

LUTHERAN[®] LIFE

*The Newsmagazine of the
Florida-Georgia District LCMS
March/April 2022*

ALL
THINGS

MADE
NEW

IN 2022

**IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION.
THE OLD HAS PASSED AWAY; THE NEW HAS COME.**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

LUTHERAN LIFE

Lutheran Life is the official newsmagazine of the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. 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 designed to inform LCMS church and school members of the activities, personalities and resources offered by the Synod and the District.

Lutheran LIFE may also provide a forum for Lutherans to express their views and ideas on a wide range of topics. Lutheran LIFE is published bimonthly. News items and photos are encouraged. Please send scanned photos as a JPG attachment rather than embedded in your emails.

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Patrick Luke Ordained, Installed at Our Savior/Orlando, FL



The Rev. Leo Patrick Luke was ordained and installed at Our Savior/Orlando, FL as the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) on Sunday, January 23rd. Luke did his vicarage at the congregation. Participating clergy pictured above are (front row from left) David Ludwig, Sr., Gregory Walton, Patrick Luke, Robert Roegner, Doug Kallesen. (back row) Marc Kappel, Timothy Brown, Peter Meier, Roy Maack, Milan Weerts, Don Moore. Not shown, Larry Schaefer. ▲

District Calls Accepted

08/08/21 Ms. Lydia Schultz to St. John/Ocala, FL (C)
11/30/21 Rev. Ken Garazin as Assistant Pastor at Marco/Marco Island, FL (O)
01/23/22..... Vicar Leo Luke as Associate Pastor at Our Savior/Orlando, FL (SMP)

Transferred Out of FLGA to Other Districts

12/21/21 Mr. Daryl Kruse to Northern Illinois (C)
01/05/22..... Ms. Leah Welter to Texas (C)

Transferred Into FLGA from Other Districts

11/15/21 Rev. David Schemm from Kansas (O)
11/18/21 Mr. Richard Haegele from Michigan (C)
11/30/21 Rev. Douglas Bock from Pacific Southwest (O)
12/15/21 Mr. John Behnke from South Wisconsin (C)

Initial Placements of Ordained and Commission Ministers

08/08/21 Ms. Lydia Schultz Concordia, Wisconsin to St. John/Ocala, FL as Teacher (C)
12/18/21 Rev. Eduardo Martinez, Concordia Hispanic Institute to Esperanza Viva/Orlando, FL as Pastor
01/23/22..... Rev. Leo Luke, Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO to Our Savior/Orlando, FL as Associate Pastor (SMP)

Installations of Ordained or Commissioned Ministers

08/08/21 Ms. Lydia Schultz, Teacher, St. John/Ocala, FL (C)
01/23/22..... Rev. Leo Luke, Associate Pastor, Our Savior, Orlando, FL (SMP)
01/23/22..... Rev. Seth Debartolo, Pastor, Christ The King/LaBelle, FL (O)
01/30/22..... Rev. Eduardo Martinez, Pastor, Esperanza Viva/Orlando, FL (O)

Status Change

12/13/21 Mr. Joshua Wareham, from Active to Candidate (C)
12/13/21 Ms. Joy Reitsma, from Active to Candidate (C)
01/01/22..... Rev. Kenneth Farsworth, from Active to Emeritus (O)

Church or School Changes

01/29/22..... Iglesia Lutheran Esperanza Viva, Orlando, FL Circuit 9, Orlando East Initial Membership

Candidates

Rev. Saint-Lux Charelus	Rev. Andrew Schroeder
Rev. Jonathan Horsman	Rev. Alemu Sernessa
Dr. Jin O Jeong	Rev. Brett Snider
Rev. Jasson Kalugendo	Rev. Daniel Sparling
Rev. John Rallison	Rev. James Weist

Called to Glory

12/04/21 Rev. Thomas Moore, Emeritus, Oviedo, FL (O)
12/18/21 Rev. Edgar Trinklein, Emeritus, Lakeland, FL (O)

Note Designations: (O) = Ordained; (SMP) = Specific Ministry Program; (C) = Commissioned

DISTRICT CAPSULES

Eduardo Martinez Ordained, Installed at Orlando's Esperanza Viva



PEOPLE

The Rev. Eduardo Martinez was ordained and installed at Hope/Orlando, FL as the Pastor of Esperanza

Viva on Saturday, December 18, 2021. Esperanza Viva works alongside Hope/Orlando

in ministry to the Hispanic community. In the photo above, participating clergy included (from left) Ken

Green, Paul vonWerder, President Greg Walton, Eduardo Martinez, Hector Parodi, Peter Meier and Doug Kallesen. ▲

CPH Names Jonathan Schultz Ninth President & CEO

Jonathan D. Schultz has been named as the 9th President & CEO of Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, MO. CPH is the publishing arm of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Schultz has been serving as Interim President and CEO since May of 2021.

“During his tenure as Vice President, and since being appointed Interim President, Jonathan has demonstrated a relentless commitment to the mission and vision of CPH,” said Dr. Mark Bender, Chair of the CPH Board of Directors. “The Board is confident that Jonathan will lead CPH in a manner that remains fervently committed to the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions. We pray God’s richest blessings upon Jonathan and all who serve at CPH.”

Schultz began his

service at CPH in 1998. As Vice President and Corporate Counsel of CPH, he worked closely with the Board of Directors, coordinating all legal activities of the corporation, and directing the Human Resources and Contracts/Rights/Permissions departments. Before arriving at CPH, he and his wife, Sue, served as long-term volunteer missionaries in Guatemala for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Currently Sue serves as an LCMS elementary school teacher.

“For 152 years, CPH has been the publishing arm of the LCMS,” Schultz offered, “and I would contend that our mission has never been more critical to the Church and her people than it is now. With a world increasingly hostile to our Christian faith, that redefines truth



and seeks to ensnare our youth, the world is often a dark, dark place. But thanks be to God that we are indeed a lighthouse, shining the pure light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this dark world with resources faithful to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.”

Lutheran education is a key priority for Schultz. For the last two decades he held various leadership positions on the Board of Directors of Christ Community Lutheran School, a Presidential Blue-Ribbon School serving pre-school through middle school

students in the greater St. Louis, MO area.

He also has served on the Board of Directors of the Lutheran High School Association of St. Louis. Schultz also currently serves as Chair of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis, a \$100-million foundation that is committed in the name of Jesus Christ to seeing the improved care of hurting people in the greater St. Louis region.

Schultz is a graduate of Concordia University Chicago and Loyola University School of Law. ▲

Jesus makes all things new in 2022! This is our hope and prayer for the year ahead. What is in need of renewal in your life? Maybe you need to dust off the New Year's resolutions you made and make those changes. Whether it's dropping a few pounds, eating healthier, or exercising more, do it all in the name of Jesus! There is power in His name, and as we grow in faith we learn how much better life is when we walk in step with Jesus.

Perhaps the need is really less of the outward changes and more inward.

As we look toward Valentine's Day, it brought to mind last year as we were

preparing to sell our home. I came across some old love letters I had written to Edith when we were in college. They expressed, in eloquent ways, my gratefulness in knowing her. Reflecting on these letters I see how God has deepened our love for each other.

The letters brought back many specific memories of our earliest days, and I can see that as true as those words I wrote were then, they are even more significant now.

God's love for us never changes! Someone has said the Bible is God's love letter to His redeemed. In it He tells us again and again of His deep and abiding love for us in Jesus, and encourages us to tell the whole world of His love.

As the pandemic continues to linger, some have declared it is God's way of making people more aware of their need to depend on Him. Personally, while I can see how some might see it this way, God doesn't coerce or manipulate. God works best through His Word, and His promise to us in Jesus is all about His grace and love.

Don't we often cut ourselves off from His love and grace by simply neglecting God's Word or failing to embrace it? It would be like a doctor prescribing a necessary medicine and a

patient deciding not to take it, or constantly forgetting to take it. Neglecting the love and grace of Jesus is much like not taking a life-saving medication, when it begins impacting your life you realize how important it really is.

Celebrating this year of Jubilee is a wonderful opportunity to commit to following God's "prescription" and spending time daily in His Word. Any time spent reading the Bible

and intentions of the heart."

Through God's Word Jesus makes us new in 2022! However, simply reading the Word and not applying it would be like only reading the prescription bottle with hopes of a cure.



As God's Word permeates our hearts and lives we can't help but be convicted by His Spirit

2022 A Year of JUBILEE – A Time To Be Made New!

is beneficial for our spiritual health and wellbeing as God speaks to our hearts and lives.

Personally, I can attest to how many times God has spoken directly to my heart as I've read His Word or heard it shared in a devotion or sermon – or sometimes even in social media.

God speaks through His Word. In fact, in HEBREWS 4:12 we read, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts

and prompted into action. As we begin to see the Scriptures through the lens of being sent it changes our perspective. We are sent people. God has given us renewed purpose in service to Him to reach the world. In GALATIANS 6:6, Paul writes, "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need."

We have been given so much through the grace of God, but it



was never His intention we should keep it to ourselves. Passage after passage throughout Scripture make it clear we are to share our faith with the world around us. This is the renewed lens for reading and applying the Bible. In it we find a multitude of examples of God sending His chosen people into the world. In fact He loved the world so much He sent us Jesus. Now we are His light-bearers to the world, carrying the hope and light of Jesus. For some it may mean going to other parts of the world to proclaim Jesus – for most of us, however, it is something we can do in our own community, where we *live*, where we *work*, where we *shop* or *go to school*, where there are likely plenty of people who need to see the light of Jesus in the midst of their darkness.



Paul wrote, in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Here Paul is telling us we are new creations in Christ. It isn't that we are becoming new creations or someday hope to be new creations, we already are new creations. Not because of anything we think, do or say, but simply because Jesus has done it all for each of us on the Cross. He reconciled us to God through His own death and resurrection and now commits to each of us the ministry of reconciliation, telling the world of His redeeming work. That's our purpose as His disciples. It was for this reason

He made us new creations.

Paul says “we are ambassadors.” The Oxford Dictionary defines an ambassador as, “an accredited diplomat sent by a country as its official representative to a foreign country.” As God sent Jesus, so Jesus sends us to represent His Kingdom to a world which doesn't know Him.



Lately we have heard researchers telling us all kinds of information concerning “The Church.” No doubt you have noticed a decline in worship attendance, one that has been slowly creeping into ministries over the past two decades, now accelerated by the pandemic.

Churches have closed down live meetings with outbreaks of the Omicron variation of the virus. Many have become rather comfortable watching church online. Some to the extent they have failed to return to live worship when it is offered. For some this is truly a risk factor, and safety must prevail. The researchers claim the majority of those not returning to churches are simply exercising their freedom to stay home, or have found other things to occupy this time slot in their life.

Whatever the case may be, we know God designed us for community. Jesus didn't have only one disciple. He had twelve, not to mention the many unnamed disciples who were influenced by Him. Jesus gathered a community, and He still does today to accomplish His mission. The point is, God is a **sending God**, and gathered together we are more empowered to carry His mission heart of love and grace to the world. His heart is beating in you and me!



So we celebrate this year of Jubilee, a time to sound (figuratively) the ram's horn, as a time of recognition of the love of our gracious God. He desires to

make us new in 2022. He has given us such a great and powerful tool in His Word to daily make us new. A 2022 challenge to each of us is to make the plan and dedicate time to reading God's Word daily, that we might see again and again His deep love for us. His law condemns which may scare us, but we know it can never bring about lasting motivation. That only comes through His grace, mercy and love. And He makes them lavishly abundant for each of us through Jesus! So we have much to celebrate! As we make time to be in His Word and apply it to our daily life, living out His promises, we will discover so much more as He renews us, strengthens us, and sends us into the world! Go in His joy – the joy of Jesus! ▲



With Jubilant Peace,

Gregory A. Walton

PRESIDENT
FLORIDA-GEORGIA DISTRICT
LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

Bob had chaired the church council for years. People were confident in Bob. He cared about the people. He got everyone involved and encouraged each one to share their ideas. Somehow he navigated the minefields during this COVID pandemic and everyone not only got along but even liked each other. Yet in a few months he and his wife were moving to Baltimore to be closer to the children. St. Johns would miss his leadership.

So the pastor encouraged John to begin to work closely with an up and coming leader who could be his "apprentice." After a brief process involving others the vice president Tom was asked and agreed to fill

at first but eventually Tom shared about his haphazard Bible reading but also how he kept a prayer journal on his mobile phone and listened to an audio devotion on the way to work most days. Bob asked Tom what he was learning and what his prayer to God was for his growing as a disciple. Tom appreciated that and wanted to be even more intentional in his faith if he was going to take on this position.

Then Bob asked Tom about his motivation for serving. At first it seemed an odd question. They talked about how it made them feel good to help others but Bob talked about something even more important. He said that if we

their congregation had an early childhood center. This was to be the focal point of how to love people, not only the students but also the parents and extended families. They would provide support services as a means to love them and bring people closer to Jesus. That purpose was what allowed the council to say "no" to ideas that while good, were not good stewardship to lean into this God given purpose. Tom seemed to be getting it. "Of course. That's why we turned down the big project last year..." "Yes" Bob said.

From there Bob and Tom would meet regularly both before and after council meetings. Tom increasingly

Who's Gonna Do It Now?

out Bob's term. Tom was a younger leader. He had done a lot with the elders and was always pitching in with the work days. Tom was reluctant but was willing if Bob would help him learn. Quickly!

They met every other Saturday morning for coffee. Over the next few months they talked about a lot. The first thing Bob asked Tom was about his faith. That surprised Tom a bit because he came to church most weeks. But Bob seemed to be asking a deeper question about how Tom was growing in his faith and following Jesus in his life and behavior.

The conversation was awkward

are serving to make ourselves feel good or valued then we probably need to grow in our appreciation of the grace of Jesus. It is from that place of knowing Jesus' love for us that we can then be free to serve others sacrificially. Tom reflected as he looked into his coffee cup. His eyes welled up with tears. Yes, Jesus loved him and was allowing him to be in this position to serve Jesus as he served people.

Next, Bob asked Tom about what he understood as the purpose of the congregation. They talked about a lot of reasons why the church existed. But while they were there to nurture the members in Christ, God put them



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on 1st and main to be salt and light for the people "walking in darkness" who lived right there by the church.

Bob pulled out the vision statement and there it was in black and white. What was especially important was that

led the meetings from devotions to discussions. Sometimes they would just review what happened. Many times they would pray together both for the church but also for individuals and one another. Tom grew in his love and appreciation for Bob but even more for his love for Jesus and His church. The pastor would join them periodically and add his prayers and support. He said that just as Bob had met with Tom, it would now be important for Tom to begin to meet with the council members individually. Yet more than that, to identify two or three with whom Tom can spend extended time like Bob did with him.

Bob went to Baltimore and was available by telephone and email. Tom filled out Bob's term very capably and was humbled to meet with others as Bob had with him. St. John's was fulfilling God's purpose. Members were growing in their faith and many were coming to faith. Praise God. ▲

Rev. Scott Gress is believes in Growing People for Ministry by focussing on leadership, discipleship and teamwork. Contact Scott if you are interested in him working with you or your church. A free 30 minutes strategy session is available. The Coaching Leader Podcast is also available on iTunes and his YouTube page. You can contact Scott through email scottgress@me.com or his blog page scottgress.com or at 561-542-4472



District's Education Executive Selected as a Van Lunens Fellow, Will Participate in One-Year, World-Class Christian Education Development Program

Inspirational Aspirational Transformational

These are the words Jennifer Tanner, Executive Director for School and Youth Ministry for the Florida-Georgia District, uses to describe her experience in the Van Lunen Fellowship. As a member of the 2021-2022 cohort – a group of Christian educators who share a defining characteristic.

Jennifer began her year of study with a week at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for intensive professional development specifically designed to build executive management skills for leaders in Christian schools.

“Along with 19 other Christian school leaders from across the United States and Canada, I was blessed to take part in sessions covering all aspects of school leadership,” Tanner explains. “My fellow participants in the program learned from the experiences and wisdom of faculty members including

David Hahn, Executive Director of the Association for Lutheran Secondary Schools, and Mychal Thom, the Chief Diversity Officer at Concordia University at St. Paul.”

Tanner states that their deep passion for the mission of Christian education has renewed her focus on the mission of the district. “My biggest take away,” she continues, “is the importance of equipping and empowering our leaders since they are the missional heartbeats of their schools.”

Van Lunen alum Rod Jackson, the Superintendent of St. Luke’s in Oviedo, calls the program a “superb combination of the practical and philosophical.” Tanner agrees, adding that the fellowship has been one of the richest learning experiences in her life. “The opportunity to spend a year in a learning community with passionate, dedicated, and highly motivated heads of school is a blessing,” she says.

Tanner will present an applied project at the conclusion of the program in July of this year. She plans to create a school governance training module to



Jennifer Tanner,
Executive Director for
School and Youth Ministry
at Calvin University/
Grand Rapids, Michigan

help principals and school boards work effectively together. “I am honored to have been selected to participate in the Van Lunen Fellowship,” Tanner concludes, “and I pray that God will work through this experience to grow my ability to support the school leaders in our District.” ▲

What is the Van Lunen Fellows Program?



The Van Lunen Fellows Program provides executive-level education and management skills to heads of Christian schools throughout the U.S., Canada, and beyond. Van Lunen sessions are led by faculty who are experienced heads of Christian schools with proven executive management skills. Participants commit to a year-long program.

Consultants with special expertise are brought in to lead sessions on financial management, marketing, sustainability, strategic planning, and other topics relevant to leading Christian

schools. This year both on-campus and virtual sessions will be utilized. Between sessions, faculty coaching and consultant support is available via phone and online tools to assist fellows with their applied school project.

Academic Content

Some of the curricular topics include:

- The Soul of Leadership
- Mission and School Culture
- Governance and Decision-Making
- Strategic Planning
- Marketing and Enrollment
- Financial Planning and Management
- Advancement and Fund Development
- Leadership Changes

“El Pelicano” Serving Collier County

Everyone who has seen a pelican in action is amazed by its size, maneuverability, vision, courage, and gift as a fisherman. Who else can dive into the water headfirst from 40 feet in the air — with their mouth open — and catch a fish? Yet, even at rest, the pelican has an uncanny way about it that communicates tranquility, confidence, and satisfaction. The “personality” of the pelican has made it a symbol for everything to worldly success to tropical relaxation.



While this may set the pelican several bars above many other animals and birds, it hardly explains

why the early Christians used the pelican as a symbol for Christ. Yes, its true! Though many contemporary Christians have never heard of this, the pelican was an important symbol for the love, sacrifice, power, and life delivered by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

“Long before Jesus walked on the earth, the people of the Mediterranean had an incredible respect for the pelican,” explains The Rev. Mark Eisold, pastor of Pelican Community Center and Lutheran Church in Naples, FL. “In fact, the pelican became a legendary figure.



New Cuban families settling in the Naples, FL area have come to The Pelican, where the LORD is uniting them to Jesus in His life, death and resurrection for their salvation and as a first step to a deeper relationship with Jesus and other new people of God in Christ Jesus. Two recent baptisms were held for Keylor (above) and Ashley (below).



Pelican’s first “Deacons Retreat” was held this past October. Seven men from the congregation and one from Grace/Naples, FL were led by Pastors Tom Boeck from Marco Lutheran Church/Marco Island, FL, and Karl Glander, Bethlehem/Fort Myers, FL and Mark Eisold as leaders.

y Hispanic and Haitian Communities

In times of famine, the pelican was known to tear at its own breast, draw blood, and feed its young in order that they may have life. Naturally, when these people received news that God, in His great love, had come into the world in human form, shedding His own blood to wash, adopt, and redeem us (Holy Baptism), and to FEED US (The Lord's Supper) so that we may have forgiveness and life, they made a direct connection with what they already had seen in the pelican."

The symbol of the pelican feeding its young with three drops of blood from its chest was used in numerous cathedrals through the end of the Middle Ages. It's not unusual to see pelicans depicted in stained glass windows or even etched into stone on the altar.

"In some churches, the tabernacle over the altar was completely fashioned in the shape of a pelican," Eisold continues. "The story of the pelican, as a reminder of our Lord

Jesus, was included in European Christian literature and song throughout the 17th century. Even in the United States, the symbol of the pelican has been found in Lutheran churches as a reminder of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Still today, liturgical items bearing the pelican symbol can be purchased."

In 2016 in Naples, Florida — where pelicans are abundant and popular, the pelican seemed the perfect fit for a new, Christian mission in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) with:

- 1) a great vision for filling the community with Christ;
- 2) training all converts to be fishers of men;
- 3) and courageously diving headfirst into a multi-ethnic community to start a multi-ethnic congregation.

This is Pelican Community Center and Lutheran Church.

Pastor Eisold has an interesting background . . . he was born in Coral Gables, FL where his father, the Rev. Theodore Eisold was serving as a Mission Developer in the Florida Keys. Mark's father took a call to Our Savior/Lake Worth, FL and moved the family there. Mark eventually went on to UF/Gainesville, FL, to study journalism and business. He held a wide range of jobs, including working on the campaign of a Florida State Senator, before enrolling in Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO. Following graduation he was called by the Mid-South District to serve as pastor and mission developer of the future Our Savior/Cabot, Arkansas, a bedroom community of Little Rock and the Little Rock Air Force Base.

"The mission of "El Pelicano" is to support all families through their daily struggles in life and to help them become productive members of society," Eisold concludes. "Our center provides English as a Second Language classes in the morning and evening. We are dedicated to serve the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic communities within Collier County. The Pelican Community Center and Lutheran Church is a mission church, and our work is reviewed and supervised by Grace Lutheran Church of Naples. ▲



Clockwise from upper left, Pastor Mark Eisold with Charite Minato and her mother, Sachiko, at Charite's baptism last summer. Eisold says several more baptisms, a few weddings and first communions are also planned in 2022.



Pastor Eisold with two ESL volunteers and two Venezuelan students, Graciela and Gabriela. ESL teachers work with those students for whom English is not their primary language. The coaches help them improve fluency in English, both spoken and in the written word.

Monsterrat, Veronica and Alfredo are shown at their food booth at last November's Venezuelan Festival in Golden Gate, Florida. There were informative demonstrations, local vendors, music, food booths and more. The Lutheran Heritage Foundation provided booklets, "Jesus Never Fails!" El Pelicano always has a presence at these events.

Amelia del Los Angeles is held by her father last September after Pastor Eisold baptized her. Amelia's parents and godparents are from Venezuela.



Former District Pastor Publishes “Letters From Havana”

The Rev. David Disson, now retired and living in Cape Girardeau, MO, has written a book, “Letters From Havana: LCMS Vicar Writes Home During Cuban Revolution (1957-58).” The book is a collection of approximately 50 letters Disson wrote to his parents while on his vicarage in Cuba from August 1957 to July 1958.

Pastor Disson served at First/ Clearwater, FL from 1970-1981 before accepting a call to Trinity/ Cape Girardeau, MO, where he served from 1981 to 1998. He also served for more than a decade as the vacancy pastor of Lutheran Chapel of Hope, the LCMS campus ministry at Southeast Missouri State University. Disson also was a part of launching Saxony Lutheran High School in Jackson, MO.

“My parents had given the letters to me about 30 years ago, but I had misplaced them,” Disson explains. “I found them again while looking through things and initially had the intention to read them one more time and throw them out.”

In the process of doing so, family and friends convinced Pastor Disson to think about publishing them. He credits his wife, Judy, and

others with the idea. “People were especially interested in hearing stories relating to the history of that time from my perspective — when Fidel Castro was beginning his rise to power.

“Some of the letters contained more history than others — primarily because I was just writing home! I never intended for them to be published at all,” Disson said.

During his vicarage it wasn’t unusual for him to be stopped at checkpoints and have his vehicle searched.

“A few times, things did get a little unnerving. One time I especially remember is when I was stopped one late evening on my way to the home of Yinson Chen, a Chinese man who was a Buddhist, to whom I was giving private instruction in the Christian faith. I turned onto the street on which Chen lived and instantly my headlights picked up a roadblock about half way down. By that time I had learned that you do not turn around and drive away or the end result might not be good!

“I stopped at the roadblock. One of the SIM, or Cuban Military Police, dressed in his SIM uniform, looked

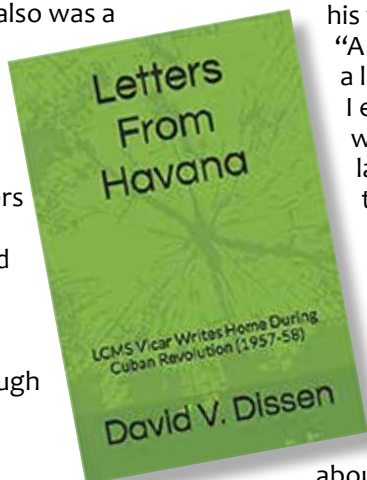


at me with his cold, steely brown eyes (I can still see that look) and asked what brought me there. I told him I was going to visit Yinson Chen who lived on the block. He told me to leave and not come back. I was more than a little shaken up . . . and later learned that the SIM had a stake-out on that street

because they had heard a stash of guns were supposed to be delivered to a house on that street that night for Castro’s supporters. It also wasn’t uncommon to see tobacco sheds on fire, a practice of the revolutionaries at the time.”

Concordia Seminary continues to offer The Rev. David V. and Judith Disson Excellence in the Study of the Lutheran Confessions (Book of Concord) Scholarship Fund. It is awarded to an M.Div. or Residential Alternate Route (RAR) student in his second year or later who has a GPA of at least 3.5, demonstrates a “quia” subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, and confesses that Holy Scripture is the “norma Normans” of our Christian doctrine, faith and life, and that the Holy Scriptures are indeed inspired, inerrant and infallible.

Pastor David Disson’s book can be purchased on Amazon at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). ▲



LWR Offers Lent Mission Opportunity for District Congregations

Lent may be a time of reflection, but it need not be one of inaction. Congregations are invited to share love with their neighbors around the world by getting their hands busy making Personal Care Kits. Resources are available to gather and assemble kits to share generosity with neighbors around the world. Kits and generous financial gifts a congregation can make to deliver hope to neighbors in need around the world. ▲



Details and instructions as to how to participate are available on Lutheran World Relief’s website: [lwr.org/lent](https://www.lwr.org/lent)

Savannah Congregation Hosts Annual Novemberfest

Every Thursday, year-round, you will find a group of ladies at **Trinity/ Savannah, GA** diligently working to make beautiful hand-crafted items for their annual Novemberfest. These dedicated volunteers are Trinity's TLC Crafters. They make the most amazing items for not only the Christmas holiday but each holiday and season throughout the year. The items created range from beautiful wreaths to crocheted shawls to hand embroidered quilts. Their talent is endless and their dedication is too.

Trinity's Novemberfest is held the second Saturday of November and the event is open to the public and many customers return each year to purchase gifts for family members, friends and teachers.

A used book sale, plant sale and a Baked Goods Shoppe add to the event. Goodies range from homemade jams and jellies to pies and breads. "The used book sale is always as big hit as the books (all donated) cover a wide range of subjects and are sold at a very low price," says Karen Hanovich. "Some of the ladies are plant enthusiasts so there is always a wide variety of plants to choose and take home for your garden. Ms. Shirley Lewis is the all-time favorite plant guru and knows everything there is to know about plants."

Lonna McEwen, LWML President, provided a little history of TLC's Novemberfest. She offered, "Many years ago, Novemberfest was started to raise funds to help



Shirley Lewis models a hat for sale along with some of the plants at Trinity's Novemberfest



One of the many quilts offered for sale at Trinity's Novemberfest



Novemberfest fills the fellowship hall with tables of crafts, baked goods, quilts, plants and books.

with altar needs and other church necessities as we were a small mission congregation. Every year the event has grown and items added along with BBQ dinners. The men spent hours and hours at the grills, ladies peeling potatoes and then

elbow deep mixing potato salad. Throughout the year ladies met one day and evening during the week crafting. Friendships have grown and we've also said earthly good-byes to some very special ladies." ▲

Saturday March 5, 2022 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM \$20



Amazing Grace to Host March "The Big Three" Women's Retreat

Amazing Grace/ Oxford, FL (The Villages) is excited to have Jan Struck, a popular speaker, humorist and author as the guest speaker at their March 5th "The Big Three" Women's Retreat. The

ladies will find out how

1. being joyful
2. praying continually, and
3. giving thanks in all circumstances

— also known as "The Big Three" from THESSALONIANS 5:16-18 — will help getting through tumultuous times. ▲

President Greg Walton Creates a Multi

More than a year ago, on February 19, 2021, a virtual meeting took place via “Zoom” and the screen populated with the faces of men and women church leaders from multiple racial, ethnic, and professional backgrounds from various points throughout the Florida-Georgia District.

It was the first meeting of the Multicultural and Ethnic Diversity Task Force (MEDTF) created by President Greg Walton and it was designed to explore how LCMS congregations in Florida and Georgia might engage the ethnically and racially diverse communities to which they belong.

“Nation-wide the membership in LCMS churches is 98 percent White Anglo-Saxon,” Walton stated. “This is unreflective of a U.S. population that is 40 percent people of color.”

The Rev. Tony Durante, pastor at Our Savior/Plantation, FL is chairing the task force. Currently other members include Rev. Dr. Victor Belton, Rev. Frank and Rebecca Marshall, Deaconess Ligia Morales and Rhoda Reilly.



The Rev. Tony Durante

“Our hope is that the task force can identify any obstacles the ministries might have in connecting with other people and groups in the neighborhoods that surround Lutheran churches within the FLGA district and provide some insights on what can be done,” Durante continued.

President Walton’s goals in establishing the task force were:

- Raise awareness in the district
- Understand the scope of issues
- Provide positive stories for website/district publications
- Discover ways to make congregations sensitive

to issues without legalism/judgment

- Discover ways to encourage congregations to consider diversity when building teams
- Provide worship resources for a potential day of repentance
- Provide a list of resources for congregations to consider.



Members of the task force have developed resources to be used by congregations in efforts to create awareness about multicultural relations and for personal reflection about attitudes toward other races. These include a recorded theatrical drama and a confession and absolution liturgy specific to racism.

Last summer the MEDTF conceived a “Multicultural Church Award” as a center piece of its efforts. It is meant to be a “fun” approach to realizing some of the task force’s goals by inviting congregations to compete for the



Cultural & Ethnicity Task Force

designation as a multicultural church.

“The inspiration for the idea is the All-American Cities Award,” Durante explained, “a community recognition program in the United States given by the National Civic League. The award recognizes the work of communities in using inclusive civic engagement to address critical issues and create stronger connections among residents, businesses and nonprofit and government leaders. Once called by the organization the “Nobel Prize for Constructive Citizenship” — it has been awarded to more than 500 communities across the country.”

Similarly, the MEDTF seeks to present the Multicultural Church Award to a FLGA District congregation that demonstrates a multicultural approach to mission and ministry in following aspects in in-reach and outreach:

1. Education
2. Engagement
3. Improvements
4. Legacy

“The winner will receive a trophy, a \$500 cash prize, considerable mention in district-wide publications and distinction as a model, inspiration, and resource to other congregations aspiring to be multicultural ministries,” Durante concludes.

According to the task force, the winner will be announced at the Pastors and Educators Conference in September, 2022. This spring congregations will be able to enter the contest at a date to be announced on the FLGA District website. MEDTF will conclude its term with recommendations to the District President’s Office toward ongoing efforts to encourage LCMS congregations in Florida and Georgia to engage a more diverse community.

As Jesus said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (MATTHEW 28:19-20). ▲



**MULTICULTURAL
CHURCH AWARD**
florigeorgia
district



FLORIDA GEORGIA

Out and About in the District

Send Your News & Photos to lutheranlife@aol.com

On Saturday December 4, 2021, the Women of **Lutheran Church of the Redeemer/ Columbus, GA**, held their very first *Advent By Candlelight*. The theme for the inaugural event was “Let Your Lights Appear.”

There were 48 attendees including many guests, seated at nine tables with hostesses sponsoring each table. Christmas centerpieces along with dishes, glasses, candles, lights and decor adorned the room. There were several Christmas trees of various sizes.

“The fellowship room never looked so pretty and peaceful,” explained Kim Hill, one of the participants. “Lovely music was played on the piano while we were able to sing several Christmas hymns. A light supper and dessert was thoroughly enjoyed.”

The men of the congregation assisted in preparing the dinner, setting up the buffet table and serving as holiday waiters — refilling glasses. In conjunction with the event a servant event took place. “We collected baby items for the local Ronald McDonald house. Many diapers, ointment, washcloths and other items were collected. It was a huge success. It was also a Thrivent Action Team event and \$250 was provided by Thrivent to help purchase the dinner along with some decor,” Hill concluded. ▲



St John Hosts Inaugural Christmas Light Spectacular

After 18 months of planning event is huge success and they hope to bring it back every year!



St. John/Ocala, FL welcomed North Central Florida to the inaugural year of *The Ocala Christmas Light Spectacular*. It was hosted south of Ocala at the Florida Horse Park.

The event featured a 1.8 mile drive-through featuring more than 350 displays — ultimately leading to a massive manger scene more than 25 feet wide. There were more than a million lights to delight the eyes. There was also a large walk through area at the end of drive-through route where visitors could get out of their cars and

enjoy the light displays and take pictures. The weekend nights also featured a Santaland complete with a train ride, seven jump houses, a letter to Santa station, a cards for veterans stand, food trucks, live entertainment and of course a visit with “You-Know-Who.”

As Pastor Jeff Shanks pointed out: “We wanted to bring the joy into the whole community and what better way than with lights pointing to the ultimate source of Christmas.” The long list of sponsors and volunteers backed up that vision

with dollars, talents and hours.

The response was overwhelming – backing up traffic for nearly a mile on the weekends. More than 10,000 cars came through the month-long event estimating more than 40,000 guests. Over 3,500 children visited Santa and everyone of them went home with a treat pack provided by St. John which included the Lutheran Hour Ministries’ produced booklet “A Journey to Christmas.”

An even bigger and better Ocala Christmas Light Spectacular will return on the Friday after



Members of the youth puppet team pose for a quick group photo



Youngest visitor to the event poses with Santa and his helpers



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Jay Wendland

District Vice President, Florida-Georgia District
407-258-5041, Jay.Wendland@lcef.org

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Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL

hosted their semi-annual Accelerated Reader Award & Pizza Party for the top 10 readers in each grade at Wildwood Elementary School. Each student joyfully selected a book of their choice in addition to receiving their award certificate. Volunteers included several new members and together with the old-timers, grew in their relationship with one another, found fulfillment in serving the community in the name of Jesus Christ and were able to encourage these precious youngsters. Both FLGA District “Miracle Grow” funding and Thrivent Action Team funding contributed to the success of this event.

“We continue to pray for the children of this school and their families, the faculty and staff with our fervent prayer that the light of Jesus was shining through each of us and that it was evident as we displayed humility, love and caring hearts,” said Lois Schaefer, one of the participants. “Our next event is scheduled for May 2022.” ▲



Dahlonega Takes Grand Prize in Christmas Parade Third Year in a Row



St. Peter/Dahlonega, GA is always looking for ways to reach out to the community with the good news of Jesus. So when City Hall announced an “Old Fashioned Christmas Parade” would be held on December 11th, the congregation started planning a float.

“We built a small mountain with spray-on snow, added wooden sheep, greenery, and signage,” explains Kelley Wiedenmann. “We also recorded and played Dolly Parton singing our theme song — “Go Tell It On The Mountain: Jesus Christ is Born.” Small children wore costumes of Mary, Joseph, shepherds and an angel. Adult members walked alongside the float greeting the community and wishing everyone a Merry Christmas —

while witnessing the love of God in the birth of Jesus. Although the parade braved a weather-related delay and soaking rain, Dahlonega residents still turned out to watch. Our float had some stiff competition, but in the end parade judges awarded St. Peter Lutheran the Grand Prize trophy!” ▲



Founded on Faith Inspired by Hope

Holy Cross/North Miami Celebrates 70 Years of Ministry



One Sunday late last November, **Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School in North Miami** celebrated their 70th Anniversary. Dealing with the pandemic and all the situations that have surrounded them — the congregation decided it was time to REFLECT and to CELEBRATE the blessings the Lord had bestowed.

They gathered to thank God for His blessings and thanksgivings to the church and school over the years. The day was also designated as Friendship Sunday and Holy Cross encouraged members to invite friends and family for this special time together. A pre-service Kahoot Trivia game captured the historical facts of the church and school. Following was a special worship service at 10:30 am followed by a turkey dinner in the auditorium.

“For this milestone, we designed anniversary t-shirts and created a video looking back at memories,” Pastor Dennis Bartels offers. “Holy Cross has learned to celebrate what we have, and we celebrate the fact that God is so good — we always seem to have what we need to get the message of Jesus as Lord and Savior for all people. That is what makes the Holy Cross family so special. We are a really diverse family of people ‘learning at Jesus’ feet, loving with Jesus’ heart, living as God’s family.”

Pastor Dennis Bartels has been at the church since 1986. Holy Cross continues with various ministries including children and adult Sunday School, youth ministry, praise team, altar guild, LWML activities and more. Services are help both “in person” and livestreamed on Facebook, posted on YouTube and the church’s website @ holycrossnm.com. ▲



Attention!

Send your stories, articles, photos and captions for your church and school events to:



LutheranLife@aol.com

Please attach photos in one of these formats:

.jpg .png .pdf

Plantation Enjoys Community Christmas Caroling



On Saturday, December 11, **Our Savior / Plantation, FL** church and school families visited community members who were in need of some Christmas cheer. Approximately 50 Our Savior members showed up to sing carols — including a Comfort Dog team. Following the home visits, the carolers all gathered together to enjoy some pizza. ▲

Mission Congregation Holds First Christmas Swahili Service

All Nations/Clarkston, GA's Christmas Swahili service took place at Grace/Atlanta, GA in mid-town and included the word of God, installation of prayer line information coordinators, a Christmas concert and Christmas gifts for all the children. Approximately 40 people attended which included members from supporting area LCMS congregations.



All Nations is the new mission starting in Clarkston, GA sponsored by three Atlanta area congregations: **Grace, Living Faith/ Cumming, and St. Mark/Tucker.**

Rev. Jasson Kalugendo and Vicar Issac Baroi have gathered a group of young people in Clarkston for regular worship and teaching, the start of new outreach in that largely immigrant community. ▲





Sue Merritt (left) and Susan Brooks (right) frame U.S. Southern Command chaplain, Navy Capt Curtis Price and St. Paul's comfort dog, Jemimah at an early December "Special Delivery" of approximately 225 handwritten letters to United States service members. **St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL Students** from both church and school wrote the letters to bring both thanks and Christmas greetings to U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coasties in places like Cuba, El Salvador and even in the local area. Jemimah and the chaplain were clearly both in ministry, they were two peas in a pod together. ▲



Kicking off National Lutheran Schools Week, District Executive Director for Schools and Youth Ministry, Jennifer Tanner, posted a fond reminiscence of last year's NLSW when she was principal of **Grace/Jacksonville, FL**. "Sometimes I miss my principal life filled with kids and craziness" Tanner stated. "But today I am filled with joy at the ministry happening everyday in our Lutheran schools — especially throughout the District!" #nlsw #lutheranschoollove ▲



St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL students appear with shepherd, Ms. Rebecca Schaffer, during National Lutheran Schools week. ▲



In Mid-December, **Hope/Jacksonville, FL's** The Rev. Patrick McKenzie (Pastor Pat) welcomed three new members and recognized servicemen who have served their country. ▲



Bethel/Hobe Sound, FL celebrated National Lutheran Schools Week with a variety of events. Here some of the preschool students participate in a pep rally with Pastor Timothy Heath, who also led them in songs and Bible stories each day. ▲



St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL students decorated the sanctuary during National Lutheran Schools week with personalized footprints from each of the students . . . all leading to the cross. ▲



Lakeside/Venice, FL celebrated and outreach event that brought more than 400 people from the community into the sanctuary to celebrate Jesus' birth last December. With 70 children from two different preschools — one from North Port and one from Lakeside's own campus. The sanctuary was alive and vibrant with Jesus and each child received a colorful gift bag and heard about Jesus' birth. More people stayed for cookies and fellowship afterwards. The congregation plans a follow up cookie give away on Valentines Day, and a fellowship meal after Easter this spring. ▲

St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL's Middle School youth (6th-8th Grade Students) pose at a recent event in their youth room above the congregation's Family Life Center. ▲

St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL's High School students held a pizza sale in the Family Life Center. They're raising funds for activities and the LCMS Youth Gathering. ▲





Our Savior/Plantation, FL — with help from several church and school families — was able to deliver baskets of food to 13 “in-need” families this past Christmas. Members donated a variety of food items and helped deliver and pray for these families during these hard times. The congregation received abundant thanks for the food and prayers. ▲



Stuart’s Church Chimers Ring at Treasure Coast Mall



From left in photo above are Zach, Jacob, Zasha, Lexi, Savannah, Caroline, Eryn and Cameron. They are the Church Chimers bell choir from **Redeemer/Stuart, FL**. They performed in Music Thon at the Treasure Coast Square mall to raise money for a local charity. The Chimers are directed by Joy Beach. ▲



St Paul/Weston, FL's Middle School youth (6th-8th Grade Students) held a lock-in early February with leader Jeremy Becker. Teen Nights are typically

the first Friday of the month and service projects are scheduled throughout the year to build friendships and have fun as they learn about God and serve others.

The high school students and their friends have Spirit Nights on Wednesday (7:30 to 9:00 p.m.). There are fellowship events, service projects, and trips planned during the year. ▲



The Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity /Macon, GA celebrated their 70th Anniversary in early December. Participating clergy pictured at left are (from left) Pastors Andrew Howe, Victor J. Belton, District President Gregory S. Walton, Laird Van Gorder, Peter Hoffman, and John C. Lehenbauer. ▲

*"Students at **First Lutheran/Clearwater, FL** participated in worship during National Lutheran Schools' Week Celebration. They sang, rang bells, and explained this year's theme "In All Things."*





Our Savior/Plantation, FL held a fall festival back in November. Admission was free, and church and school families were encouraged to bring guests and neighbors. They enjoyed a pumpkin patch, hayride, cookie, cake and treats walk, and a petting zoo. The school's parent-teacher organization coordinated the event.

An area Comfort Dog made the visit to enjoy plenty of hugs from participants. ▲



From **Christus Victor** (University of Georgia), pastor Greg Michael performed a wedding in November of a Christus Victor alumna from several years ago. He says it was a good opportunity to see various alumni and to see the long-running connections made through campus ministry. "It was a good reminder of the reality of the formative nature of the college years. Campus ministry takes place over a short time. But the opportunity to grow together in the faith endures," Michael exclaims. "What a blessing to be part of that opportunity!"

British-American author and inspirational speaker, Simon Sinek says that the goal of any non-profit is to work itself out of a job. When debriefing the month of October — a month that involved **University Lutheran/Tallahassee, FL** FSU student leadership team stepping into the gaps created by Pastor Jay Winters (needing to attend to some important family issues) — one of the student leaders said, "Pastor Jay, we found out we don't need you." We laughed, but the reality was there. The student leaders found that they could step into a place where they were able to run at least a good amount of the student programming without Pastor Jay. In terms of one of our leadership tools, this means that the student leaders are at "D4" — the fourth stage of discipleship where the disciple is able to truly take steps on their own. We celebrate this moment in our leadership program. Winters reports nine new members from a range of backgrounds joined **University Lutheran** at Florida State University.

"This is in part due to more students being on campus, but it also shows good things are happening not only in student attraction but in terms of student retention. In years past, the FriendsGiving event would have been more lightly attended because it was at the end of the semester," Winters says. "This year, the event showed that our students are not only being fed, but are forming community with one another through Christ. We are thankful that God gives us the privilege of partnering with our Campus Ministries, and pray that He will use them to equip, empower and engage our young adults as He sends them into His harvest fields!" ▲

An Amazing God . . . Doing Amazing Things

We so easily find ourselves using common cliches or phrases, and yes, that can be true in matters of faith as well as everyday life. Yet, our God and Savior is Amazing! Whether it's the fact that He loves us unconditionally in spite of our failures, wandering and sin. Or that without fail continues to provide for our daily needs and so much more...our God is Amazing!

In many of our congregations, we have example after example of God's presence and the amazing things He has done. At Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL (The Villages) that is truly our experience and testimony over and over in our 14 years since being planted!



by James Rockey
Region Two Vice President
Florida-Georgia District
Pastor, Amazing Grace/Oxford
pastor@amazinggraceclc.org

Yes, God not only tells us in His Word how He loves us, but He demonstrates it time after time.

As disciples of Jesus, we cling to the truth that this is most powerfully revealed for us in "that God demonstrated His love for us, in that while we were yet still sinners, Christ died for us!" (ROMANS 5:8). But that love, that amazing undeserved love isn't to be kept to ourselves. It is with that in mind that John writes, "We love because He first loved us," (1 JOHN 4:7), and Paul writes, "Christ's love compels us" (2 COR. 5: 14).



Aimee Knoepfel

Our Amazing God has continued to direct and bless the mission and witness of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church. During the past year we have celebrated the addition of staff with a DCE-intern, we have seen our worship not only return to pre-Covid levels, but membership grow. In addition, our Early Learning Center — opened just three years ago — is at capacity with 89 full-time children! What a blessing to not only provide a high-quality education, safe, loving and beautiful setting, but to daily be sharing the love of Christ with the children and their families. This is happening

in many ways under the direction of our ELC Director, Aimee Knoepfel and the staff she leads and mentors.

God is amazing! In the midst of all this, He led the ELC to develop a clear vision for the future in how we can remain a Christ-focused center of excellence. The leadership and congregation, fully united have now approved a building expansion that will enable the church to serve 123 full-time students and their families. This was approved at our congregational meeting in January with 99% support. Lead gifts of \$250,000 have been made and due to the Lord's amazing provision through excess income in 2021 and other development funds, another \$180,000 has already been set aside for this \$900,000 project! Yes, our amazing God is doing amazing things! Construction is slated to begin in May with completion in late fall on the additional 3240 square feet. ▲

Lilly Endowment Inc. Awards Grant for Pastoral Formation Partnership Between LCMS Seminaries

Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO (CSL) and **Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN (CTSFW)**, the two seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), will work in partnership to implement a recently awarded \$1 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to establish the project, “Partnership for Pastoral Formation: Setting Our Course for Future Church Leadership.”

The project is being funded through Lilly Endowment’s Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, a three-phase initiative designed to help theological schools across the United States and Canada as they prioritize and respond to the most pressing challenges they face as they prepare pastoral leaders for Christian congregations both now and into the future.

The main goal of the project is to increase student enrollment at both seminaries to address increasing pastoral needs within the LCMS — including increasing enrollment of students from ethnically and racially diverse communities and cultural backgrounds as the institutions strive to better reflect the country’s population and changing demographics. Additionally, the project aims to strengthen the faculty pipelines at both seminaries and will include a focus on the development of coordinated post-seminary educational opportunities.

“I am grateful to Lilly Endowment for this generous grant and to President Rast and all of our friends at CTSFW for their commitment to this kind of collaboration,” said CSL President Dr. Thomas J. Egger. “This grant application concept sprang from a meeting between our seminary administrations in May of 2021, which identified the areas of student recruitment, faculty development and continuing education as ripe for team effort. These initiatives aim to provide more pastors and deaconesses for the church as we continue to strive for efficiency, excellence and ethnic catholicity at our seminaries. Just as importantly, I pray that increased collaboration,

over time, will lead to even greater familiarity, mutual respect, trust and unity between our two seminaries and among our church’s ministerium.

Now is the time to be ‘rowing together’ for the sake of Christ’s mission and His church.”

“The Lord tells us that ‘the harvest is plentiful.’ We only have to look around us to know this is true. So many of our family, friends and neighbors are unchurched or unbelievers,” said CTSFW President Dr. Lawrence R. Rast, Jr. “Our Lord then goes on to say that ‘the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’ (MATTHEW 9:37-38). In this project, we intend to heed our Lord’s command to form more servants in Jesus Christ who can teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all. Partnering in this work will maximize the limited resources of both seminaries and serve to advance the Gospel and global mission of the LCMS.”

This award is one of 84 grants awarded to theological schools in the United States and Canada totaling more than \$82 million through the second phase of the Pathways initiative.

“Theological schools have long played a pivotal role in preparing pastoral leaders for churches,” said Christopher Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “Today, these schools find themselves in a period of rapid and profound change. Through the Pathways initiative, theological schools will take deliberate steps to address the challenges they have identified in ways that make the most sense to them. We believe that their efforts are critical to ensuring that Christian congregations continue to have a steady stream of pastoral leaders who are well-prepared to lead the churches of tomorrow.”



Thomas Egger



Lawrence Rast



Christopher Coble

Lilly Endowment launched the Pathways initiative in January, 2021 because of its longstanding interest in supporting efforts to enhance and sustain the vitality of Christian congregations by strengthening the leadership capacities of pastors and congregational lay leaders.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly, Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community, development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its founders’ hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. The primary aim of its grant making in religion, which is national in scope, focuses on strengthening the leadership and vitality of Christian congregations in the United States.

Concordia Seminary provides Gospel-centered graduate-level theological education for pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, scholars and other leaders in the name of the LCMS.

Concordia Theological Seminary is an institution of theological higher education of the LCMS, whose central purpose is to prepare men for the pastoral ministry, as well as men and women for other service in the church, through programs offering an understanding of the Christian faith that is Christ-centered, biblically based, confessionally Lutheran and evangelically active. ▲



Middle School Youth Summer Servant Event

JUNE 19-24, 2022

Luther Springs, Hawthorne, FL



Who: FLGA District Middle School Youth.

What: Servant Event Camp.

Where: Luther Springs in Hawthorne, Florida.

When: June 19-24, 2022.

Why: Grow in God's Word, Serve Others, Fellowship and Fun with Lutheran Youth.

Cost: Early Registration - \$419 per person, before April 1, 2022. Price increases after April 1, 2022.

The Details

- Middle School Youth Group members from FLGA churches (plus one chaperone per congregation) will spend one week at Camp Luther Springs. Counselors from the camp will lead the daily activities. Drew Boggs, a DCE Intern serving at St. Paul in Lakeland, will lead daily Bible studies.
- Chaperones are needed for transportation to the camp and off-site servant events. They will not be responsible for organizing or leading activities but will be present to help as needed. A minimum of one chaperone per group is required.
- Middle School youth will sleep in cabins with a Luther Springs camp counselor. Chaperones will stay in hotel style rooms.

Schedule

- Groups should arrive Sunday at 4:00. After registration, there will be dinner and a swim test followed by open swim time.
- Monday is spent at camp with team building and challenge course activities.
- Tuesday through Thursday mornings will be at various locations for servant event projects, with afternoon activities at camp.
- Attendees depart after lunch on Friday.

COVID Protocols:

Protocols are still in development for this summer. Below are the protocols used last summer.

- Weekly COVID tests for all staff.
- Masks were not required outside.
- Cabin groups did not have to mask when together inside.
- When multiple groups were inside, masks were worn.

To Register:

- Complete the youth group registration form
- All attendees (youth and chaperones) complete the health form
- Email completed forms to Luther Springs at jsteele@novusway.org

Questions:

Jennifer Tanner at 407-857-5556 – jtanner@flgadistrict.org
Cindy Hammerstrom at 407-258-5042 – chammerstrom@flgadistrict.org

New England District President, Tim Yeadon, Called to Glory

The Rev. Timothy Yeadon, president of the LCMS New England District, passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 16, 2022 after a courageous battle. He was born June 27, 1959 in Glen Cove, NY to Margaret and Ray Yeadon.

Tim had many fond memories of Mill Neck Manor Lutheran School for the Deaf where many family members and friends worked. Tim worked on the grounds crew there in the summers during his teenage years. Tim attended Cornell University in Ithaca, NY majoring in Classics and History, and graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1981. During the college years, he met Ruth Schumacher through Campus Crusade for Christ, a Christian fellowship group, and the two became engaged. They married in 1982 and moved to St. Louis, MO to attend Concordia Seminary.

Following seminary graduation, Tim received a call to be the pastor of St. Paul's/New Hartford, CT.

Tim greatly enjoyed ministering to the people of St. Paul's and the community. In his free time, he enjoyed hiking, biking, canoeing,

snowboarding, golfing, painting, and woodworking. He taught himself to play the guitar and had a beautiful baritone singing voice. He was an avid reader and doer of word puzzles, especially crosswords. He especially loved coaching youth sports, soccer and baseball in New Hartford leagues.

Yeadon was a supervising pastor to 15 vicars and took three groups of parishioners to Kenya, Africa, on Mission trips. Tim was the third king in Winsted's Annual Boar's Head Festival.

Prior to being elected on the first ballot during the New England District's 16th convention, Yeadon had served as first vice-president. The New England District, based in Springfield, MA, includes congregations in Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island. In 2012, Tim was elected President of the New England District. During the next nine years, he traveled extensively throughout New England as well as to Liberia, and Germany in 2017, taking a group of Lutherans to visit historical



sites of significance to the Reformation. He was also on the board of Mill Neck Manor Lutheran School for the Deaf.

He was always happy to return to his home in Barkhamsted, working in his basement woodshop in his spare time. During these years, he earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Concordia Seminary which was awarded in the spring of 2021.

According to several clergymen who were intimately acquainted with Tim, he was known for his sincerity, humility, encouragement, humor, and great smile. He could make you laugh and then cry in the same sermon. ▲

2022 LCMS Youth Gathering

JULY 9-13, 2022

information: lcmsgathering.com/registration/



Available Resources:

- Gathering Registration Book
- Youth Participant Worksheet
- Adult Leader Worksheet
- Congregational Worksheet
- Special Needs Form
- LCEF Account Form
- Gathering Update Live
- End Goals Podcast
- Frequently Asked Questions



As youth groups return to school and regular youth ministry ramps up a number of National Lutheran Youth Gathering resources are available to youth leaders preparing their youth and adults to attend In All Things next summer.

The registration rate increases on March 1, 2022. Please read each resource carefully before entering in data or sending in registration materials. ▲

The Rev. Edgar Trinklein

On Saturday, December 18, 2021 Rev. Edgar A Trinklein, a long-time member of the District, was welcomed into his eternal home at the age of 88. He served in three District ministries as a pastor. First as an Assistant Pastor at Trinity / Orlando, FL, then went north to Faith/Marietta, GA, and finally came back to central Florida and served the rest of his ministry at St. Paul/Lakeland, FL, where he retired in 1998 but remained active until weeks before the Lord called him home.

Pastor Trinklein had also served several terms as Vice President and one term as President of the FLGA District. Other positions he held during his ministry included but may not be limited to District Youth Committee, Circuit Counselor, LWML Pastoral Advisor, Missions Committee, Pastoral Conference Chairman, Advisory Counsel on Stewardship, Veterans of the Cross Planning Committee, Reconciler of Congregations in Conflict.

Trinklein spent his life serving his Lord both in the Lutheran church and as a loving father at home. Ed — who was often affectionally referred to as E.T. in the District — was born on January 27, 1933 in White Hall, TX to Rev. Louis and Lillian Trinklein. Ed made the decision to follow in his father's footsteps at the early age of 6 when his father asked Ed what he wanted to be when he grew up. This was shortly before Ed's father passed away from strep throat. He fulfilled his promise and spent his life serving his Lord and Savior as pastor in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod for more than 40 years.

Ed married Carol Dandanell on June 14, 1958, the same year he began his ministry. His first call was to serve as assistant pastor at Trinity, Orlando, FL until 1960, then he moved on to be head pastor at Faith in Marietta, GA. In 1982 he and his wife came to Lakeland, FL and he served as Administrative Pastor at St. Paul until his retirement. Even after his retirement he continued to serve other congregations along with St. Paul in various ways. He

is predeceased by his wife Carol.

"Rev. Edgar A. Trinklein was a gentle giant in the faith. He was more than a friend to me, he was a mentor," stated Rev. Dr. President Greg

Walton. "He was such an influential, humble, faithful servant of God.

"I first met Ed as a young pastor, only a few years out of seminary, when I was asked to chair a District task force with the likes of Ed Trinklein as a member. As a young pastor I knew what I didn't know, and so did the committee, and yet they gently encouraged and shaped me as a leader," Walton continued. "A decade later I would serve in a congregation where Ed had once served along with his brother, Roland. In the 1960's through the early 80's it was the golden age of Trinkleins in Marietta, GA.

"Their names are still legendary there, and both were revered. I had the good fortune and blessing to be shaped by two of the Trinklein brothers. These were godly men, full of wisdom, joy and pastoral care. Because his brother Roland and his wife Joan were still active members at Faith Lutheran during the early part of my tenure Ed, and his wife, Carol, would often come to visit.

"As a pastor in Marietta I relished the times Ed came for a visit, and I invited him to preach on numerous occasions. So much of his ministry there shaped mine. Whenever he visited he always left me with an encouraging word and a sense he really enjoyed spending time together. Years later, after being elected as the District President, an office Ed served unexpectedly and faithfully, he was especially supportive, having spent time in the office. As a DP and because of our friendship I remember being invited to a few fellowship times at Veterans of the Cross with the Trinkleins and Strickerts which I will treasure all the more.

"Whether it was when I visited

St. Paul/Lakeland, or at the Veterans of the Cross Retreat, or at the District office, any time I spent with Ed left me with a smile and a sense of joy in knowing him as a friend. He

was, for me, a part of the golden age of the Florida-Georgia District, and I am so grateful to have had him a part of my life. His was a life well lived, which will continue to be a blessing for generations to come as it points people to Jesus."

"My brother, Ed Trinklein, was like biblical Nathaniel of whom Jesus

said: "He is a man of no guile..." Ed was First Vice President of the District when I accepted the Call to become pastor of King of Glory in Williamsburg, Virginia in the very late 80's," explained the Rev. Dr. Thomas R. Zehnder, former President of the FLGA District. "Ed was enjoying a Caribbean cruise when I telephoned him to let him know I would be vacating the District Presidency. Ed said something like: 'Ouch. I think the boat is sinking!' It didn't. Ed was a great President and always a beloved and faithful friend. Rest In Peace, dear brother."

"Pastor Trinklein was a true brother in the Lord. Like the Apostle Paul, he faithfully administered his stewardship of God's grace with creativity and passion, yet always as a servant of that grace," stated former President of the FLGA District, Rev. Gerhard Michael. "I could always count on him to listen and provide good advice. What a blessing he was to us pastors, the congregations he served, and our entire District."

"Ed was a special guy! When I started Concordia/Austin, TX in the Fall of 1946 Ed was a classmate," offered The Rev. Bob Besalski, emeritus First/Gainesville, FL. "Ed's dad had died at a very young age and left a widow and several kids! Since Ed was an Austin boy he did not have a room in the dorm so he was assigned to my room! He was an easy going guy and much less apt to mischief than yours truly!



Receives Crown of Glory



District Presidents in recent history are (from left) the Revs. Greg Walton (in his final triennium), Tom Zehnder, Gerhard Michael and the sainted E. T. They posed on stage at a recent

“We all played sports and for a small school did pretty well! Ed was a half-back on our football team,” Pastor Besalski continues, “a good baseball player and high-jump specialist in track! He was always well liked, modest and all around good guy! I dropped out for awhile and Ed graduated with my class of 1950 and headed off to St. John/Winfield, KS because the college hadn’t open yet in Austin! After two really fun years in Orlando and the opening of the college in Austin the Lord tapped me on the shoulder and I was back in the system through Concordia/ Austin and then off to the Concordia Seminary — where Ed and I connected again!

“I was able to keep my dad at Trinity/Orlando with recommendations for vicars and

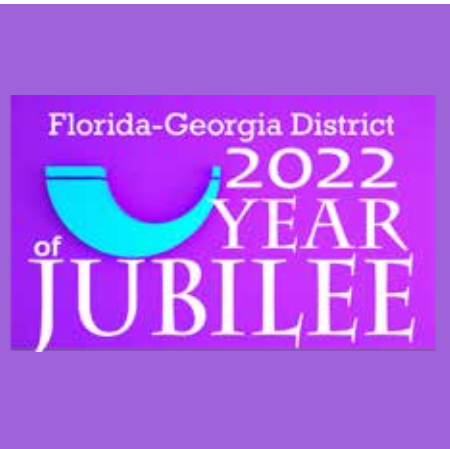
assistants and that’s how Ed ended up in Orlando and the FLGA District! Unlike most Texas guys Ed never went back to Texas! I never regretted that recommendation watching Ed serve at Faith/Marietta, GA and then St. Paul/Lakeland, FL and in so many other capacities in the District — from pastor’s conferences and conventions to serving on a variety of committees and task forces. All those things gave us a chance to remember those fun days in the 1940s at Concordia/Austin!

“Ed was a true humble servant of Christ! The District and the congregations he served,” Besalski concluded, “were blessed to have him! RIP Ed! You left a mark!”

“Five years ago I accepted the call to be Associate Pastor of St. Paul/Lakeland FL, and asked Ed to come out of retirement and preach

my installation service,” said The Rev. Andy Ritchie., Senior Pastor at St. Paul. “Ed welcomed me and encouraged me as the “68th member” of the St. Paul ministry team participating in God’s Kingdom work. His encouragement reminded me that I was not only called to be a pastor to the congregation but of 67 other team members as well.

“Ed welcomed me and affirmed that I was not serving alone but as part of a team that God brought together. Through the last two years, as I moved into the senior pastor role, Ed would come up and remind me nearly every Sunday that he was praying for me. Ed was a man of integrity and I knew he did what he said and I truly miss his prayers for me and the ministry.” ▲



Lutheran Life
Florida-Georgia District
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
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Inquiring minds want to know . . .

Who Will Be Minding the Store at the District Office?

I'm terming out as Secretary of the Florida-Georgia District — after three terms and a *bonus year* caused by the delay of the District Convention due to COVID-19 gathering concerns. One of the things that I've learned in my time is the answer to the question: "Who leads the District?"

In large part, you do!

Your congregation has an opportunity to nominate and select the leaders of the District for years to come. Those leaders then — nominated and elected by you — will help shape District for the future.

The upcoming June 16-18, 2022 convention is an important one because we will be electing a new **District President**. It is also important for other elected offices:

✳ **Regional Vice Presidents**

— These pastors support our Circuit Visitors and will be a great support for the newly elected District President. Your church can nominate two ordained pastors from your region

✳ **Regional Lay Representatives**

— Two can be nominated from each region. They are important additions and participants in the District Board of Directors. They ensure that lay people have a voice in how our District functions. Our church workers are great — but it is imperative that we hear everyone's voice.

✳ **District Secretary** — This

pastor does not just take meeting minutes, he helps keep the District and the Board of Directors running smoothly, stays on top of rules and procedures. Each congregation can nominate two ordained pastors from anywhere in the District for Board Secretary.

✳ **Commissioned Minister Representatives** — These are our Teachers, DCE's, Deaconesses, School Administrators, and others, we need to hear the voices of our schools, our District youth and others. Commissioned ministers

help us hear how our District can support these. Each congregation can nominate two commissioned ministers from anywhere in the District.

✳ **LCMS Synod Nominations Committee**

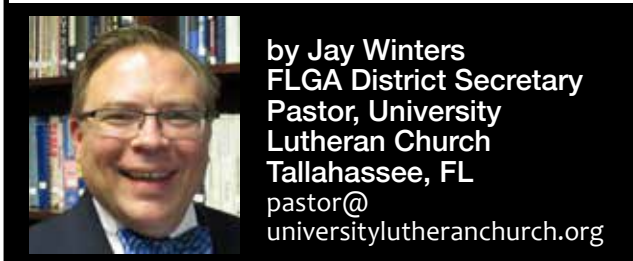
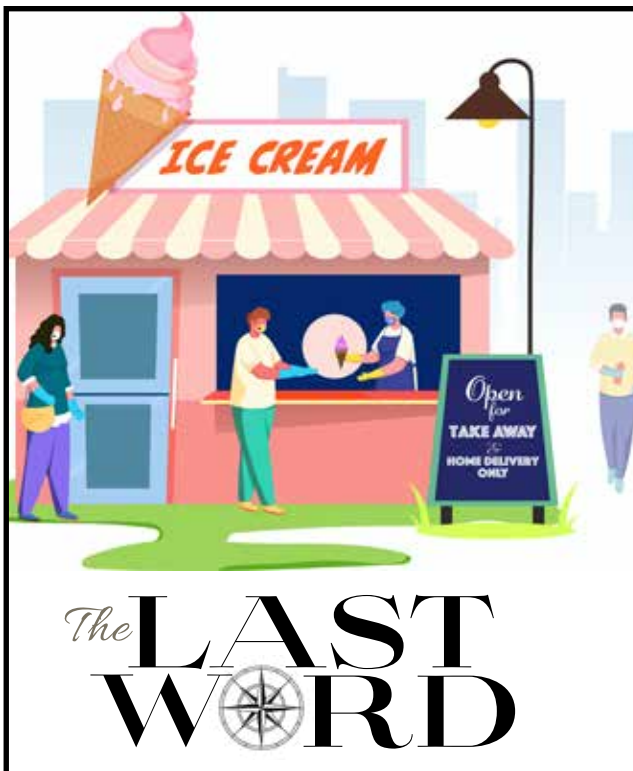
— Every-other convention (each six years), we get to help our church body fill its leadership needs on a national level. A congregation can nominate up to two (pastors or commissioned minister) from our FLGA District.

✳ **FLGA District Nominations Committee**

— Our District also needs help filling leadership needs — both at our Convention as well as nominating people to national offices when those positions open up. Each congregation can nominate up to eight (up to four lay persons, two pastors, two commissioned ministers) from the FLGA District.

Please consider who God might be calling you to nominate and select as the leaders of our District for these upcoming years. All of the nominating forms are available on our District website, flgadistrict.org.

If you have any questions or would like more information about any of the positions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at my email pastor@universitylutheranchurch.org



by Jay Winters
FLGA District Secretary
Pastor, University
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I will be happy to answer any questions that will help you in this important task for our District. Thank you for prayerfully considering it. ▲