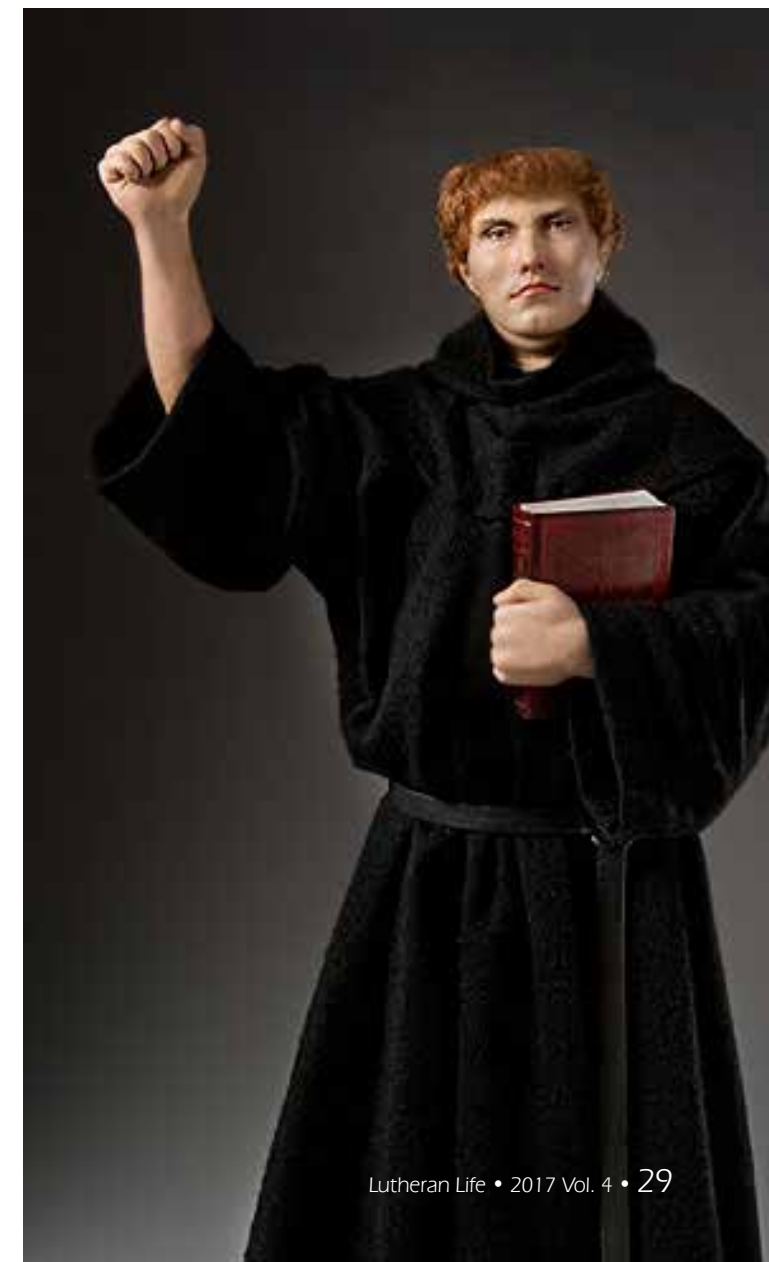
At left — a colorized rendition of Luther's seal began appearing as printers began to include color images in Luther's works. Each one was laboriously painted by hand.

At right — Current rendition of Luther's Seal in a stained glass window.



The Luther Seal, or Luther Rose, a widely recognized symbol for Lutheranism, was designed for Martin Luther at the behest of John Frederick of Saxony in 1530 while Luther was staying at the Coburg Fortress during the Diet of Augsburg. Luther interpreted his seal in a July 8, 1530, letter to Lazarus Spengler:

*Grace and peace from the Lord. As you desire to know whether my painted seal, which you sent to me, has hit the mark, I shall answer most amiably and tell you my original thoughts and reason about why my seal is a symbol of my theology. The first should be a black cross in a heart, which retains its natural color, so that I myself would be reminded that faith in the Crucified saves us. "For one who believes from the heart will be justified" (Romans 10:10). Although it is indeed a black cross, which mortifies and which should also cause pain, it leaves the heart in its natural color. It does not corrupt nature, that is, it does not kill but keeps alive. "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17) but by faith in the crucified. Such a heart should stand in the middle of a white rose, to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace. In other words, it places the believer into a white, joyous rose, for this faith does not give peace and joy like the world gives (John 14:27). That is why the rose should be white and not red, for white is the color of the spirits and the angels (cf. Matthew 28:3; John 20:12). Such a rose should stand in a sky-blue field, symbolizing that such joy in spirit and faith is a beginning of the heavenly future joy, which begins already, but is grasped in hope, not yet revealed. And around this field is a golden ring, symbolizing that such blessedness in Heaven lasts forever and has no end. Such blessedness is exquisite, beyond all joy and goods, just as gold is the most valuable, most precious and best metal. This is my compendium theologiae [summary of theology]. I have wanted to show it to you in good friendship, hoping for your appreciation. May Christ, our beloved Lord, be with your spirit until the life hereafter. Amen.* ■





## VBS Programs Reach Thousands in Florida and Georgia

Florida-Georgia District churches are hosting vibrant Vacation Bible School programs this summer, with popular themes including Mighty Fortress and Maker Fun Factory. Crafts, skits, fun and fellowship are elements of the programs, which attract participants from inside the church as well as the community. Shown here are some of the VBS programs in action in the District.



*Ascension/Casselberry, FL*



*Amigos Center/Bonita Springs, FL*



*Concordia/Kendall, FL*



*Rivercliff/Atlanta, GA*



*Hope/Melbourne, FL*



*Grace/Jacksonville, FL*



*Epiphany/Tallahassee, FL*



*Living Hope/Kennesaw, GA*



*St. John/Ocala, FL*



*Mission: Haiti/Haiti*



*Our Redeemer/Augusta, FL*



*St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL*



*Messiah/Valdosta, GA*



*Living Faith/Cumming, GA*



*Our Savior/St. Petersburg, FL*

# The choice isn't always obvious!



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