

LUTHERAN LIFE

The Newsmagazine of the
Florida-Georgia District of the
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
September-October 2019

Synod Convention Coverage begins on page 6
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National Youth Gathering page 18





CHOSEN WITH
PURPOSE
ABIDING IN
JESUS

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:

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floridageorgia DISTRICT CAPSULES



As Of August 1, 2019

Calling Congregations

Peace/Decatur, GASole Pastor
King of Kings/Jasper, GASole Pastor
Christ/Lakeland, FLSole Pastor
Oak Road/Lilburn, GASole Pastor
Woodlands/Montverde, FL Senior Pastor
Good Shepherd/N Fort Myers, FL...Sole Pastor
Epiphany/Tallahassee, FL..... Senior Pastor
Timothy/Woodstock, GA.....Sole Pastor

Calls Issued

Faith/Hialeah, FL
Called Rev. Luis Diaz | Senior Pastor
Bethlehem/Jacksonville Beach, FL
Called Rev. Nate McCarty| Associate Pastor
St. Paul/Weston, FL
Called Rev. Scott Henze | Senior Pastor
First/Clearwater, FL
Called Rev. Pat F. A. O'Brien | Sole Pastor
Holy Trinity/Rome, GA
Called Rev. Dana Loney | Pastor IIM

Calls Accepted

Luis Diaz to Faith/Hialeah, FL
Nate McCarty to Bethlehem/Jax Beach, FL
Scott Henze to St. Paul/Weston, FL
Pat O'Brien to First/Clearwater, FL
Laird vanGorder to Holy Trinity/Macon, GA
Joel Dietrich to St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA
Dana Loney to Holy Trinity/Rome, GA

Transferred OUT to Other Districts

Laura Hillman (C) to South Wisconsin
Kiara Denholm (C) to Texas
Kenneth Chitwood (O) to Pacific SW
Paul Sutterer (O) to English
Kimberly Cluck (C) to Oklahoma
Andrew Cluck (C) to Oklahoma
Linda Sasse (C) to Michigan
Andrew Schermbeck (O) to Nebraska
Cynthia Tillman (C) to CNH

Transferred IN from Other Districts

Michael Duchene (O) from Michigan
Eric Gerken (C) from Nebraska
Bradley Heinecki (O) from Wyoming
Michael Mast (O) from N Illinois
John Flamme (O) from Indiana
Ellen Prohl (C) from N Illinois
Peter Hoffman (O) from N Illinois
Dana Loney (O) from S Wisconsin

Ordained/Commissioned Minister

Initial Placements
Eric Gerken |DCE
to Prince of Peace/Orlando, FL
Dana Loney | Pastor
to Holy Trinity/Rome, GA

Ellen Prohl | Parish Music
to Mount Calvary/Warner Robins, GA
Joel Dieterichs | Pastor
to St. Paul/Peachtree City, GA
Jessica Wittcop | Teacher
to Redeemer/Stuart, FL
Ronald Pawlitz | Principal
to First/Clearwater, FL
Pat O'Brien | Pastor
to First/Clearwater, FL
Luis Diaz | Pastor
to Faith/Hialeah, FL
Katherine Onnen | Teacher
to Faith/Marietta, GA
Emily Brenner | Teacher
to Faith/Marietta, GA
Deborah Heilman | Teacher
to Faith/Eustis, FL
Scott Henze | Pastor
to St. Paul/Weston, FL
Margaret Ruehle | Deaconess
to Grace/St. Petersburg, FL

Status Change in the District

Kenneth Chitwood (O)
from Active to Candidate
Steve Hoffschneider (C)
from Active to Candidate
Brooke McKinnon (C)
from Active to Candidate
Crystal Jones (C)
from Active to Candidate
Nickolas Utech (C)
from Active to Candidate

Called to Glory

Aaron Simms (O) 4/30/19
Orlyn Schlie (C) 7/9/19
Carl Peterson (O) 7/19/19

Church Changes

The Gathering Place/Port St. Lucie, FL
[New Church Start]

Removed from the Roster

Debra Blackwood (C)
Scott Briggs (C)
Tara Concepcion (C)
Steven Graebner (O)
Paul Hasselbring (O)
Kathleen Munce (C)
Sara Perez-Arche (C)
Barbara Phillips (C)
Cristine Schafer (C)
Thomas Schnetzer (C)
Angela Schultz (C)
Danette Smith (C)
Nancy Sweringen (C)
Erica vonEbers (C)
Michael Wilson (C)



District Education Pioneer Orlyn Schlie Called to Glory

Fondly remembered for his quick wit and sense of humor, Orlyn August Schlie was one of the dominant patriarchs of the Florida-Georgia District Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Born in Elgin, Illinois to German immigrant parents, he was the eighth of 10 children. He was baptized, grade school educated, and confirmed in his Lutheran faith at St. John's/Elgin, IL. His secondary years were spent at Concordia (High School), River Forest, Illinois, and he received his college education at Concordia Teachers College, also in River Forest.

Upon graduation in 1943, his first assignment took him to a one room schoolhouse in rural Jefferson City, Missouri. Following one year there, he was called to Grace Lutheran in New Albany, Indiana where he spent two years as teacher and organist. He married Dorothy Grace Umbach of New Albany. The newlyweds moved to Columbus, Indiana and began their family. Orlyn taught school and was a youth counselor at St. He received his Master's degree at Indiana University.

They were blessed with four children: Stephen, Carolyn, Roger and Daniel.

In 1956, Orlyn, Dorothy, and their four children moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida where Orlyn had been called to be the principal of Trinity Lutheran School. Trinity later became Lutheran Central School, and Orlyn remained there until retirement in 1984.



*Orlyn August Schlie
March 10, 1922 - July 8, 2019*

During his tenure in Florida, Orlyn also served the Florida-Georgia District of the LCMS in a number of capacities, including president of Lutheran Education Society and board chairman of Lutheran High School of South Florida.

Following retirement, Orlyn and Dorothy didn't sit still. They enjoyed traveling, and their retirement gift enabled them to cruise through the Panama Canal. Travel often involved visits to family and friends. They traveled throughout most of the

USA, as well as Europe and Australia.

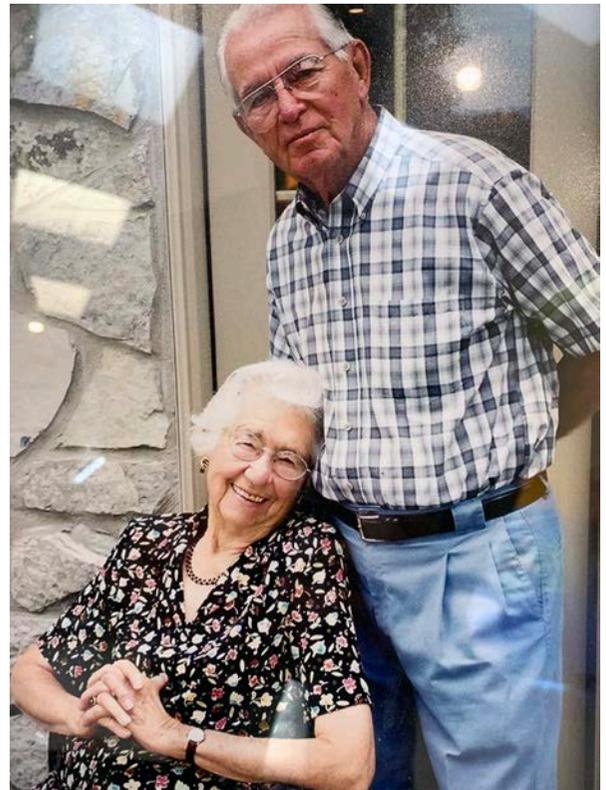
They were active participants with Laborers for Christ and assisted in construction at 18 churches in seven states during a 10 year period.

Together they moved to Lutheran Haven in Oviedo, Florida in 1995 — where they spent their later years. There they were faithful members at St. Luke's. Dorothy went to heaven in 2012 and now Orlyn is there as well.

Orlyn's love of sacred music was evident — he often wrote additional verses to his favorite hymns. He looked forward to Sunday worship every week and took great delight in a well-delivered sermon. At Orlyn's Celebration of Life

service on July 15th, the Rev. John Elliott, pastor at St. Luke's, preached on the third article of the Apostle's Creed. He selected that text from Luther's Small Catechism because it was the theme of his first Bible Study class attended by Orlyn and Dorothy at Lutheran Haven many years ago.

David Ludwig, Jr. was the organist and some of Orlyn's favorite hymns were



selected from both The Lutheran Hymnal and Lutheran Service Book. And as Orlyn would have insisted, all verses were sung with a spirited Amen.

Memorial contributions may be sent to St. Luke's Lutheran Church (Adopt-a-Student program), or to the Benevolence Fund at Lutheran Haven, both in Oviedo. ▲

DISTRICT CALENDAR

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

Lay Leadership Summit Region 2 • November 15 & 16 • Abiding Savior/Gainesville, Florida

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

What a great summer this has been, but it has been busy and full! This has been what we would call a “Synod Summer.” I traveled a lot this summer for different Synod events, including the National LWML Convention in Mobile, Alabama, the National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Synod Convention in our own backyard, in Tampa, Florida.

Each of these events held some wonderful moments to **Let Jesus Be Seen in 2019**, and several took me to parts of the country I hadn’t spent much time in before. Even in the midst of a busy travel schedule, Edith and I found ways to make the trips more enjoyable beyond the work.

Summer is a great time to get away and be refreshed. Even Jesus did this from time to time. He had to slip these times into His busy schedule, and He provides us with an excellent example. We read in MATTHEW 14, “And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone...” We *need* those times to get away to hear God’s voice.

God’s voice was heard in a variety of ways this summer. First, I had the privilege of representing the Florida-Georgia District in Mobile, Alabama for the National LWML Convention. I was honored to preach at the closing service. The theme was **“In Praise to**

the Lord,” and let me tell you, those ladies know how to praise! It was an uplifting gathering and not surprisingly, there was a lot of purple all around! We had a wonderful delegation from the Florida-Georgia District. Our FLGA District LWML was one of the sponsors, along with two of the LWML districts from the Southern District and they all did a marvelous job. You can read more about the LWML Convention on page 14.

God’s voice was clear as we gathered. God loves our praise and even in the midst of their business, the ladies offered praise. The amount of funds they raise through their

mite box donations, and then distribute, is astounding. So many great missions are enabled due to their generosity. We came back from the National LWML Convention uplifted and excited for the wonderful ministry these ladies do.

A couple of weeks later we were off to Minnesota for the National Youth Gathering, where some 20,000 youth from all across the United States gathered in the US Bank Stadium and the Convention Center. There was about a mile and a half between the two, and my Fitbit was very happy with my daily average of about 25,000 steps.

Under the theme: **“Real. Present. God.”** we saw enthusiastic youth gathered, serving, and sharing Joy in Jesus. There is an unspeakable joy in seeing young people, well behaved, excited and giving praise to Jesus. The whole program was great. One of the real highlights for me was our Florida-Georgia District event in the Kia Room at the US Bank Stadium — home of the Minnesota Vikings. We had more than 600 youth and leaders from across the Florida-Georgia District participate in a time of fellowship, food, music and games. I even had a few moments to encourage the youth to consider a future in ministry. While they weren’t lining up to sign up, I did later hear from one our youth leaders that he had a member of his youth group express an



I was honored to preach at the closing service — “In Praise to the Lord” — at the National LWML Convention in Mobile, AL. The FLGA District was one of the convention sponsors. This was our district photo. I’m in the purple shirt and black jacket about 11 o’clock in this photo.

interest in ministry! Praise God! You'll read more about the National Youth Gathering on pages 18 & 19.

We arrived home from Minneapolis only to repack and head to Tampa for the LCMS National Convention. This was an historic first for the Florida-Georgia District. Never, in the history of our Synod, had we ever hosted a Synod Convention. Thanks to the untiring work of Liz Pfeffer, who coordinated the volunteer corps, and Kathy Keene, who coordinated our delegates, it was an excellent event. In fact, not only did we receive positive comments and notes, but we also heard from folks at the Synod that this was one of the best run conventions in recent history! We should all be honored by this wonderful accomplishment.

The theme for the LCMS Convention was



I was honored to present the Bible to LCMS President Matthew Harrison for the reading of the Gospel at opening worship of the LCMS Convention in Tampa. The Rev. Todd Peperkorn (on far right next to me), pastor of Holy Cross/ Rocklin, CA, served as crucifer.

cultural issues. You can find abundant details and news on pages 6 through 13 of this issue of Lutheran Life as well as on the Synod's website.

Three large Lutheran gatherings in one summer was an amazing experience. Then it was time to get away for a little rest. Edith and I spent a few days just being away from it all to recharge the batteries

and prepare us for a busy fall. Many of us tend to run from one thing to the next, and not only does that wear us out physically, but it can impact our very souls.

Jesus said in MATTHEW 11:28-29, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Paul Simon put it this way: "Slow down, you move too fast. You got to make the morning last, just kicking down the cobble stones Looking for fun and feelin' groovy." I know that dates me, but Jesus makes me feel groovy! He helps me live in Praise to the Lord! He is my real, present, God! Jesus makes me joyfully Lutheran, because it is all about Him.

I hope you had a break this summer. But even if you didn't you can still find an

even deeper rest in Jesus. Step away from all the busy work of life, and rest in Jesus. Make time to come away, maybe by yourself, and rest in Jesus. Pray, praise, and give thanks as His Spirit renews you day by day.

By the way, the best part of traveling is coming home! It's been a busy summer! It's good to be home!

Our 35th wedding anniversary fell right in the midst of the National LCMS Convention. So we celebrated a little later in Key West, Florida with Edith's sister Bev and her husband Anthony. It was a wonderful, relaxing week exploring the Florida Keys and we even celebrated Bev & Anthony's 25th



One of the best reasons to return home is to enjoy our children and grandchildren.



Mark & Mary Beth Brink and Edith & I got to Whang with the band — "Bread of Stone" at the FLGA District event at the National Youth Gathering

"Joy:Fully Lutheran." I'm told it's the first time that the Synod Convention has ever had the word "Lutheran" in the theme. We did, in fact, see many joyful Lutherans, who gathered to do the work of the Synod by day, and gathered to celebrate our faith and life in Jesus in the evening. Important matters were decided at this convention about issues of fellowship, ecclesiastical supervision, and



Celebrating my lovely wife's birthday after returning home from a long summer of work and travel. She is a true partner in ministry in my life and a wonderful travel companion.

In His Peace,
GREG

Five Minutes With Lutheran Hour Speaker, Michael Ziegler

The Rev. Dr. Michael Ziegler has been the voice and face of Lutheran Hour Ministries [LHM] for a little less than a year. Lutheran Life caught up with him at the LCMS Convention and got him to talk about his task. LHM is one of the front-running ministries within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and has been from its inception more than 100 years ago. This long-standing ministry was built on the outreach method of radio broadcasts, and has developed into a multi-faceted organization offering videos, pamphlets, printed resources, podcasts, online discussion boards, and more. One hallmark is their weekly sermon broadcast by the LHM Speaker.

LUTHERAN LIFE: Despite the long history of the organization, there have been only a few Speakers throughout the years. What does it mean to be the LHM Speaker and how did you make your way into the ministry?

MZ: “I was raised in a military family, my dad was a career Air Force officer for about 21 years and he decided to go back to school at Concordia Nebraska and be a Lutheran School Teacher. I followed in my father’s footsteps entering into a career with the Air Force, and then feeling the call into the pastoral ministry. I attended Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and was placed as a pastor in that area.”

LUTHERAN LIFE: How did you get to be LHM Speaker?

MZ: “I was nominated to be considered for the position of the Lutheran Hour Speaker after a lengthy application and consideration process. I then was offered the call into this unique ministry position.

“I am convinced that this is where the Lord wants me. It’s a little intimidating, I am the tenth in a long line of speakers. The

first two had the position for a total of fifty years, and they have set a great example and given a great heritage for what this position has become.

“So I have been in it for a little more than ten months now and I’m learning how to do it in the 21st century. One of the new developments in ministry is reaching out to the online community. I feel pulled to focus on reaching out to those who might not otherwise hear a sermon, or are unaccustomed to typical service-oriented Gospel proclamation and Biblical knowledge.

LUTHERAN LIFE: How do you plan to reach this group?

MZ: “To approach this vast field of ministry, we’ve put together a podcast discussion that pairs with the weekly sermon — but doesn’t need to be heard with that sermon to make sense to the listener. I sit down with four or five others around a table and we discuss the Scripture lesson together.

As the face of Lutheran Evangelism for many years, LHM is constantly trying to live up to its innovative reputation and history. As a resource for new believers, seasoned church members, and faithful pastors, teachers, parents, and individuals, LHM seeks to always be bringing Christ to the nations, and the nations to the Church. I’m proud to be a part of this organization. ▲



Michael Ziegler

Florida-Georgia District Delegation Tampa, Florida 2019



Convention Condemns Physician-Assisted Suicide, Remembers, Prays for the Persecuted Church

Two convention resolutions passed unanimously with a vocal affirmation — the first on physician-assisted suicide. Entitled “To Emphasize the Sanctity of Life and the Dangers of Physician-Assisted Suicide,” the resolution declared the Synod’s “opposition to physician-assisted suicide and legislative efforts on state and federal levels to legalize it; and called for and encouragement of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty to address this issue in discussions about public policy and encourage LCMS members and congregations “to have a voice in the public square opposing physician-assisted suicide.”

Committee Chairman Rev. Terry Forke, president of the LCMS Montana District, noted that this resolution was important and timely “because the seventh and eighth states in our country have recently passed physician-assisted suicide legislation, and because we recognize that physician-assisted suicide is a gateway drug to euthanasia.”

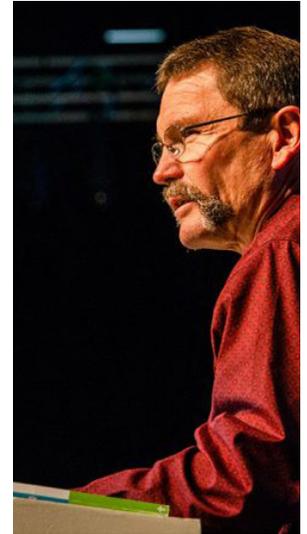
The other unanimous resolution dealt with the persecuted church. Forke said this:

“This resolution is also important and timely because there are people around the world, our brothers and sisters, who are under persecution, and who are losing their life for Jesus Christ, and because there is an event horizon for that persecution to come to our nation as well.”

A study by Open Doors USA indicates that “worldwide every month, on average, 345 Christians are killed for faith-related reasons, 105 churches and properties are damaged or destroyed, and 219 Christians are detained and imprisoned.”

Delegates were encouraged to return home to their congregations and recommend the use of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations’ Bible study “Why Are You Persecuting Me? A Christian Response to Hostility and Persecution.”

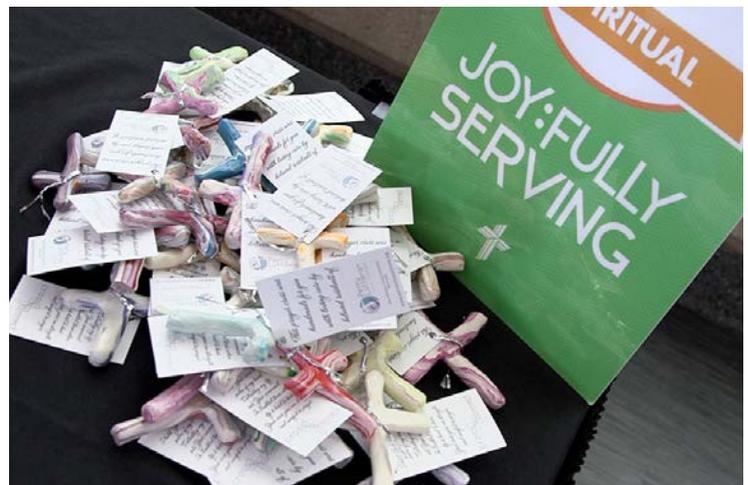
The resolution also encouraged LCMS members to pray for persecuted Christians around the world by using the LCMS “Pray for Us Calendar” and other resources; and Resolved that the LCMS in convention pray for the persecuted church. Upon the adoption of the resolution, the convention spent time in prayer. ▲



Terry Forke



Convention Servant Event



As the 67th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) was about to commence in Tampa, Fla., volunteers packed 275 baskets of items for area mothers and their babies. The servant event, “Joy:fully Lutheran,” was planned months in advance and open to the first 100 registrants.

The baskets will be distributed by **Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries/Sanford, Florida**, which operates a maternity home and transitional living for pregnant women and their children; and **Amigos en Cristo, Immokalee/Florida**, which provides social services to its largely migrant and immigrant community, many of whom are in crisis and need assistance to build a solid foundation for a better future. Both Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries and Amigos en Cristo are LCMS Recognized Service Organizations in Florida. ▲



Lawrence Rast and Dale Meyer switched ties in a statement of solidarity to show convention delegates that both seminaries were strong and walking together in mission and education. Rast wears CSL and Meyer CTSFTW ties.

Both seminary presidents, the Rev. Dr. Dale Meyer, president of **Concordia Seminary/St. Louis**, (CSL) and the Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast Jr., president of **Concordia Theological Seminary/Fort Wayne** (CTSFW), displayed a united front against the challenges of raising up pastors and other professional churchworkers.

“It is no secret that the LCMS is facing a difficult situation in the coming decades where the number of pastors retiring far overshadows the number of seminary students. This will cause a critical shortage of pastors,” Meyer emphasized.

LCMS Leaders & Delegates Professional Church-Worker

Specific Ministry Program

Delegates dealt with a resolution dealing with the Specific Ministry Pastor program and other routes currently available through the seminaries. Both Meyer and Rast spoke in favor of the resolution while also acknowledging their ongoing support of alternative paths toward ordination.

“All things being equal, we want our pastors to go through the residential route. But all things are not always equal,” stated the Rev. John E. Hill, president of the LCMS Wyoming District and chairman of the floor committee dealing with pastoral ministry and the two LCMS seminaries. “Then the other routes become preferred, because that’s what’s needed at the time and at the place.”

Friendly Competition

As many laypersons are aware, there are sometimes comical or exaggerated comparisons made between students of each seminary. While there are certain differences, the presidents of each institution are working with students and faculty to enter into a new season of perceptions toward this friendly “rivalry.”

Except in basketball — in which there is no friendly cooperation whatsoever — Presidents Meyer and Rast hope to exemplify an atmosphere of unity that spills out into the students’ and pastors’ lives well into the future.

“In this day and age we really, really have to be together in the cause of the gospel. We cannot enjoy the luxury of nitpicking each other,” Meyer stated.

Rast agreed, “We’re outside the center, we’re on the margins, and we know that what we’re trying to do, we’re committed to one another in the gospel, we are trying to model this from our perspective for the sake of our students and help our existing clergy to kind of get a feel for the changed circumstances in which we find ourselves.” Currently, students from both seminaries get together to build community through sports matches, student association meetings, and voluntary get-togethers meeting halfway between each school campus. As the Synod navigates the challenging adjustments within society and culture, pray that our clergy would maintain a united effort in Gospel outreach and collegial relationships with one another.

“The Synod loves its seminaries, and we are blessed to have two robust, healthy and sound seminaries. Anniversaries are really about the future.

LCMS Convention Delegates Adopt Missions-Oriented Resolutions

A resolution “To Encourage Support of Short-Term International Mission Activities,” was presented — which passed with 98 percent of the vote.



Daniel McMiller

“We want to support and expand the fruits of congregation-sponsored short-term mission activities,” the Rev. Daniel F. McMiller, executive director of the LCMS Office of International Mission (OIM) offered. “My co-workers and I stand ready to support you. Do you want to send or be on a short-term mission team from your congregation? Then talk to your friends at the OIM. Let them help you by making the introductions to your sent career missionaries and your overseas church partners. Those are the folks who will live with your work long after you return home.”

Delegates also passed a resolution “To Strengthen and Encourage the Partnership of our Congregations in International Mission through the Board for International Mission.” This resolution asked the Synod in

convention to “reaffirm her commitment to working within the voluntary partnership while giving thanks for the 19,602 congregations, households and others who directly support the Synod’s missionaries.

“The committee wants to assure and sincerely emphasize to the convention that we did our very best to take into careful consideration all of these overtures submitted by six districts as well as numerous congregations,” said the Rev. Peter K. Lange, committee chairman and president of the LCMS Kansas District. “The issues under consideration here are not just about one bylaw, but about the way we live, work and walk together as a Synod — because our Synod is a balance of what we, the congregations of the Synod, do independently and what we do together.”

Pass Resolutions Regarding Recruitment and Education

For while they recognize what God has done, they are actually about what God will do. And what God will do is be faithful to His beloved children. He will strengthen and preserve them, for the Gospel promise is clear: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever; and He has promised to be with us always to the very end of the age,” Rast concluded.

Rev. Dr. Patrick Ferry of Concordia Universities Wisconsin and Ann Arbor said the issue of recruitment was a major theme of discussion at the synodical convention. “We have to be creative and think about this,” Ferry stated, “its not like the harvest is any less plentiful, its greater than ever. So we’ve got to be innovative, and thoughtful and creative in ways that we go about this and prepare people. And so that goes beyond preparing churchworkers. It includes that of course, but it includes how do we prepare all of God’s people for work in their fields.”

In agreement with this sentiment, the Rev. Dr. John Nunes of Concordia College New York brought up the changing picture of college students across the country, and especially in the cultural mosaic of Bronxville, New York. “One thing I have found to be a great joy is how robust the Concordia system is, it’s robust, it’s alive, and any living organism will seek to replicate itself. It’s one of the parts of our church body where we actually see

expansion and growth. The average college student is no longer an 18-21 year old, in fact only 22% of students are in that segment of the population So the average college student is the 29 year-old single mother. Which means there also are ministry opportunities in terms of engaging with people.”

Both of these leaders brought forward the reality that filling the positions of churchworkers does not immediately guarantee the success and growth of the church. Rather, those who engage their coworkers, supervisors, and clients in other fields through the lens of Christ set the tone for the future of the church, and from that will the success and growth of the church be achieved.

Concordia University Florida?

In pursuit of equipping those with non-church-related occupations to live out their faith even in their workplaces, both Ferry and Nunes expressed strong hope for their programs offering top-tier education, and indicated the future possibility of a Concordia presence within the Florida-Georgia District.



Patrick Ferry (left) and John Nunes on stage during the introduction of the Concordia University System presidents.

Nunes cautiously tossed around the idea concerning a “ConFlorida,” as did Ferry, but the appearance of something like this would be rather unconventional. Since the national picture of higher education is constantly changing, there are challenges in planning and forming a new educational presence in any community. Ferry indicated opportunities in several areas of success by all the Concordia colleges and universities — such as healthcare and the medical science fields — could be explored. Whether this ever becomes anything more than discussion around a table or not, we can be thankful and supportive of our Concordia University schools, and rejoice with them in the ongoing work of the Gospel in all spheres of life! ▲



Standing ovations were given to a Czech children’s trio who sang “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” in the language of the Czech Republic. They were part of a presentation by the Office of International Mission.

LCMS President Emeriti Robert Kuhn and Gerald Kieschnick Recognized



A standing ovation was also given to both living President Emeriti for the LCMS — The Rev. Robert Kuhn who brought his granddaughter to the stage as his escort and The Rev. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick and his wife Terry. Kieschnick served as the 12th president of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod for three terms beginning in 2001-2010.

LCMS National Convention Deals With Racism, Immigrant Care, Sexual-Orientation and Gender-Identity

Convention delegates passed resolutions regarding racism, care for immigrant neighbors, sexual-orientation and gender-identity issues.

“These issues are in the headlines every day, and our people ... are confused by what they hear,” said Floor Committee 11 Chairman Rev. Terry Forke, president of the LCMS Montana District. “They clearly want to hear the clear Word of God.”

RACISM & IMMIGRANT CARE

The LCMS “publicly [condemns] the sin of racism in all its manifestations;” asserts that this sin “has its roots in the sins of pride and arrogance,” that it is “contrary to the law of love,” and that it “denies the biblical truth that all humanity has a common origin in Adam;” and encourages its members “to work toward racial reconciliation and equality within the Church and within society-at-large, praying that those who advocate racist ideologies and those who are deceived by them be brought to repentance, and that justice and healing come to those who have been wounded.”

“We live in two kingdoms,” said LCMS President Matthew Harrison. “We don’t all agree on the specifics of immigration laws in this church. Those laws are not mandated by the Bible — I may have views on the left-hand kingdom [civil authority] that are very strong in one way or another. In the right-hand kingdom, the kingdom of the Church, I have Jesus’ mandate of the Good Samaritan. My neighbor’s need is my vocation to mercy.”

Harrison urged the body to set aside their political views and consider their Christian vocation to serve their neighbor as they considered the resolution: “You may very well believe in building a wall in one kingdom, but in the other kingdom, my neighbor’s need is my call to mercy.”

Compassion toward immigrant neighbors [Res. 11-05A] was met with a positive response from the delegates in discussion, who largely sought to strengthen the wording of the resolution, to help ensure freedom of conscience for the members of their churches to care for any and all of their neighbors in need.

An amendment to the resolution, which added a resolve that “members of the Synod give bold witness, in keeping with the Scriptures and Confessions, against inhumane treatment and attitudes towards immigrants, war refugees, and minorities,” was suggested and passed on the floor.

Other points of the resolution encouraged of LCMS members to recognize their calling to see the immigrant and the stranger as their neighbor and to not to allow political divisions to become church divisions. The amended resolution passed with 90 percent of the vote.

Committee Chairman Forke felt that this resolution was timely and important because “there is so much confusion and concern. Our people want to love their neighbor, but they also want to be obedient to the laws of the land. So we hope that we gave some direction today.”

SEXUAL ORIENTATION & IDENTITY

A resolution “To Encourage the LCMS to Develop Resources to Aid Congregations and Schools regarding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues,” passed with 97 percent of the vote. Some of the more important points of the resolution were to reaffirm “the biblical truth that God created humanity as male and female;” to condemn “any acts of abuse” committed against all those people — “our neighbors, beloved of God” — who experience sexual-orientation or gender-identity issues.

LCMS congregations, districts and the Synod at large are encouraged to seek the counsel and leadership of these individuals in creating ministry resources; Resolve to “minister compassionately” to those experiencing sexual-orientation and gender-identity issues and to their families and friends; and to continue to develop resources “that enable the church to confess the truth boldly and minister compassionately” to those who experience these issues and those who care for them.

According to Forke, these issues are in people’s lives every single day. “They don’t know how to handle it, they’re afraid . . . so we thought it was very important to encourage our people to recognize these issues as a way to demonstrate the love of Christ to people who are lost and confused and need a word of help.” ▲

Future LCMS Delegates Addresses No Longer Available For Publication

A number of overtures brought to the LCMS nationally convention floor raised concerns over privacy and data protection for convention delegates. Previous Synod bylaws required the secretary of the Synod to publish the names and addresses of delegates in the Convention Workbook and, subsequently, online. This enabled people to “be in contact via mail or email” with delegates who would be voting for issues brought before the convention.

A resolution came before the convention to reverse this process and only publish the name and the congregation of each delegate. Mailing and e-mail addresses would only be available to the synod — and only to be used for conducting official convention business.



Donald Fondow

“This ends the long-standing practice of providing mailing addresses for unofficial but convention-related publications,” said the Rev. Dr. Donald Fondow, chairman of the Committee on Structure and Governance and president of the LCMS Minnesota North District.

Some delegates had concerns that recognized service organizations would also not receive the list since they are governed independently of the Synod. Some delegates expressed concern over the inability to receive information from sources other than official channels.

Fondow explained that while special-interest groups will not be able to mail delegates directly, the resolution does allow them to distribute information through delegates’ congregations. ▲

Specific Ministry Pastor Program May Help Solve Synod's Future Demand for Clergy

by Jeffrey Skopak, Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church & School/Jacksonville, FL

According to the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod a tidal wave is coming where we will face the reality of a clergy and church worker shortage. The current projection is that by the year 2029 more than 50 percent of LCMS congregations will be facing the prospect of a pastoral vacancy without options to fill those vacancies. To further support those numbers, the enrollment in the Masters of Divinity residential programs for academic year 2018-19 was at a record low (45 enrolled at Concordia Theological Seminary/Ft. Wayne and 44 enrolled at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis). What drives this crisis home is that there were 181 requests for graduating candidates from the Seminaries this year alone!

Throughout the history of the LCMS, multiple routes to the pastoral office — Theoretical, Practical, and Apprenticeship have been offered. The St. Louis Seminary historically was the *theoretical seminary* following the German gymnasium mode. The Fort Wayne Seminary was the *historic practical seminary*

focusing on essential theology and pastoral character. The third model, known as the *apprenticeship model* has been with the Synod since its inception and is mentioned in the first constitution of Synod. This model has gone through several iterations throughout the decades — most recently Distance Education Leading To Ordination (DELTO) and now the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program.

To be clear, SMP is not a “short-cut” to the pastoral office, nor is it somehow “lesser than” the residential model that is offered at our two seminaries. SMP is different. A candidate for the SMP program needs to be raised up by the ministry he will serve. SMP students participate in a four-year curriculum that is a mix of intensive residential classes at one of the seminaries, online classes, and on-site mentoring work with an ordained pastor approved by the Seminary and

District by which the SMP student will serve.

The SMP student enters the program as a vicar (a student intern under the tutelage of a mentor) for the first two years of the program. At the completion of two years the student is ordained into the pastoral ministry. He is required to complete the academic component of the program over the next two years.

SMP pastors are exactly that — Specific Ministry Pastors! Some SMP pastors serve in small, rural contexts that otherwise would never have a pastor due to financial constraints. Meanwhile, other SMP pastors serve in large ministry contexts where they have been raised up to serve a specific ministry.

At Grace/Jacksonville, Florida, Michael Popp was asked to consider the

the church, the church is able to better serve the spiritual needs of the school families, baptisms of school children have increased, and the kingdom of God is most certainly growing!

Due to the nature of the mentor-SMP student relationship there has also been another positive consequence for the ministry of Grace — the supervising pastor and the SMP pastor have developed a close and supportive working relationship in the ministry. Each pastor's gifts are honored and each is thankful for the other.

Another positive consequence of SMP has been the strengthening of the relationship between the church and the school. Along with the Principal, Jennifer Tanner, Pastors Popp and Skopak have worked diligently to “erase” the boundary

lines between the two sides of the ministry in order to reflect one voice for the sake of the Gospel on the church and school campus as well as in the community. Much of the ministry planning now revolves around both church and school families.

Principal Tanner seeks opportunities to include both pastors in the school on a regular basis and the pastors seek out opportunities to serve, bless, and care for the school families.

It is the responsibility of each church and school ministry in our District to identify, encourage, support, and raise up future pastors and church workers. This successful collaboration illustrates the success of an SMP Program.

An SMP program does have a cost factor of \$40,000 for the four years. Consider supporting or offsetting these costs if you raise up a man for the ministry. The more they can focus on the work the better they are able to serve the ministry. If you have any questions regarding SMP please contact the Florida-Georgia District Office or one of our two seminaries: Concordia Seminary/St. Louis at 314-505-7000 or Concordia Theological Seminary/Ft. Wayne at 260-452-2100. ▲



Jeffrey Skopak



Michael Popp



Jennifer Tanner

SMP route to the ministry in order to serve the church in the capacity as pastor to the families of their school. Due to Michael's deep understanding of Lutheran education, his 19 years as a Lutheran educator, his leadership as athletic director, and most importantly his love for the students and their families, it was very clear that he could serve the ministry in an even greater capacity as the Specific Ministry Pastor to the school families.

During the first year of his SMP program Michael continued to teach in the school; however, his teaching schedule was “lightened” in order to give him the time necessary to focus on the class work of the SMP program. Michael transitioned out of the classroom and into the pastoral office during his second year of the program. He completed SMP this June.

What impact has SMP had on the ministry of Grace? School families are now bridging into the worship life of

President Matthew Harrison Shares Opinions On Shrinking Membership, Recruiting of Future Churchworkers and Conflict Within t

LCMS President Matthew Harrison was re-elected to a fourth term as president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod after receiving the majority vote on the first ballot during the June 22–25 election period. Two voting delegates registered by each congregation or parish participated in the vote via electronic balloting four weeks prior to the national convention. The voters in the presidential election were the 6,449 pastoral and lay voters validly registered by the congregations and parishes of the Synod. During a recess in convention proceedings, Harrison spent 15 minutes with Lutheran Life's John Karolus. This is an excerpt from that discussion.

What can you share about the shrinking membership of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

“Yeah, well it's great to talk to you, its clear that many of our congregations struggling in the United States are doing so because of demographics issues and other issues too. But we've also, in one of the many studies we've done, shown that there are many, many zipcodes and areas which are amenable to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Where we should be by all intents and purposes, *and we're not there!* There are many, its very vital for us to be going into the city, going into the rural areas, too, especially to make sure our churches stay open in those areas.

“However, to stay healthy in those areas, and to provide ministry and mission to city and countryside, we have to have strong suburban churches. *Strong suburban churches.* And so we have to focus on that too. Now, some have criticized and said, ‘well, you're just interested in, uh, Caucasian areas — not true! Our suburban areas are more diverse than ever, across the United States — and even getting more that way!

“We've got to go there. One thing we've done, we've produced a whole bunch of data and studies on the decline of the LCMS within the millennial generation,

which has been very intriguing and enlightening and has blown up a lot of myths about young people, why they may or may not be leaving the church, we did a study of almost 2,000 millennials, about 400 of them former LCMS members, and most of them who aren't going to church, aren't going to church anywhere.

“And that points to a study relating to really big issues like family, relationships in the home, and also relationships at church. So, there are a lot of things we can focus on, when dealing with millennials, and the coming Z generation, and others. They are not so different from the previous generations, but relationships are really important. Most of them — even most of them who have left — think their pastor really loved them. So those are significant issues for us to address.

“I think we need to be looking at *best practices* across the country, to see where congregations hold up congregations who are in challenging circumstances. With regard to the issue of consolidating parishes, there really aren't tools to help the congregation through considering the consolidation process, which is really kind of shocking. And so there are many places where it's working very well, we've documented that. And other places where it has been very difficult, because the same intensity which allows you to stay open a long time also means there might be some inflexibility in worship and looking at a new paradigm and doing something new.

“And there are some positive trends. In the Missouri Synod, 35 percent of our membership are adult converts, that's a fantastic number, and its only like 12 percent in the Roman Catholic Church! And we retain 65-70 percent of our people

once they hit their 20's, I mean that's really good. The millennials in our church don't disagree in any significant ways with our public teachings, they generally believe Jesus is the only way to heaven, so, that's good stuff.



Matthew Harrison

“The further we get away from Seminex in 1974, the better we will be. (Seminex was the schism from 1974 to 1987 dividing the LCMS. At issue were foundational disagreements on the authority of Scripture and the role of Christianity.) I think that issue has haunted us for many, many years, and I think its finally fading away, and we just continue to work together, to love each other, to be patient with each other, the international fund continues to be, we've

got all the invitations for the work we can possibly handle, its, you know, there's tons of churches represented here form the International Scene, and that work goes on unabated, we will never have enough resources to address that. They mostly want seminary education, our seminaries are providing more and more resources in education around the world, and continue to be vital, so those are some of the things going on. Nothing really terribly new, but.

What would you say to young people considering churchwork?

“Pray the Lord of the Harvest send workers. And President Schwan of the Missouri Synod a long time ago, more than a hundred years ago said be careful if you pray, because pretty soon God will get the money from you, and then be careful the money for seminary, and be really careful if you pray because pretty soon he'll get you to go! So, be careful of prayer. I'd say, you know, they're not easy vocations.

“You're not likely to be wealthy, but you'll be well taken care of. We have a

Puerto Rico Lutherans Seek Membership in Florida-Georgia District

The Lutheran church in Puerto Rico is appealing to be included under the supervision of the Florida-Georgia District, rather than its current inclusion under the Board of International Mission. The rationale for this appeal is that Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States, and therefore her citizens are the citizens of the United States. This legal identity the people of Puerto Rico share with the people who reside in the mainland United States give them status from a government perspective that they wish to share from the perspective of the LCMS, as well.

With Puerto Rico being so close, it is the desire for the church to be included in this District — much like the Bahamas are in the District. Rev. Dr. Wilfredo Rivera, the Puerto Rican representative at convention, expressed these hopes, “With adjacency to the FLGA district, a team of workers can really effect growth and we can oversee liturgy.” The Puerto Rican church is working with the LCMS Offices of International Mission in order to bring about discussion and execution of this reorganization. ▲

Membership, in the LCMS

wonderful pension plan, very solvent, in great shape. And they are really the greatest vocations on earth. You get to live with the same people you're with when they are dying and having the worst crisis on earth, your ears will hear everything possible, every sin possible, and yet you are there in the name of Jesus to forgive. And people will love you like nothing you've ever experienced. So there will be plenty of crosses, and it's only through crosses that we become real shepherds and real teachers, too.

Speak to the conflict existing in our Synod? How do you encourage people in the midst of that?

"I actually think the division is real, but I think the division is accentuated by a handful of obsessive-compulsive people. (with an internet connection!) *Absolutely.* And, um, if you look at this convention sort of as a hard, there's a hard 25-30 percent who want different leadership, a different direction, and we've had very high resolutions on worship practice, 83 percent, not locking you in but just saying 'follow the order, don't ditch the Gospel, don't ditch the readings, don't ditch confession/absolution,' *instrumentation is not the issue*, we just want the gospel to be preached and the sacraments to be ministered.

"The close(d) communion issue is still a rub for some, but look, I've just said, 'Hey, as long as you're not saying *Ya'll come!* That is, the scriptures and the confessions say probably twelve times, I don't want you to be communed unless he is examined and absolved. And, there is pastoral discretion, and we grant it! So just don't say, *ya'll come!* Use pastoral discussion, we grant it! That's not too much to ask, its just not too much to ask.

"The synod has passed resolutions like this until it is blue in the face, I think there is a real, kind of a difference, and I think some would really like to diminish the role of the seminaries and make education local, almost completely local, and I think we've been very flexible with the SMP program and other routes that have been very flexible, but we must continue to focus on the well being of our seminaries where we need that solid theological education, we're the world's leader in confessional Lutheran education, and we have to have strong seminaries to survive together, so, yeah, I uh, you know, it's a constant sigh and frustration that's a part of the journey of the Missouri Synod. I think when we actually talk to each other, the divisions aren't so huge." ▲

"Taste of the Sem" Slated for February, 2020 at St. Louis' Concordia Seminary

Is there a young man in your high school youth group who has gifts that would be well served in pastoral ministry? Do you have a high school student who has expressed an interest in the pastoral ministry? If so, please consider encouraging him to check out Concordia Seminary's "Taste of the Sem," being held **February 15-17, 2020**. During this on-campus event, young men considering the ministry will be connected with a current seminary student to see what life is like at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.



The event provides a sense of Seminary life for those who think God might be directing them toward the pastoral ministry. "Taste of the Sem" helps participants gain a better understanding of what we confess when we say, "Faith alone, Scripture alone, Grace alone," explains Rev. Dr. Scott Holder, admissions officer for Concordia Seminary.



Scott Holder ▲

"Participants explore the significant historical impact of the Lutheran Reformation on the Church and world, and study the Scriptures with Seminary professors to find out why we believe in justification by grace through faith. Participants spend time with one Seminary student at his field education congregation on Sunday morning and attend classes with him on Monday morning."

To register or to get more information, please check the Concordia Seminary website at <https://www.csl.edu/admissions/visit/taste-of-the-sem/>. If you would like more information, please contact Rev. Dr. Scott Holder in the Admissions Office at (314) 505-7225 or via email holders@csl.edu

John Karolus, Concordia Seminary Class of 2020 and recent vicar at St. Paul/ Boca Raton, FL, contributed to Lutheran Life's LCMS National Convention coverage and conducted the interviews with Matthew Harrison, John Nunes, Patrick Ferry, Gregory Walton, Dale Meyer, Lawrence Rast, Michael Ziegler and others. Immediately following the convention Karolus returned to St. Louis to complete his fourth year of seminary. ▲



National LWML Offers “Praise to the Lord” in Mobile, Alabama

LWML members throughout the Florida-Georgia District are breathing a sigh of relief, as the LWML Convention in Mobile, Alabama, is now in the history books. The LWML Florida-Georgia District was one of three hosting districts, along with the LWML Gulf States and Louisiana-Mississippi Districts. It’s a huge job, requiring more than 500 volunteers who do everything from planning to packing up afterwards — and a lot of things in-between.



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

More than 3,100 people gathered in Mobile (including 691 first timers!) and 544 delegates approved a mission goal of \$2.1 million for the 2019-21 biennium. Twenty-one mission grants will be funded.

Delegates elected a new president, Debbie Larson, who previously held the position of Vice-President of Organizational Resources, and has also served as the LWML North Dakota

District President and LWML Public Relations Director. Also elected were Vice President of Organizational Resources, Marie Chow of Seattle, Washington; Vice President of Special Focus Ministries, Deaconess Betty Knapp of Marquette, Michigan; Treasurer, Karla Koehler of Wausa, Nebraska; and Pastoral Counselor, Rev. Brian Noack of Sayville, New York.

We got a jump start on raising funds for the mission goal, as 848 people participated in the *Mission in Motion Pledge Walk*. More than \$60,000 was raised on the pledge walk alone. The golf outing, held on Wednesday, raised another \$9,300.

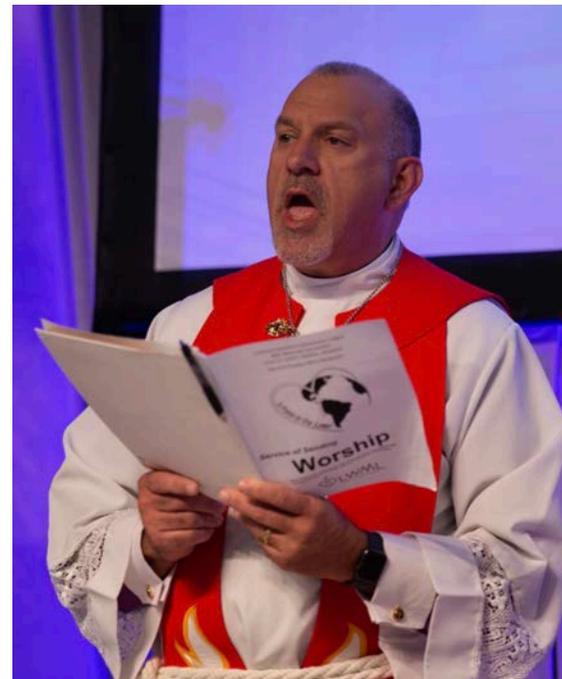
We were inspired by Bible studies led by author Donna Pyle, and an evening with artist Joe Castillo, who tells Bible stories with sand. And it isn’t every day that we not only start the day with singing, but are treated to LCMS President Matthew Harrison’s banjo accompaniment!

We may not be able to go on mission trips to spread the love of Jesus. But through LWML, our mite offerings support the work of the Orphan Grain Train, KFUO, Lutheran Bible Translators and many more. They install clean water tanks in Kenya, and provide services to children with learning disabilities here in the United States. Mite offerings support US seminary students and church workers through scholarships and food and clothing co-ops, and provide training for local church workers in Africa.

The next national convention will be June 24-27, 2021 in Lexington KY hosted by Michigan, Indiana and Ohio LWML districts. ▲



▲ Two beautiful Southern Belles greeted guests at the airport and were seen throughout the convention.



▶ At right — LCMS Florida-Georgia District President Greg Walton participates in worship. Pictured below are (from left) Bunnie Koelsch, Joan Koch, Lori Dorman, Linda Peters, Lois Ford and Nancy Hughes — being recognized on stage for volunteer services.

“This celebration doesn’t end when you walk out that door. This celebration is for all of God’s people, all of the time,” said Debbie Larson after being elected the new president of the LWML.



Is Your Ministry Subject to Unemployment Compensation?

Over the years I have fielded scores of calls from our churches and schools to discuss issues related to their employees. Sometimes, the calls involved issues surrounding terminating an employee and the ramifications of that termination. My typical response was “did you document the employment file of any misconduct or warnings?”

My heart was lifted when the caller would state, “Absolutely!” (Please document everything. In writing and included in files. Enough said.)

Every once and a while I get a call that even rattles me. Let me site a recent example:

I received a call from a school telling me that they had to let an employee go “for cause.” The principal who wrote in the terminated employee’s exit interview did not cite the event giving rise to the termination. Instead of being straightforward, the principal wrote a very ambiguous statement as the reason

What?!?!?!?! The hearing officer’s decision to dismiss the appeal flies in the face of state and federal law. What do I mean? Florida Statute §443.1216 specifically exempts such religious organizations. The statute provides in pertinent part:

(4) For purposes of subsections (2) and (3), the employment subject to this chapter does not apply to service performed:

(a) In the employ of:

1. A church or a convention or association of churches.
2. An organization that is operated primarily for religious purposes and that is operated, supervised, controlled, or principally supported by a church or a convention or association of churches.

Moreover, the Employer is also exempt under 26 U.S. Code §3306 as the Employer is a 501(c)(3) and therefore exempt from

federal income tax. Finally, and most importantly, the Appellate Court held in *Peace Lutheran Church v. State*, 906 So.2d 1197, (2005) that: *Individuals are entitled to unemployment compensation benefits when they are terminated by an employer who meets certain*

characteristics. Section 443.036(2)(c), Florida Statutes (2002) provides: “[t]he term ‘employment’ includes service performed by an individual in the employ of a religious, charitable, educational, or other organization....” However, the term “employment” does not apply to service performed in the employ of: (a) a church or convention or association of churches, or (b) an organization which is operated primarily for religious purposes and which is operated, supervised, controlled, or principally supported by a church or convention or association of churches. [Emphasis added.] Peace Lutheran Church v. State, 906 So.2d 1197 (Fla. App., 2005) . . . With respect to the period

in which [Plaintiff] was directly employed by the Church, there is no question that the Church is an excluded employer pursuant to section 443.036(2)(d)1(a). Both the Appeals Referee and the U.A.C. appear to have overlooked this obvious fact. Peace Lutheran Church v. State, 906 So.2d 1197 (Fla. App., 2005)



LEGAL MATTERS

by Rusty Huseman
President
Lutheran Legal League

Despite the fact that the school included the name of the church, this particular hearing officer wanted *proof*, that the school ministry was religious. We provided information evidencing that the school was a religious organization. In other words, we showed them at this particular school was the church. That seemed to resolve that problem. However, it caused me to be concerned that some of our schools, early childhood learning centers, etc., are not sufficiently “linked” to the church.

Here is the take-away . . . some of our education ministries are separate legal entities from the church and other learning ministries operate so independently that someone looking at the school would not know that school is a ministry of the Church. If the department cannot immediately determine that the school is a ministry of the church, you may end up spending money on legal fees unnecessarily. Make sure that *all* your documents related to student enrollment very clearly state that your school is a ministry of the Congregation/Church. Finally, make sure your employment manual clearly states that the school is a ministry of the congregation/church. If you received notice from a department in your state overseeing unemployment compensation, please give me a call to discuss further. ▲

The Lutheran Legal League is made up of actively practicing attorneys who regularly attend worship in a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. They are a unique fraternal organization of Christ filled attorneys who desire to assist our Synodical churches, schools, ministries, missions and LCMS members with their legal needs. Please to go to the website: www.lutheranlegalleague.org to find members throughout the country and to take advantage of the many policy template available to our churches and schools.



for termination. The employee filed for unemployment. What was surprising to me was, the department did not consider the fact that the school was a religious organization and as a result, the department agreed to provide the employee with unemployment compensation. I told the principal to relax! I got this! As it turned out, it was not as cut and dry with this department as one would have thought.

I reached out to the department and filed my notice of representation. I got a call from the hearing officer who told me the department was going to dismiss the employer’s appeal. In other words, the department was going rule against the school ministry and give this employee unemployment compensation.



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The Florida-Georgia District Booth was a popular meeting place — some students from Grace/Naples are shown here.



District President Greg Walton (far right) greets Morgan Sims and Zack Dettmer, students from Ascension/Casselberry.

REAL.PRESENT.GOD.

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

More than 21,000 participants. More than 1,300 volunteers. More than 80 speakers. More than 1.5 million meals were packed and distributed to Feed My Starving Children, a Christian non-profit organization based in Minneapolis that coordinates the packaging and distribution of food to people in developing nations. More than 1,000 kits built for local homeless. More than 925 inches of hair donated for cancer patients. More than 575 letters of encouragement written to veterans. More than 465 pints of blood donated. ONE Real. Present. God. The next National Youth Gathering is in 2022 in Houston, Texas.

Below left — FLGA District Youth Ministry Executive, Mark Brink, gets “Prayer Nails” at the Southeast Regional Booth.



Austin Schubert, one of the Florida-Georgia District youth, from **Living Hope/Kennesaw, GA** said he hopes to go into the pastoral ministry.



Servant events included work throughout the Twin Cities — at community centers, youth and senior centers, local churches and schools and food banks.



LCMS President Matthew Harrison has some fun with NYG participants during a book signing and “selfie” opportunity at one of the event booths.



Redeemer/Stuart, FL

District Youth Rock the NYG for a Real. Present. God.



Faith/Marietta, GA



First/Gainesville, FL



Trinity/Orlando, FL



Bethel/Clearwater, FL



Good Shepherd/Gainesville, GA



Prince of Peace/Orlando, FL



St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL



St. Paul/Weston, FL



FLORIDAGEORGIA

REGIONAL NEWS

Out and About in the Florida-Georgia District

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 "Backyard" and entertainers were stationed along the route through historic downtown Atlanta. **Christ/East Point, GA** fielded an enthusiastic team.



"We are King of Kings Lutheran Church" was part of the opening prayer of dedication, as the sun shone on the steeple of the beautifully designed new sanctuary — built, envisioned and prayed over with membership blood, sweat and tears. **King of Kings /Jasper, GA** was culminating their journey with a May, 2019 dedication of facilities while feeling embraced by the hallowed walls of Jesus' love. "Jesus' peace is 'peace on a mission.' 'As the Father has



sent me,' He told his apostles, 'even so I am sending you,'" said the Rev. Dr. Gregory Walton, FLGA District President. "We are...a member church of the LCMS. Our worship services are shaped by the liturgical traditions of the Christian church and in particular the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod."

Shown in the sanctuary are Pastors David Sieg, President Greg Walton and Ernie Knoche. Both Pastors Sieg and Knoch are retired and serving together at King of Kings.

REGION 1



Vice President:
David Brighton
Mount Calvary/Warner Robins

Laity Board Members:

Gary Engel | King of Kings/Jasper
Karen Cerny | Faith/Marietta

Commissioned Minister Board Member:
Tamie Worthington | St Paul/Peachtree City

Circuit 1 NE Georgia Circuit Visitor:
Zachary Hoffman | Good Shepherd/
Gainesville

Circuit 2 Atlanta N Circuit Visitor:
Jeffrey Jordan | Rivercliff/Atlanta

Circuit 3 Atlanta S Circuit Visitor:
George Murdaugh | Prince of Peace/
Douglasville

Circuit 4 E Central Georgia Circuit Visitor:
John Lehenbauer | Christ/Perry



Faith/Marietta commissioned and installed three new teachers on Sunday, August 4, 2019. All three are called teachers (CMR) and commissioned ministers of religion. Gerald Brenner leads the 7th grade home room and teaches various subjects in middle school. Emily Brenner leads the 8th grade home room and teaches various subjects in middle school. Katie Onnen leads the 4B Early Childhood Education class.

Rivercliff Completes Fifth El Salvador Mission Trip with YWAM

Every mid-June for the past five years has found a team from **Rivercliff/Sandy Springs, GA** winging its way to El Salvador for another mission trip with their partners in San Salvador, Youth with a Mission (YWAM). YWAM (www.ywam.org), whose aim is “To Know God and to Make God Known,” has been around since 1960. It offers Discipleship Training School (DTS) as well as mission trip opportunities around the globe. The focus of YWAM El Salvador (jucumes.org/en) has been to bring Jesus to a slum area of San Salvador known as Gerardo Barrios.

“They have brought the presence of Christ into that community mainly through their Homes of Hope program,” states team organizer Michael Tull. The Rivercliff team spends the first three days tearing down a dilapidated home and building a new 16 X 16 home for a family who has been attending YWAM adult and children’s programs. “The experience of the home building is often heartwarming,” explains Melanie Tull. “The neighborhood kids come and greet you with big smiles and lots of hugs. Adults and children are friendly and happy. It makes you realize that material possessions don’t equal happiness.”

While some work on the house, others prepare food for a children’s feeding program called King’s Table that YWAM provides three times a week. Helen Bourne

explains “the children have to pay 15 cents for the meal so it is not a handout. They also learn basic hygiene such as washing their hands and brushing their teeth. It’s also a good time to share the love of Jesus with them.” YWAM also provides a weekly adult discipleship class for 40 or 50 and a “Seeds of Hope” children’s program each Saturday. The Rivercliff team plays an active role in all these activities.

The house built by Rivercliff this June was the 50th built by YWAM El Salvador since it began its program in 2012. The team got to participate in a celebration of that milestone with homeowners. There are a lot of gang members in the Gerardo Barrios. “What YWAM has seen,” adds Doug Huffman, “is that of all the children in the 50 homes built, only two have ended up in gangs.”

The Rivercliff team stays with the YWAM missionaries at the YWAM base in San Salvador run by longtime base leaders Fran and Judy Garcia. The missionaries are former DTS students who have stayed on to help with YWAM programs. “It’s a blessing to interact with these young people who are so dedicated to Christ,” says Melanie Smith. The missionaries lead devotions, keep the base in good shape, do the driving and provide guidance in all activities. “Though San Salvador can be dangerous, we have never felt unsafe. We just rely on guidance from the missionaries and everything is fine”.

Outside of the work in Gerardo Barrios, the Rivercliff team engages in other opportunities to share God’s love. Jessica Soles notes “Two nights during the week, the team prepares 150 bag dinners and a missionary drives us around to distribute them. That is a real eye opener.” The team also travels to a nearby village one day and goes door to door to distribute Bibles and pray with residents. “I wouldn’t

feel comfortable doing this in the United States.” says Britt Bryant, “but here everyone is receptive and everyone has prayer requests.”

Finally, the team visits a children’s hospital to interact and pray with children and their families.

“The tears often flow and feelings pour out. The emotions these parents feel for their children are universal.” states Kristina Tull.

The main expenses are \$4,500 for the house which includes furnishing it with beds, stove, table and dining accessories. Staying at the base is \$25 per day per team member and includes all meals. The airplane ticket is in the \$750 range. There are also some minor expenses to pay for the King’s Table, Feed the Homeless and transportation.

“Our congregation is incredibly generous especially in regards to our El Salvador mission.” says Libby Huffman. “People see that we are engaging in the Great Commission abroad and really get behind us.” The donations by Rivercliff’s congregation cover all but a portion of the plane tickets for participants.

The theology taught at the YWAM DTS is similar to LCMS. In fact, next summer Rivercliff’s Pastor Jeff Jordan plans to teach at the YWAM DTS for a week on the subject of grace. Annie DeLuca (from **Living**

Faith/ Cumming, GA) takes half of her annual vacation to make the trip. She declares “I’m coming back next year. The week is hard in some ways, but incredibly rewarding and just what we should be doing as Christians.”



Melanie Smith interacts with one of the children at The King’s Table. Children receive a nutritious meal prepared and served by the Rivercliff team.



◀ The Rivercliff team prepares sack dinners to distribute to the homeless of San Salvador.

“I agree” adds recent high school grad Katherine Dunn who has made this trip three years in a row. “The week is a nice mix of hard manual labor and sharing the Gospel.” More information about Rivercliff’s mission trips with YWAM El Salvador are on the Rivercliff site at rivercliff.lutheran.org/ community then look at the El Salvador section. If you would like to learn more about a mission trip with YWAM El Salvador or DTS, contact Wayne Smith at waynesmi@bellsouth.net.




 The Rev. Nathan McCarty was installed as Associate Pastor of **Bethlehem/Jacksonville Beach, FL** on June 30. Participants included (from left) Pastors James Wiggins, Patrick McKenzie, Dana Brones (Senior pastor of Bethlehem and Circuit Visitor), Robert Jacobs, Nathan McCarty (newly installed), Jeffrey Skopak, Gregory Walton (FLGA District President), Bill Reister, Jeremy Steinke (Vicar at BLC) and Jonathan Gregor (acolyte and crucifer).



The ordination of The Rev. Alan Mueller was held on Sunday, June 23, 2019 at **Timothy/Woodstock, GA**. Mueller has been a member of Timothy since 1994 when his family moved to the Woodstock area. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO. Mueller has been called to **Immanuel/Sweet Springs, MO**. Ministers in attendance at the ordination were the Michael Zwemke, Savior of All/Cartersville, GA; 1st VP David Brighton, Mount Calvary/Warner Robins, GA; David Wesche, All Saints/Blairsville, GA; Newly ordained, Rev, Alan Mueller called to Immanuel/Sweet Springs, MO, Atlanta North Circuit Visitor, Jeffrey Jordan, of Rivercliff/Sandy Springs, GA; and Robert Davis, Intentional Interim Pastor of Timothy/Woodstock, GA.



▲ Missionaries David and Barbara Bush visited **Messiah/Valdosta, GA** this past summer and shared a message about their Mission work in Hong Kong. They are shown above with Pastor Frank Kinast.

▶ **St. John Lutheran High School/Ocala, FL** had a surprise visit to their volleyball practice at the beginning of this school year. Alumna, Kaylee Thomas (Class of 2017) is on a full ride scholarship at University of Alabama and will be going into her junior year as the starting libero.



▲ **First/Gainesville, FL** held Vacation Bible School July 28 – August 2 with 20 children ages 3 years to 5th grade. They learned about how Life is Wild, God is Good! First had 27 volunteers serving in many different capacities to make sure that VBS students had fun while learning about Jesus' love for them!

Then in August, First installed Vicar Jake Bellinghausen. The Blue Springs, MO native is a University of Central Missouri graduate in his third year at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis.



REGION

2



Vice President:
James Rocky
Amazing Grace/Oxford

Board Secretary:
Jay Winters, University Church
Student Center/Tallahassee

Lay 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



▲ **Hope/Jacksonville, FL** held a Seredipity Lupper (a meal in between lunch and supper) June 10-12. This was for all ages starting with a picnic followed by group singing, an adult Bible study, children's Bible story, craft and snack time. This was their version of the traditional Vacation Bible School.



Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/ Sanford, FL has completed their new food pantry. Volunteers prepare bags in advance and the food is distributed on a first-come, first-served basis — with many people showing up at 8:30 AM. “Every third Saturday of the month we gather together to help friends in need in our community,” explains Pastor Ed DeWitt. “It is our greatest honor to serve them and show them God’s love in a tangible way.” About 26 volunteers work on this monthly project to help the hungry in

Following the Sunday July 28th worship of **Hope/Plant City, FL's** Spanish Ministry, Pastor Miguel Sanabria, Jr. (photo far right) distributed backpacks filled with school supplies to all school age children in the congregation. The funds for this outreach event were received from loving members of Messiah, Tampa. The Spanish ministry serves mission sites at Messiah/Tampa, FL Family of Christ/West, Tampa,FL and Hope/Plant City. The mission is served by Revs. Miguel Sanabria, Jr and John Cabos.

REGION



3



- Vice President:**
Charles Reich | Grace/Winter Haven
- Board Treasurer:**
Renee Varga | Woodlands/Montverde
- Laiety Board Members:**
Katie Abercrombie | Prince of Peace/Orlando
Sheryl DeWitt | Redeemer/Sanford
- Commissioned Minister Board Member:**
Lois Ford | Faith/Eustis
- Circuit 8 Space Coast Circuit Visitor:**
Bruce Alberts | Good Shepherd/Titusville
- Circuit 9 Orlando East Circuit Visitor:**
Ken Green | Prince of Peace/Orlando
- Circuit 10 Orlando West Circuit Visitor:**
Marc Kappel | Faith/Eustis
- Circuit 11 Winter Haven Circuit Visitor:**
Dean Pfeffer | Hope/Plant City

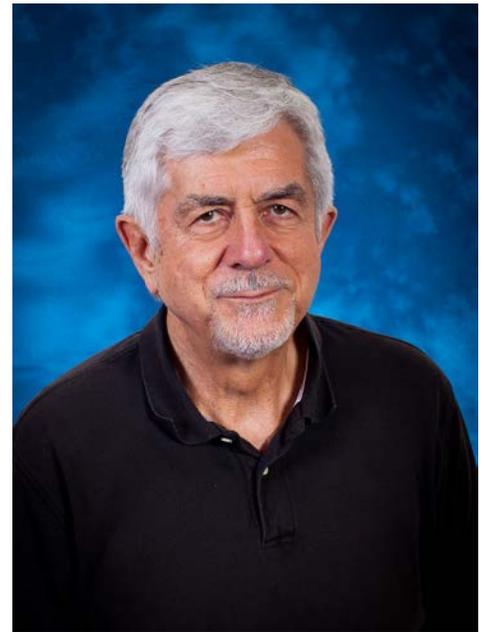
Prince of Peace/Orlando, FL served the surrounding community by distributing more than 600 backpacks filled with school supplies and offering different types of health screenings free of charge.

More than 800 attendees crowded their facilities to benefit from these services with the help and orientation of 45 volunteers that helped make this event a total success. They had more than 20 vendors and exhibitors present and offered their services to the families in attendance. Prince of Peace offered this to the community as part of their “back to school” activities.





▲ Members of all ages at **Lakeside/Venice, FL** enjoyed an old-fashioned Ice Cream Social following services on Sunday, June 30. Participants topped their ice cream creations with a variety of sprinkles, jelly beans, and syrups. The social followed a “throwback” worship service when the Order of Matins was used as the service format. The church celebrated their 65th anniversary in the Venice community this summer.



▲ Ronald Pawlitz has been called to serve **First/Clearwater, FL** as principal. Pawlitz, a Midland, Michigan native, was raised in Kirkwood, MO, attending Concordia/Kirkwood and Lutheran High School South before attending Concordia College/Seward, NE. He later earned a Master of Arts in Religion degree from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, with an emphasis in Practical Theology/Christian Education and attended post-graduate classes in school administration at Michigan State University and Concordia University Chicago.

Pawlitz’s career has spanned a variety of congregational and geographic settings. His years as a classroom teacher were spent in urban Lutheran schools in Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis. He served as a Director of Christian Education for rural and suburban congregations in Iowa, Oklahoma, and New York. He has administered urban and suburban Lutheran schools of various sizes in the Missouri District.

Since his retirement from full time service in 2014, Pawlitz has served as part-time intentional interim administrator at three Lutheran school and is now beginning his fourth such service at First Lutheran Church and School in Clearwater.

Pawlitz is married to Gail (Youngblood) of Jefferson, Iowa. Gail served many years as a Lutheran teacher and ended her full-time career with 14 years as a curriculum development editor at Concordia Publishing House. Their marriage has been blessed with five children and seven grandchildren.



▲ **Marco/Marco Island, FL's** Pastor Tom Boeck and Ashley Francis participated in a flagpole dedication at Artesia, a community near Naples, FL as part of a Flag day celebration. ▼



REGION
4

- Vice President:**
Jon Zehnder | St. Michael/Fort Myers
- Laity Board Members:**
Evita Gonzalez | Beautiful Savior /Lehigh Acres
Daniel Najjar | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota
Commissioned Minister Board Member:
Jesse Crosmer | Our Savior/St. Petersburg
Circuit 12 Heartland Circuit Visitor:
Richard Norris | Trinity/Lake Placid
Circuit 13 Suncoast Circuit Visitor:
David Brockhoff | Holy Trinity/Masaryktown
Circuit 14 St. Petersburg Circuit Visitor:
Paul Burtzlaff, Our Savior/St. Petersburg
Circuit 15 Tampa Circuit Visitor:
Gilbert Kuehn | Messiah/Tampa
Circuit 16 Sarasota Circuit Visitor:
Rossetter Leavitt | Beautiful Savior/Sarasota
Circuit 17 SW Circuit Visitor:
Richard Browning | Hope/Bonita Springs

During the last week of July, **Immanuel/Brandon, FL** hosted Michael Erslund, Lutheran Bible Translator's (LBT) missionary to Ghana, West Africa. For the past 3 years Michael has been living and working in Gbintiri Ghana to translate the Old Testament into the Komba language. While in Brandon, the Thrivent Action Team and Volunteer Missions Coordinator, arranged lodging, host dinners, a Youth night event, a sports outing and an appreciation luncheon.

Erslund gave informative and personal presentations at Sunday and Tuesday Bible study hours. Collections during the week raised nearly \$740 for LBT. Erslund is on a one-year furlough to continue his Masters studies at Dallas International University, Dallas Texas. More about this ministry: erslundministry.wordpress.com or contact via email at Michael.Erslund@LBT.org.



Michael Erslund (far left) with ILC youth group, ILC President Morrissey, youth leaders and Immanuel Pastor Brammeier



St. Michael/Fort Myers, FL had 20 youth and 6 adult leaders attend the National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis in July. Some of the team is shown above at the commissioning service held in July prior to their departure.



▲ A few of the **Our Savior/Lake Worth, FL** youth who traveled to the National Youth Gathering are shown here in one of the mass events at the Convention Center in Minneapolis, MN.

New Day Adult Care Center, a ministry of **Faith/North Palm Beach, FL**, offers a refreshing approach to adult care services — an affordable alternative to assisted living or nursing home care. They are celebrating 20 years of service to the community this fall. The center offers an Integrated Memory Enhancement Program . . . structured around a research-based program that integrates the mind, body and brain connections to boost cognitive reserve and minimize the progression of memory loss or dementia. The program is designed for individuals who have been diagnosed with memory disorders or who are concerned about memory changes. New Day works with individuals and families to help answer questions about home care vs. home health care, assisted living vs. memory care facilities and steps that can be taken by a caregiver to keep a loved one in the home.



New Day Adult Care Center

In late August Faith's New Day offered a workshop and roundtable discussion to help with those issues and the care options available to caregivers and families. More information about New Day is available at (561) 844-0012.

Ed Nicklas Honored Posthumously By Plantation Elementary



From left — Marlen Veliz, Mirror Lake School Principal, Jane Nicklas, Gigi McIntire, Guidance Counselor

In November, 2009 **Our Savior/Plantation** began a partnership with Mirror Lake Elementary School, also in Plantation. The purpose was to reach out to the community in significant and helpful ways.

Former pastor, the Rev. Edwin Nicklas, encouraged the congregation to make a commitment to this ministry and was the first to volunteer one day a week as a mentor and cafeteria helper. He loved to sit with the students and joke around with the staff. Church volunteers worked in the office and classrooms, as mentors, chaperones, and tutors. Along the way Mirror Lake became a true friend of Our Savior.

In July, 2010 Pastor Nicklas was invited to speak at the LCMS National convention and accept the "Exemplary Congregation Award" on behalf of the congregation because of the impact volunteers had in our community. Broward County named Our Savior Lutheran Church the Mentor Program of the Year in May, 2012. Sadly, Pastor Nicklas had to stop volunteering in 2014 because of early onset Alzheimer's disease. He died at home surrounded by loved ones on July 23, 2018.

This past June, Mirror Lake Elementary School honored Pastor Nicklas at their annual volunteer breakfast for his countless hours of volunteer work and love for the school. His wife Jane accepted a plaque in "Pastor Ed's" memory. It will be on display in the school cafeteria which is being dedicated to his memory.

Luis Diaz Installed at Faith/Hialeah

Miami-Dade and Broward County clergy participating in Pastor Luis Diaz's installation on Saturday, August 10, 2019 at Faith/Hialeah. Pastor Diaz will be doing two services on Sunday — one in Spanish and one in English. Faith has been vacant for more than five years.

Front Row — Pastors Luis Santana, Daniel Medina, Erwin Perez-Arche, Luis Diaz, Greg Walton, Benito Perez-Lopez, James Leggett, Wilfredo Rivera, Russ Johnson. Back row: Alan Sielk, Dennis Bartels, Tim Hartner, Dennis Glick, Enrique Orozco, Scott Gress, Tony Mandile.



REGION



5



Vice President:

Stephen Carretto | St. Paul/Boca Raton

Laity Board Members:

Samuel Ludington | Holy Cross/North Miami

Stephen Bradshaw | Trinity/Lake Placid

Circuit 18 Treasure Coast Circuit Visitor:

Mark Stillman | Faith/North Palm Beach

Circuit 19 S Palm Beach Circuit Visitor:

Dennis Glick | St Paul/Boca Raton

Circuit 20 Gold Coast Circuit Visitor:

Timothy Hartner | St. Paul/Weston

Circuit 21 Monroe-Miami-Dade Circuit Visitor:

Tony Mandile | Martin Luther/Marathon

St. Paul/Weston Installs Scott Henze



The Rev. Richard Scott Henze was installed at **St. Paul/Weston, FL** on Sunday, August 11, 2019. A native of Chattanooga, TN, he most recently served Our Redeemer/Clinton, Mississippi. He is married to Kathy and together they have three children, Katie, 19, who will be attending the Disney College Internship Program this fall. Also twins Alex and Ashley, 16, who will attend Cypress Bay High School in Weston.



▲ Front Row — Pastors Stephen Reynolds, Greg Walton, Scott Henze, James Leggett, Wally Becker; Back Row — Scott Gress, Tony Durante, Tim Hartner, Steve Carretto, Dennis Bartels

During the presentation of pastoral gifts, this girl brought water on behalf of Christ's church -- commanding Pastor Henze to baptize according to God's word Other gifts came from lay ministry, altar guild, youth group, music ministry, preschool and church council.

▲ At the conclusion of the service the Henzes were presented with a gift basket from the congregation with abundant gift cards to local restaurants. Jeremy Becker, minister of youth and family services, joked that their first assignment in SE Florida was to find all of the restaurants in the Weston area. ▲



Our Savior/Plantation, FL held an installation for their teaching staff (left) to kick off the new school year. Pastor Tony Durante recognized the teachers and also had a "blessing of the backpacks" and a message for the students (above) as they got ready to return to the classroom. ▲



▲ **Trinity/Delray Beach, FL** made history in August, 2019. They installed their first female Principal for their school. Heather Lowing is shown with the Rev. Vince Putnam at the installation service. Trinity celebrated the first day of school with an ice cream social after dismissal.

A Trinity student models the uniform and some of the "cold weather gear" available in the bookstore. ▲



St. Paul/Boca Raton Launches Recovery Ministry With Florida-Georgia District's FiveTwo Network

St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL sits in the middle of one of the largest populations of recovering alcoholics and addicts in the United States — the South Florida tri-county area encompassing Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Many families have been personally affected in some way by alcohol or drug abuse. It might be a child or teen, a student away at school, a spouse, a parent, an employee . . . the reach of the disease of addiction is seemingly endless.

Up until this point, the extent of St. Paul's involvement with the recovery community has consisted of allowing several 12-step groups to rent space on campus to hold meetings. However, God recently opened a door for them to do more for these people who are literally dying to know Him.

Beginning in September, St. Paul will launch a recovery ministry called "Revive." The purpose of this ministry is to connect men and women in recovery with Jesus through weekly gatherings that will include bible teaching, the sharing of personal experience, and a time for prayer and reflection with music. Services will be held at St. Paul's Family Life Center on Sunday evenings.

Their prayer is that this ministry will provide a simple path for those in recovery to connect with Jesus, the message of His grace and mercy, and His fondness for those whom society has deemed outcasts. We ask that you would bless us with your prayers during this time of preparation, that we may be a safe place of discovery for the sick and suffering among us.

"Sometimes a 'NO' here on earth is really a 'YES' from God," explains St. Paul member Jen Kleinberg, who began working with her church to launch a Bible-based recovery ministry. One of the first people they approached for help turned them down. "That gave us pause to step back," Kleinberg remembers. "During that time Pastor Steve Carretto got hooked up with Oscar Benavides, Vice-President of Strategic Initiatives for Dallas, TX-based FiveTwo.

FiveTwo Network equips Christian entrepreneurs to launch a variety of sustainable start-ups that reach people for Jesus, providing clarity, camaraderie and know-how so that the startup Jesus

has placed in people thrives. FiveTwo has a contract with the Florida-Georgia District to launch multiple unique mission starts.

"Through our assessment, training, and coaching, entrepreneurial men and women of faith realize their dreams of creating faith-based start-ups that lead to more baptized followers of Jesus," Benavides explains. He has a background in unique ministries — his first ministry start

be walking with Revive Boca to help them maximize their organization's sustainability and impact during the next 18 months.

"There's this huge community of people who are so hungry to know who God is, and they are not going to go to church," Kleinberg explains. "The whole point of Revive Boca is to make that waypoint . . . where we can meet people where they are — in their comfort zone — and gently open



Part of the planning committee for the Revive Ministry. The organization's website is reviveboca.com

was at age 19 when he launched a street evangelism ministry and four years later a door to door evangelism ministry for low-income Latino families in West Dallas. His passion for evangelism continued after

the door to God's work in their lives."

Kleinberg has teamed with The Rev. Andrew Kubowicz, St. Paul/Boca Raton's family life pastor. Together the team has prepared for this launch. "I've gotten to see through the whole process how involved God is. Doors have opened that I feel like I wouldn't have even known to knock on had it not been for FiveTwo and St. Paul," Kleinberg concludes.

The Florida-Georgia District is partnering with FiveTwo — involving leaders who are gifted at starting new ministries that introduce people to Jesus. FiveTwo is working on multiple projects

throughout the FLGA District. Information is available from FiveTwo's Vice President, Oscar Benavides at obenavides@fivetwo.com or from FLGA Region 5 Vice President, Steve Carretto at pastorsteve@spboca.com

For information about Revive, please visit their website at reviveboca.com.



Jen Kleinberg



Andrew Kubowicz



Oscar Benavides

Seminary as a Pastor of Youth and Missions for a church in North Dallas where he served for more than 12 years.

"I'm grateful that initial person said no!" Kleinberg recalls. As a result, she and her team members are about 1/4 of the way through their 24-month StartNew training process. They are excited to see the fulfillment of their God-given dream when their ministry launches this fall. FiveTwo will

Concordia Seminary Launches 181st Academic Year

Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO began its 181st academic year with an opening worship that served as a welcome to new students and the beginning of the 2019-20 academic year. The service also included recognition of new staff and the installations of five faculty members into new positions: Associate Provost Dr. Benjamin Haupt; Dean of Faculty Dr. David Peter; Director of Placement Dr.

Glenn Nielsen; Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program Dr. Mark Rockenbach; and the Buehner Duesenberg Professor of Missions Dr. William Schumacher, who replaces Dr. Victor Raj who retired in June.

Vicarage and internship assignments were announced for pastoral and deaconess students in the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) Program, Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT)

Program and Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS) Program.

The Opening Service is part of Orientation week where new students in all academic programs are familiarized with their programs and campus life. Orientation included a servant event for students to volunteer at various sites around St. Louis. ▲

Valparaiso University Begins Presidential Search

After more than a decade as president, The Rev. Dr. Mark A. Heckler has announced his recommendation to the Board of Directors that it begin the search process to identify the next President of Valparaiso University. Heckler assumed his position as the University's 18th president in 2008. Heckler has agreed to serve as president until such time as a successor has been identified and is available to assume office.

"It may take time to search, hire and effectively transition to the next president. Therefore, the process must begin now to ensure continuity of presidential leadership," Heckler said. "With the rapid changes in the



Mark Heckler

educational landscape I want to ensure that the next president has the strengths and skill set to address these challenges over the next five years and beyond."

Heckler implemented a strategic planning process that brought forth the vision for Valpo to be known for the knowledge, character, integrity and wisdom of its graduates and a place for dialogue across differences.

A dedicated educator with more than 40 years of experience as a professor and administrator, Heckler has led Valpo in comprehensive strategic

and master planning efforts resulting in significant campus program expansion and construction. Under his leadership a dozen new academic programs were launched, including physician assistant

studies, bioengineering, business analytics, cyber security, data science, music therapy, supply chain and logistics, integrated business and engineering, and occupational therapy, and six new campus facilities have been constructed. Most significantly, Heckler launched Valpo's first ever endowment campaign, Forever Valpo: The Campaign for Our Future which has raised more than \$215 million as of mid July toward a goal of \$250 million.

"May God continue to bless each and every one of you as together we are called to seek truth, serve generously, and cultivate hope. It is the greatest privilege of my life to be among your company and to undertake this noble work," Heckler concluded. "I continue to serve as your president until such time as a successor has been identified and is prepared to assume office. For a transitional period afterward, I will continue to serve the University in areas identified by the Board in consultation with the new president, after which time I plan to retire." ▲

Thrive/Estero Greets New Students at FGCU



Thrive/Estero, FL participated in a mass "move in" for the arriving students at Florida Gulf Coast University in mid August. About 3000 freshmen students moved into various dormitory facilities. Thrive has a vibrant student ministry population that meets weekly on campus under the leadership of Pastor John Roth. ▲

Fort Wayne's Kantorei Releases Album

The Concordia Theological Seminary/Fort Wayne, IN (CTSFW), Kantorei has released a new album, "Oh, Praise Our God," available as a CD or for digital download. This is the first recording of the seminary Kantorei in six years, featuring music that represents several seasons of the Church Year, including hymn settings, psalms, classic favorites, and new compositions written expressly for the Kantorei.

"Part of the Kantorei's objective is to represent the Seminary and proclaim the truth of God's Gospel in the rich variety of the Church's song," stated Kantor Kevin Hildebrand, director of the Kantorei. "Since its founding by Kantor Resch forty years ago, that's what has defined us, and this recording continues that tradition."

The CD is available for purchase at the CTSFW Bookstore, or can be ordered online at CTSFW's website. ▲



Mission: Haiti's April Community Health Outreach Results in Two Successful Surgeries

Woodley, our sweet little guy from the mountain village of Bien Aime, has had his surgery and he is doing very well. The tumor was not attached to his spine or any internal organs (Praise God) and the wonderful physicians and surgeons at St. Damien's Pediatric Hospital in Port-au-Prince did his surgery and follow up care without cost.

Woodley is back home, 11 months old now and his mother expressed her gratitude to us. The few hundred dollars provided by Mission: Haiti for transportation and preliminary testing will make a lifetime of difference for an entire family and a reason for them to praise God!



The tumor on Woodley's back as discovered at Mission:Haiti's April Community Health Outreach



Woodley after his surgery



At left is Charles, who came to Mission:Haiti's April Community Health Outreach the same day as Woodley with a large painful growth on his back that made it impossible to work. This man is the father of five children and was no longer work able to provide for his family due to the pain and difficulty of movement due to the growth. Mission:Haiti was able to provide transportation to a free hospital that provided treatment, removed the growth and Charles is working again, enjoying his children and thanking God for his provision and care!



**MISSION
MOMENT**
by Helen Roenfeldt
Executive Director
Mission: Haiti

For more information on how you can be part of a servant team, sponsor education, agriculture or water or community building projects in Haiti, see our website missionhaiti99.org, email us missionhaiti99@aol.com or call (954) 868-8218. ▲

Brian Friedrich Accepts Call to Concordia/St. Paul

The Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, president of Concordia University/ Nebraska since 2004, has accepted a call to become the next president of Concordia University/St. Paul.

"Serving Concordia/Nebraska has been a humbling honor and joyful privilege," Friedrich said. "We have been blessed in countless ways during nearly three decades of service. When Laurie and I arrived in Seward in 1991, we had no idea of the plans God had for us to serve Him here. Never would we have imagined we would have had such amazing opportunities for service and witness. It has been the thrill of a lifetime."

Paul Schudel, chair of Concordia Nebraska's Board of Regents, thanked Friedrich for his dedicated service and strong leadership during his 28-year tenure at the university.

Friedrich's leadership brought growth in undergraduate enrollment, graduate online programs and charitable support, a record endowment and the enhancement of campus through transformative capital projects during his 28 years of leadership.



The Board of Regents will be initiating a search for the 11th president of Concordia/Nebraska.

Friedrich, a 1979 graduate of Concordia/St. Paul, has held several positions in development and administration at Concordia/Nebraska. He served as the dean of development and college relations in 1993 before being named assistant to the president in 1994. He was appointed as vice president for institutional advancement in 1997 and was named president of the Concordia Foundation, Inc. in 2003. ▲



East Regional Office of LCEF Hosts Late June Grand Opening

Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) formally dedicated its new East Regional office on Monday, June 24, 2019 in Orlando, Florida. This special event marked a new era for LCEF as the organization continues to grow and expand to support ministries and individuals of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The dedication was part of a three-day summit attended by District Vice Presidents, national executives, and the East Regional team. Rev. Bart Day, President and CEO of LCEF, led the dedication ceremony.

Each Regional team includes a Regional Vice President, Regional Administrative Coordinator, and Regional Marketing Manager. Here in the East, Daniel J. Reichard serves as Regional Vice President. Dan has worked with LCEF since 2010, starting as the District Vice President of the Florida-Georgia District. He earned the promotion to Regional Vice President in

April 2018 where he supports 11 District Vice Presidents across 13 districts. After Dan's promotion, the Florida-Georgia District was blessed to welcome Jay Wendland as the new District Vice President.

Debbie Arrington joined LCEF in 2012 as the Administrative Assistant to the District Vice President, Dan Reichard. In 2018, she followed Dan to the East Regional office where she now serves as Regional Administrative Coordinator.

The newest member of the East Regional office is Austin Wessel, who joined the team in May 2019 as the Regional Marketing Manager. Austin has spent more than six years in professional church work, most recently as Director of Worship and Media at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Orlando.

Founded in 1978, LCEF now has more than 40 years of strong relationships with individuals and ministries of the LCMS.

Members of the LCMS can invest with LCEF. Every dollar invested helps support LCMS ministries around the world including churches, schools, registered service organizations, and more. LCEF shares the Lutheran beliefs and desire to transform lives through ministry. Additionally, LCEF offers flexible investment options with competitive rates that allow individuals and organizations to maintain access to their funds.

To learn more about LCEF products and service, information is available from Jay Wendland, Florida-Georgia District Vice President: jay.wendland@lcef.org or (407) 258-5041. ▲

Below left — LCEF Regional Vice President Dan Reichard is surrounded by some district vice presidents and East Regional team members at the opening ceremonies.

Below — Florida-Georgia District President, the Rev. Dr. Greg Walton, shakes hands with Dan Reichard as the ribbon is cut to open the new facilities.

