

LUTHERAN LIFE

*The Newsmagazine of the
Florida-Georgia District
of The Lutheran Church -
Missouri Synod*
November/December 2018





The Mission of the Florida-Georgia District is to serve, assist, and encourage congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ. People of the Florida-Georgia District are equipped, empowered, engaged in the Master's business ... connecting people to Jesus.

Lutheran LIFE is the official newsmagazine of the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. *Lutheran LIFE* is designed to inform LCMS church and school members of the activities, personalities and resources offered by the Synod and the District. *Lutheran LIFE* may also provide a forum for Lutherans to express their views and ideas on a wide range of topics. *Lutheran LIFE* is published bimonthly. News items and photos are encouraged. Please send scanned photos as a .jpg attachment rather than embedded in your e-mails. Or mail your photo print in a good quality resolution to our address below. Advertising is welcome and encouraged; rates and information are available from *Lutheran LIFE's* office. Changes of address including e-mail changes, additions or deletions should be directed to our office — if possible via e-mail: LutheranLife@aol.com

LUTHERAN LIFE

Lutheran Life Publishing:
971 SW Pepperidge Terrace
Boca Raton, Florida 33486

<http://flgadistrict.org/lutheran-life/>

E-Mail photos, news, address updates to:
lutheranlife@flgadistrict.org

John List, Editor

Florida Georgia-District LCMS
Lutheran Ministries Center
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd, Suite 500
Orlando, FL 32822
Toll-Free: (877) 457-5556

www.flgadistrict.org

District President, Greg Walton
School & Youth Ministries, Mark Brink
Finance/Administration, Laura Zirbel
Legal Counsel, Rusty Huseman



floridageorgia DISTRICT CAPSULES



by Greg Walton District President

Calling Congregations

Faith/Fort LauderdaleSole Pastor
Faith/Hialeah, FL..... Senior Pastor
Bethlehem/Jax Beach..... Assoc. Pastor
Epiphany/Lake WorthSenior Pastor
Oak Road/Lilburn, GA.....Sole Pastor
Epiphany/Tallahassee, FL..... Senior Pastor

Calls Issued

Epiphany/Tallahassee, FL called
Stephen Becker as Senior Pastor
Epiphany/Lake Worth, FL called
Stephen Reynolds as Senior Pastor
Oak Road/Lilburn, GA called
Young Chol Choi
as Pastor of Outreach Ministry
Trinity/Port Charlotte called
Brian Albrecht as SMP Pastor
Lakeside/Venice called
David Dahlke as Senior Pastor
Mount Calvary/Warner Robins called
Andrew Howe as Associate Pastor

Calls Accepted

Young Chol Choi accepted call to
Oak Road/Lilburn, GA as Pastor of Outreach
Brian Albrecht accepted call to
Trinity/Port Charlotte as SMP Pastor
David Dahlke accepted call to
Lakeside/Venice as Senior Pastor
Andrew Howe accepted call to
Mount Calvary/Warner Robins as Associate Pastor

Calls Declined

Stephen Becker declined call to
Epiphany/Tallahassee, FL
Eric Van Sharrel declined call to
Lakeside/Venice, FL
Stephen Reynolds declined call to
Epiphany/Lake Worth

Transferred Out to Other Districts

Clarissa Kollbaum (Commissioned)Nebraska
Mary McCain (Commissioned)CNH
John Hanke (Commissioned)Southern
Philip Rigdon (Ordained)Indiana
Kevin Brockberg (Commissioned)Indiana
Stephen Wiperman (Ordained) Kansas

Transferred In from Other Districts

Henry Simon (Ordained)..... Southeast

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Placements

Matthew Chilman (Teacher)
from Concordia/Nebraska
John Cobos (Associate Pastor)
from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis
Miguel Samabria (Associate Pastor)
from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis

Ordained/Commissioned Minister Installations

Rev. Patrick Poock, Pastor
Faith/Parrish, FL
Stephen Hayden, Pastor
Lake Oconee/Eatonton, GA
Paul Sizemore, Pastor
Trinity/Holly Hill, FL

Status Change within the District

Rev. Jacob Roedsens (O)
from Associate Pastor to Sole Pastor
Ms. Tracey Rice (C)
from Active to Candidate
Rev. Stephen Wiperman (O)
from Active to Emeritus
Re. David Sieg (O)
from Candidate to Active

Emeritus

Rev. Stephen Wiperman (O)

Called to Glory

Ms. Juanita Hill-Bell (C)
Rev. Darrell Stuehrenberg (O)
Rev. Jose Puerto (O)

Church Changes

Grace/Rockledge, FL Closed
Journey of Life/Orlando, FL Closed

I AM JOY:FULLY
LUTHERAN
1 THESS 5:16-24

The LCMS Synod Convention will be held in Tampa, FL July 20-25, 2019 under the theme "Joy: Fully Lutheran" from 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. As the host district, volunteer opportunities will be available throughout the week. Watch for further information in the new year on how to register as a full-of-joy servant for this event.

Jay Wendland Named District Vice President LCEF

Jay Wendland has been hired to serve in the role of District Vice President of Lutheran Church Extension Fund for the Florida-Georgia District. He began his role October 15, 2018.



Wendland was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and grew up in Jackson, Mississippi. He attended the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg where he received his Bachelor's degree in Marketing. He grew up attending Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Clinton, Mississippi. He currently attends Living Faith Lutheran Church in Cumming, GA. While attending Living Faith he served as Treasurer and as a congregational LCEF advocate.

In 2012, he was elected to the Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors as Region One Lay Representative. Additionally, he served on the Board of Directors as Treasurer of Stepping Stone Mission, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization (RSO), and as a Circuit Treasurer. Wendland brings with him more than 20 years of marketing and sales management experience. Most recently in his role as Director, Partner Sales at a major accounting software company and Head of Sales at a startup software company in the Atlanta area.

He has been married to Deborah, for seven years. Deborah serves as an Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy in the College of Health Professions at Mercer University and was recently awarded her PhD in Applied Physiology from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

"Jay has a servant's heart and is looking forward to making a difference in the Florida-Georgia District with LCEF where investments build ministry," President Walton stated. "He and his wife will be relocating to the Orlando area in the near future and our entire District ministry team is looking forward to his participation." ■

Gary Engel Appointed to District Board of Directors

Gary Engel, Vice President of King of Kings/Jasper, GA will join the Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors. He holds a bachelor's degree in History from the University of South Alabama, and a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the United States Naval War College with a focus on the Middle East.

Engel founded and owns Engelheim Vineyards and Engel Farms. He is the Vice President of the Georgia Wine Producers and he also serves as a member of the Gilmer County, Georgia Board of Tax Assessors.

In addition to his church service, Engel was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Army in 1975 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps as a Distinguished Military Graduate. Engel served at multiple levels within the Army for 28 years which includes being a member of the Army Science Board Studies for 1999, 2000, and 2001. The Army Science Board develops Strategic level concepts and future force innovations that it recommends to the Leadership of the Army.

Engel served as the Director of Plans, Readiness, and Mobilization of the Military Traffic Management Command from May of 2000 to June 2002. In June of 2002, he reported to the United States Army Forces Command Headquarters where he served until October of 2002 when he was to deployed to Kuwait/ Iraq. Colonel Engel served as the Operations Officer of the 377th Theater Support

Colonel (R) Engel and his wife, Jan, have two daughters, Kathryn Vaughan, an Assistant Principal in Las Vegas, Nevada, and Emily Engel, the Legislative Assistant for the Education Committee for the State of Georgia, plus one son, William Engel, a Senior Operations Director for the Accenture Corporation. ■



DISTRICT CALENDAR

Hearts for Jesus Project
In 2019 we will be supporting the
Lutheran Special Education Ministries

Florida Georgia District 70th Anniversary
Celebrating 70 years 1948-2018

2019 District School Music Festival
Friday, February 22, 2019
St. Paul Lutheran Church & School
Lakeland, FL

National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors
February 18-22, 2019
District Office Orlando, FL

District Administrators Conference
February 27-March 1, 2019
El Caribe Hotel Daytona Beach, FL

2019 New District Workers Retreat
March 1-2, 2019
District Office Orlando, FL

2019 Veterans of the Cross Retreat
March 4-6, 2019
Life Enrichment Retreat Center
Fruitland Park, FL

Regional Pastor Conferences
Region 1 April 28-29
Region 2 May 7-8
Region 3 May 4
Regional 4 May 7
Region 5 May 6-7
Locations In Each of the Five Regions

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

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

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

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

National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors
September 30-October 4, 2019
District Office Orlando, FL

We've Got Plenty

In November we kick off the Florida-Georgia District 70th Anniversary Special Appeal to raise funds for the District Mission Loan Fund, which is a perpetual fund to help start ministries and loan dollars that will be returned and re-loaned to other ministries. It allows the dollars contributed to roll over and over and live on perpetually, serving missions across the Florida-Georgia District.

If every member of the District were to make a one-time contribution of \$70 dollars (which is \$10 a day for just one week; \$5 dollars a day for two weeks; or \$3.33 a day for three weeks — all very attainable), the net result could be \$3.5 million that will be dedicated for lending congregations and ministries at 0% interest.

Imagine what God will do as we together respond to this opportunity with thankful hearts! We have so much for which to give thanks!

In one of my favorite holiday movies, "Holiday Inn," Bing Crosby croons the delightful Irving Berlin song, "I've Got Plenty to Be Thankful For." Take a look at the lyrics:

I've got plenty to be thankful for
I haven't got a great big yacht
To sail from shore to shore
Still I've got plenty
to be thankful for

I've got plenty to be thankful for
No private car, no caviar
No carpet on my floor
Still I've got plenty
to be thankful for

I've got eyes to see with;
Ears to hear with
Arms to hug with;
Lips to kiss with;
Someone to adore!

How could anybody ask for more?
My needs are small, I buy 'em all
At the five and ten cent store
Oh, I've got plenty
to be thankful for

How much more do each of us have reason to be thankful because of a living faith in Jesus! God has given us, undeserved as we are, new life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He paid the debt we could never pay, and bore the suffering we could never suffer. How can we not be thankful? Each of us have been given so much, maybe not in terms of finances or material possessions, but certainly in terms of our spiritual blessings in Jesus. This spirit of thankfulness in Scripture seems often to be related to relationships rather than things.

It is interesting as you look through the Bible how often the word thanks or thanksgiving or thankfulness is used. Not surprisingly, the biggest concentration can be found throughout the Psalms — songs of thankfulness and praise! However, the Epistles of St. Paul are filled with words of thanks. Take, for example, Ephesians 1:16, where Paul writes, "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers..."

Or look at Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; Phi-

lémon 4. Each begins the letter thanking God for the people who have faith in Jesus and the work they are doing on behalf of the Gospel. I don't believe that Paul had that spirit of thankfulness prior to his Damascus Road experience, when Jesus appeared to him and, in blinding him, literally opened his eyes to a new reality. It was a reality filled with thanksgiving.

As you look around your home, as you look around your neighborhood, your workplace, your congregation, your golf course or bowling alley, wherever you find yourself, see all the opportunities to be thankful.

In speaking to the District President in the Southern District, shortly after Hurricane Michael, he feared that of the five churches impacted and destroyed by the hurricane, three would not likely be able to be rebuilt. Even at that, the concern was more about workers and the people in these congregations rather than the facilities themselves. While my heart grieves for these con-

gregations and communities, I am thankful that there was minimal loss of life. At the same time, I am thankful that not one congregation in the Florida-Georgia District reported anything other than minor damage, and that we have congregations engaging

in their communities to help with clean-up efforts. We have so much for which to be thankful!

In 2 Corinthians 9 Paul writes, "He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only



70th Anniversary Goal \$3.5 Million Thankoffering

If every member of the District were to make a one-time contribution of \$70 dollars (which is \$10 a day for just one week; \$5 dollars a day for two weeks; or \$3.33 a day for three weeks — all very attainable), the net result could be \$3.5 million that will be dedicated for lending congregations and ministries at 0% interest.

To Be Thankful For

supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" If we want to strengthen a spirit of thanksgiving it will come as we serve others around us in the name of Jesus!

We have so many organizations, in addition to our congregations, which serve the larger community on behalf of us all. Let me name just a few of them for your consideration. In Georgia we have Lutheran Services of Georgia, a Social Service Agency that works with refugees, foster care, adoptions, disaster response and disability services. They have stations all over the state of Georgia, working on behalf of us all. Stepping Stones Mission, led by Pastor Joseph Song, is an inner city Atlanta mission that serves the homeless population, providing essentials like food and clothing, and sharing the hope of Jesus. Numerous projects are accomplished in the name of Jesus through Thrivent Action Teams. These are all ministries that partner with us to share the love of Jesus in the world.

**LUTHERAN SERVICES GEORGIA
LUTHERAN SERVICES FLORIDA
STEPPING STONES MISSION
MISSION: HAITI
REDEEMING LIFE MINISTRIES
AMIGOS EN CRISTO
LUTHERAN COUNSELING SERVICES
CAMPUS MINISTRIES
MINISTRIES TO VETERANS
MINISTRIES TO RETIREES
PRISON MINISTRIES**

In Florida we have Lutheran Services Florida that work with a variety of issues, including disaster relief, refugees, prevention and care for victims of human trafficking, work with elderly

and with children, and assistance for those struggling with substance abuse. Redeeming Life Ministries in Sanford, FL works with unwed mothers and gives them a safe environment to stay as they prepare for motherhood. Mission Haiti does an excellent job providing opportunities for short-term missions to Haiti and caring for some of the poorest people. Amigos En Cristo in Immokalee, FL does a wonderful job of working with immigrants and refugees in SW Florida. Lutheran Counseling Services in Orlando does a tremendous job as our ministry partner working with all kinds of people in need of various kinds.

In both states we have campus ministries that are making an impact on students. We have ministry to military veterans, ministry to retirees, and ministry to those in prison. All these, and so many more that I didn't mention, occur every day, week in and week out, for the sake of Jesus, on behalf of us all. We have so much for which we can give thanks!

In a matter of weeks we will once again celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus. So many traditions surround our celebrations. No doubt your congregation will have extra services or maybe special presentations, decorations and lights, things that help build the anticipation and excitement for our celebrations of Jesus. God sent us His only Son to provide salvation and life to us. And while we are thankful for this gift, it was never meant to be tucked away in some closet for future use, like some Christmas presents will be. Instead, our thankfulness is a call to action. Someone has said that thanksgiving leads to thanks-living. May our gracious God cultivate in each of us a spirit of thanksgiving that moves us into action for the sake of the

Gospel! May He instill in us an eagerness to serve and support ministry that makes an impact and connects people to Jesus. There are so many opportunities all around us to make a difference. In thankfulness, won't you join in?

I've got plenty to be thankful for . . . and so do you! May this be a season overflowing with thanksgiving that leads to thanks-living as we work together to celebrate 70 years of blessing in the Florida-Georgia District and connect people to Jesus!



*Blessings during
this holy season!*



*In His
Peace,
GREG*

District's Launches 70th Anniversary Campaign

The Florida-Georgia District was founded in 1948 with only 28 churches. A group of individuals who were to become the board of directors for the District met in November of 1947 and then officially organized on January 1st of 1948. Today the District is comprised of more than 200 congregations planted from as far South as Key West, Florida and as far north as Toccoa, Georgia.

"As in 1948, the District today remains keenly focused on missions," District President Greg Walton offers, "missions that connect people to Jesus. So as we prepare to celebrate God's blessings for the past 70 years it seems right to honor that mission spirit and challenge the members of our District to reach out with the saving grace of

Jesus to more people, right here in Florida and Georgia."

Walton challenges the District to use their imagination — taking a visionary look at locations where Jesus and the news of salvation can be proclaimed! He has asked the District to start 10 new missions — two in each of the five District Regions — each year during the next five years. "We are working closely with Five-Two Network to help achieve this goal."

According to Walton, the District has started a Mission Loan Fund. Money from that fund is loaned to congregations and ministry starts at 0% interest to be used for a new house of worship or for them to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities.

Loan repayments go directly back to the Mission Loan Fund and the cycle is able to repeat itself.

"If every member of the District were to make a one-time contribution of \$70 dollars (which is \$10 a day for just one week; \$5 dollars a day for two weeks; or \$3.33 a day for three weeks — all very attainable), the net result could be \$3.5 million that will be dedicated for lending congregations and ministries at 0% interest," Walton concludes.

Additional information will be coming through the District's congregations about opportunities to make a one-time contribution to this Mission Loan Fund. ■

From battlefields to hospitals, from prison cells to boardrooms, chaplains are ministering in places where churches often cannot go.

District Vicar John Karolus Explores US Navy Chaplaincy



Vicar John Karolus has been busy since arriving at St. Paul/Boca Raton in mid-August from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis.

Last February, Karolus received a recruitment email from one of the St. Louis Naval Recruitment officers. Because he had always had the idea of serving as a chaplain in the back of his mind, "it seemed like a good time to explore it further," he explains. "After some meetings and a lot of paperwork, I was selected to participate in the Navy Chaplain Candidate Program. This is a program that allows current seminary students to experience what serving as a naval chaplain would be like, without interrupting their studies or personal life.

"I have several years of eligibility to complete three separate phases of training, which includes job-shadowing a current Active Duty chaplain," Karolus continues, "all of which I schedule when I am available, rather than having to report for a monthly or month-long annual drill."

Karolus was commissioned as an Ensign of the United States Navy on September 10th at the United States Navy's Delray Beach, Florida recruitment office. His Chaplaincy training will take place in Newport, Rhode Island, but will be scheduled around John's calendar and the program runs for six years. Karolus and his wife, Emily, look forward to the unique opportunities this service will provide them.

"The program will not interfere with my vicarage experience at St. Paul/Boca Raton, but will likely begin more intensely after Emily and I return to St. Louis next August. This is a great opportunity for me to see if the armed services would be a good fit for us, and for the Navy to see if I would be a good fit for them. We are excited for what doors this may open for us!" ■



Well done good and faithful servant

District's Darrell Stuehrenberg Called to Glory

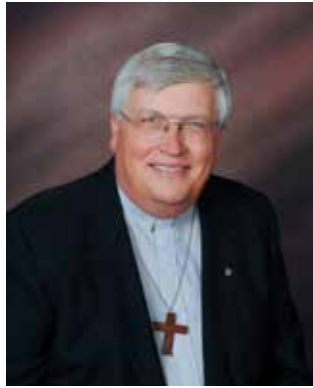
"Mr. Evangelism," the Rev. Darrell Arthur Stuehrenberg, was called home October 22, 2018.

"Probably best known for his extensive social media network, Stuehrenberg was an ardent supporter and participant of District-wide Great Commission Conventions, conferences, conventions, ordinations, installations, stewardship rallies and memorial services," the Rev. Dennis Bartels explained at Stuehrenberg's dual memorial services held on Florida's separate coasts — Friday, November 2nd at St. Paul/Weston and Sunday, November 4th at Bethlehem/Fort Myers. Bartels preached at both services. Rev. Dr. Greg Walton, president of the Florida-Georgia District, served as liturgist at Sunday's service.

"Darrell was proud of his Minnesota heritage," Bartels offered, "and he was quick to let you know that. He was so connected to the Southeast Florida coast during his 33 years at Gloria Dei/Davie and equally connected to the Southwest Florida people during his eight years of ministry at Bethlehem/Fort Myers."

Stuehrenberg was born April 8 1951 in Breckenridge, Minnesota — the oldest of four children. He was raised on a grain and livestock farm about 40 miles south of Fargo/Moorhead, MN. He was one of three cousins that became Lutheran pastors. He attended a country day school through the sixth grade and then Breckenridge High School where he met his lifelong partner, Linda (Olson). Together they attended Concordia College/St. Paul, MN; Concordia Senior College/Ft. Wayne, IN; Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MN and Concordia Seminary in Exile (Christ Seminary/Seminex). After graduating seminary he received his first call to Gloria Dei/Davie, FL and was ordained in his home congregation in Minnesota during the congregation's 75th Anniversary celebration on June 12, 1977.

Darrell and Linda Stuehrenberg celebrated 46 years of marriage this past summer. They were blessed with three children: Christopher (Kit) in '74, Bryce in '76, and Tina in '81. They have five grandchildren.



"Darrell was always a hard-working and very focused individual," Bartels continued. "He led Gloria Dei from a small congregation in a double-wide trailer to a vibrant church/school ministry that eventually constructed a geodesic dome for their permanent sanctuary."

Eileen and I were early members of Gloria Dei and had been intimately involved with the youth Bible study and meeting groups," John List, Florida-

Georgia District communications editor remembered. "Pastor Stuehrenberg had me involved in the marketing and promotion of the capital campaign to raise funds for our building project — and no one had even heard of a geodesic dome."

"We learned that a geodesic dome is a hemispherical thin-shell structure (lattice-shell) based on a geodesic polyhedron and triangular elements of the dome are structurally rigid and distribute the structural stress throughout the structure, making geodesic domes able to withstand very heavy loads for their size as well as strong winds. Although the congregation was a little skeptical at first, they got on board as the architect began to show us renderings of the anticipated sanctuary."

"The capital campaign and logo we created as called 'God's Domain' and we kicked off the campaign at Kapok Tree. It was THE place in Broward County for weddings, bar mitzvahs and banquets and Pastor Darrell wanted to make a big splash with our members. It worked!"

As Gloria Dei's dome was completed it became a statement in architectural design for Southeast Florida and was easily identified from commercial aircraft as you approached Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport.

During his three decades at Gloria Dei the congregation became one of the first to experiment with contemporary worship. His passion for quality music led to spirited festival services both within the domed sanctuary and out in the church's grove. Easter Sunrise worship was often among the trees adjacent to the athletic fields.

In addition to Stuehrenberg's work at Gloria Dei/Davie, he was deeply involved in

community, Florida-Georgia District and LCMS National ministry activities. He participated or led committees for crisis pregnancy centers, hot air balloon outreach ministries, emergency assistance service for Broward County, the Davie-Cooper City Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce. He mentored DELTO (distance education leading to ordination) students preparing to become Lutheran pastors.

Stuehrenberg was also instrumental in the establishment of Haiti Lutheran Mission Coordination Committee and made more than 22 trips to Haiti as the pastoral advisor for the Florida-Georgia District's 'Mission: Haiti' organization under the leadership of Helen Roenfeldt.

"Darrell played a pivotal role in the establishment of St. Paul/Weston's congregation in 1988," emphasized Rev. Tim Hartner, who recently retired from St. Paul/Weston. "Gloria Dei provided office space and enthusiastic support for that new mission and was an exceptional friend and coworker during those early years — and throughout my ministry at St. Paul."

In recent years Stuehrenberg had been fighting cancer and was going through treatments that took a toll on his body. "We knew something was wrong," Bartels continued "when Darrell went silent on social media. Although he preached at Bethlehem on Sunday the 21st, he succumbed to a heart attack the following day. He was a great friend and I'm going to miss him."

During the memorial service Pastor Bartels had the clergy stand and offer a word or two of what they would remember most about Stuehrenberg. Thoughts like "master communicator, never judgmental, assimilator, conduit for connecting people to Jesus, thinking outside the box — and one that brought a lot of laughter — didn't always follow the rules! He was also a lover of food and planned his lunches with friends weeks in advance."

According to Bartels, Pastor Stuehrenberg appeared in "Cease Fire," a movie made in South Florida with actor Don Johnson. "Darrell played a pastor of course."

"The Bible doesn't say not to grieve," Bartels concluded. "Just that when we grieve we should do it with hope knowing that our loved ones are in the arms of Jesus."

Interment will be in Stuehrenberg's home state of Minnesota. — JL ■

District Educators Convene in Daytona Beach

The 2018 Florida-Georgia District Educators Conference was held in Daytona Beach and was attended by more than 500 Lutheran school and parish education professionals.

The theme of the conference, "Urgent Care," centered on Care for Others and Care for Self, and ultimately on the most urgent care ... sharing the Gospel with those who don't yet understand who Jesus is and what He has done for them.

The conference included daily Bible study based on the conference theme taken from Titus 3:14, "...let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful."

The Bible studies were led by the conference chaplain, Rev. Dr. Ryan Peterson who serves as Assistant to the University President and Campus Pastor at Concordia University Ann Arbor. More than 50 Breakout Sessions were offered and participants engaged in conversation and discussion with collegial affinity groups following "Ted Talks" based on the conference theme.

District President Greg Walton preached at the closing worship service hosted by Trinity/Delray Beach.

Three individuals were honored at the annual, "Celebration Banquet." The, "Dr. Ben Eggers Outstanding Lutheran School Educator Award," was presented to Mrs. Jan Tumminello a teacher and administrator at St. Paul/ Boca Raton and



URGENT CARE

titus 3:14

Mr. David Leimer, Middle School teacher at Grace/ Jacksonville.

The "Barnabas, Son of Encouragement Award," is presented by

the Educators Conference to the pastor of a congregation with a school ministry. Honorees are nominated by members of their school faculties. The 2018 award recipient is Pastor Steve Carretto from St. Paul/Boca Raton. ■



Jan Tumminello



David Leimer



Steve Carretto

District Pastors Convene Under

The Florida-Georgia District Pastors Conference was held September 24-26, 2018 in Daytona Beach, FL under the theme "The Gospel in a Secular Age."

More than 200 workers attended the event, inclusive of vicars, deaconesses, and deacons. Led by keynoters Rev. Dr. John Nunes, President Concordia/NY, & Rev. Mark Kiessling director of LMCS Youth Ministry, those gathered worked through the complexity of our contemporary



John Nunes



Mark Kiessling



Victor Belton



Oscar Benavides

culture, and the desire for all the world to know the love of Christ.

Some of the presenters were Rev. Dr. Victor Belton, Rev. Oscar Benavides, Rev. David Haara, Rev. Ben Hoyer, Mr. Matt

Keene, Dr. Daniel Seidell, Rev. Jay Winters, and President Greg Walton.

Rev. Dr. Rick Armstrong, Executive Director of Lutheran Counseling Services led the devotions each day and attendees

District LWML Completes 36th Biennial Convention, Establishes \$104,000 Mission Goal

Greetings on behalf of the LWML Florida-Georgia District! Our 36th biennial convention was held September 28-30 in Orlando, and it was a very uplifting event, attended by almost 300. We adopted a Mission Grant goal of \$103,978 for the coming biennium, and voted on the specific grants which will be funded. We also elected new officers, who will serve a term of four years.

- Vice President Mission Service – Elizabeth Borth of Clermont, FL, member of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Sanford
- Recording Secretary – Silvia Grasberger of St. Petersburg, FL, member of Grace in St. Petersburg
- Treasurer – Ada Jarmosevich of Ocala, FL, member of Our Redeemer in Ocala.
- Pastoral Counselor – Rev. Paul Meseke of Brooksville, FL, who is the pastor of Christ in Brooksville.

I was elected as Vice President Communications, and am a member of Our Savior in St. Petersburg.

The nominating committee for the 2020 District Convention was also elected: Lois Ford of Eustis, FL, chairman; along with Paulette Bernthal of Juliette, GA and Bunnie Koelsch of Melbourne, FL.

We are excited about the mission grants we have adopted for the biennium, and are preparing to co-host the 2019 LWML Convention in Mobile, AL next June. Co-hosting the convention is a big job . . . the 2017 convention in Albuquerque was attended by 3,470 people, and the 2015 convention in Des Moines was attended by more than 4,600! Fortunately our sisters in the Gulf States and Louisiana-Mississippi districts are working with us as hosts.

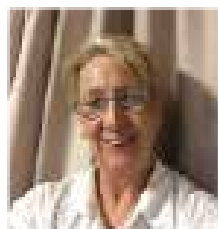
Many hands make light work!

Speaking of many hands, we could use a few more hands as we plan to staff the convention. The time commitment is not large: just 2 4-hour shifts over



**FUTURE
& HOPE**
by Pat Powell
LWML District Vice President
for Communications

the course of the convention. But the rewards are immense. It's a once in a lifetime experience working with other LWML members, and making new friends. Workers also receive a substantial discount on their convention registration. To learn more, visit www.flgalwml.com ■



Elizabeth Borth



Silvia Grasberger



Ada Jarmosevich



Paul Meseke



Lois Ford



Paulette Bernthal



Bunnie Koelsch

Theme “Gospel in a Secular Age”



David Haara



Ben Hoyer



Matt Keene



Daniel Seidell



Jay Winters

had the opportunity through several breakouts to dive deeper with each of the speakers during the breakouts, reception and meals with conversations flowing into dinner and the evenings.

Survey responses included “one of the best conferences I have been at in my 27 years as part of our District.” “Excellent topic and fantastic presenters.” “It was eye-opening!”

Among the business conducted were the elections for the Ordained Advisory Delegate for the 2019 Synod Convention. The following were elected: Rev. Dr. Dennis Glick; Rev. James Guelzow and Rev. Ronald Biel.

Those serving on the committee for 2019 are Rev. Andrew Schermbeck, Chair, Rev. Joe Adams, Rev. Tom Eggebrecht, Rev. Eric Estes, Rev. Mark Harris, Rev. Stephen Reynolds, Rev. James Wiggins, and President Greg Walton. ■

Pastor James Rockey is serving his third 3-year term as a Director on the LSF Board

Lutheran Services Florida Remains an Important District Partner in Mission, Faith

Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) is a leading, life-changing human services organization working to transform the lives of people regardless of age, background, or belief. LSF is consistently making a positive and transformative impact in widespread communities by strengthening families and protecting children.

"Lutheran Services Florida is built upon the Lord's call for us to love our neighbor," explains Rev. James Rockey, pastor at Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL. "Today LSF helps build healthier, happier, hope-filled communities by impacting the lives of 1 in 50 Floridians through its various programs across the State!

"We generously serve children and families, youth and teens, adults and elderly, refugees and immigrants, and victims of natural disasters through various programs ranging from substance abuse and mental health to education."



James Rockey

Help is offered to five basic groups: Children and Families — where LSF is making a positive and transformative impact in our communities by strengthening families and protecting children.

Adults and the Elderly — creating healthier lives by protecting and advocating for adults who may otherwise be in vulnerable circumstances.

Refugee and Immigration — forming a welcoming community and happier future for refugees and immigrants seeking a new life and home.

Victims of National Disasters — responding and rebuilding when our neighbors and communities are in most need after natural disasters, and

Lutheran Services Florida Health Systems — a behavioral health managing entity creating an integrated system of care for uninsured children, adults, and families.

"Through our work, we help communities build healthier, happier,

and hope-filled tomorrows," Rockey continues. "A lot of members of our District are unaware that we have been blessed with a fruitful working relationship with LSF since 1982!"

According to Rockey, every week the Lord is working through more than 200 congregations around the Florida-Georgia District in sharing Christ's love. "We are consistently blessed to see the Lord working in and through our ministries connecting more people to Jesus."

Established by Lutheran churches, LSF collaborates with others toward common goals of loving and serving neighbors. LSF is a nationally recognized faith-based organization transforming the lives of individuals and communities through effective and efficient programs. With a budget of more than \$240 million and more than 1,300 employees, LSF is a ministry partner we can celebrate.

Additional information about Lutheran Services Florida is available at lsfnet.org. ■

Last week I spoke to a woman that has a dream of reaching families



FiveTwo NETWORK

by Oscar Benavides
Vice-President
of Strategic Initiatives

Oscar Benavides

with the gospel that are consistently on the basketball court, soccer field or traveling to a sports tournament on Sunday mornings. Next week I'm meeting with a couple about reaching families for Christ through their gymnastic and dance studio. Another wants to reach college students by opening a coffee shop. Most of us have dreams of using our passions, experiences and gifts in helping others. But how do we do it? Where do we start?

In the Scriptures, the word "dream" appears 98 times. Some of

those times the word could also be interpreted as "visions." We believe that God does put burdens, visions or dreams in us to reach out to those that don't know Him. I had a dream of reaching students in public schools and though there were many doubters, our ministry reached more than 7,000 students and families in ten years. We all have God-given kingdom expanding dreams.

This last year, President Greg Walton has shared his dream of seeing two new ministry starts in each region

men and women in our churches. The leaders who have what it takes to reach new people for Jesus often go unnoticed. That's why FiveTwo has created a process that helps men and women grow their God-given dreams into ministries and businesses that last. Leaders who use our proven model live out their dreams, and the Church grows.

FiveTwo has training opportunities on how to start your new ministry. We will be launching workshops in 2019 that help you launch your dream. In addition, the FiveTwo New Start Incubator is available to you in Orlando

Dreams Can Come True Without Disney

of our district every year. When he says, "ministry start" it does not only mean churches but all kinds of expressions of the gospel that reach outsiders. That means that some of these new starts could be led by

every six months. Contact us to start your training on May 9-11, 2019. Additional information is available: email: obenavides@fivetwo.com website: www.fivetwo.com ■

What do you want to do?

That's a good question!

It often comes up at church board meetings, council meetings or staff meetings. So how do you answer the "what do you want to do" question? Often the answer is given based upon what was liked or enjoyed in the past

What Do You Want To Do?

or what we are familiar with from our church or others. "We should do that pot luck again." "We should have another talent show night" or "we

few years pass and we are not where we could be or should be. Personal preferences creep in. Yet when we answer the "where are we going" question we can help churches to get clear, get specific and become more focussed in doing what God wants for them in that particular time and place.

But be careful, some will hear this "where are we going" question and answer the "how do you want to get there" question instead and start talking activities.

Once again the temptation is to assume we all know where we are going. So don't give in. Interrupt and say, we're going to get to strategy and programs but let's first define and

clarify where we are going. It is a question we should repeat before we plan and again after the event to check how we did in getting us where we believe God wants us to go.

When we intentionally ask again and again the "where are we

going" question we are reminded to be more focussed in what we decide to do. For example, when we say that

the desired outcome is to get to know our immediate neighbors who live near our church, then we probably will be more discerning and careful in focussing on something that will lead to those relationships. We will be less likely to accept what may be a popular strategy or program yet does not lead to that desired outcome. We like board member "Chuck" or "Sally" and we don't want to disappoint them by saying "no" to their program or strategy. We are tempted to say "yes" to them. But when we ask the "where are (or should we be) going?" question, it helps them and all present stay on track and say both "no" and "yes" with conviction.

It is a matter of stewardship. Churches serve a limitless God, yet we are charged with managing a limited amount of time, energy, finances, people with gifts and talents. We will want to choose wisely. We want to be faithful to the mission of God to make disciples. What questions are you going to ask your board this month? ■

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



The COACHING LEADER

by Rev. Scott Gress
Lutheran Counseling Services
Leadership Coach

should do [fill in the blank] like the church down the road."

So predictably, this question often turns our thoughts to the past and activities that we have heard about. After all, that is our frame of reference.

Yet asking this question is really a lot like the husband asking the wife, "do you want to go by car or by plane?" Naturally the wife will respond with an obvious question and not a little annoyance in her voice: "Where are we going?!" Of course she wants to know that! How that is answered will determine if she wants to go by car or by plane! In our personal lives we are generally pretty careful to clarify where we are going and then decide how to get there. Yet in church we sometimes assume the where are we going part.

So instead of asking a question about the activity (how we will get there), the coaching leader would encourage you to ask an outcome question first: "where should we be going?" or "what does God desire for us?" Or even, "what do we want to accomplish by God's grace?" That is a far different question! It is one which defines outcomes, goals or even our purpose or mission. Perhaps we all assume what that is. We all know what a church is to be about. Yet when it is assumed it often gets fuzzy and a

District To Host National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors in February, September

The Florida-Georgia District is hosting the National Association of Lutheran Interim Pastors in February, 2019 in the Orlando, Florida area.

A detailed description of the three-phase, 60-contact hour course is found on the NALIP website at www.NALIP.net. Continuing Education Units will be available from the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis for a fee of \$20. While pastors in this class will come primarily from this district, the training is open to all interested pastors. Direct questions about the content of the training is available from Ken Rupp, Executive Director of NALIP at nalip.net@outlook.com or (804)564-5389.

Phase I will be held February 18-22, 2019 at the FL-GA District Offices. The District has arranged for lodging at the Hampton Inn Orlando Airport a short walk from the District Office. Costs are \$118.00 per night and paid directly to the hotel. Meal costs include four lunches and three dinners for Phase III will be \$175.00. This fee is to be paid to the Florida-Georgia District Office. On Wednesday evening the class will eat at area restaurants.

Phase II is work to be completed between the training dates.

Phase III is September 30-October 4, 2019 at the FL-GA District Offices.

The District Office will handle the registration and payments for the training. The fee for both Phase I and Phase III training is \$1,250.00 per participant. Registration and payment can be made with check payable to the FLGA District or by credit card on the District website.

For questions or further information on the training and arrangements please contact Kathy Keene, Administrative Assistant to President Walton, either by email, KKeene@flgadistrict.org or by calling the office at (877) 457-5556 ext 8. ■



MISSION HAITI

by Helen Roenfeldt
Executive Director

Mission Haiti's latest service trip included three hard-working servants from Divine Redeemer Lutheran Church, Hartland, WI and Medical Director, Dr Nancy Swisher, also from WI. The Divine Redeemer team had raised funds to provide more than 50 goats for villages to start new goat cooperative to help families toward self-sufficiency.

"The team distributed food for more than 130 needy families, many displaced from the recent earthquake and gave out 50 tarps to provide shelter for displaced families or homes with roof damage," states Helen Roenfeldt, executive director for Florida-Georgia District's Mission:Haiti.



Pastor Charles with goat herd

had no money. Mission: Haiti provided the funds for transportation for both he and his mother to Port-au-Prince and his treatment at the Leprosy hospital. Both were so grateful, the mother cried as she thanked the local pastor who arranged the details for us.

"At the same village, called Deluge', an elderly gentleman came with a badly infected wound on his foot that he said was from a curse. As the nurse prepared to clean his wound we asked if he wanted to pray with him to lift the curse. He said yes. We then asked if he was a Christian. He said 'no' but he had heard our message of the Gospel before the clinic started

"During the October Health Outreach the team served more than 400 adults, 250 children and 100 expectant and nursing mothers," Roenfeldt continues. "One young man came to us with leprosy. He had been to the local hospital and they turned him away because he

and today was his day; he wanted the assurance of salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ. After prayer and explanation he asked to be baptized. We have a new brother in the faith and we are so thankful that God allowed us to witness both his physical healing and spiritual rebirth!"

Herb Nordmeyer a well-known expert in concrete construction came

during the second week and trained approximately 20 Haitian architects, engineers and construction professional in disaster-resistant construction. He certified four people to teach the course and a formal



Elderly man who was baptized



Young man with Leprosy

District Launches Next Emergent Leaders

Leaders regularly proclaim they want to make a difference in the lives of others. Is this true for you? If so, then I have a question for you:

Is your tendency to speak more for

demonstrate greater clarity when you are speaking only for self. In Emergent Leader sessions we have discovered that "speaking for self" is not a very common or natural occurrence among participants.

During our sessions I've observed these roadblocks to speaking on behalf of self: First leaders, parents, etc. who often see it as their 'job' to speak for others often evidence little

awareness about their potential for inaccuracy when they speak for others. A couple of examples:

A family leader announces:

"My children and grandchildren are Lutherans. We follow Lutheran teaching, Lutheran worship forms and Lutheran prayers."

The oldest child responds to me in a far corner of the room: "That just reflects my parents wishful thinking. I was raised as a Lutheran, attended Lutheran schools but don't make my way to church with any consistency at this point with their grandchildren."

A school principal\DCE\pastor praises her\his staff: "I'm so thankful that you have really bought into a team-work culture."

A member of the staff is later heard commenting on the idea of team-work: "What he\she calls buy-in I call rolling over. I go along with all that "teaming stuff" because it is expected not because I am a fan. I need to see the



EMERGENT LEADERS

by Daryl Pichan
Leadership Trainer

others (we, they, you, many people, I've heard others say...) or do you lean more in the direction of speaking for self? (I, me, my)?

Your leadership communication will

Mission:Haiti

A report from the trenches

graduation was held on Sunday morning at Bon Berger Lutheran Church.

David Vangsness, traveled from Oregon to teach carpentry and the class learned how to construct stable, durable blackboards and painted them with blackboard paint.

"If you, your Church or organization would like to know more about mission and service in Haiti I welcome your contact at missionhaiti99@aol.com or call me at (954) 868-8218. I welcome the opportunity to discuss Mission:Haiti with you and truly appreciate your prayers and encouragement. ■



Left to right: Lophane Laurent, Jean Chaudry, Sem Dieudonne, Dr. Herb Nordmeyer, Ronald Segu, Negjie Paillant



Left — Dr. Herb Nordmeyer with 4 construction professionals newly certified to teach his course on disaster resistant housing.

Right — More than 50 tarps were distributed to residents affected by the recent earthquake.



Training Sessions in January 2019

people at the top really buy in to team work for culture to improve here."

Speaking for others leads to amazing inaccuracy for leaders. Over generalizing, poor listening, and attributing their personal views to others become regular features of communication.

A second impediment is embracing "leadership" training that holds up not speaking for self. Think about these:

"Let's never forgot it is about "us" and not about me."

"There is no 'I' in team."

"Children are to be seen...."

When we try to lead under the weight of the training implied in the sentiments like above leaders begin to hesitate for being labeled selfish. Speaking for others is selfish and controlling. Reflect on the following:

Speaking for others: "We need to identify a path forward for our ministry."

Speaking for self: "I would like to schedule a time with you to talk about a path forward in ministry."

A third impediment is the absence of any training, feedback or coaching that would lead a person to speak for self.

The Emergent Leader experience provides a safe learning environment, skill development and leaders that all contribute to raising the ability to 'speak for self.'

Speaking for others is a leadership weakness. Learning to speak skillfully for self is an elegant leadership skill that contains the power to transform your self-confidence and coaching interactions, build more powerful

conversations with your children and deepen intimacy with your spouse.

The Florida-Georgia District has contracted with Cornerstone Consulting to conduct ten days (65 hours) of leadership training. The training will take place over three 2019 events. January 14-17, February 12-14 and March 25-27. Included in the training program are ten core leadership models, peer review and evaluation, cohort accountability groups, skill development practicums, reading and growth assignments between events, teaching about core leadership capacities and competencies.

Additional information is available from Cornerstone's Kurt Bickel at bickelkurt@gmail.com. ■

Lutheran Coalition for Habitat for Humanity Celebrates

Think about this; how many organizations do you know which are started by a few dedicated people to address an issue in your community? Now, how many of those have been around for 25 years? That is exactly what the Lutheran Coalition for Habitat has done. This organization of about a dozen LCMS and ELCA Lutheran churches in the North Atlanta area finished its first house in 1994 in its quest to eliminate substandard housing in the area. Since then, it has been building one or two houses a year every single year.

"We put a lot of effort into planning and there is lots of work on the Saturday build days, but we love doing it. The Coalition Board is very close knit and we enjoy working together and socializing. It's like a family really," commented current Chairperson Don Snyder. "Partnering mainly with affiliates Habitat/North Central Georgia and NW Metro Atlanta Habitat, the Lutheran Coalition has helped 30 families start new lives in their well-constructed homes."

"The Coalition steps up year after

year, being the hands and feet of Jesus, by building homes and relationships with our families. Their hard work and determination to serve has encouraged our families, staff, and other volunteers and for that we are eternally grateful," offers Sabrina Kirkland, Director, Community Engagement & Home Repair, Habitat/ North Central Georgia.

Perennial board member Jeanne Wieckert described her experience at dedications. "To stand at a home dedication and see a family hold the keys to their new home and their new life after so much hard work, is to see Christ moving in the world through us."

The Coalition is blessed with several members who know a lot about construction, but there are a lot of inexperienced volunteers who come out week after week and accomplish a lot with a little instruction in the "Habitat ways."

In addition to providing volunteers for the build, the Lutheran Coalition does a lot of fund-raising to help pay for the houses. Board member and past Chairperson Marianne Pieper notes "When we started, a share of a house

was around \$38,000. Now it is more than \$80,000."

To meet this financial challenge the Coalition sponsors the annual gala event called Taste of Habitat. "This is our 14th year for the event and it is a fun evening which includes tastes of food from our church's "chefs," live piano music, a silent auction and trivia contest — all held at the beautiful Metropolitan Club in Alpharetta," states treasurer Charlene Yde who organizes the silent auction for the event. "Everyone has a fantastic time and last year the Coalition raised a record \$27,000."

For many years, the Coalition was awarded one of the few Thrivent Builds homes in the southeast through their partnership with Habitat/North Central Georgia. This helped pay for a majority of the share of these houses. Thrivent has recognized that the Lutheran Coalition would do a quality job and get the house done on time, so they always helped to make the Habitat/North Central Georgia application a strong one. Now, the Coalition frequently uses Thrivent Action Teams to help provide



Completion of 30th Home

breakfasts and lunches on work days.

The Coalition recently finished a house for the Abeka family. Mike Christian, house leader for the build effused "Sponsors are the heart and soul of the Habitat ministry and in all my years of working with Habitat, I have not encountered a more generous, hardworking, and dedicated or fun group of people than the Lutheran Coalition. Working, knowing and being with the Coalition has truly been one of the greatest joys of my life."

Unfortunately, the need for decent affordable housing is at least as great now as it was 25 years ago. This group of dedicated volunteers shows no signs of slowing down in their endeavor to alleviate that sad reality. ■

Lutheran Coalition for Habitat for Humanity (LCHH) is headquartered in North Atlanta, Georgia and has been operating for 25 years. Visit their website to learn about schedules and needs for their current building projects, fund-raising activities, future plans as well as sharing our activities with others. Website photos archive the history of the 28 homes built by the Coalition. Members of Lutheran congregations in Cherokee, Cobb & Fulton Counties, Georgia have joined together through Habitat for Humanity to help provide simple decent housing for lower income families. For more information about the Coalition and the Taste of Habitat, visit their Web site at www.lutheranhabitat.org

Below photo — Pastor Carl Schneider from Faith/Marietta present a Bible to one of the new homeowners, Emmanuel Abeka. Emmanuel grew up and was educated in Ghana. He came to the USA 14 years ago and is now proud to be a citizen of the United States.



Buying or selling a home in South Florida?



Sometimes the right choice isn't always obvious.

Real estate broker John List expertly guides clients through myriad challenges to secure the home that meets their needs. He knows and understands market conditions, the importance of being near excellent schools, churches, retail, recreational, financial and business centers. John takes the time to learn each client's goals before researching available properties and connecting them to those that best answer their needs. His personalized service continues through every step of the process until a successful closing. John is equally adept at selling homes, offering 30 years of proven experience backed by a powerful marketing program and an extensive broker network. If you're considering the purchase or sale of a home, call John today.



John List, Senior Broker Associate
Douglas Elliman Real Estate
40-Year Member of Florida-Georgia District
John@JohnList.com
561.212.2112 • elliman.com/johnlist
444 E Palmetto Park Road
Boca Raton 33432





Lutheran Church Extension Fund
› where investments build ministry

When Your Investments Do More For The Church

When you invest with Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), you not only earn a competitive interest rate—your investment also goes to work for the Church.

Since 1978, LCEF has been the chief mission supporter of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). LCEF accomplishes this mission through the generous support of ministry partners like you.

Through secure and easy-to-open investments funds are made available to equip LCMS pastors, churches, schools and organizations to fulfill their call of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*This offer is available on a one account per investor basis only to new investors 18 and older who have not had an LCEF investment in the past 24 months.

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization; therefore, LCEF investments are not FDIC-insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, nor a solicitation to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made solely by LCEF's Offering Circular. Investors should carefully read the Offering Circular, which more fully describes associated risks. StewardAccount access features are offered through UMB Bank n.a. StewardAccount products are not available to investors in South Carolina. ConnectPLUS is not available to investors in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Neither LCEF nor its representatives give legal, accounting or tax advice. Consult your tax advisor as to the applicability of this information to your own situation. UMB Bank n.a. serves as the custodian for the LCEF IRA/HSA programs.



Investment Options

- Open a Young Investors StewardAccount® for your children or grandchildren.
- Open a Family Emergency StewardAccount® to prepare for the unexpected.
- Strengthen your retirement with an Individual Retirement Account.
- ConnectPLUS is for new investors* and offers a competitive interest rate.
- PartnerPLUS is an exclusive investment opportunity for current LCEF partners.
- And more.

Want to learn more about investing with LCEF?

Call us at 800-843-5233, between 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., M-F. There is always a kind, knowledgeable and helpful person to answer your questions.

Visit lcef.org/investment-rates to see our latest investment interest rates.



Lutheran Church Extension Fund
> florida-georgia district

Daniel J. Reichard
877-457-5556 ext. 4

District's High School Youth Will Enjoy Private Access to Hyundai Club at Minnesota Viking's US Bank Stadium

Are your congregation's high school aged youth getting ready for next year's National Youth Gathering? Have you planned out your fund-raisers and set goals? Has your group decided if you are flying or driving? Most importantly of all, have you registered yet?

These are all question for every Florida-Georgia District congregation's high school youth groups and leaders.

Registration is well under way for the LCMS National Youth Gathering slated for Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"All congregations should have received NYG packets," Cindy Hammerstrom stated. Hammerstrom, along with Joe Guagliardo of Faith/Merritt Island, FL are coordinating efforts for the Florida-Georgia District. "If your church didn't receive its Gathering Packet or you have questions, don't hesitate to contact the Gathering Office directly at nygregistration@lcms.org or by phone at 314-996-1155."

"And if you want general information about the Gathering, Pre-Gathering Bible studies, history of the Gathering," Guagliardo continued, "you can learn more about Minneapolis, check out past Gathering videos, pre-Gathering videos and other valuable information at the official website: lcmsgathering.com."

According to Hammerstrom, the



Florida/Georgia District will be hosting a special event for all District groups attending. It will take place at U.S. Bank Stadium where all of our Mass Event take place each evening (this is the home of the Minnesota Vikings). The District event will take place on Saturday, July 13th from 5-7 p.m. Food, interactive games and plenty of time to interact with other churches in our district are all part of the evening.

"A great perk of having our event at the stadium is that we won't have to get in line outside to enter into the stadium that night," Guagliardo concluded. "We'll already be inside and have a reserved section ready for our district youth at the conclusion of the event."

Interested parties can see a video of the venue on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=cINfxHvIQGo.

More information will become available soon about the Florida-

Georgia District Event but it is time to get aggressive with your fund-raising, planning and recruiting high school you to get them ready for next summer. Any questions about the District event can be directed to Cindy Hammerstrom at chammerstrom@flgadistrict.org. ■



REAL.PRESENT.GOD.

LCMS YOUTH GATHERING | Minneapolis · July 11-15, 2019

NYG Key Planning Dates:

Oct. 17, 2018 Registration Opens
Dec. 31, 2018..... YAV* Application Closes
March 1, 2019 ... Last Day of Regular Registration
May 1, 2019 Registration Closes
July 11, 2019 2019 Gathering Begins!

* Young Adult Volunteers

Not only is the Gathering the largest gathering of LCMS teens, it is also the largest gathering of young adults between the ages of 19-25. Young Adult Volunteers (YAVs) can be identified by their orange shirts and extreme enthusiasm at the Gathering. These 19 – 25 year olds, also known as "Orange Nation", play a huge role in making the Gathering a successful and memorable experience. They serve as role models and servant leaders while working in specific areas of the Gathering in the convention center, stadium, hotels and off-site servant events.

District's Middle School Youth Rocked Lake Yale



The Florida Georgia District's Middle School Youth Gathering was held at Lake Yale Conference Center in early November. Over 415 participants from all around Florida and Georgia gathered to hear Matt Popovits, Pastor at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Houston, talk about this year's theme – "REAL" – based on Psalm 46. The gathering band "Bread of Stone" from Sioux City, IA helped everyone in attendance praise our very "REAL" God. The youth assembled more than 1250 Blessing Bags filled with items that people less fortunate – the homeless, those in shelters – can use. Each congregation took some Blessings Bags back to their own city. ■



FLORIDA GEORGIA

REGIONAL NEWS

Out and About in the Florida-Georgia District



A ground breaking ceremony for a state-of-art outdoor sign (left) was held this summer at **Trinity Lutheran/ Toccoa, Georgia**. Pictured at the ground breaking (left-to-right) are: Doe Sawicki, Hank Sawicki, Pastor Roland Vega, Kevin Brockschmitt,



Jan Baird, Paul Young, Jerry Klein, and Richard Waters. The first official use of the sign was the welcoming of the Gauthier family during Trinity's yearly

Octoberfest celebration. Guest minister for Octoberfest this year was Reverend Brian Gauthier who with his wife Amanda are missionaries in Panama. ■

REGION



1



Vice President:

David Brighton

Mount Calvary/Warner Robins

Laity Board Members:

Gary Engel | King of Kings/Jasper

Karen Cerny | Faith/Marietta

Commissioned Minister Board Member:

Tamie Worthington | St Paul/Peachtree City

Circuit 1 NE Georgia Circuit Visitor:

Zachary Hoffman | Good Shepherd/Gainesville

Circuit 2 Atlanta N Circuit Visitor:

Jeffrey Jordan | Rivercliff/Atlanta

Circuit 3 Atlanta S Circuit Visitor:

George Murdaugh | Prince of Peace/

Douglasville

Circuit 4 E Central Georgia Circuit Visitor:

John Lehenbauer | Christ/Perry



The Reverend Steven Hayden was installed as the Pastor of **Lake Oconee/ Eatonton, Georgia** on Sunday, October 7th. The installation was officiated by Rev. David Brighton, First Vice President of the Florida-Georgia District. A sizeable group of active and retired pastors as well as current vicars were present from surrounding churches in the East Central Georgia Circuit. Retired pastors that have served Lake Oconee during the past year and a half vacancy were also present at the service.

Pastor Hayden most recently served at Mount Calvary Lutheran in Indianola, Iowa for the past 17 years. He and his wife Linda have three adult children: Katharine, Hannah, and Christian. ■

Hope Lutheran/Milledgeville Celebrates Golden Anniversary

Hope/Milledgeville, Georgia recently celebrated a milestone — fifty years of praise and worship. This little congregation in a small middle- Georgia town began October 1968 with 13 members, some of whom still regularly attend Sunday worship and bible study.

They first began meeting in private residences and then moved to the “Chapel of All Faiths” on the campus of the Central State Hospital. There they called, ordained and inducted the Reverend Schliepsiek from the seminary in St. Louis. During the last 50 years there have been 16 spiritual leaders at Hope.

The day began with last-minute preparations for a special worship service. Rev. Dr. David Bernthal arrived with the service worship folders which were arranged on tables along with the bulletins and a History of Hope Lutheran Church brochures and various memorabilia from the past. All told there were 74 respondents to the invitations and several visitors as well. The

sanctuary was nearly filled to capacity. The following pastors were in attendance: President Gregory Walton, Reverend Richard Schliepsiek, Reverend Dr. David Bernthal, Reverend Dr. Thomas Artelt and Vicar Laird Van Gorder.

Pastor Bernthal wrote and conducted the communion service, liturgy and prayers, while Pastor Schliepsiek made a return to Hope after celebrating his seminary graduation with friends in St. Louis. He read the bible lessons for the day while adding some historical commentary as well.

President Walton delivered a reflective sermon based on the scripture from Leviticus 25 concerning the “Jubilee” years which among other things provide for a “new beginning.”

Walton challenged Hope’s members to look ahead, while respecting and honoring past accomplishments is proper. He admonished, “If you are only looking back you are going to run into a wall, so what are you prepared to do now to further the

ministry?” A vocal solo was performed by the church organist, Emily Beggs and a duet was performed by members, Deanna Hegedus and Barbara Stevens, on their dulcimers.

Following the service congregation president Lance Priem stood to make a few comments. He thanked everyone for attending, and the individual clergy for taking the time out from their schedules to participate. Recognition of charter members still with the church, specifically Charles Riley (head elder), Dr. & Mrs. Dionisio (Ruthild) Pinero, Mr. & Mrs. Sam (Ruth) Marshall, followed. “But for you and God’s grace we would not be here today,” Priem said. His concluding comments were borrowed from Pastor Schliepsiek’s commentary from the dedication ceremony 50 years ago, — emphasizing how it is still relevant today; in a world marked with all kinds of hopelessness, despair and bitterness, “Hope emphasizes a dimension of our faith that rises above

these so called facts of life. May it always serve to inspire your Christian life and faith. Hope has a ring of uncertainty to it so I like the biblical definition — Confidence. Confidence that whatever the future holds for Hope it is God’s will and we need not worry.”

Following worship there was a luncheon and a large decorated cake was provided by a member of the church. The fellowship hall was filled with chairs and decorated tables covered with white table cloths accented with flower arrangements for the center pieces, which were arranged by a former member. The blessing before the meal was delivered by Reverend Dr. Thomas Artelt who was also a former pastor at Hope.

Below, Emily Beggs played keyboard; the five pastors, left-to-right, are Vicar Laird Van Gorder, Rev. Dr. David Bernthal, Rev. Dr. Greg Walton, Pres. of the FL/GA District, Rev. Dr. Thomas Artelt and Rev. Richard Schliepsiek, first pastor of Hope/Milledgeville.





Forest Lutheran/Silver Springs, Florida is a growing congregation established in 1987 by Christians who had moved to the area. Silver Springs is comprised of a group of artesian springs that feed into the Silver River in Marion County, Florida. It is the largest artesian spring in the world and the site of the oldest commercial tourist attraction in Florida. Originally privately owned and operated, the springs area was formerly the focal point of a small amusement park named Silver Springs Nature Theme Park. Developed in the late 19th century, the springs became a tourist destination for Northerners following the American Civil War. It was first used as a location for a Hollywood film in 1916, and it became popular with the series of Tarzan films in the 1930s and into the 1950s. Beginning in 1993, the first thorough scientific studies of the springs were conducted and wildlife rehabilitation was started. That same year the State of Florida bought the underlying land, but private operators continued to conduct the operation of the attractions and concessions. While still a mission congregation, Forest Lutheran was the mother church to **Shepherd of the Coast/Palm Coast**, sharing a pastor with them. This past year Forest celebrated their 30th anniversary and Congregation Council Chairwoman Joanne Fisher painted this Luther Rose to commemorate the occasion. It is done on cloth but you have to touch it to believe it is not made out of wood.

Forest Lutheran is in the process of certifying Larry Dexheimer as SMP Colloquy pastor. ■



The youth group at **Abiding Savior/Gainesville** operated a pumpkin patch offering the gourds from \$15 and up to raise funds toward their trip to the National Youth Gathering. The patch operated the latter part of October with a Trunk or Treat on Sunday, October 28. An unexpected visitor (at left) was a gopher tortoise that showed up midweek. ■



REGION

2



Vice President:
James Rockey

Amazing Grace/Oxford

Board Secretary:

Jay Winters, University Church
Student Center/Tallahassee

Laity Board Members:

Donald Kaufman | St. John/Ocala

Lois Schaefer | Amazing Grace/Oxford

Circuit 5 Tallahassee Circuit Visitor:

Frank Kinast | Messiah/Valdosta

Circuit 6 First Coast Circuit Visitor:

Dana Brones | Bethlehem/Jacksonville

Circuit 7 N Central Florida Circuit Visitor:

Alan Struckmeyer | Abiding Savior/Gainesville



Holy Cross/Jacksonville recently celebrated one of their largest confirmation classes in recent years. ■

Amazing Grace Opens Early Learning Center

"As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me," Pastor James Rockey, quoted from John 9: 4. Rockey is pastor at **Amazing Grace/Oxford** (The Villages) and Vice President of the Florida-Georgia District.

"We're surrounded by The Villages and we don't have many families with children in the church, but we can serve those around us and pour Christ's love into these families every day!"

On Sunday September 30, Amazing Grace celebrated the Baptism of three

daughters of the King. In the process of meeting with the parents of Audrey Myers, Pastor Rockey learned that this newborn's mother, Robyn had never been Baptized. Through discussion and prayer, the Lord led her to join her daughter in receiving this gift of God's



"Jesus spoke those words in response to a question from His disciples and in doing so revealed the urgency of His mission," he continued, "yet those words are directed toward Christ's Church and each of us as His followers today as well."

The mission of making disciples and sharing the only true hope that is found in Jesus alone is even more urgently needed today than ever! According to Rockey, all we have is today for we "know not the day nor the hour the Lord will return."

With this in mind, the people of Amazing Grace took to heart the Lord's call and committed in 2016 to building and opening an Early Learning Center to serve the surrounding community.

On September 12, that vision was fulfilled as a new 6,000 square foot facility opened debt free with 42 full-time children infants through Pre-K4).

"This was a response to following Christ's example of *going to the people*, to meeting real needs and then using those relationships as a bridge to meet their greater & eternal need!



grace. Then while talking with her sister, she too revealed that she too had never been Baptized. Together, the three were Baptized during worship.

Rockey explains that there is a story behind the story. The story of a faithful grandmother who not only lived out and modeled her faith, but who prayed for this for years. Yes, "Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times" (Romans 12:12). Amazing grace how sweet the sound! ■



Rev. James and Martha Rockey, **Amazing Grace/Oxford** were honored on November 4 with a catered lunch in celebration of Rockey's 20th Ordination Anniversary

Deltona Congregation Participates in Food Drop

Lutheran Church of Providence/Deltona, FL has been feeling especially blessed this fall. They are offering a “Food Drop” from the Second Harvest Food Bank.

“On October 31, we received 20,000 pounds of food which went out to needy families in our community,” Pastor Robert Weikart stated. “The food we received consisted of bakery, chips, watermelon, strawberries, cabbage, apples, potatoes, snow peas and various juices. Families could take as much as their families could use. Bags and boxes were furnished for those who didn’t have any”.

The majority of LCP’s members were there to help with distribution and clean up and volunteers who heard about the “Food Drop” also came to help out.

Approximately 235 families showed up and were ushered into the sanctuary where they had the opportunity to learn more about the Deltona congregation and the colors of the church year.

“We also told the stories about our stained glass windows, sang some action songs and encouraged everyone to give thanks to God for the food and the volunteers,” Weikart continued.

The congregation found the event so successful they are considering doing it several times during the year.

The congregation has also started evaluating the homeless situation in their community. They have started packing bags of food consisting of water, juice,

canned fruit, vegetables, soup or meat with flip tops. The content choices vary depending on donations and the seasonal offerings.

Lutheran Church of Providence members are encouraged to take bags home with them for the purpose of handing them out. Reports have been extremely positive.

The Lord is really blessing our congregation,” Weikart concluded, “and we are extremely grateful.” ■



On Sunday, September 2, 2018 **Christ/Avon Park, FL** dedicated 78 new chairs — the result of a grant obtained with the help of the FL-GA District that was matched by members of the congregation. Pastor Scott McLean stated, “the new chairs expand our ability to comfortably seat more people to meet the needs of a growing worship community. We are grateful for the support we received from President Walton and his ministry team.” ■

REGION



3



Vice President:

Charles Reich | Grace/Winter Haven

Board Treasurer:

Renee Varga | Woodlands/Montverde

Liaison Board Members:

Katie Abercrombie | Prince of Peace/Orlando

Sheryl DeWitt | Redeemer/Sanford

Commissioned Minister Board Member:

Lois Ford | Faith/Eustis

Circuit 8 Space Coast Circuit Visitor:

Bruce Alberts | Good Shepherd/Titusville

Circuit 9 Orlando East Circuit Visitor:

Ken Green | Prince of Peace/Orlando

Circuit 10 Orlando West Circuit Visitor:

Marc Kappel | Faith/Eustis

Circuit 11 Winter Haven Circuit Visitor:

Dean Pfeffer | Hope/Plant City



Trinity/Tampa’s staff poses on the steps in Daytona Beach at the recent Educators Conference

Winter Haven Circuit Gathers for Reformation Festival

On Sunday October 28th, the pastors of the **Winter Haven Circuit** of the Florida Georgia District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod gathered at Grace Lutheran Church, Winter Haven to mark the 501st anniversary of the Reformation. The churches of the Winter Haven Circuit gather annually for this special service marking the day when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Thesis (statements) to the church doors in Wittenburg, Germany. These thesis were statements to reflect where the church had deviated from the truth of Holy Scripture. With Luther's nailing of the 95 thesis on October 31, 1517 thus began what was known as the Protestant Reformation.

As these churches gather annually for this special afternoon service, each of the area pastors participate as do the musicians from the 6 participating congregations along with a mass choir composed of choir members from each of the congregations. Special speaker for the day was Rev. Dr. Glenn Nielsen, Director of Vicarage and Deaconess Internships, Ministerial Formation, Professor of Practical Theology, and Director of Placement at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. Nielsen's message was based on Romans 1 and focused on the Reformation truth that we are saved by Faith Alone in Christ Alone. ■



Pictured following the service are (from left): Rev. John Cabos (Spanish Ministry Hope, Plant City); Rev. Ron Pennekamp (St. Paul, Lakeland); Rev. Dean Pfeffer (Hope, Plant City); Rev. Mark Harris (Grace, Winter Haven); Rev. Ed Trinklein (St. Paul, Lakeland); Rev. Dr. Glenn Nielsen; Rev. Tom Block (Christ, Lakeland); Rev. Andy Ritchie (St. Paul, Lakeland); Rev. Zong Yang (Hmong Ministry, St. Paul, Lakeland); Rev. Tod Shouse (Our Savior, Zephyrhills); Rev. Miguel Sanabria, Jr. (Spanish Ministry Hope, Plant City); Rev. Shea Pennington (Hope, Plant City); Rev. Charles Reich (Grace, Winter Haven) and Rev. Jonathan Horsman (Redeemer, Bartow).

Trinity/Downtown Orlando has their Christmas tree up and is partnering with Angel Tree Prison Ministries. Ornaments are on the tree and contain food, gift, and donation requests. Members of Trinity are encouraged to take one or more ornaments and then add their name and ornament code to a running list. The goal is to return the items to the church narthex no later than November 25th. Trinity is in their 13th year of this partnership. ■



The Board of Directors of the Plant City Family YMCA thanked the Rev. Dean Pfeffer, Sr. Pastor of **Hope Lutheran Church**, for his leadership to the branch. Pfeffer recently completed serving two terms as Chairman of the Plant City YMCA Board of Directors. During his tenure as board chair, he oversaw tremendous growth of the board from 6 members to its present 17 actively engaged members. Along with that growth came the division of the board into the following committees that serve the YMCA: Youth Development; Healthy Living; and Social Responsibility. Pictured are (from left): Zach Hilferding, YMCA Branch Director; Pastor Pfeffer and Nick Thurston, Board Chairman. ■



The number “three” has a special significance to **Trinity/Southwest Florida**. On Sunday, October 21 they installed the Rev. Brian Albrecht — exactly three years and three days from the date Trinity was chartered as a Florida-Georgia District LCMS congregation. Twelve pastors were in attendance with District Vice President Jon Zehnder presiding and preaching. Rossetter Leavitt, circuit visitor from Beautiful Savior/Sarasota, served as liturgist and District Vice President James Rockey from Amazing Grace/Oxford was also in attendance. The 4 pm service was followed by a reception and dinner at the Rotonda Golf and Country Club. ■

Hope/Bonita Springs celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with an afternoon worship that included a festival choir, brass and organ.

Saturday, November 17 from 11:30am – 1:30pm

ESTERO COMMUNITY PARK
FREE CONCERT | FREE LUNCH | FUN FOR KIDS

A Salute to VETERANS

FREE CONCERT IN THE PARK
Bring Your Lawn Chairs and Blankets

- ✓ 21 Gun Salute and Taps
- ✓ Military Theme Songs
- ✓ Brief Message by Local Estero Veteran
- ✓ Pop Music and Dance Floor

FREE FOOD AND FUN FOR KIDS
Bring Your Lawn Chairs and Blankets

- ✓ Free Hot Dogs, Chips, and Desserts
- ✓ Free Water
- ✓ Free Games and Gifts
- ✓ Free Face Painting, Flags and Balloons

LINDSEY GRAHAM
Patriotic and Pop Music by Estero Concert Artist

HONORING ALL VETERANS, ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND GOLD STAR PARENTS

Thrive/Estero planned some major outreach this past November 17th at Estero Community Park. They community was anticipating 500 or more people there to honor veterans. Thrive offered kids a chance to make a thank you card for a veteran and also a patriotic T-shirt craft. While doing that Thrive members shared with the families about their ministry. Thrive continues to host students from Florida Gulf Coast University on Wednesday evenings involving Bible study, conversation and camaraderie. John Roth is pastor at Thrive Community Church. ■



REGION



4



Vice President:

Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers

Laity Board Members:

Evita Gonzalez | Beautiful Savior
/Lehigh Acres

Daniel Najjar | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota

Commissioned Minister Board Member:

Jesse Crosmer | Our Savior/St. Petersburg

Circuit 12 Heartland Circuit Visitor:

Richard Norris | Trinity/Lake Placid

Circuit 13 Suncoast Circuit Visitor:

David Brockhoff | Holy Trinity/Masaryktown

Circuit 14 St. Petersburg Circuit Visitor:

Paul Burtzlaff, Our Savior/St. Petersburg

Circuit 15 Tampa Circuit Visitor:

Gilbert Kuehn | Messiah/Tampa

Circuit 16 Sarasota Circuit Visitor:

Rossetter Leavitt | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota

Circuit 17 SW Circuit Visitor:

Richard Browning | Hope/Bonita Springs



Beautiful Savior/Sarasota has a Wednesday morning Women's Bible Study group that put gift labels in brand new paperback Bibles and through their "Spreading the Word" Bible Ministry distributed them to more than 60 various agencies in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. They have been given to area hospitals, two county jails, substance abuse centers, assisted living facilities, family counseling agencies, high schools, and others organizations. During the month of September, 2018 they are celebrating having given a total of 10,000 Bibles in the 5 1/2 years of their vital ministry. ■



Our Savior/Saint Petersburg, Florida recently celebrated a Festival of the Arts on their campus with local artists providing a fun learning experience for their students. ■



First/Clearwater, FL recognized their students achieving either honor roll or the principal's list during one of the chapel services last month. They also had a recent fund-raiser and spirit night at the Enterprise Road location of Chick-fil-a Restaurant. ■



Saint Michael/Fort Myers, FL — The Varsity Volleyball team participated in a Kick Out Cancer Tournament benefiting Base Camp Children's Cancer Foundation. BASE Camp Children's Cancer Foundation provides a year-round base of support for children and families who are facing the challenge of living with cancer and other life-threatening hematological illnesses. ■



REGION



5



Vice President:

Stephen Carretto | St. Paul/Boca Raton

Liaison Board Members:

Samuel Ludington | Holy Cross/North Miami

Stephen Bradshaw | Trinity/Lake Placid

Circuit 18 Treasure Coast Circuit Visitor:

Mark Stillman | Faith/North Palm Beach

Circuit 19 S Palm Beach Circuit Visitor:

Dennis Glick | St Paul/Boca Raton

Circuit 20 Gold Coast Circuit Visitor:

Timothy Hartner | St. Paul/Weston

Circuit 21 Monroe-Miami-Dade Circuit Visitor:

Tony Mandile | Martin Luther/Marathon

St. Paul/Weston faculty posed (below) for an on-campus photo promoting their recent fall festival. The event (above) involved games, a bounce house, hay ride, DJ, chili cook off, cup cake war (?) ring toss, a raffle and and much more. ■





Holy Cross/North Miami (at left) takes a break between sessions at the recent Florida-Georgia District teachers conference in Daytona Beach. ■



Queens of the Surf — Seven ladies — members of the faculty at **Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale** — posed on the oceanfront stairs at the recent Florida-Georgia District teachers conference in Daytona Beach. ■

St Paul/Boca Raton Vicar John Karolus (with wife Emily in front of him) led beach worship on Sunday morning for St. Paul/Boca Raton Women's Retreat on Sanibel Island, Florida. According to Lynn Fetting, retreat organizer, "This year's event was held October 5th through 7th on Sanibel Island on Florida's west coast. More than 25 women gathered for fellowship and spiritual growth. Throughout the weekend the ladies attended bible studies and devotionals — plus a little time for fellowship and shopping. The retreat focused on Biblical examples of

godly women in Ruth, Esther, and Anna, allowing for the beauty of God's tropical creation to set the scene for the faith-filled weekend. The ladies also found time to explore the island, traveling up to Captiva, biking along the island's paths, and walking the beach combing for shells. Thankfully, the Red Tide had finally moved on in time to enjoy the stunning scenery and warm Gulf breeze. Saturday evening the group got together for a potluck and laughs." ■



LCMS Life Conference Slated for January 17- 19 in Arlington

The 2019 LCMS Life Conference is scheduled for Jan. 17–19, 2019, at the Westin Arlington Gateway Hotel in Arlington, Va. The conference is open to Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod members and guests.

Sheryl DeWitt, executive director of Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries and a member of the Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors will attend as a representative of the District.



Registration is open and can be done online. The schedule can also be downloaded at <https://calendar.lcms.org/event/2019-lcms-life-conference/>. Registration closes December 6, 2018.

The cost for students is: \$200 and regular adult registration is \$300. Registration includes breakfast and dinner on Friday, Jan. 18; and breakfast and lunch on Saturday, Jan. 19. A Metro card will also be included for travel to the March for Life event.

The National March for Life rally is in Washington, D.C., on Friday, Jan. 18, is an opportunity for all to celebrate their commitment to upholding the sanctity of life. The March for Life is an annual rally protesting both the practice and legality of abortion, held in Washington, D.C. on or around the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, a landmark decision issued in 1973 by the United States Supreme Court decriminalizing abortion. It is said to be the world's largest pro-life event.

"Whether or not you're able to attend the 2019 LCMS Life Conference, we are encouraging everyone to join their LCMS brothers and sisters at 9 a.m.

Eastern time for a Divine Service at The Westin Arlington Gateway Hotel in nearby Arlington, Va. After the Divine Service, we will travel by Metro to the march," DeWitt explained.

The 46th annual March for Life rally will begin at noon Eastern time on Friday, Jan. 18, at 12th Street on the National Mall, between Jefferson Drive and Madison Drive (near the Smithsonian American History Museum).

According to the LCMS event website, the march following the rally will begin on Constitution Avenue between 12th and 14th Streets at approximately 1 p.m.

The Westin Arlington Gateway Hotel in Arlington, Va., is offering conference attendees a \$129 room rate for single/double occupancy. The special rate is available through Jan. 3, 2019, subject to availability.

Room reservations may be made online, or by calling (888) 627-7076 and asking for the LCMS Life Conference rate.

The LCMS is asking all participants to complete a photo/video release form to grant permission to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), and persons and entities authorized by the LCMS, to make perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free use of photos and videos, taken by an LCMS photographer, that include or portray you. Attendees may complete and email the fillable form to barb.temple@lcms.org. They may also be mailed to:

LCMS Life Conference
c/o Barb Temple
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122



President Walton Gives Hurricane Michael Update

In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, we rejoice in God's merciful care. The Psalmist writes, "He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven. Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!" (Psalm 107:29-31)

While our hearts are grieved for the many who lost so much during this monstrous hurricane, we all realize that "things" can be replaced, but so many lives were spared by people who heeded the warnings and took precaution. Still, there is great need all around the areas impacted by Hurricane Michael.

Reports from territories around the Florida-Georgia District came in as soon as power was restored and cell towers come back online. To date we have not heard of any catastrophic damage to *any* of our churches or people, but may learn more in the coming days and weeks. Many had minor damage from wind and rain, roof damage, trees down, etc.

If you are led to help you are encouraged to go to the District

Website and donate. All dollars donated will be used for Hurricane Relief.

At the same time, our brothers and sisters to the West on the panhandle of Florida were hit extremely hard, and the devastation is visible. In conversation with President Eric Johnson of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Southern District they anticipate that out of the five churches in the zone of destruction, possibly three will not recover. Your help is needed, and please know that we will be partnering with the Southern District, who in the past 70 years ago gave birth to the Florida-Georgia District!

We can stand together in difficult times because our eyes are fixed on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith! He is with us in the midst of these trials, and will provide for all our needs.

At this time we are working with the LCMS Human Care to provide teams to help with clean up. Beyond sending financial contributions, flood buckets are always helpful, and we want to challenge congregations not impacted by the storms to put together 10 buckets in the next week

to assist those in flood ravaged areas.

Mr. Jay Wendland, our new staff member and District Vice President for Lutheran Church Extension Fund, will be our disaster coordinator when he is fully on board. We are also working with Joel and Kathy Matthews, members at Messiah, Tampa, who are also coordinating with the LCMS.

Financial donations can be made to the Florida-Georgia District, either by sending a check or by going to our website. Again, *all funds collected will be used for disaster relief.*

We are still asking congregations to not attempt to take crews to the impacted areas without first coordinating with the trained volunteers. As soon as we are able to go in and help, we will send out notices and requests for assistance. If you have a chainsaw crew or other LERT trained volunteers, please notify Kathy in the Florida-Georgia District Office so we can keep communications clear.

Again, please keep all who have lost so much in your prayers. Our trust remains in Jesus, who stills the waves and the storms, and will keep us into eternity. His death is our promise of life, and so we look to Him in hope and know that He will give us peace. ■

—GW





The
BACKPAGE

Lutheran Life
Florida-Georgia District
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
5850 T. G. Lee Blvd., Suite 500
Orlando, FL 32822-4410

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BOCA RATON, FL
PERMIT NO 1928

Registration Opens for Annual Veterans of the Cross Retreat

Retired church workers and their spouses will be gathering at the Methodist Life Enrichment Center, Leesburg, FL, from Monday, March 4 to Wednesday, March 6, 2019 for the annual Veterans of the Cross Retreat.

The retreat was established in 1979 by the late Florida-Georgia District President Dr. L. Lloyd Behnken to stimulate retired professional church workers with relevant ministry and senior presentations in addition to helping people connect with friends from years past.

The theme for the 2019 retreat will be "Bearing Fruit on the Edge" (John 15:12-17).

Rev. Ken Hennings, President Emeritus of the Texas District, LCMS will be the keynote speaker. An additional keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Greg Seltz, director of the LCMS' new Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C.

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Rockey, Palmer, Alaska will be the proclaimer for the communion service. Daily devotions will be led by Rev. Earl Steffens, Valdosta, GA.

Another highlight of this year's retreat will be "Servant Events" coordinated by Rev. Bob Steinke with an introductory presentation by Mike Muller from Hope Seeds.

The presentation of Behnken Medallions will also be a significant part of the retreat. These will be given to "veteran servants" in four categories: pastor, teacher, church at large and lay person.

Retreat registration will be available in December. District website flgadistrict.org Newly retired workers are encouraged to contact the FLGA District office at 407-857-5556 x8 with any questions. ■



Ken Hennings



Jonathan Rockey



Greg Seltz



Earl Steffens

