

# LUTHERAN LIFE

The Newsmagazine of the  
Florida-Georgia District of the  
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod  
May-June 2019



*Let Jesus Be Seen  
In Twenty-Nineteen*





## Have you made your 70th Anniversary Challenge Gift?

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

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

# LUTHERAN LIFE

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## floridageorgia DISTRICT CAPSULES

by Greg Walton District President

### Calling Congregations

Peace/Decatur, GA .....Sole Pastor  
King of Kings/Jasper, GA .....Sole Pastor  
Faith/Fort Lauderdale, FL .....Sole Pastor  
Faith/Hialeah, FL ..... Senior Pastor  
Bethlehem/Jax Beach, FL ..... Assoc. Pastor  
Epiphany/Lake Worth, FL ..... Senior Pastor  
Oak Road/Lilburn, GA .....Sole Pastor  
St Paul/Weston, FL ..... Senior Pastor  
Epiphany/Tallahassee, FL ..... Senior Pastor  
Woodlands/Montverde, FL ... Senior Pastor  
Trinity/Rockledge, FL .....Sole Pastor  
Holy Trinity/Rome, GA .....Sole Pastor  
St. Paul/Weston, FL ..... Senior Pastor

### Calls Issued

Oak Road/Lilburn, GA called  
Pastor Andrew Ross  
Holy Trinity/Macon, GA called  
SMP Pastor Laird vanGorder  
St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA called  
SMP Pastor Joel Dietrich

### Calls Accepted

Pastor Young Choi Choi accepted to  
Oak Road/Lilburn, GA as Outreach Missionary

### Calls Declined

Pastor Andrew Ross declined to  
Oak Road/Lilburn, GA

### Transferred OUT to Other Districts

James Watson/Ordained to Mid-South  
Scott Kirchoff/Ordained to Ohio  
Mark Steinke/Ordained to English

Laurie Steinke/Commissioned to English  
Richard Ludwig/Ordained  
to N Illinois  
Timothy Moore/Commissioned  
to Iowa West

### Transferred IN from Other Districts

Roger Keller/Ordained  
from Missouri  
Carol Schaefer/Commissioned  
from Southeastern

### Ordained/Commissioned Minister Initial Placements

James Olckers/Ordained  
to SMP Trinity/Lake Placid, FL  
Larry Dexheimer/Ordained  
to SMP Forest/Silver Springs, FL

### Status Change in the District

James Watson/Ordained  
from Active to Emeritus  
Kenneth Ferrier/Ordained  
from Candidate to Emeritus

### Called to Glory

Rev. Gilbert Schillinger • 5/13/18  
Mrs. Marilyn Sagehorn • 4/4/19

### Removed from the Roster

Jared Juszczak/Commissioned 3/4/19

### Church Changes

Trinity/Norcross, GA • New Church Start

## Did you know?

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

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

\*are you sending your congregation and school news and photos to [LutheranLife@aol.com](mailto:LutheranLife@aol.com)? We want your news!



In Memoriam

## District Education Pioneer Called to Glory

Marilyn Ruth Eggersmann Sagehorn, 88, of Bermuda Run, NC, was born June 3, 1930 and passed away on April 4, 2019 at her home in Greystone Cottage, at Bermuda Village Retirement Center.

Originally from Illinois, Marilyn was called to be a teacher and church worker serving the Lord and others with joy and enthusiasm in the Lutheran Church— Missouri Synod. She graduated from Concordia Teachers College in River Forest, IL and received her master's from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL. Marilyn, along with her husband, Donald Sagehorn, and

eventually their three children, followed this call to Grace Lutheran Church & School/Key West, FL; St. Mark's Lutheran Church & School/Hollywood, FL and eventually to Peace Lutheran Church & School in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. She retired in Fort Lauderdale.



In 2013 Marilyn moved to Bermuda Village Retirement Community just west of Winston-Salem, NC to be close to her daughter and son. With her humble demeanor, Marilyn was well known within the community for her sincere faith, biblical knowledge, eloquence, and positive attitude. She was

always ready with a quick wit and words of humor and wisdom enjoyed by young and old alike.

Her dominance of the Scrabble board was legendary. Marilyn was preceded in death by her eldest son David in 2002 and her husband Donald in 2012. She is survived by her daughter Paula Jones and husband Mike of Advance, NC and her youngest son Daniel Sagehorn and wife Mary of DeLand, Florida. ■

## 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

### Regional Pastor Conferences

Region 1 April 28-29  
Region 2 May 7-8  
Region 3 May 4  
Region 4 May 7  
Region 5 May 6-7

Locations In Each of the Five Regions

Professional Youth &  
Family Ministry Worker Retreat  
May 6-8, 2019  
El Caribe Resort  
Daytona Beach, FL 32118

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

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

## Young Georgia Pastor Victim of Massive Stroke

The Rev. Aaron Simms, 41, suffered a massive stroke on Friday, April 26 and was immediately air lifted to Emory University Hospital in Atlanta. He never regained consciousness.

The week previously Aaron had posted this on his blog: "He has Risen!"

"We confess we believe in the 'resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.' Thus, wherever your bodies are on that last day of this age, the day of his return, Christ will make you alive, body and soul reunited together. If your ashes are in an urn or scattered over field or sea, Christ will make your body alive.

"If your bones are in a grave, Christ will make you alive. If your body is fallen on some battlefield far away from home, Christ will make you alive. And if you are still alive in the body when Christ returns, he will make you truly alive.

"For you will live for eternity. And if it were possible for someone to peer into your graves and look for your bodies at that time, they would hear what the angels asked the women at Jesus' tomb: 'Why do you seek the living among the dead?'

"Because when Christ returns he will take death, which he has already defeated, and destroy it forever so that neither sin, nor death, nor the devil can plague God's good creation any longer."

Aaron, an SMP pastor, had a call to **Living Faith/Cumming, GA** and had also been helping with ministry needs at **Saint John The Apostle/Buford, GA, and St Peter/Dahlonega, GA.**

He leaves behind wife, Amy, and two children. May God's gracious and healing hand embrace his family and both parishes with grace and peace.

The funeral service was held Saturday, May 4, 2019 at Living Faith/Cumming, Georgia. ■



Pastor Simms in an early photo with Amy and their two children, Molly (now 14 years of age) and their son William (now 11).





The weeks leading up to Easter were bittersweet for me this year. I experienced two very polar extremes in a very short space of time. Life is filled with all kinds of transitions — some that we anticipate, many that are unforeseen. One event had been planned for many months, and highly awaited with joy. The others were simply the product of living in a broken world.

In early April I had the great privilege of officiating at the wedding of a young lady I had confirmed years ago. We gathered with the couple, their families and friends in the beautiful mountains of North Georgia for an outdoor wedding. While we hoped above hope for a sunny day, the weather forecast was ominous, calling for a 90% chance of rain, beginning the night before the wedding.

The rehearsal weather was warm and cloudy, but no rain, and we held out hope that the next day's weather would be the same. Unfortunately, the rain came, and in spite of it, we stayed on schedule. We gathered at 7 a.m. at the golf course and sacrificially slogged through the intermittent rain, which eventually let up. It didn't help my game — at all, and even took away my repertoire of excuses. Fortunately, it was team play and my teammates were really good golfers. It was cloudy when my team completed its

round, and as I went to get ready for the wedding the changing weather continued to improve.

By the time we made our way to the wedding venue, the sun began to peek from behind the clouds, and as the wedding party lined up, the sun began to shine in all its brilliance. As I stood before the congregation and made a few brief announcements before the wedding began, I couldn't help but reflect on the magnificent day God had given us, or the fact that the congregation needed sunglasses. It was a beautiful wedding, and a great celebration. Just a great reminder that our Lord says to us, *"Don't worry. I've got this!"*

At the wedding I was grateful to catch up with some old friends. One of my friends was sharing about his brother, whom he had just returned from seeing, stating that he was very sick. We parted saying that we would be keeping them all in prayer. When I arrived back in Orlando on Saturday evening after the wedding we rejoiced in the blessing of being with those friends. Then, Monday came, and early in the morning this same friend called me. I assumed the worst, that his brother had died. I even began consoling him before I understood what he was saying. It was indeed a death, but not of his brother. It

was the death of another close friend, a lady I had worked closely with in my last parish, someone I had just spoken to less than a week before. It happened suddenly and unexpectedly. I was shocked and speechless. Confident of her faith in Jesus, I reached out to her husband and daughter to pray with them, but could hardly wrap my own head around the fact that this had happened.

The Lord spoke to my heart once again, reminding me, *"Don't worry. I've got this!"* And He did, and He does!

The next day I heard from my friend who had called, himself still reeling from the news of this untimely death, only to learn that his brother had gone home to be with Jesus. We prayed, and I was able to remind him of our Lord's promise, *"Don't worry. I've got this!"*

I began to think about celebrations of life, and the celebrations of death. It made me mindful of missed opportunities to share the love of Jesus with those who don't know, and to share my love with those I care about.

Many live life filled with regrets — "I wish I had done this; I wish I had said that; I wish I had forgiven this person; I wish I could have told him/her that I loved them..." This life is truly fragile in so many ways, and time is short.

Easter was a wake-up call for the disciples. They had traveled with Jesus, and He had given them all sorts of clues, but I can't begin to imagine the sense of regret they felt as they watched Him die on that Cross. They had the joy three days later of seeing Him alive again. And while we believe that we also will see those we love who die in the Lord, sometimes we choose to live with regret. Let me encourage you not to neglect to share the love of Jesus with those for whom you care!

Let me just say that I am thankful for you, dear reader, and for our partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the One that binds us as brothers and sisters regardless of anything that might separate. We can stand together on His Easter victory!

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I tell you this, brothers [and sisters]: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and

the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:50–58). In other words, don't worry. He's got this—whatever the "this" happens to be in your life!

Easter was a little different this year because the whole theme of death and life took on a new significance — not only for me, but for some dear friends. It was because of the pain and anguish that Jesus suffered on our behalf on the Cross of Calvary that we can celebrate life even in the midst of death. The Resurrection of Jesus gives us renewed hope and a deep joy that may not always be seen on the surface, but is "down in my heart to stay!"

Death still stings, but it has no victory or power to defeat us because we know that because Jesus lives we also will live forever. It isn't because of the good things we may have done, or because of the restraint we may have shown in the things we didn't do. It is solely, totally, and completely because of the grace of Jesus, poured out in His amazing love through His blood shed on the cross. His resurrection is the assurance that we, too, will live forever. We have the victory in Jesus!

Someone shared with me how we have it backwards. We are sad for those who are now living in a land where death has no dominion, while we live in a dying world. Our loved ones who have gone home to Jesus no longer fear death, but live in the fullness of joy that awaits each of us who by faith trust in Jesus. This is the very news that we proclaim in a fallen world. Martin Luther wrote, "Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime."



The good news is all around us! It is why we are called to live as Resurrection people! This isn't just an Easter theme. This is a life theme. We live in joy because Jesus has given us new life, and this life is merely a training ground for the joyous life still ahead. Don't live with regret! Live so that Jesus is seen in 2019 in our lives!

we keep our eyes on Jesus, His love can flow through us, and open our eyes to the mission opportunities all around us. By the way, I believe that this is how we will see our goal of starting two new ministries in each region each year as we live in the love of Jesus!

Continue to bask in the glory of the



A few weeks from now the Church will celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. It's a great transition from celebrating the Resurrection Life we are given, to receiving the power to live it. As God pours out His power on His Church it is to empower us to show the love of Jesus to the world. Some of the parting words Jesus shared with His disciples tell us, "By this all people will know that you are My disciples if you love one another." That's a call for each one of us. To love another is indeed a

choice — sometimes a difficult one. It's often not as difficult when it comes to a wedding or a funeral or other life transitions. Yet, other times it is really tough to love people.

Our call is to live in love all the time. It's an impossible task left to any of us by ourselves. As the Spirit breathes His breath on us, as we grow in the Word and Sacrament, as

wonder and joy of the Resurrection of Jesus. Let the season of Easter remind you that we are each called, chosen and privileged to let Jesus be seen in how we live out our faith in the world around us! Let His Spirit empower you to live out His love. Whether it is in joyous occasions in life, or the ones that are more sobering, or just the ordinary every day circumstances, may the hope and promise of Jesus enable



you to shine His light in the darkness so that all may know His love as Jesus is seen in 2019 in each of us, His Resurrection people!



*Let Jesus Be Seen  
In Twenty-Nineteen!*  
**GREG**



## District in Midst of 70th Anniversary \$3.5 Million Challenge

The Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is well into the 70th anniversary year. President Greg Walton has set a goal of \$3,500,000 to be raised for a perpetual mission fund.

“That amount was arrived at by multiplying a \$70 minimum donation by the number of congregation members we have in the District,” Walton explains. “It’s just that simple!”

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



Greg Walton

“Starting a mission costs money,” Walton continues. “Renting or purchasing a building, buying supplies, creating websites, signage, salaries . . . these are all real costs. Missions and ministries need funds to cover these costs — especially when there isn’t a local congregation involved in the financial support.”

According to Walton, each loan will go through a vetting process that will be reviewed by a loan committee to ensure good stewardship of the mission funds. Those funds are distributed by the Florida-Georgia District Office and repayment would begin six months after the initial disbursement.

“This is an exceptional way to honor the spirit of the District’s founders back in 1948,” Walton points out. “It’s really quite simple. A one-time gift of \$70 per member of the District

will successfully launch this perpetual mission and ministries program.”

On the District’s website there is an online form where participants can easily make the one-time gift. Other interesting anniversary items are also profiled including a movie, “Reaching From Heaven,” produced by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in the late 1940’s. This movie features Margaret Hamilton (The Wizard of Oz), veteran character actor John Qualen (Casablanca), Regis Toomey (The Big Sleep), Hugh Beaumont (Leave It To Beaver) Mae Clarke (Henry Frankenstein’s bride Elizabeth, who is chased by Boris Karloff in Frankenstein) and many others. The short movie runs approximately 90 minutes.

Just as church services are letting out, a shabbily-dressed stranger is run over by an automobile in front of a church. The stranger is helped mentally and physically by the minister and congregation members, who help him regain his self-confidence and also to accept the death of his wife as she was about to embark from Europe, as a displaced person, to join him in America.

They help bring his five-year-old daughter to the United States, and the congregation makes a home for him and his daughter. The young lady who caused his accident, the town-banker’s daughter, takes a job to pay for his hospital expenses.

The 90-minute film can be found on the District’s website. ■



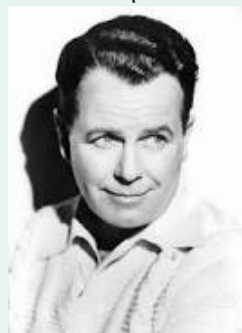
Hugh Beaumont



Mae Clarke



John Qualen



Regis Toomey



Margaret Hamilton



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### THE 70th ANNIVERSARY CHALLENGE

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

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



## LCMS Convention Delegates Will Vote for President in June

At the 2016 national convention for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, bylaws were amended to change how the Synod presidential voter list is formed. Previously, it had been composed of the list of district convention delegates; with the new rules, it will be assembled by direct communication of the Office of the Secretary with congregations or multi-congregation parishes, each of which will have the opportunity to designate a lay and (if not vacant) pastoral voter.

This year our national church body will convene July 20 through July 25, 2019 at the Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Florida — the very first time the Florida-Georgia District will be acting as the host district. Most participants will be lodged at the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel and Marina — a renovated waterfront facility adjacent to the convention center.

Four weeks prior to the national convention, two voting delegates from each congregation will vote for one candidate for President of the LCMS. The voting delegate may or may not be the same individual who attended the Florida-Georgia District Convention last June in Orlando. Each electoral circuit elected a delegate to the LCMS 2019 national convention.

The presidential election occurs every tri-ennium (three years) and the responsibilities of the national president includes supervising the doctrine taught and practiced by our almost 9,000 ordained ministers; representing the LCMS with all of our partner church bodies throughout the world; and overseeing all officers, executives and agencies of the LCMS. The president also manages relationships with some 120 LCMS Recognized Service Organizations and other inter-Lutheran social ministry organizations.

The nominees for Synod president and from whom the delegates will choose the next LCMS president are (in alphabetical order), Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, incumbent; Rev. Timothy Klinkenberg, senior pastor of St. John’s



Matthew Harrison



Tim Klinkenberg



David Maier

Lutheran Church, Orange, California; and Rev. Dr. David P.E. Maier, president of the LCMS Michigan District.

Matthew Harrison was elected president in 2010 and has served since at our church body’s chief ecclesiastical officer. Prior to being elected president, Pastor Harrison served at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Westgate, Iowa and Zion Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He also served on numerous boards for church and community organizations.

Matthew graduated with a bachelor’s degree in religious studies from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa. Following his graduation, he and his wife, Kathy, spent a year as missionaries in a remote Canadian Cree Indian village with the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots.

Pastor Harrison earned a Master of Divinity in 1989 and a Master of Sacred Theology in 1991, both from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. He has pursued additional graduate study at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. In 2011, he received two honorary doctorates: a Doctor of Laws from Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Mich., and a Doctor of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. He is 57 years old.

The Rev. Tim Klinkenberg has served as a pastor in the LCMS for 27 years — serving his entire professional career in a parish setting, most of that time at St. John’s in Orange, California. The ebbs and flows of parish life have defined his work, including public preaching and administration of the sacraments, building teams with lay members to further the work of the congregation, serving a large Lutheran Day School, and working in his local community and in the Synod.

Pastor Klinkenberg finds great joy in encouraging and working with both church workers and laity, to build his own congregation, and to find inroads for the gospel in different settings in its larger community.

Tim is a graduate of Concordia/St. Paul, Minnesota and Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, Missouri. He

has the reputation for being a high-energy man and hard-charging for the sake of the Gospel. Tim is 54 years old and married to Barb, also a graduate of Concordia/St. Paul and a financial manager at Orange Lutheran High School. They have two children.

The Rev. Dr. David Maier is Chairman of the Council of Presidents for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Maier has served almost nine years on the Council of Presidents in his role as President of the Michigan District LCMS. Pastor Maier was elected chairman of the Council of Presidents by the full Council which consists of his 35 fellow District Presidents as well as the Praesidium of Synod which is made up by the Synodical President and the five regional Vice Presidents.

Prior to being elected president of the Michigan District in 2009, Pastor Maier served Our Savior Lutheran Church and School, Lansing, Michigan for approximately 20 years and Christ-St. Peter Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin as youth pastor for five years.

David is a graduate of Concordia University/Ann Arbor and Concordia Theological Seminary/Ft. Wayne. David has received three honorary doctorate degrees. He has served on various committees for Synod over the years.

David’s father is Dr. Walter A. Maier, Jr., son of the first Lutheran Hour Speaker, the sainted Dr. Walter A. Maier. Dr. Paul L. Maier, renowned author and lecturer is David’s Uncle and Walter A. Maier, III is his older brother. Pastor Maier and his wife, Pat, have four children and two grandchildren and live in Michigan. ■

— John List, Editor



## Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Ministries Share Mercy, Compassion and Comfort Throughout the District

Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) mission is to share the Mercy, Compassion, Presence and Proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who are suffering and in need. The LCC K-9 Ministries embrace the unique, calming nature and skills of AKC Purebred Golden Retrievers to interact with people of all ages and circumstances. The Comfort Dogs serve every day in the communities in which they are placed. When invited, they also deploy in times of disaster and crisis to bring comfort to all those affected, including first responders and the volunteers who serve them.

The LCC K-9 Ministries include the LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs, LCC Kare 9 Military Ministry, and the LCC K-9 Police Ministry.

Launched in 2008, the LCC K-9 Ministry began with four Golden Retrievers to bring comfort to devastated students, faculty, and staff following the shootings at Northern Illinois University. Seeing firsthand the calming effects of petting a comfort dog, LCC President & CEO Tim Hetzner felt God's calling to continue to grow this important ministry. Since then, LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs continue to be placed in Lutheran churches, schools, and universities to share comfort, love, and hugs to everyone they meet.

On March 6, 2016, LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Sasha was placed at Island Lutheran Church in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Sasha Comfort Dog and her team have served thousands of people through her ministry and has many social media followers. Whether serving locally,

or through deployment in times of crisis and disaster, Sasha and her team brought hope, love, and joy through their presence wherever the Lord led them.

Sasha's first major deployment was following the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, shortly after her placement. Other deployments in the Florida-Georgia District include visiting communities following Hurricane Irma in 2017 and the Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy in 2018, both in Florida. Sasha frequently traveled throughout the Florida-Georgia District and looked forward to reconnecting with friends she met each time.

Sasha has recently retired and remains with her Top Dogs and caregivers, Phil and Brenda Burden. They continue to serve as the Regional Coordinators for the LCC K-9 Ministries Southeast Region. Other LCC K-9 Comfort Dog placements in the region include Hope (Faith Lutheran Church – Marietta, Georgia), Lizzie (Trinity Lutheran Church – Savannah, Georgia), Luke (Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church – Alpharetta, Georgia), and Peace (Trinity Lutheran Church – Orlando, Florida) as well as churches who are currently in process to start their Comfort Dog Ministry. These teams continue to faithfully serve throughout the region.

Lutheran Church Charities currently has more than 130 LCC K-9 Comfort Dogs serving in more than 26 states and operates training facilities in Illinois and in Nebraska. LCC never charges those who are served. ■

*Sasha visits the Florida-Georgia District Office. With Greg Walton, Cindy Hammerstrom, Debbie Arrington and Laura Zirbel*



For additional information:  
Lutheran Church Charities,  
3020 Milwaukee Avenue  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
(866) 455-6466

[KgComfort@LutheranChurchCharities.org](mailto:KgComfort@LutheranChurchCharities.org)  
[www.LutheranChurchCharities.org](http://www.LutheranChurchCharities.org)



*Right and below —*

*Sasha brings comfort following Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School and Hurricane Michael Panama City school visits.*



## What's The Secret To A Healthy Congregation?

What's The Secret To A Healthy Congregation?

In *Built On The Rock: The Healthy Congregation*, Ted Kober provides a helpful and practical perspective into the increasingly consequential topic of church conflict. Kober is an expert in Christ-centered reconciliation, offers church leaders and members an effective prescription for building and sustaining healthy congregations.

Shying away from the natural label of “church conflict resolution,” Kober expounds on the subtle but necessary idea that a church goes through conflict regardless of health. However, the health of a church often dictates what the outcome of that conflict will be. He presents this comprehensive survey, detailing how and why a church's health develops into what it is, and then offers balanced advice towards the method a church leader or pastor might employ to build up the health of his church.

Rather than basing his concepts on the alluring wisdom of psychological theories or business management theory, Kober prescribes a return to the foundations of the Christian life: looking to Jesus, dwelling in God's Word, and living as reconciled children of God in mutual confession and forgiveness. It's by taking this biblical approach that *Built On The Rock* offers sought-after practices not just for conflict resolution but also for lasting reconciliation.

Working through the opening chapters of *Built on the Rock*, the reader finds the book laid out plainly and in an organized fashion. While the crux of the book might be summarized simply with the phrase, “churches should be in the Word more,” the growing passion of the author throughout the book keeps the reader really engaged.

While some contemporary authors would try to coax the reader into the meat of the book, Kober fully explains his argument. In doing so, he makes contact with the curiosity the reader has to see why another book needs to be written on the topic instead of discovering at the end of hours of reading that it is simply another book about needing to read more Scripture.

After reading Part 1 of the book, I expected the rest to follow a similar pattern. “Here is an example of church conflict, and here is how one healthy church handled it and how another unhealthy church handled it.” These case studies are pleasant to read and extend to the reader practical application of the central idea, but Ted Kober moves into a more convicting tone as the work progresses. Where Part 1 identifies the circumstances leading to an unhealthy church, Part 2 answers the question, “what do I do about it?” This second portion of the reading enforces the point that yes, all churches will experience conflict, — but healthy churches are equipped to handle that conflict in a positive way. Conflict will either be negative and destructive, or give opportunity for growth and restoration in the midst of failure or change. Kober's Part 2 gives light to that reality.

While Parts 1 and 2 offer valuable identification and growth tools, Part 3 is what pastors and church leaders will find most impactful. Here is where the full weight of Kober's work, specifically, can be appreciated. The importance of this section of the book is hard to overstate, as here is where the reader encounters what makes church conflict and the health of congregations so unique. It's not like any other conflict resolution for other companies or organization, because when a church models health in its experiences with conflict, the members of that congregation tend to model a health in their other relationships!

Part 3 also shines because it gives pastors the critical reminder that the state of the congregation's health might be the pastor's responsibility, but it does not have to be his actions solely that encourage a healthy church. Instead, God gives church leadership other leaders (such as Elders, committees, and willing individuals) with which to bear the burden of congregational health. Kober's frequent case studies reinforce his points with tact and force, as it is visible to the reader and any witness to a

church in conflict that a healthy church which embodies the teachings of Christ to its core handles conflict successfully, and a church that only claims to have that embodiment flounders in the face of conflict.

In his conclusion, Kober identifies practical methods for developing health within a church, and options church leadership has in dealing with conflict professionally — he makes special note

## BOOK REVIEW

by Vicar John Karolus  
St Paul/Boca Raton



of the organization “Ambassadors of Reconciliation” with whom he has personal connection and often references within the book.

As I previously mentioned, my enthusiasm in reading this book grew as I got further into it. Opening with the reminder that churches are better off who have a high percentage of members and leadership involved in regular Bible study seems like a rather evidential and tired claim. However, as I progressed through his work, Kober brought a fresh realization to mind about how churches might become more healthy, even those that have been set in their unhealthy ways for generations.

That hopeful and positive tone carries the reader through this difficult topic, ushering him into a new and optimistic perspective on church conflict and health. All this he does while at the same time instilling within the reader a determination to better the spiritual health of himself, his immediate relationships, and his church!

President Greg Walton has said “*Built on the Rock* is a wake-up call for the Church.”

Postscript: It is not without realizing how the Synod as a whole might benefit from a book like this that I read and reviewed *Built on the Rock*. While the details and distinctions of our many areas of improvement as an organization cannot begin to be explained here, if pastors and church leadership set aside their differences to work through reconciliation on a nationwide — if not global — scale, there would be far less public and internal scrutinization of the Synod's health and future. ■





# LCMS Group Gathers for Caribbean FORO in March

I had the privilege this past March 22-25 to attend the FORO meeting held in Puerto Rico with representatives of the LCMS, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Minnesota North, Southeastern and our Florida-Georgia Districts. I represented President Greg Walton. FORO means “forum” in Spanish.

There was a “Meet and Greet” on



## FORO REPORT by Pastor Dave Brighton District Vice President

Friday night at Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz in Mayaguez. I wasn't able to attend this due to a 4½ hour drive from San Juan (more than 100 miles).

On Saturday we heard from Pastor Charles St. Onge, our Synod's Area Coordinator for the Caribbean, which includes Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the Cayman Islands and Haiti. He shared plans for each location:

**Mayaguez:** Currently served by newly arrived (4-5 months) Pastor Anthony DiLiberto (wife: Jamie and three children). DiLiberto speaks fluent Spanish, and Pastor Gustavo Maita (Venezuelan pastor, sent as missionary to Puerto Rico) and Evangelist William Torres, who plays guitar in the worship band with Ruth Maita, Gustavo's wife.

William is taking classes towards ordination thru the seminary in the Dominican Republic. Both of these men are outstanding and have been

at Principe de Paz during vacancies.

They know the people well! The church is a worshipping community of 25-30 people and is doing great things following Hurricanes Irma and Maria that hit Puerto Rico two weeks apart in September, 2017. The main thing is putting on new roofs — 75 so far.

Disaster Response has also distributed more than 2,600 bags of supplies (mostly food) and more than 100 Baby Bundles (diapers, wipes, quilts) in Mayaguez and Ponce.

The story about Manuel and Sarah: Manuel worked for Sarah's dad, but after he died, her step-mother cut them off.

Then their roof was broken by the hurricane and Sarah was hospitalized for depression and was suicidal. When the people came to replace their roof, it changed their lives! Manuel, who said he would never go to church because of all the hypocrisy, and Sarah learned about the love of Jesus as our folks put on the new roof, led by Pastor Maita and the disaster-response team.

Long story short, on Sunday morning during the worship service, Sarah was baptized and she and Manuel knelt at the front of the church to acknowledge their faith and become members — there wasn't a dry eye in the pews!

Disaster Response money is paying Evangelist Torres \$10,000 in 2019 and the goal is for the congregation eventually to be self-sustaining and pay him a full salary. I think Pastor DiLiberto is committed to staying until that happens! Pastor Maita and

his wife just announced they are expecting their first baby!

**Ponce:** Currently served by newly arrived (3 weeks ago) Pastor James Neuendorf and wife, Christel, who is a DCE and very involved in the ministry! She arrived five months ago and has been heading up a search for a permanent church home for Iglesia Luterana Fuente de Vida. They are currently in a great location, using the front of the Lutheran Disaster Response building in Ponce, but that rental will end in November of this year. Pastor Neuendorf shared an 18-page “Church Planting Pastoral Vision” that focused on worship, fellowship, Bible study, meeting the needs of people in the community and Mercy and Outreach Plans — and for each area he has annual, monthly and weekly goals!

Amazing!

He also already has a plan for achieving financial independence, by increasing congregational offerings (currently \$40/month) incrementally until Fuente de Vida is self-supporting. This will be a real challenge, since the people have so many needs! I should mention that Pastor and Christel Neuendorf have been missionaries for 3 years in Panama and 7 years in the Dominican Republic before coming to Puerto Rico, so they both are fluent in Spanish and very aware of the culture.

On Sunday morning we dedicated the new “CARD” (Casa de Amparo Y Respuerta A Desastre) center, which is a concrete block building (bought by disaster relief money) that sits right at the top of the hill that leads down to the Principe de Paz. This mercy and

disaster center will help people in need in Mayaguez. Along with an office and kitchen and counseling room, there are also four bedrooms with two bunk beds each on the lower level — and one large bathroom for mission teams to use when they come to help!

After the official dedication, some of the Puerto Rican members of the congregation played trumpets and drums and one costumed member danced and they celebrated for close to a half hour! They love to celebrate in Puerto Rico!

After the worship service and lunch served at Principe de Paz, we all drove over to Ponce, about an hour, and had an afternoon service at Fuente de Vida in which Pastor Neuendorf was installed as the pastor! A wonderful service.

An elderly lady seemed very overcome during the service — it was quite warm in the church. Pastor Neuendorf got out a fan that helped a bit. But after the service as both Pastor Neuendorf and Pastor DiLiberto had an intense conversation with the lady who was overcome in the service and with her adult daughter who was there with her two children, we learned that the woman's son was murdered that very morning. How wonderful it was to see these men of God sharing the comfort and peace of Christ with this stricken mother! As Pastor Neuendorf says, there are a lot of needs and many tough back-stories with many of the members at Fuente de Vida.

A challenge that both pastors shared with me is to reach the Puerto Ricans living in the United States that worship in our LCMS congregations and

ask them about relatives and friends in Mayaguez or Ponce. If we let the pastors know, they will be sure to follow up with them — and help any who may be in need, while sharing the Gospel with them.

A real “plus” is the \$600,000 grant from the Harold C. Smith Foundation that was highlighted in the most recent LCMS publication Reporter. They found out about what the LCMS was doing in Puerto Rico by Googling it and offered us the grant over a three-year period. What they liked is that we were there to stay and that we are sharing the Gospel. Amazing! It was shared with us that it is a sort of matching grant, with the Synod to kick in an additional \$600,000, but that was not mentioned in the Reporter article. I'm not sure what that means. How that money would be used was not discussed at this meeting — still in the discussion stage — but a lady from the Foundation joined us for the “FORO” and seemed very pleased to be there!

Overall, my impression is that these two mission congregations are in great hands and we can expect the Holy Spirit to be at work through the efforts of Pastors DeLiberto and Maita in Mayaguez and Pastor and Christel Neuendorf in Ponce. These ministries are worthy of our prayers and financial support, as well as short-term mission teams! ■

Bottom right photo — Evangelist Torres is communed by Pastors DiLiberto and Neuendorf during the installation service for Pastor Neuendorf at Fuente de Vida in Ponce, PR

FORO will meet in October at our District Office in Orlando.



Top — Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church) in Mayaguez, PR

Middle — Pastor Neuendorf, Evangelist Torres, Pastor DiLiberto, Pastor Becker and Lutheran Hour Ministries representative at the dedication of the Disaster Relief Center in Mayaguez



Pastor Gustavo Maita baptizes Sarah during the worship service at Principe de Paz in Mayaguez while Pastor DiLiberto stands to the right



Evangelist William Torres and Pastor Gustavo Maita at Principe de Paz, Mayaguez



Ruined home, still partly submerged from the hurricane, in Mayaguez.



Pastor James Neuendorf, installed as pastor of Fuente de Vida on Sunday afternoon, March 25, in Ponce.



## LWML Will Convene June 20-23 in Mobile, Alabama

Greetings from the LWML Florida-Georgia District! If you notice the ladies of the district seem preoccupied . . . absent-minded . . . or just extra-busy these days, they are probably helping plan the LWML Convention in Mobile, AL, coming up June 20-23.



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

The LWML Florida-Georgia District is hosting the convention, in partnership with the LWML Gulf States and Louisiana-Mississippi Districts. It's a big job preparing for thousands of Lutheran Women in Mission!

mission grants are announced, and the mission goal is approved for the new biennium.

You've listened to amazing speakers talk about mission work and what the grants can accomplish in spreading the Gospel. You've had a chance to share

meals and work on Servant projects with Lutherans from all over the country who are "serving the Lord with gladness" in the LWML.

But if you've never attended an LWML Convention, or you haven't been to one in a while, don't miss out on this year's convention in Mobile! Our keynote speaker is the Rev.

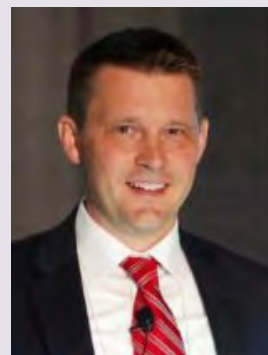
Dr. Brent Smith — known as the "man in purple overalls!"

He serves as a mission development counselor at Mission Central, which supports LCMS missionaries and mission projects. His service to the

parish LWML events as well as a variety of events for the LCMS and beyond.

Serving the LWML convention as Worship Leaders are the Rev. Dr. Ulmer Marshall Jr. — pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Mobile, Alabama, and Bethel Lutheran, Point Clear, Alabama and Rev. Dr. Gregory S. Walton Florida-Georgia District President who previously served Trinity Lutheran Church, Toccoa, Georgia, and Faith Lutheran Church, Marietta, Georgia.

We'll also have six "Mites in Action" speakers interspersed during the convention who will report on the results of recent mission grants. There's evening entertainment on Saturday from the VOICES of Mobile — a highly versatile, auditioned vocal ensemble consisting of 18 students from The University of Mobile, Alabama. This choral ensemble maintains a highly visible and consistent performing schedule in churches, schools, conferences, and civic events throughout the United States and abroad.



Rev. Dr. Brent Smith



Rev. Dr. Ulmer Marshall Jr.



Rev. Dr. Greg Walton



Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor



Joe Castillo, Artist

If you've ever attended an LWML Convention, you've experienced the joy of attending opening worship with 3,000-4,000 Lutherans and marveled at the ability to distribute Holy Communion to all of them! You've experienced the energy and excitement that electrifies the convention hall when the new

church includes 16 years of international ministry and three years as LCMS Southeastern District Director for Mission Development. He began his service as a business manager in Central Asia, evangelistic missionary in Russia, and regional director for the Eurasia region.

The Song Leader is the Rev. Dr. Dien Ashley Taylor, pastor at Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, The Bronx, New York, and the First Vice-President of the Atlantic District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Pastor Taylor has preached, taught, and led music for many national, district, zone, and

On Friday evening, we'll see Joe Castillo, an inspirational performer who tells stories in sand. All in all, it's an opportunity to be refreshed and inspired as we join together "In Praise to the Lord!"

Don't wait! Register today, either online at [LWML.org](http://LWML.org), or using the registration form in the Lutheran Woman's Quarterly. As our ladies have been saying, "Ya'll come!" ■



### VOICES of Mobile



## What are the Summer Plans for the Church?

"Well, you know. People take vacations during the summer. We go down to one service, we cancel Sunday School, our attendance drops by 20 percent, it's tough to do anything or make any real plans. So it will be a quiet summer."

Is this how you want to answer that question? If you were someone looking to be more engaged in the church you might be discouraged with that answer. You might even look elsewhere for your summer schedule. Not good.

It is often a challenge to make any real plans in the summer. So things may wind down. But there may often be an unintended consequences if you give in to the less active church season of the summer.

First, it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you expect it to be a summer slump, it will be. People will know that you "plan" for nothing to happen so they make their plans not to engage. The saying is true once again, "you get what you create and allow."

Secondly, as you do this year after year, it gets tougher and tougher to do much of anything and it becomes ever tougher to wind back up for the fall. So planning for a slump actually encourages a longer slump.

So what might the coaching leader say in response to that question? Depending on who is asking that question (and who you are in the church) there may be a number of responses, which for a coaching leader, are in the form of a question to encourage dialogue and ideas:

For the governing board:  
"How can we keep the momentum of the year going even through the summer?" "How can we engage people this summer where they will grow in their faith/witness skills/relationships with each other and the community/etc.?" "What can we do that would bring people together when we typically go in separate directions during the summer?" "How can we set our church up to be ready for the fall activities of rally day, engaging the community, etc?"

To the individual church member:  
"What would you dream that we do this summer?" "What would you like to see accomplished?" "What would best help your faith/fellowship/discipleship/etc grow this summer?" "How would you

like to help?"

To the church member who has an idea for the summer:

Not: "Well, thanks anyway, we find it hard to get people together in the summer. So no."

Instead: "Great! Tell me your idea! How can we get this to happen?"

The key is engagement. As a leader we don't want to trample on people's enthusiasm. If they get shut down they may never risk coming back again. We want to respect their interest and enthusiasm and add to the fire!

As a coaching leader, we want to model what we are looking for. So we can acknowledge the need to take a breather, while also seeing the summer season as a way to do something different, and engage people in ways that may be a positive surprise. It may look like a special servant event in the community. It may be joining into what your community is doing for the 4th of July. It may be a fellowship activity where you intentionally engage and involve non member spouses, friends



and neighbors. It may be a series of block parties at your member's homes that include a special prayer for the neighborhood prior to the meal. Try something new.

Experiment.

Have fun.

Think engagement and making new friends. You'll be talking about it all year!



**COACHING  
LEADER**

by Rev. Scott Gress  
Lutheran Counseling Services  
Leadership Coach

What are the summer plans for your church?

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





## Latest Emergent Leader Class Graduates Ten Colleagues

On March 28, 2019 President Greg Walton presented Emergent Leader Certificates to ten more professional and lay leaders of the Florida-Georgia District.



### EMERGENT LEADER

by Kurt Bickel  
Leadership Trainer

During the last five years, 107 Pastors, Lay Leaders, Principals, DCEs, Deaconesses and Teachers have completed the Emergent Leader Training course. This includes people from seven other LCMS Districts. Each event of the training is evaluated with a pre- and post-assessment that is given to all participants establishing the progress toward the goals and objectives for each participant.

In an effort to better understand the long-range value of the training to participants, Emergent Leader recently surveyed participants who completed the training a year or more ago.

Half of the respondents were in training four or five years ago. Which indicates the sustainability of the training.

September 2014 29.2%

April 2015 20.8%

March 2016 8.3%

April 2017 33.3%

January 2018 8.33%

Of participants from 2014-2018, 91 percent reported that they employ what they learned in the training “frequently” or “somewhat frequently.”

When asked how likely they would be to recommend this training to a friend or colleague, 86 percent of past participants reported that they are extremely likely to recommend the training. An additional 9% stated that they were “likely” to recommend it.

We are finding that the majority of participants in Emergent Leader becomes challenged to evaluate their own thinking and behaviors as they lead God’s people in ministry.

“Still fresh out of Seminary in my first call and as a first career pastor this program truly, truly helped me emerge as a leader I continue to sharpen the skills,” offers Shea Pennington, Plant City, Florida. “I use the tools and knowledge instilled from Emergent Leader on a daily basis in areas of youth ministry, young adult, young professional and family ministry.

In fact, this past Elders meeting I brought up Triangles and how to handle them as it pertained to a particular situation that arose. All in all, I’d say anyone — pastoral or lay — who seriously and faithfully wants to step-up and grow as a leader in connecting people to Jesus . . . go through Emergent Leaders.”

“Like many, I’d had a variety of “leadership” training experiences in my life/ministry, yet this one did an excellent job in ways like no other. The

difference included helping me understand myself better and how that influences my decision making and leadership,”



(Back Row Left to Right) Bill Jewell, Jay Wendland, Jack Proctor, Louis Marinelli, Keith Lingsch and Bruce Alberts; (Front Row Left to Right) Abby Moss, Stephanie Karolus, Sue Easton, Kurt Bickel and Marc Nauman; (Not pictured) Michael Zwemke and Trainers Daryl Pichan and Les Stroh.

states James Rockey, Ocala, Florida. “I reaffirmed and taught me new skills in looking at the system or community in which we are working and seeking to lead toward God’s will. It was practical and has given me resources that I still review and polish today. It was Kingdom focused so that whatever I do, I do it all for the glory of Christ.”

Don Bergwall, a lay leader from Kennesaw, Georgia says this, “I learned a lot about myself. I got to know some great people. I thought the program was well done, with great facilitators. The Cornerstone Factor was hard for me to grasp at first, then with more examples

and trying to explain it to people at home it clicked and made sense. I just looked through the outline and notebook and don’t know of any segment I would call a waste of time. Really don’t have any thoughts on changing anything. Feel blessed that I was able to participate in this experience.”

“Not only was the training valuable, being in the same cohort over three months really helped build our community. Peer review was very powerful. And our group continues to remain in touch via our own Facebook group. This offers the ability to keep up to date on one another as well as provide an exchange of encouraging and worthwhile resources,” says Lois Schaefer, former director of Christian Outreach at Chapel of the Cross in The Villages, Florida.



### florida georgia district MUSIC FESTIVAL



The District’s Music Festival is for all Lutheran school music groups. All age groups of choir, band, orchestra, praise band, and bells are invited to attend. This year’s Music Festival took place at **St. Paul/Lakeland FL**. A few of the participants included, clockwise from above left — **St. Paul/Boca Raton FL**; **St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA** and lower photos **Grace/St. Petersburg, FL**’s band and chorus.



## June Temme Recaps the Life of a Minister’s Wife

For years June (Noske) Temme has shared her story of growing up on an Australian sheep farm — especially the experience of a bushfire. Both friends and family encouraged her to write about it and other interesting events in her life. June born in Tarrington, Victoria, Australia just a few years before the start of World War II. *Led by God, the Blessed Journey of a Minister’s Wife*, is the account of her extraordinary life growing up on a farm in wartime and later traveling and working with her husband The Rev. Dr. Hubert Temme, now a retired LCMS clergyman.

Their work began as missionaries to the Australian Aborigines in the desert of South Australia. From there,

they continued their work, not only in Australia but in America, Hong Kong,

China, the Bahamas, Grand Cayman and places all around the globe before finally settling down in the Florida-Georgia District — first in Tampa and now in New Port Richey — for their golden years.

June’s autobiography chronicles her many adventures seeing the world and helping others with her husband Hubert of almost 65 years.

The book was completed near the end of last year and the Temme

family was surprised with copies of her book for Christmas!

The book is available through Amazon in both Kindle and paperback.





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



To learn more about these options, call me:  
**Jay Wendland**  
[jwendland@flgadistrict.org](mailto:jwendland@flgadistrict.org)  
 877-457-5556 x 5041





Some members of the **Florida-Georgia District Youth Ministry Council** retreated to Daytona Beach for their annual gathering in early May. Youth and family leaders also participated. The facilitator was DCE Leah Abel. The scripture that she focused on was Colossians 3:16 — “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” Leah’s sessions focused specifically on the word DWELL.

Every year these workers gather to take some time away from their everyday tasks to be spiritually renewed and to enjoy fellowship and quality networking with one another.

The District Youth Ministry Council has been appointed by President Walton and established to coordinate youth ministry efforts in the district. The DYMC will equip, empower, and engage the youth of the church for lives of Christian discipleship. To ensure that the purpose of the Florida Georgia District ministry is carried out, the DYMC will accomplish this by assessing the needs of the youth of the church, developing a plan of action based on the assessed needs, implementing the plan, and evaluating the results.

Youth and family leaders participating in the retreat are, front row: Roy Heflin, David Timmerman, Stephanie Karolus, Leah Abel, Abby Moss, Amanda Bell. Back row: Eric Gerken, Josh Cromley, Jeremy Becker, James Gray, Alaina Ruszkowski, Nathan Toenjes, and Nick Moss.



**Pretty In Pink! —** A couple dozen bright pink flamingos were roosting on the front lawns of several members of **Redeemer/Stuart, FL** recently — accompanied by a “Flamingo Flocking Ransom Note.” The fundraiser was conducted by the Redeemer’s youth to raise funds for the National Youth Gathering. The ransom note stated that “the flamingos are very territorial and unless they are replaced on someone else’s lawn, they will roost on my property for a long time. Removal of the flock should only be attempted by “trained professionals” and fortunately, Redeemer’s youth group are highly skilled removal technicians!



## CAMPUS CORNER

Leave the Hard Work to Us  
You or your student has completed a lot of hard work — grades, extra curriculars, social life, ACT/SAT, applications, financial aid, and the list goes on and on. So by the time that you get to thinking about campus ministry, maybe you’re just looking for a place to get some easy answers. We hope this sheet does that for you. We’ve collected some of the most common questions we hear from parents, students, and youth leaders.

### Is there a campus ministry at my student’s school?

We hope so! If your student is going to be attending a flagship school in Florida, there probably is a dedicated campus ministry — but even if your student is going someplace else, there are a bunch of different churches that minister to students. Let us know where they are going and we’ll help you figure it out.

### Why bother?

This is a great question. We have a lot of great answers to it, but the two best are:

1. Your student will need community. Especially if your student is going to go to a school that is much larger than his or her high school, he or she will need a group of people who care. Campus ministries provide

this kind of community for your student in a way that is often more caring than other groups they can get involved with.

2. Your student will experience crisis. No doubt about it, college is a fun time, but every student experiences some form of crisis during their college years and will need someone to help them and to assure them that no matter what happens, Jesus is there for them.

### What do campus ministries do?

Most campus ministries are somewhat different from neighborhood churches. They all worship and pray like neighborhood churches, but most campus ministries also place an emphasis on the personal growth of your student’s faith and giving them the leadership opportunities and skills that they will need to mature into well-formed adults and members of the Body of Christ.

### Do I have to connect with a “Lutheran” campus ministry?

Honestly, we’re happy if a student connects to a Christian ministry at all while they are in college — but Lutheran campus ministries will provide your student with some valuable things. Lutheran campus ministries provide solid Biblical perspectives on God, and they also provide a bridge from

your student’s experience at their home church as well as a bridge back into a local congregation when they graduate. Most parachurch and non-Lutheran campus ministries find this challenging to do.

### How do I connect?/I have other questions.

We’re glad you asked, and feel free to ask any other questions you may have! Contact Pastor Jay Winters [pastor@universitylutheranchurch.org](mailto:pastor@universitylutheranchurch.org) / (850) 284 9507 (it is ok to call or text). He’s the pastor at University Lutheran in Tallahassee, but he will connect you to the right campus ministry if your student is going someplace else. ■





# FLORIDAGEORGIA

## REGIONAL NEWS

*Out and About in the  
Florida-Georgia District*

### Rivercliff Celebrates Six Baptisms With Mary Hall Freedom House

**Rivercliff/Roswell, GA** has partnered with a number of community organizations over the years — Habitat for Humanity, Inspiritus, the Community Assistance Center, and most recently Mary Hall Freedom House (MHFH).

“The mission of Mary Hall Freedom House is to empower women to end the cycle of addictions, poverty and homelessness for themselves and for their children.” [maryhallfreedomhouse.org]

A number of years ago MHFH began renting space at Rivercliff. During that time Rivercliff members have provided occasional coffee and cookies to welcome them, using the opportunity to share the Gospel in a short devotion. At Christmas each year Pastor Jeff Jordan is invited to share the Christmas story with the ladies and candy canes are given as a reminder of the reason Jesus came for us. When the adult services moved to another facility down the road, MHFH continued to lease space at Rivercliff for their daycare. It has been a great relationship that continues as the Rivercliff staff supports the daycare staff in our facility.

But late last year the relationship took a turn in unexpected and wonderful ways.

An unrelated meeting between MHFH’s director, Lucy Hall, and Pastor Jordan opened new doors to ministry. Pastor Jordan was invited to begin an informal “chaplaincy” at MHFH that included weekly devotions and teaching at the facility. Prayer, time in God’s Word, and an open time of questions concerning anything the ladies want to talk about has brought much joy and many tears, laughter and intense quiet, and a new level of relationship with the women MHFH serves.

Questions like “What’s a Lutheran?” and “Why do you do this anyway?” have led to wonderful conversations about God and His grace.

Ultimately, a very simple question was asked: “Can I get my baby baptized?” And so, with explanations of

what God accomplishes in Holy Baptism and a commitment to walk along side these mothers and their children as long as they will let us.

*Below — Pastor Jordan with six children from MHFH who were recently welcomed into the family of God.*



#### REGION



**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



**Faith/Marietta, GA** students in 2nd and 6th grades went to Sewell Mill Library and Cultural Center for a Bloxel STEM activity. The children had to create a pattern on the Bloxel board in which the different colored blocks represented different things. Then they used the Bloxel app on the iPad and took a photo of the pattern created on the board. That was then turned into a video game they could play. The children were actually creating their own video game!



*Below — Faith’s 2nd grade students also made a trip to Cobb County Safety Village to learn all about health and safety (helmet, bike, bus, traffic and fire safety!)*



The annual Atlanta Hunger Walk/Run raises funds and awareness for hunger relief through a sponsored 5K event every spring. Thousands of runners and walkers come together to support Atlanta neighbors in need and celebrate the work that’s being done. The festival atmosphere before and after the Walk/Run includes food, games and live music. This year’s event took place in the Home Depot “Bakyard” and entertainers were stationed along the route through historic downtown Atlanta. **Christ/East Point, GA** fielded an enthusiastic team.





## Amazing Grace Participates in District's 70th Anniversary

"We would not be where we are without the District's partnership from the beginning and each step in the journey!" said the Rev. James Rockey, pastor at **Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL** (The Villages). "From the support of the District in guiding discussions, prayer, visioning and planning, to Calling a Mission Developer, to a Mission Grant, the Florida-Georgia District has been there with us through it all. In addition, they have been some of our biggest encouragers and cheerleaders."

Amazing Grace has utilized other resources of the District from an LCEF loan for its Ministry Center, to consulting in deciding to build and open an Early Learning Center, and to help in the Call process.

It was with all this in mind and in thanks to God, that the Leadership of Amazing Grace asked all members to join together in a "Thank Offering" for 70 Years of God's grace in our District and for their partnership. For two weeks, information was shared in writing and in the announcements. This helped not only those who were here over the past 11 years remember the vital role of the FL-GA District, but also helped the many new members recognize and celebrate the same.

Amazing Grace tithes to the District from its offerings as an ongoing way to affirm their partnership with the Florida-Georgia District. On Sunday January 20, the Members brought forward their "Thank Offering" to contribute to the 70th Anniversary Mission Challenge of the District. Together more than \$5100 was gathered.

Amazing Grace would like to encourage all congregations and members of the District to join them in accepting this "Mission Challenge" and give thanks by each giving a special 70th Anniversary "Thank Offering."

Consider this: if every member of each congregation in the Florida-Georgia District were to give \$70 during the next year, the District could easily raise more than \$3.5 million dollars. Some participants may even be able to give more. This is done without impacting the normal tithe process.

All dollars raised will go into a perpetual fund for mission loans, money that will be loaned out, at no interest, to congregations and ministry starts. Whether it be for a new house of worship or for being the feet and hands of Jesus in their community, as each loan is repaid, the money is loaned out again and the cycle repeats. It is our hope the funds raised during this anniversary year will serve the mission of the District for at least 70 more years. ■



Julie Bedard, Amazing Grace's Director of Early Learning Center is pictured with (from left) Mark Brink, District Executive Director of School & Youth Ministries; James Rockey, Pastor of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church; and Greg Walton, President of the Florida-Georgia District, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.



▲ **Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL** Early Learning Center serves children 6 weeks through 4 years of age and has a capacity for 60 children.



▲ Some of the grand prize winners are pictured with their baskets following the **Epiphany/Tallahassee, FL** Easter Egg Hunt. The annual event takes place the Saturday afternoon before Easter Sunday at nearby Tekesta Park and Playground.

Members of the **St. John/Ocala, FL** 2019 graduating class celebrated their baccalaureate service on May 4th and the students gathered afterwards for a group photo. ▼



### 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



## Dean Pfeffer Recognized as YMCA Plant City Volunteer of the Year

Whenever the Plant City Family YMCA needs volunteer help, few are as quick to answer the call as **Hope/Plant City's** pastor, the Rev. Dean Pfeffer. He has been involved with the YMCA's board of directors for the past six years. In March, Pfeffer — along with others from the Tampa Metropolitan YMCA network — was recognized with Plant City Y's "Volunteer of the Year" award. He is completing his term as chairman of the board of directors.



And even with his involvement and dedication he admits that he didn't see that coming.

"When Zach (Hilferding) told me, I was planning to meet with him to give him names to consider for the award," Pfeffer said. "Getting that was not in my thoughts."

It may have been a surprise to Pfeffer, but Membership Experience Director Bryan Cross called it an "easy choice." Pfeffer remains active with the Dean's Ride and Strong Leader events and heads up the

Healthy Living Committee. He is currently chairing the Parking Lot Committee for the duration of the Florida Strawberry Festival, which ends up being the Plant City Y's most lucrative annual fundraising effort with a massive influx of festival-goers searching for the perfect parking spot.

Pastor Pfeffer is Senior Pastor at Hope Lutheran Church working with Associate Pastor, Shea Pennington. Pfeffer has served Hope since June of 1996 after serving as Associate Pastor at **Faith/Sebring** from 1994-1996. He received his Master of Divinity from Concorida Seminary in St. Louis MO in 1994. He earned his Bachelor's in Political Science in 1981 from Long Island University and a Master's in Public Administration in 1982. Prior to attending seminary, he was Assistant to the late Rep. Norman F. Lent (4th CD, New York) and late State Senator John D. Caemmerer (NY).

Pastor Pfeffer currently serves as Circuit Visitor for the Winter Haven Circuit and is a member of the following boards: United Food Bank of Plant City, Plant City YMCA where is 1st Vice Chairman, and the Plant City Daybreak Rotary. He previously served on the board of directors for the Florida-Georgia District of the LCMS.

Pfeffer was on the search committee

that brought Zach Hilferding to the Plant City YMCS and also helped hire new executive director Paul Conley. Cross noted Pfeffer is also adept at recruiting volunteer help from outside the Y.

"Volunteers like Dean really ensure that ('strengthening the community') happens," Cross said.

One of Pfeffer's favorite things to do for the Y is give back to the staff and board members for their hard work. Every December, Pfeffer opens Hope Lutheran's doors to the folks from the Plant City Y for the annual staff meeting and a dinner cooked entirely by his wife, Liz.

"The staff at our Y, you can't find a better bunch of people to be working and serving with," Pfeffer said.

And while his time as chairman may be over, he plans to stay as involved as he possibly can with the community center he calls home as both a gym member and an active board member.

"We're not a 'swim gym,'" he said. "The Y is something special and I just want to further that within the Plant City community. It's one of those places where everybody knows your name. You're not just some body that walks in to work out... that's a real special place."

## Sanford Hymnfest a Singing Success! ▼

HymnFest 2019 — the annual event featuring great music, worship, food and fellowship at **Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/Sanford, FL** — was held Saturday, March 2 at 4 pm under the theme "Fruit for the Healing of Ourselves." In 2014, LCR/Sanford purchased a three-manual Rogers Organ. The church organist, Marge Freeman, felt that organ dedication should be part of an event she referred to as "HymnFest" because the purpose of the organ is to lead the congregation in song. Marge asked local organist, artist and musician, Mr. David Ludwig, Jr. to be the guest leader/director for the dedication and first Hymn Festival in 2014. Mr. Ludwig is the Worship and Arts Director at Redeemer Lutheran Church/Winter Park, FL. He continues to be involved in the annual event.

"Little did we know that this wonderful musical event would continue to grow and is now in its sixth year!" Freeman explains.

At right — Freeman, a member of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians and music minister at LCR/Sanford since 2011. Marge also volunteers at Lutheran Haven's Village Shop (Oviedo) and regularly plays piano for their devotions.

Below — the church was at near capacity for the HymnFest.



## Trinity/Orlando To Celebrate Centennial

Saturday, September 14 and Sunday, September 15 will mark the celebratory weekend for **Trinity/Orlando** as they celebrate 100 years of ministry. Their plans include a Saturday evening gala dinner event on their campus with food, music, fellowship and sharing of history. They'll continue giving

thanks to God the following morning combining worship into one festival service for the entire Trinity family followed by a light brunch. They will also open a time capsule — now buried in the wall of the Sanctuary — to see what's there, and then will bury a new one that will be opened by another generation of Trinity members.

## Youth Produce Dinner Theater Fund-Raiser

Youth from **Trinity Downtown** and **Prince of Peace/Orlando** combined efforts in April to produce the hysterical and riveting murder mystery dinner theater, "Death by Chocolate" — a play combining all the elements of classic murder mysteries with a scathing satire of today's health crazes. Proceeds from this event help send youth to the National Youth Gathering held in Minneapolis, Minnesota this summer.

The Youth served a plated dinner of salad, spaghetti, and garlic bread with a chocolate dessert buffet.

According to their program notes, members of the newly renovated Meadowbrook Health Resort were dropping like flies — including famed chef Edith Chiles! On the eve of the grand re-opening, this is not the best advertisement. It's up to John Stone, the manager, to find the cause and the murderer.

Delightfully sarcastic and cynical, Stone finds himself teaming up with Ed Parlor, mystery writer and amateur sleuth, in a wacky race against time. The clues point to a sinister box of chocolates, and the suspects include all the outlandish characters working for the resort: Lady Riverdale, owner of the resort and a woman with dark secrets; Ralph Deadwood, gym instructor and all around cad; Dick Simmering, the aerobics instructor; Anne, the panic-stricken nurse; "Sweet Pea" Meadowbrook, overweight and grieving daughter of the recently deceased founder of

## LCEF, Thrivent Toast Cinco De Mayo

At right — Jay Wendland, District Vice President of LCEF and Jeff Albright, the Thrivent representative with an office in Mt. Dora, recently visited Faith/Eustis, FL promoting the Lutheran Early Response Team Training (LERT) to be held at Faith on Saturday, June 8th. The training event will be partially funded by a Thrivent Action Team Grant. If anyone would like to attend the training they are welcome to do so.



**St. Luke's/Oviedo** recently completed their 25th anniversary concert season under the direction of Judy Duda. The volunteer group (below) works together to produce this annual concert series that includes some of the finest music in the greater Orlando area. The group also surprised Judy with a reception to honor her leadership as the founding director of the concert series. Judy is retiring as the leader of that series. That's Judy in the photo below holding the number eight!



## REGION



# 3



### Vice President:

Charles Reich | Grace/Winter Haven

### Board Treasurer:

Renee Varga | Woodlands/Montverde

### Lay 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 Kappell | Faith/Eustis

### Circuit 11 Winter Haven Circuit Visitor:

Dean Pfeffer | Hope/Plant City



## ▼ Lakeland Celebrates 7th Annual “Feed The Need” Food Drive



St Paul/Lakeland, FL joined with Christ/Lakeland, FL and Christ Community Presbyterian Church for a unique opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus. The event was their 7th Annual “Feed the Need,” on Sunday, March 19th.

Members from these three Lakeland congregations headed to the Lake Miriam Publix to buy food for three local charities: kidsPACK, One More Child & VISTE. Food donations were sorted by 30 volunteers and loaded onto the trucks for delivery to these charities. The food receipts totaled more than \$28,000!



## Early Learning Center Teaches Ushers and Acolytes ▼



At Grace/St. Cloud, FL Early Learning Center they have chapel every week. They teach the children how to usher and acolyte and they take turns every week. The younger children collect the offering and their VPK class participate as acolytes. They love serving the Lord as God’s church! They also love singing “This Little Light of Mine!” They refuse to hide their lights!



## Thrivent Grants Help Fund LWML Convention Backpacks ▼

The national convention of the LWML will be held in Mobile, Ala June 20 – 23, 2019. Since the Florida-Georgia District is one of the hosting Districts,

string backpacks, towels and fleece to be made into blankets. At the event the participants will fill the backpacks with the listed contents, towels and tie the fleece

suggested that those who were able and could, would apply for Thrivent Action Grants. Grants are \$250.

The ladies discussed what they could buy from the list of supplies sent to us with the monies gotten from Thrivent and other donations. After much discussion and co-ordinating with an LWML district officer present, they decided to order the canvas string backpacks with the Thrivent funds. Lutheran World Relief was very specific as the size and type of backpack.

Gloria Luddecke applied and received a Thrivent grant and bought 14 dozen backpacks and spiral notebooks. Other LWML members bought more canvas string backpacks, pencils, pens, rulers, spiral notebooks, crayons, towels and fleece. It is through Thrivent grants like this that many supplies



they are charged with the responsibility of providing supplies for the Servant Connection Event. The event is to supply Lutheran World Relief with filled canvas

into blankets. At a recent meeting of the LWML from Our Savior/St. Petersburg, FL the 16 members present discussed how to best go about funding this effort. It was

collected by LWML members can be taken to the convention will be well used by Lutheran World Relief.

### 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 Burtzlauff, Our Savior/St. Petersburg

Circuit 15 Tampa Circuit Visitor:

Gilbert Kuehn | Messiah/Tampa

Circuit 16 Sarasota Circuit Visitor:

Rosseter Leavitt | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota

Circuit 17 SW Circuit Visitor:

Richard Browning | Hope/Bonita Springs

## Thrive/Estero Heading to Haiti In May ▼

Haiti, thankfully, has been calming down. Thrive’s Mission Team is has a mission trip planned for May 24-31. They plan to take school supplies for the children involved with Mission:Haiti. They’re looking for pencils, erasers, personal pencil sharpeners, 16 crayon packages, ball point and gel pens, rulers, protractors.

Paper is too heavy to transport there, but they plan to purchase paper notebooks in Haiti for approximately \$2 each and are looking for contributions to help cover those costs. This trip is a transformative experience for all who participate, but it is not cheap to travel in Haiti safely. The Mission Team is asking for donations to help cover travel costs also. They’re doing some fund-raising and have set up individual participants on their website where pledges can be made.







▲ **St. Paul/Boca Raton** held a successful track and field day this spring. Above photo shows both tug-of-war and long jump events held on the athletic fields of their campus.

## Trinity/Fort Lauderdale Closing School

On June 9th **Trinity/Fort Lauderdale, FL** will celebrate 85 years of Christian Education and a vibrant mission as they close their education facility at the end of the 2018-19 school year. The school was founded in 1933.

According to Principal Candace Church, “We can no longer support our school or campus. We have struggled with security issues suggested by Broward County, dated facilities badly in need of repair, the demand for newer technology in order to be competitive in South Florida Education and declining enrollment.”

Trinity Lutheran Academy has provided Kindergarten through 8th grade quality education and a Christian learning environment to children from the greater Fort Lauderdale area.

“Members of Trinity have worked hard and can be very proud of the legacy for this educational institution,” Church concluded. “As a private Lutheran educational facility that believes in the importance of maintaining a small class size in order to provide a higher teacher to student ratio, teachers were able to focus more on their students.”

The celebrating of mission service will be Sunday, June 9th on the campus.

▼ Five classmates at **Shepherd of the Coast/Fort Lauderdale FL** take a break.



Below — Both the boys and girls cross country teams of **Redeemer/Stuart** made first place in the finals.



Palm Sunday worship overlooking the Indian River Lagoon is an annual event hosted for the community surrounding **Redeemer/Stuart, FL**. The congregation has been hosting the community event for a decade. The location is inviting for their casual, outdoor service. Members, neighbors and friends bring lawn chairs or beach blankets and stay after the service to enjoy the Easter Egg Hunt for the kids followed by breakfast. Photo at right — members of the congregation preparing the palm crosses gifted to the community at worship.



## 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 | Faithy/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



# Haitian Lutheran Teachers 2020 Conference

On March 20, 1999, Helen Roenfeldt and I were in Haiti for the first Haitian Lutheran Teachers Conference that was co-planned by the Florida-Georgia District Haitian Mission Society (now, Mission: Haiti) and Florida-Georgia District School Ministries.



**MISSION:HAITI**  
by Mark Brink, Member of  
2020 Haitian Lutheran Teachers  
Conference Planning Team

On March 20, 2019, we were back in Haiti with the 2020 Haitian Lutheran Teachers Conference Planning Team. Over the course of those 20 years, many

hundreds of teachers and pastors who serve children in their Lutheran schools have grown personally and professionally as a result of attending the conferences. Additionally, the impact on team members has been life-changing for many who have served on those conference teams.

When I asked one teacher to serve on the 1999 team, she said, “Me? Why

would you ask me?” She couldn’t think of one good reason why she would be well-suited to go to Haiti. But God had plenty of good reasons. Eventually, Karen Smith,

the Early Childhood Director at Peace Lutheran in Okeechobee, became the Chairperson of Mission: Haiti. And she will tell you she has been incredibly blessed as a result.

The March visit to Haiti was to give members of the Planning Team the opportunity to visit schools in the city, in towns and villages as well as in remote rural areas of the country. The visits helped to put into context, the various environments in which the children live and the teachers serve.

Photographs of places and faces help to tell the story, but being there in person, interacting with the children and their teachers is the best way to gain some sense of what life and learning there is like. What is consistent, is a sense of hopefulness on the part of the people, because they know who Jesus is and who they are as His children. The theme for 2020 is, “A Hope and a Future: Created Anew.” A fitting theme for people who know where their hope truly comes from.



## Conference Planning Team Participants

(Left-to-Right) Mark Brink, District Executive Director for School and Youth Ministries; Todd Sickles, Science Teacher, St. Luke’s/Oviedo, FL; Lophane, on site planner and security for Mission:Haiti; Anne Dobbins, Early Childhood Director, Good Shepherd/ Titusville, FL; Susan Franskousky, Pre-K 4 Teacher St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL; Karen Smith, Early Childhood Director, Peace/Okeechobee, FL; Susan Brockberg, Team Leader for the 2020 Conference Planning Team; and Helen Roenfeldt, Misso:Haiti Executive Director.W

# Planning Team Makes Remote Haiti Trip







## Three Pastors, Five Vicars Assigned to FLGA District By Concordia Seminary/St. Louis



First row, from left: Erica McCarty, Christina (Soto) LeBoriosis, John Kyle, Haley Hickey and Aaron Hickey. Second row, from left: Jordan Moore, Nathan McCarty, Brendon Moore, Joshua LeBoriosis, Amy Will, Kyle Will and Florida-Georgia District President Rev. Dr. Gregory Walton. Not pictured: Laird VanGorder and Joel Dietrich.

**Concordia Seminary/St. Louis** celebrated call day on May 1st with 116 students who learned of their first call. Students included placements as pastors and deaconesses, and assignments as vicars and deaconess interns.

Calls were issued to 49 pastoral students and one diaconal student during a special worship service at 7 p.m. in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus on Concordia's campus. These students join more than 12,500 who have been prepared to serve as pastors, missionaries, deaconesses and

chaplains in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) during the Seminary's existence. Two pastoral students have calls or placements pending.

A total of 63 vicars and three deaconess interns received their assignments at a 3 p.m. worship service, also in the chapel.

"It is a great time to be the church and it is a great time to be getting into the ministry," Seminary President Dr. Dale A. Meyer told the students. "As you go on, remember your Seminary. We have for you, a heart."

The LCMS Florida-Georgia District received the following new pastors and vicars from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis:

Pastors — Joel Dietrich, **St. Paul / Peachtree City, GA**; Nathan McCarty, **Bethlehem/Jacksonville Beach, FL**; Laird VanGorder, **The Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity/Macon, GA**;

Vicars — Aaron Hickey: **Mount Calvary/Warner Robins, GA**; John Kyle, **Grace/St. Petersburg, FL**; Joshua LeBoriosis, **St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL**; Brendon Moore, **Grace/Winter Haven, FL**; Kyle Will, **Epiphany/Lake Worth, FL**. ■