

LUTHERAN[®] LIFE

75
YEARS
1948-2023

*Florida-Georgia District LCMS
March/April 2023*



**Our Savior
Plantation, FL
Kindergarten
Class Visits China**

LUTHERAN LIFE

Lutheran LIFE is the official newsmagazine of the Florida-Georgia (FLGA) District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The Mission of the FLGA District is to serve, assist, and encourage congregations in the ministry of Jesus Christ. People of the FLGA 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 readers to express their views and ideas on a wide range of topics. Lutheran LIFE is published bi-monthly. News items and photos are encouraged. Please send scanned photos as a .jpg, .png or .pdf attachment rather than embedded in emails.

Please send address additions, corrections or deletions to: LutheranLife@aol.com.



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Lutheran LIFE

DISTRICT CAPSULES

District Calls Accepted

01/01/23..... Rev. Dr. Robert Roegner as Assistant Pastor to Woodlands/Montverde, FL
01/02/23..... Rev. Ted Andara as Senior IIM to Redeemer/Stuart, FL

Transferred Out of FLGA to Other Districts

01/05/23..... Rev. Jeremy Davis (O) to Northwest

Transferred Into FLGA from Other Districts

01/30/23..... Rev. Roland Feickert (O) from Eastern
01/31/23..... Rev. Grgegory Stringer (O) from CNH

Ordinations & Installations

12/18/22..... Rev. Dr. Richard Lohmeyer (O-IIP) as Sole Pastor at Messiah/Valdosta, GA
12/18/22..... Ms. Andrea Bell (C) as Teacher at Woodlands/Montverde, FL

01/08/23..... Rev. Dr. Robert Roegner (O) as Assistant Pastor at Woodlands/Montverde, FL
01/08/23..... Ms. Betsy Burnham (C) as DCE at Woodlands/Montverde, FL
01/08/23..... Mr. Michael Glowinski (C) as Teacher at St. John/Ocala, FL

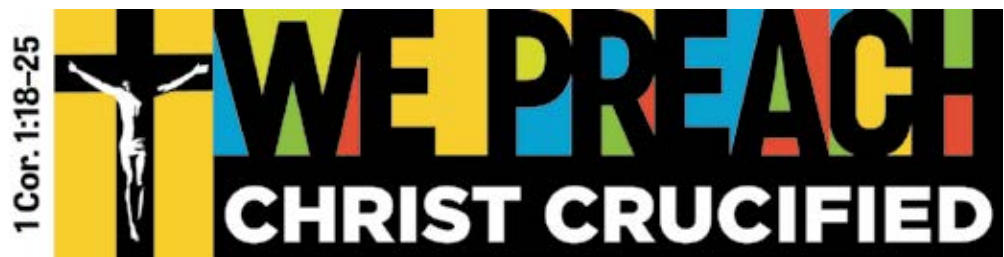
Removed From the Roster

01/31/23..... Rev. Angel Ramos-Ruiz (O) Voluntary

Church/School Closings

01/15/23..... Faith/Fort Lauderdale, FL
01/22/23..... Hope/Milledgeville, GA
02/13/23..... Primitive/Boynton Beach, FL

Note: (O) = Ordained; (C) = Commissioned
(IIM) = Intentional Interim



The 68th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) will take place in Milwaukee, WI this summer from July 29–Aug. 3, 2023. The convention theme is based on I Corinthians 1:18-25 — “We Preach Christ Crucified.” In a world of uncertainty, the church’s proclamation, her mission, her identity remains the same: “We preach Christ Crucified.”

The pre-convention work of assembling overtures, reports and nominations is well underway, all with the aim of guiding the Synod toward fruitful faithfulness for years to come. March 11, 2023, is the deadline for submitting overtures (proposed resolutions) to the Synod Convention. Any overtures submitted after that date can only be accepted for convention attention if approved by a

special committee made up of the president, first vice-president and secretary of the Synod and only if thought to introduce an important issue not adequately covered by other submitted documents. While March 11 is the official deadline, the Secretary’s Office encourages submission of reports and overtures by Feb. 10, 2023, to facilitate their inclusion in the 2023 Convention Workbook.

The FLGA District Board of Directors has been working on multiple proposed resolutions under the leadership of Board Chairman the Rev. Jay Winters. These overtures to the Synod Convention that came out of the FLGA District Convention. The Board has been fine-tuning language prior to submission to Synod for the Convention workbook. □

2024 National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference Will Gather in New Orleans

The next National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference will take place July 21-24, 2024 in New Orleans, LA. This conference is a standalone youth ministry conference, and an opportunity to prepare for the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering. Adults who attend and stay on-site will receive a complimentary registration for the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering held in New Orleans July 19-23, 2025. Any plans for leadership training for youth will be announced this spring. □

\$60 Discount for Advance Registration!

District Middle School Youth Servant Event in June



Florida-Georgia District Middle School Youth Group members (plus one chaperone per congregation) will spend one week at Camp Luther Springs in the Greater Gainesville, Florida area. Counselors from the camp will lead the daily activities. Daily Bible studies will be led by a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod [LCMS] leader.

“Chaperones are needed for both transportation to the camp and off-site servant events,” explains Jennifer Tanner, District Director for Schools and Youth. “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.”

According to Cindy Hammerstrom, one of the organizers of the event and assistant in schools and youth ministry, “Middle School youth will sleep in cabins with a Luther Springs camp counselor while the chaperones will stay in hotel-style rooms.”

Groups should arrive Sunday the 18th at 4:00 pm. After registration, there will be dinner and a swim test followed by open swim time. Monday will be 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 will depart after lunch on Friday the 23rd. Luther Springs Camp and Conference Center is located south of Gainesville, Florida. The site allows for a variety of outdoor activities including hiking and walking trails, a swimming pool, archery, group interaction, large fields.

Registration information is available on the District website at flgadistrict.org/servantevent/



Who FLGA District Middle School Youth
What Servant Event Camp
Where Luther Springs, Hawthorne, Florida
When June 18-23, 2023
Why Grow in God's Word, Serve Others, Fellowship, and Fun with Lutheran Youth
Cost \$480 per person before March 15, 2023, \$540 after that date

Mark Your Calendars and Save The Dates!

We are truly excited for what our Big God is already doing as we prepare for this year's President's Equip Conference. We say this because we believe it is far more than a conference, but is about us living out Christ's call to "be His witnesses" and to "go and make disciples"... and the best way for this to happen is through His people, one on one, as we share "the hope that is within us."

Our goal is that those who participate in the Conference will depart celebrating a renewed calling of how God is working through their lives daily. Together we will rediscover the Biblical practice of living daily as people who model and "teach" (Deut. 6: 6-7) the faith with those they walk with along the paths of life. In response, we pray that the Body of Christ known as the Florida-Georgia District will be passionate and active in living as disciples who make disciple makers, so that Christ's Kingdom may grow, and the joy of the Lord's salvation may be experienced by all!


Mark your calendars! Begin to plan and recruit other leaders from your congregation and schools to discover all the joy and blessings of **"LIVING AS ALONG-SIDERS – Disciples Making Disciple Makers!"**

"Circuit District Partnership Events"

One of the things that President Rockey says is, "We are partners in mission!" This is nothing new. The Body of Christ, with its various parts is designed by the Lord of the Church to work together, each doing its part as the Apostle Paul says to the church in Ephesus, "so that the Body may be built up." This is also nothing new for our work together as District!

It was with this partnership in mind that President Rockey set out to visit every Circuit throughout the District within his first nine months in office. In November he along with the District Executive Staff conducted their first "Circuit District Partnership Events" in Region five on our SE coast and then in January in Region four along our SW coast. These events are for lay-leaders in any capacity, along with their pastors and school administrators. The event begins with a light dinner followed by a time of sharing and getting to know the District staff, what they do, the resources available and how we are here to assist and work together. Then there is a time for open discussion. The response has been wonderful with nearly 80 attendees at some of these gatherings!

Regions One, Two and Three are scheduled in March and April. We encourage you to contact your Circuit Visitor or Pastor to learn more and register. All are welcome as we Equip, Empower and Engage that more people may be connected to Jesus for today and eternity!



LIVING
as *Along-Siders*
DISCIPLES MAKING DISCIPLE MAKERS

President's Equip Conference
September 28 – 30, 2023

Celebrating Three-Quarters of a Century of Mission & Ministry
Pastors • Educators • Congregants • Commissioned Ministers of Religion • Administrators

Hilton Orlando Buena Vista Palace • Orlando, FL

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!
Pricing • Keynote Speakers • Workshops • Conference Schedule
flgadistrict.org/pec

A few years ago, I heard the following after worship. "Pastor, it took a lot of guts to say what you did in your sermon!" "Pastor, we all needed to hear what you have been sharing." "Pastor, what you are speaking is the truth. This is our call. This is our holy purpose." This is our holy purpose! The individual who spoke those words to me was exactly right. Our holy purpose is God's purpose, the purpose for which His Church exists...to reach a lost and dying world that without Christ has no hope for this life or the next. Maybe to put it another way, we're soldiers in a holy war!

Those words aren't real inviting, are they? But they're true. We are called to put on the armor of God and to stand firm in the face of the devil's attacks (Ephesians 6: 10ff), and our battle is for that of others as well as our own salvation! There is no doubt that we are in a battle. The Church and the message of the Gospel is under attack. Often our presence and voice are not welcomed in the public square. The Christian faith is rejected as myth, stories, judgmental, unloving, or worse as simply a religion.

I believe that in many ways, the Florida-Georgia District has been about the holy purpose of God from its inception 75 years ago! We were founded not just to gather together the Lutherans coming to this growing region of the country, but to stand firm in the battle so that others too may know the hope that comes through Christ alone! We as the Body of Christ, the Church, are called by our Lord to be His presence in the world in which we live. We are called together in the Church to be fed, encouraged, and assured of God's unceasing grace. For that we rejoice and give Him our praise! Yet as I said often in my last congregation, "It's not all about us!" Yes, the Gospel is about us and for us, but it is also for all people. One of the ways we reflect and live out this belief is in sharing the hope

we have with this dying world...to reach out and build bridges to those who are living in darkness, to those who are living apart from God and outside of His will and to those who are in despair, alone, abandoned, forgotten, hurting, and who do not know of God's undeserved grace and love. We have this precious message of God's incredible love to give away!

As soldiers in this holy war, we know what we are fighting for – life eternal. We as the Church are not to make people be more like us, but to introduce them to the Lord who can make them like Him and give them real life. Our calling is to daily take advantage of every opportunity we have in order to bring the message of His hope to those He sends us. The world in which we find ourselves doing ministry and being the Church is



A Holy Purpose Indeed!

very different today compared to what we grew up with, but, but the objective is the same, to reach those without Jesus before it's too late.

Now I realize that not everyone agrees with this as the primary purpose of the Church. I can understand, but please don't miss the big picture. As Christ's servants, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we, individually and together, must begin to look at how we can more effectively accomplish the holy purpose we've been given. Yes, it's time for us to go and put on the armor of the Lord for the sake of God's holy purpose... each and every one of us.

In many ways, I believe this is where the Florida-Georgia District is...serious about not only feeding, comforting, loving, and ministering to those already part of God's family,

but also about reaching those not yet believers. Here's the challenge – to daily arise and say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." To get up and know that the Lord has already put "Divine appointments" on your calendar. People He has planned for you to be a bridge to in this holy war with Satan.

As you may have heard, our theme for this fall's President's Equip Conference (a joint conference in September for lay people, pastors, and commissioned workers) is: **LIVING AS ALONG-SIDERS...Disciples Making Disciple Makers!** It's about us living out God's holy purpose. It's about us coming along side of that neighbor, co-worker, family member or whoever the Lord places in our path, to share His love just as we received it.

My prayer for every congregation and member of our District is that we daily take to heart God's command to "make disciples." Begin over a cup of coffee or lunch twice a month with just one person. Engage, encourage, love, speak to those He sends you, explore what's going on in their lives and help them know and experience God in the midst of their situation. Read Scripture with them, pray and watch how He will work through you for their good and the Kingdom's growth!

Thankful to Serve Together!

James Rockey



PRESIDENT
Florida-Georgia District
LUTHERAN CHURCH—Missouri Synod

International Christian Speaker Will Be Connecting Wives of Pastors

Deb Burma To Speak at FLGA President's Equip Conference "Wives of Pastors Retreat"

Calling all Pastor's Wives and Deaconesses! A special pre-conference retreat is scheduled for Thursday morning, September 28, 2023 — sort of a pre-gathering luncheon and networking event that will feature Deb Burma — the internationally sought-after Christian speaker.

Burma was one of the speakers at BPM — Best Practices for Ministry Conference held February 16-18 in Phoenix, AZ. She also will be speaking at Wives of Pastors Retreat for the Kansas District in June of this year. She is a headliner for the LWML National Convention June 22-25, 2023 in Milwaukee.

"Deb led a weekend women's retreat at my former congregation in Minnesota," offers Kathy Meier, one of the coordinators helping with the President's Equip Conference. "She connected with us in a genuine way around God's Word. I'm excited to welcome her to FLGA!"

The FLGA District has also secured her for an April 5-7, 2024 Pastors' Wives Retreat that will be held in Orlando, FL.

Burma is best known for her women's-oriented retreat themes centered around being women of joy, being still and knowing in the midst of storms of life Jesus still comes to us. She challenges her audience to



sip, savor and drink deeply to receive God's overflowing gifts. "The idea of a coffee break is enticing, isn't it? Whether you prefer to sip a strong cup of Joe, slurp a steamy cup of cocoa, or savor an espresso, prepare to take a break from the daily grind for a real pick-me-up! And even if coffee isn't your beverage of choice, you look forward to downtime, especially if it's spent with a friend who wants your company," Burma says.

Some of Burma's speaking topics have included stepping out to a life on the edge, living a chocolate life while savoring God's sweet grace, having beautiful feet and being treasured ~

"The LORD has chosen you to be a people for His treasured possession." (Deuteronomy 14:2) We are the precious, treasured possession of our Heavenly Father, who sought us and claimed us as His own in Christ! From coal to diamonds, we are continually being transformed in Christ, reflecting His glory and light to a dark world." She often includes lots of fun discussion about "Bling" and the 4 "C's" of a diamond for stunning illustration and applicable analogy.

In addition to the pre-conference luncheon, Burma is expected to participate in PEC breakout sessions geared for pastor's wives and deaconesses . . . defining their roles in ministry.

Details about the pre-conference luncheon on Thursday, September 28 will be forthcoming.

Youth Attending National Youth Gathering Participate in Poll

The Lutheran Youth and Adult Poll (formerly known as the Lutheran Youth Fellowship Poll) has been conducted every three years at LCMS National Youth Gatherings since the 1980s.

During these four decades, tens of thousands of LCMS teenagers have participated in the polls, providing insight into their

beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. In July of 2022, 1,744 youth took the poll at the National Youth Gathering held in Houston, TX. A related poll featuring several questions from the Youth Poll was also conducted among Adult Leaders (n=817) at the Gathering, as well as poll of Young Adult Volunteers (n=392). The whole of the poll gives young people, parents, supportive adults, and the church insight.

While the executive summary does not include every finding, it seeks to summarize the most important findings from this poll. The youth poll seeks to understand the changing

complexities of the lives of young people in the church, particularly related to their spiritual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Additionally, the poll explores aspects of their upbringing and attempts to look ahead to where they think they are going in life. The poll summarizes five categories: Spiritual beliefs; Opinions on Cultural "Hot Topics;" Behaviors; Family Life and Home Church; and Looking Ahead.

The poll is designed to start important conversation in the church about how to best care for young people in our churches and community.

To read and/or download the poll results, go to: tinyurl.com/4vy63rd5



Todd absolutely did not want to go to church. He turned down every invitation from his Christian friends. He wasn't opposed to God or even Jesus. He just didn't want to go to any church, probably because of his past experiences or just being misinformed.

John was one of Todd's Christian friends. He knew how Todd felt. So when they were having a conversation about the "He Gets Us" ad campaign about Jesus, John knew that an invitation to church wouldn't get very far. So he had a different idea based upon how God promised to work through His Word.

John started with a question. "Have you ever read the Bible's biography of Jesus?" "No" said Todd. So John told Todd about the four gospels or biographies. Then he said, "we could each read a chapter a week on our own and then when we normally get together

we can talk about it." Todd liked the idea. It wasn't a "Bible study" where he would have to sit in a class. They could sit in their

A

DIFFERENT Kind Of Evangelism

regular spot at the coffee shop and just talk about what struck them from their privately reading a chapter that week. They also agreed to include their friend Randy who was sitting there with them. It sounded interesting. Learn from the source, without someone preaching.

Week after week they would come with their thoughts, reactions, questions and discoveries. No one tried to be the teacher, especially not John. The only thing John tried to do was be curious and encouraging to each of his friends. But over time, something interesting happened. Todd was growing closer to Jesus. (So were John and Randy!).

God was true to His Word which says in John 20:30, "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Todd was believing in Jesus. God was at work. Just like He said.

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



Singer Named President/CEO of Lutheran Church Charities

The Lutheran Church Charities Board of Directors has named The Rev. Chris Singer as the new President and CEO. Singer has spent more than 25 years working in senior pastoral leadership roles within The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). His background spans community and congregational work with localized and regional cultural/ethnic program development, international missions, disaster response, and crisis management.

Singer has spearheaded the development of digital capabilities to support the organizational transitions necessary today for successful Ministry Outreach. He is a known keynote speaker connecting with groups on multiple topics but has found his work with small teams to help them achieve their life and spiritual goals just as rewarding. His volunteer work in Texas includes being a board member for the Board of Mission Administration for LCMS in Texas and the Kenyan Schools of Hope, an organization providing safe environments and education for children.

During his time in California, he volunteered for Graceworks, an organization working to break the cycle of poverty for

orphans and vulnerable children. He was also the Tustin Police Department Chaplain, giving him an understanding of the roles and stresses of first responders.

"They say that hindsight is 20-20. Such hindsight in my own life made this calling to LCC crystal clear," Singer said. "Looking back over more than 25 years of ministry which included evangelism outreach, missions, police chaplaincy, hurricane rescue, relief, rebuild, and leading a large organization through a pandemic, it became abundantly clear that the Lord was calling me to accept this call from LCC."

He began his full-time role with LCC at the end of January, moving to Illinois from Texas, where he has left his role as senior pastor of Trinity/Klein, TX Lutheran Church and School.

Prior to Klein, Singers was at St. John's /Orange, CA. He is a graduate of Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO, with a Master of Theology and Culture/ Ordained Clergy Certification. He also studied at Concordia University/ Irvine, CA, obtaining a BA in Sociology/History.

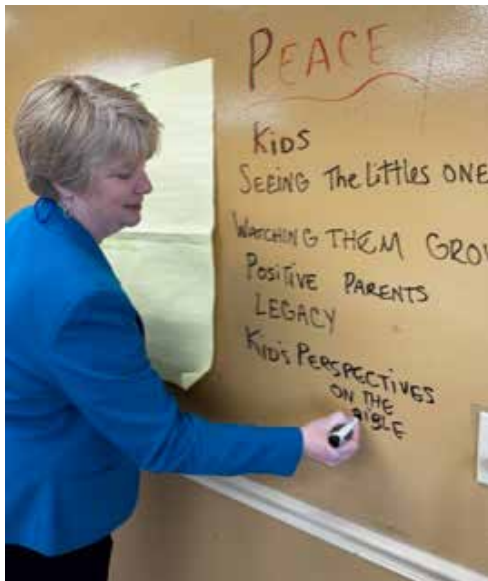
With the Singer Family move, Chris's wife Jeanette Singer, a Life Coach and School Counselor will



be bringing her much-needed skillset to a position with junior high students in the Chicago western suburbs. Chris and Jeanette's family consists of five adult children, living and studying in Texas and California, and a chocolate Labrador named Harvey.

Lutheran Church Charities is based in Northbrook, IL and is known for their Disaster Response, Military, Police-K9, Hearts for Mercy & Compassion and their Comfort Dog Ministries. □

Early Childhood Director's Conference Launched



The inaugural FLGA Early Childhood Director's Mini Conference took place at **Faith/Marietta, GA** on February 8th. Jennifer Tanner and Aimee Knoepfel, the District Early Childhood Consultant, led participants in Bible study and professional development that encouraged and equipped our preschool leaders in ministry. □

At left — Principal Sharon Wallace, **St. Paul/Peachtree City GA**, leads the group in some brainstorming.

At right — Early Childhood Director Carol Parker, **Trinity/Athens GA**, responds to an idea-sharing exercise.



An “UNtroduction” to Church Planting

by Peter Meier, Executive Director, Missions & Outreach

When many people hear the words “church planting,” they recall being part of a church plant 20, 30, or even 40 years ago, where the church began by gathering Lutherans from the area or from other Lutheran churches. Some churches sent a larger group to the new church plant to provide critical mass at the start. The goal was to plant a church to provide worship services and the erection of a new church building.

On February 4, 2023, a group of 20 people from six Orlando area churches met with Rev. Dr. Peter Meier, the District Mission Executive, to “unlearn” this former way of church planting. Peter gave an “UNtroduction to Church Planting” while introducing them to God’s “why” for starting new and sharing some of the newer, innovative models for planting the church.

A simple, but critical distinction is the difference between planting **A** church (a congregation ultimately with a building), and planting **THE** Church (making disciples who make more disciples). The **WHY** of church planting is simple. It’s God’s heart to reclaim and restore the lost to a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

God’s vision is that ultimately every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (PHILIPPIANS 2:11). He has chosen the church as His instrument to do this, which is made clear in the Great Commission (MATTHEW 28:18-20). While Jesus did not command His disciples to plant churches, he did send them to make disciples. That is the heart of church planting.

In our culture today, for a variety of reasons, people aren’t necessarily interested in attending or joining a church. For that reason, church planting especially in our post-church culture, is done primarily through

relationships which share Jesus. Inviting another person to meet Jesus and follow Him with you is the idea behind making new disciples who will make more new disciples who will gather in groups of disciples. This is very similar to what we see taking place in the book of Acts where the church was planted by making new disciples.

A local church or faith community is a group of believers in Christ who meet regularly for Biblical worship, learning (discipleship) and mission. Church planting is starting these new groups in new places to share the great Gospel message. These new groups are often small, lay-lead, under the authority of an existing congregation and pastor. The leader of these new groups is the church planter. (See the related article on Nona Hope Dinner Church page 23).

The “UNtroduction,” held at **Prince of Peace/Orlando, FL** shared many innovative ideas used by others to start these new groups. Those who gathered for the UNtroduction were sent back to their church and communities to pray for God’s direction, to talk among themselves and their church friends about what God may be calling them to do. Each of these

church groups are surrounded by significant demographic growth and great opportunity for starting new. In the near future, we will schedule on-line church planter training followed by an in-person day of training to share the plans God is shaping for new church starts in the Orlando area.

According to the Florida Association of Realtors, the State of Florida is expected to grow by 60,000 people a month, more than 700,000 people in 2023. Georgia can also expect large increases in population. God has positioned us, whether large or small congregations, to make a difference through the power of the Gospel. President Rockey has challenged the FLGA District to plant 10 new, chartered congregations in the next five years. Imagine if every church thought of themselves as a church-planting-church! How is that possible? We will help you think about your part as we highlight church planting over the coming months.

For more information on church planting, or to schedule an “UNtroduction” in your circuit, contact FLGA Director of Missions and Outreach, Dr. Peter Meier, pmeier@flgadistrict.org. □



FLORIDA GEORGIA

Out and About in the District

GriefShare Counseling Under Way at First/Gainesville

Barbara Hughes and Dave Groggel know what it is like to lose their life partners: it's not easy. Because of their experience, they made it their mission to help other folks find peace and solace after the loss of a loved one. Barb and Dave are facilitating their third GriefShare group at **First/Gainesville, FL**.

GriefShare seminars and support groups are led by people who understand what you are going through and want to help. Barbara and Dave give their group member access to valuable GriefShare resource that help them recover from their loss and give them hope for rebuilding their lives.

GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside those dealing with one of life's most difficult experiences. The death of a spouse brings a unique kind of pain. People who are widowed haven't just lost a loved one — they've lost an entire lifestyle.



Breaking News!



Congregations, schools and ministries of the FLGA District can send stories, articles, photos for publication! Lutheran LIFE is free to all congregants of the FLGA District!

Want to subscribe? It's FREE! Send you name and address to us. Want your entire congregation to receive LIFE? Send your mailing list in any format supported by Excel.

LutheranLife@aol.com

Please attach photos in one of these formats:
.jpg .png .pdf



Pastor T. Kent Fuqua, Emeritus, and Dianne Murphy of **Hope/Hudson, FL** dropped off more than 130 quilts and 75 personal care kits to the Tampa distribution pick-up site for Lutheran World Relief on February 6th.

Woodstock, GA Congregation “In The Movies”



This past November the lower parking lot and field of **Timothy/Woodstock, GA** became the movie set for the Christian movie “A Walking Miracle” — which will be released in the Spring of 2023. The church field was the location of an accident involving a car leaving the road and twice rolling over. The “movie groupies” (above photo showing members of the congregation and preschool staff) braved the cold night air to

watch the scene being filmed. After more than five hours of waiting for the crash action, it finally took place with the female stunt driver performing the car roll over as planned. It happened at about 12:45 a.m. According to Marlene Snyder it took three days of lighting, the use of heavy equipment and abundant planning to perform a one-minute crash scene. □

Snow Day & Ice Skating For Lutheran Schools Week

Our Savior/Plantation, FL celebrated Lutheran Schools Week by dressing up and participating in special events each day. The special event for Wednesday was Super Hero Day! On this day they honored law enforcement — as they are the “real life superheroes.” Parents of students who are in law enforcement were invited to a

chapel where Pastor Tony Durante prayed over them. Students also wanted to bless them by making gift bags for all police at the Plantation Police Department.

Another highlight of the week was a snow day! Elementary students grabbed their coats, mittens, and thick pants as they got to climb

and play in the snow. At the same time, middle school students got to go on a field trip to the ice skating rink where a lot of them braved the ice for the first time. It was a week full of blessings and excitement as staff, students, and families celebrated the joy of being a part of a Lutheran School! □





Lake Worth Beach Congregation

Our Savior/Lake Worth Beach, FL has celebrated 96 years of mission and ministry — beginning with a couple of dozen people back in 1927. *But their story goes back 125 years!* In 1898 the Southern District of the LCMS resolved to divide the northern and central Florida mission fields and assigned The Rev. Ed Fischer (Zion/Gotha, FL) to survey the southeast coast of Florida and bring worship opportunities to scattered Lutheran families. Fischer traveled by foot, horseback and canal boats serving Lutherans in Larkins (now Coconut Grove, FL) Delray Beach (to become Trinity) and Chosen (to become Belle Glades).

When Fischer accepted a call to Texas The Rev. Hugo Hennig stepped in and added West Palm Beach and Lucerne (to become Lake Worth). Trinity/Delray Beach called The Rev. F. Pebler as the first “resident pastor” in southeastern Florida and he and his successors, Rev. Arno Thieme and Rev. L. Geiger served Lake Worth Lutherans as part of Trinity’s parish responsibilities.

In 1922 Rev. Rudolf Keyl accepted the call to Trinity/Delray Beach and served Lake Worth Lutherans with bi-monthly worship in the Women’s Club on N Street. The small mission congregation officially formed in September, 1927 and called and installed their first permanent pastor, The Rev. Walter Meyer. The

congregation began worshipping in the Elks Club and the Labor Temple for the next four years and by that time had 85 members who managed to purchase three lots with a five-room house on it for just \$200. They built a worship center that still stands today despite multiple hurricanes.

At one point the congregation boasted more than 2,000 members and was often the host church for regional

Reformation Festival Worship that included combined choirs and a packed sanctuary with standing room only. Membership declined as people moved out of the area — many of them into the western suburbs. They survived the collapse of the Florida land boom, the Great Depression and the building restrictions imposed by the Federal government during World War II.

Our Savior became a charter member of the Florida-Georgia District. The congregation, located across the street from Lake Worth High School, launched their day school in 1954. In fact, The Rev. Wyatt Kimberly was called in 1957 from Redeemer/Miami, FL and had to give up the parsonage residence in order to support the school’s expanding enrollment.

In June, 1962, Kimberley led the ground breaking services for the three-story education building and a new parish hall. In 1970 Kimberley left to serve in Athens, Georgia. In 1971 Rev. Ted Eisold accepted Our Savior’s call and came from Marathon, Florida.

By 1986 Principal John Rothlisberg was leading a teaching staff of 20 serving 342 students and Our Savior grew to the operation of one of the largest Lutheran schools

in the District with more than 500 students. Sadly, they closed that school around 2015 due to declining enrollment.

In fact, Our Savior launched an expanding mission congregation in January, 1977 which would become Epiphany/Lake Worth.

Other clergy who have served Our Savior include Mark Behring, Pat

Carlson, J. R. Reinke and Donald Kasischke. At the FLGA 40th Anniversary Service, Our Savior was the largest congregation in the District boasting 1,300 communicants.

Think back to Reformation of 2005. Hurricane Wilma crossed Florida from the Gulf of Mexico in the southwest before charging across Palm Beach County — knocking out power for 90 percent of the county’s residents. Most schools had extensive roof and building damage and they were closed for weeks.

Our Savior completely lost the sanctuary — only the 15-foot wooden cross remained standing. Other things surviving included the baptism font, the grand piano — and the many, many chunks of glass. The Rev. Stephen Wipperman had arrived from Minnesota just a couple months prior. Wipperman had significant “church planting” experience.

Lake Worth Beach (as it is now called) is one of Palm Beach County’s oldest cities. It doesn’t hold the glamorous reputation of Palm Beach or Boca Raton. It was settled by a burgeoning Finnish community — many of them Lutherans. Today more than 70 percent of the residents are minorities: Hispanics, Haitians, Guatemalans, African-Americans,



This is an example of the new windows in the “new” sanctuary — created with shards from the original ones.



At left — The congregation collected shards from the original stained glass windows and assembled this cross on the new sanctuary wall. Today there is a grassy vacant lot where that church once stood.

Celebrating 96 Years of Mission, Ministry

Mexicans, even Asians. Altogether the population boasts about 42,000.

Jump ahead to 2023 and discover an enthusiastic congregation led by a young shepherd reaching just 40 years of age — The Rev. Jacob Roedsens. His flock calls him Pastor Jake. Roedsens arrived in June of 2018 and his congregation today numbers about 250 members.

“We’ve been blessed to share Jesus Christ’s love with thousands surrounding our community in a multitude of ways,” Roedsens explains.

Our Savior offers Family Promise (a homeless ministry), Rebecca’s Garden of Hope (offering tutoring and mentoring) a quilting and craft group that provides hundreds of blankets for people around our community and throughout the world, a food pantry and a facility located in the heart of the community. These are just some of the programs active at Our Savior.

“Jesus is active in all that we are doing *all the time*,” Pastor Jake emphasized to me at a recent meeting of the District Circuit Visitors in Orlando. Roedsens is serving as Palm Beach Circuit 19 Visitor/Counselor to the area LCMS congregations.

After Wilma destroyed Our Savior’s sanctuary, members gathered on campus and on their hands and knees collected shards from the blown out stained glass windows.

“Inside our new sanctuary we have begun to install windows made from these shards of glass,” Roedsens explained. This sanctuary was originally gymnasium space for their school — which had been somewhat spared by Hurricane Wilma.



The Rev. Jacob Roedsens, Circuit Visitor for the South Palm Beach Circuit and pastor of Our Savior/Lake Worth Beach, quarterbacked the rebuilding of a new sanctuary in the former gymnasium of their school.

[photos courtesy Palm Beach Post Greg Lovett]

The congregation began worshipping in the gymnasium immediately after the storm leveled the sanctuary.

McMow Art Glass Company is a stained glass studio located in Lake Worth Beach that has been creating world-renowned custom glass art since 1977. They have spent hundreds of hours creating 14 windows: four on the north wall showing Old Testament scenes and 10 more on the south and west walls showing the life of Jesus. According to Roedsens, ten of the 14 have already been installed.

“Today Our Savior continues to meet the needs of the community,” Roedsens enthusiastically stated. “The Guatemalan Maya Center rents the first floor of the former school building, and the City Blessing Church leases the second floor. A Haitian Baptist church,

Eglise Baptiste Des

Rachetes, rents the old chapel on campus. A Spanish congregation, Ministerios Casa de Oración, rents another school space. The Alzheimer’s Community Care center helps seniors in the parish-hall space across from the Our Savior’s new sanctuary. A karate park for young people rents space here. A food pantry is here, too, and so is a free thrift store!

“We listen to the community and work to meet their needs — instead of telling the community what they need.

“The church is not one group of people, it’s comprised of many people, and ethnicities. Eternity is going to be filled with every tribe and every race and every color,” Pastor Jake concluded. □



*The **Our Savior/Lake Worth, FL** sanctuary circa 1960 dedicated on April 3rd of that year.*



St. Paul/Boca Raton School

More than 550 members, families, friends, students, faculty and administrators gathered on January 22, 2023 to celebrate six decades of Lutheran education in Boca Raton, Florida. The congregation elected to combine their two morning services into one festival worship held in the family life center to accommodate the large crowd. Afterwards a picnic barbeque was served in the parking lot adjacent to the athletic field and the congregation's praise team entertained the crowd with songs.

St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL was founded in 1957 — 66 years ago when Stuart Moore, the manager of the Boca Raton Hotel & Club, invited his former pastor, The Rev. George Schuster, to establish a Lutheran congregation. Moore secured a small white church

on East Royal Palm Road, one block off Palmetto Park Road, for worship.

Members formed a choir, Sunday School, LWML and Walther League chapter and 86 communicant members signed the charter. Late in 1958 the congregation acquired the present 10-acre site with plans for an educational facility.

Pastor Schuster's health had been deteriorating and members used several vicars from the seminary to maintain activities and regular worship. As the congregation remained vacant in search of a permanent pastor, some members founded another congregation further north in Boca Raton called Advent Lutheran, leaving the LCMS to join the American Lutheran Church (now ELCA).

In September of 1960 St Paul's

members called The Rev. Eugene Krug. Shortly after his installation they dedicated a new sanctuary and joined the FLGA District. With sights on a full-time school the members launched a building program that included an education hall, five-classroom building and a youth hall. In 1969 they moved the kindergarten program into the new education hall and called Al Gunderman as Director of Christian Education and principal.

Gunderman supervised the addition of a new grade each year beginning in 1971 and a new principal, Rich Althage, designed a new curriculum through grades five. By the mid-1980s St. Paul enrolled more than 325 students.

Chuck Anderson and other administrators worked with Pastor Krug along with a cooperative arrangement with Advent to have grades six through eight meet at Advent's northern campus. The lower grades met at Palmetto Park Road.

Krug continued outreach in the community that involved working in deaf ministry and establishing a congregation in Nassau, Bahamas.

By 1983 St. Paul's membership had reached more than 900 and members called The Rev. Thomas Ahlersmeyer as associate pastor. He arrived as the congregation moved into their new sanctuary — the one they are using today.

DCE Greg Keithly was coordinating youth ministry and Pastor Krug retired, Pastor Ahlersmeyer accepted a call out of the area and members called The Rev. Dennis Glick from Ohio.

Under Glick's leadership the congregation grew to the largest in the FLGA District and today holds the place of being the largest communicant member congregation at more than 1,600.

The Rev. Tim Hinz served as associate pastor with emphasis on school, youth and family ministry from 1991 to 1995 when he accepted a call to First/Gainesville, FL.

Other principals who have served St. Paul include Carl Schiefer (interim), Lauren Kramer and Richard Herman. □



Two Legacy Families of St. Paul led the congregation in Bible readings and prayers.

At left — Pastor Steve Carretto introduces (from left) Michele Barberi, Barberi's parents, Domenic & Elizabeth Luppino, were charter members of the congregation. Standing beside her are her daughter, Laura and son-in-law Jeff Van Camp with their children Bradley and Ainsley.

In right photo are Cynthia & John Slinker (John's parents, Virgil & Marjorie Slinker, were also charter members of St. Paul). Cynthia taught many years at the school. Beside them is their daughter, Sara, with her husband Ben Willocks and their two sons, Chris and Sean.



From left — Jeff Krempler, former principal, Jim Richards, current principal, and Barbara Dorlac, former teacher read the lessons.



Marybeth Keenan, director of administration, and Dawn Zook, a St Paul member for more than 50 years stopped to catch up before the picnic.

Commemorates 60 Ministry Years



Students, faculty, administrator gather on the athletic field to celebrate 60 years. The ten-acre site on Palmetto Park Road was acquired in 1958. At right — Jim Richards (current principal), Carl Schiefer (former interim principal) and Jeff Krempler (principal emeritus) posed for an anniversary photo.



St. Paul students served as banner-bearers, crucifer and processional participants.



Tonya Haberlein, office and admissions administrator and Katrina Kemos, a former student and life-long member of St. Paul served dessert at the picnic.



At left — Rebecca Schaffer, music director, led the school vocal and bell choirs during the festival worship in the Family Life Center.

Orlando Trinity Downtown Renews Accreditation



Trinity/Orlando, FL renewed their Child Development Center (CDC) National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) in January. NLSA serves as the accrediting body for Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod schools across the United States and the world. NLSA has been accrediting schools in the LCMS since 1978, and accreditation decisions have always been based upon a school's compliance with national standards for Lutheran schools that reflect the essential qualities that are expected of Lutheran schools.

The purpose of an NLSA self-study is to evaluate the actual conditions in place that are related to essential indicators of school quality. These are evaluated and measured in seven specific standard areas. In order to become accredited in good standing with NLSA, a school must comply fully with 30 required indicators of success.

Additionally, the school must evaluate itself on a scale of 1-4 (4 being the highest rating) using a variety of general indicators that quantify how it complies with standards in each accreditation area. Ratings are established by the school based upon evidence and practices that are in place at the time of the self-study. Ratings allow a school to identify and celebrate unique strengths and address concerns that need corrective actions.

As a part of the process, each school is responsible to construct a school action plan based on concerns identified in its self-study. Actions are required for all conditions that have been given a rating of 1 or 2. The actions

that are planned by the school insure continuous improvement and schools are accountable to their district accreditation commission for annual progress.

Upon conclusion of the self-study, an NLSA visiting team validates that the information prepared by the school accurately reflects the actual conditions that are present at the school. In a formal, two-day visit, the team examines evidence, interviews school stakeholders, visits classrooms and observes overall school practices. If the evidence presented does not sufficiently support a school rating, the visiting team has the authority to change the school's rating in its report.

National Lutheran School Accreditation encourages, assists, and recognizes schools that provide quality Christian education and engage in continuous improvement. The Evidence Based Accreditation (EBA) process allows for the fulfillment this mission effectively thereby providing a valuable service to Lutheran schools. It is designed to improve quality and offer the families assurance that their child's center is offering the highest level of care. The process looks at all aspects of the center, including:

- Leadership and Management
- Relationships – Church and School and families
- Curriculum
- Teaching
- Assessment
- Health
- Community Relationships
- Physical Environment
- Staff Competencies.



Patty Moser, CDC Executive Director for Trinity Lutheran School

"A team of six validators visited Trinity's classrooms, thoroughly reviewed records, interviewed teachers, families, and administrators," explains Patty Moser, CDC Executive Director for Trinity Lutheran School. "Trinity's Child Development Center earned a 98.31 out of 100 possible points. An 80% overall score is required for recommendation to the National Lutheran School Accreditation in Good Standing, not only receiving accreditation with National Lutheran School Accreditation, but also achieving Gold Seal Approval with the State of Florida."

According to Moser, the additional recognition of Gold Seal Approval designation offers many potential additional benefits including increased School Readiness and VPK funding. □

Reporting From Duty



Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Pon Chanthaphon, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit is a Chaplain in the FLGA District — providing religious services to Marines and Sailors during Realistic Urban Training at Camp Lejeune, NC. Realistic Urban Training allows Marines and Sailors the opportunity to train in a controlled, realistic environment utilizing command, air, ground and logistics elements. His family is based in Jacksonville, FL while he is stationed in North Carolina.



The Rev. Jim Daub and wife, Megan, with LCDR Pon Chanthaphon. They were invited as guests to the U.S.Navy Chaplain Corps 247th Birthday Ball. Rev. Daub has been supporting the military community for more than 20 years and he is the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Chaplain.



Master Gunnery Sergeant Daniel Clark with LCDR Pon Chanthaphon at the USMC 247th Birthday Ball. Chanthaphon offered the invocation. Clark was wearing a blue boatcloak with a scarlet liner — appropriate for such occasions as state functions, inaugural receptions, and formal dinners. □

The Card Ministry at **First/Gainesville, FL** is a somewhat quiet and behind-the-scenes mission. These ladies, at the request of members, send cards to folks on the prayer list who are mourning the loss of a loved one, battling an illness, or experiencing a life milestone. Cards are continually sent on a monthly basis until the need no longer exists. Each card is lovingly written by a member of the team with an appropriate Bible verse and personal post script. This has turned into one of the most cherished and heartwarming mission efforts of the congregation. □

Seated from left — June Nesheim, Judi Steffen, Karen Natzke
Standing from left — Julie Schilling, Dottie Mounts, Barb Hughes, Marge Polkowski, Winnie Price
Not pictured Sheila Ebert





From left — Rev. Kris Whitby, Rev. Dr. Allen Buss, Olivia Hitz, Sheryl DeWitt, Nadia Beadle, Sharon Dawn, Julia Heinz, Dcs Lori Trinche.

Redeeming Life Nearing Illinois Expansion

Pro-life students at Concordia University/Chicago, IL “CUC4Life Group” submitted a video to Lutherans For Life during Life Week 2023 as part of the Mascot Video Challenge to highlight their 4Life spirit and won the competition and a \$100 donation to the 4Life charity of their choice, Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries — headquartered in Sanford, FL. Redeeming Life is expanding to the East Dundee, IL area about 35 miles from Concordia’s campus.

This gift will stay close to home in the Chicago area as Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries (RLOM) will open a new maternity home for single moms in unexpected pregnancies in northwest Chicagoland’s East Dundee, IL in mid-2023. Concordia University’s first lady, Mrs. Sharon Dawn, introduced RLOM to the student group with the suggestion that these college students could be impactful for RLOM’s ministry in Illinois.

“We are so thrilled to accept this check from CUC4Life and to hear about all of the pro-life things these student leaders are

doing on this campus and in the greater community,” said Sheryl DeWitt, Executive Director for Redeeming Life Ministries. “The Northern Illinois District has been so welcoming to us in getting this expansion home project going. So many people have stepped up for this maternity home and we will have a huge crowd to celebrate its opening in 2023!”

In addition to meeting with the CUC4Life leaders, RLOM staff was on campus to attend the Northern Illinois District’s first ever Registered Service Organization meeting, which brought together all of the RSO’s who have a presence in the district for a day of networking and collaboration to further ministry opportunities.

Deaconess Dorothy Krans, who manages all of the RSO’s for the LCMS traveled from the church’s headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri for the event and was on hand to see the partnership between this RSO and college students based on pro-life work.

Concordia’s CUC4Life group puts faith into action throughout the year. The group is active

holding meetings and forums to educate and discuss pro-life topics with fellow students. Their pro-life work goes beyond beginning of life issues with work to battle food insecurity on campus, support mental health, and volunteer.

Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries is headquartered in Sanford, Florida where it began in 2013 with a vision and a Christ-centered maternity home to help single moms in crisis pregnancy situations who courageously chose life for their unborn babies. Later they opened a transition home to allow moms and babies to live in a sheltered environment while continuing to build job skills and complete educational goals before living independently. An expansion into the Chicago area is happening this year with an additional maternity home opening in the northwest suburbs. Redeeming Life’s program offers moms more than just housing with the inclusion of a life skills curriculum, support for education and job skill training, a family-like setting, and the personal and spiritual support to build a successful and independent life. □



Christ Our Savior/Griffin, GA sponsored public service announcements for blood donations on local radio station WREK "The Bear." In the announcement, Christ Our Savior thanked the public for helping during this critical time and reminded listeners that blood donors are needed especially during the month of December." □

Trinity/Albany, GA members collected more than 600 pounds of non-perishable food at the end of last year for delivery to the Albany Local Food Pantry. Shown are the members. Ted Soderberg and Barbara Logan, loading the pickup truck for delivery. The collection of non-perishable food has been an on-going project for members of Trinity for many years. Food is collected monthly and blessed for delivery at the end of each month. □



Principal Jim Richards was a good sport during a Lutheran Schools Week Pep Rally! St. Paul's annual fundraiser sponsored by the Booster Club raised more than \$55,000 — resulting in Richards having his head shaved in front of the student body. Kindergarten teacher Kristina Williams (dressed as Cruella Deville for the 101st day of school) did the honors of shaving his head.



"Making Disciples for Life" was the theme for the 2023 National Lutheran Schools Week celebration. St. Paul Lutheran's Middle School Students participated in the annual "Color Run." Shown are The Falcons and (at inset) are Principal Jim Richards and Assistant Principal Jeff Potter. □

Troy Countryman Installed at Faith/Viera

The Rev. Troy Countryman was installed as senior pastor of **Faith/Viera, FL** on December 11, 2022. Pastor Troy and his wife Andrea, have three children — Piper, Oliver and Drew. Piper enjoys singing, drama, and reading Harry Potter books. Oliver enjoys playing Minecraft, jumping on trampolines, and staying in new hotels. Drew enjoys dancing and she “doesn’t know what else.”

Countryman was born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Lutheran parochial education was an important part of his childhood, as he was blessed to attend Holy Cross Lutheran School and Concordia Lutheran High School. After graduating in 2000 with a BS in Industrial Management from Purdue University, Countryman worked four years at Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company in Indianapolis.

During his time at Eli Lilly, he met his wife, Andrea, a native of Anderson, Indiana, and a graduate of Indiana University.

In addition to vocations as a wife and mother, Andrea is currently working toward a nursing degree.



The Countryman family — Ollie, Piper, Drew, Andrea, and Troy with The Rev. Waldemar R. Vinovskis, SELC District President

Pastor Troy and Andrea were married at Carmel Lutheran/Carmel, IN, in 2003. Troy began seminary education at Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO in 2004. Upon seminary

graduation in 2008, he was called to St. John’s Lutheran Church and School in Mattoon, Illinois, where he served as Associate Pastor and then Senior Pastor until accepting the call to serve at St. John Lutheran Church and School, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Favorite family pastimes include hiking, living room dance parties, and travel. The Countryman Family all believe that life in the Church is quite simple: “it’s about relationships,” Troy emphasizes.

“The primary relationship is with our Triune God, and every other relationship is centered in Christ Jesus.”

Countryman’s favorite passage from Scripture is 2 Corinthians 1:20 — “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him [Jesus]. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.” □

Ben Hoyer (left) preached at Troy Countryman’s installation service.



Clergy from the SELC and Florida-Georgia District of the LCMS attending Pastor Troy Countryman’s installation at **Faith Viera/Rockledge, FL**

Athens, GA Congregations Celebrates Milestones

The Rev. Tim Davis and the congregation of **Trinity/Athens, GA** recently celebrated his first anniversary there. The celebration included a reception following that morning's worship. A year ago Pastor Davis relocated to Trinity from Calvary/Wray, CO.

Organist Anne Weaver also celebrated her third year at Trinity.

The seed that has grown into today's congregaton family numbering approximately 200 families, was first planted on November 12, 1939 by the Rev. Theodore Ahrendt of Grace/Atlanta and of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Ahrendt shared his vision in a sermon to six Christian Lutherans of the Athens and University of Georgia communities. Services were originally conducted at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

World War II brought in a wave of veterans as students and faculty who wished to continue their Christianity in their new home.

By April 5, 1953, 16 Lutherans chartered Trinity Lutheran Church and began the Lord's work by establishing a Sunday School first. The school met in the Lustrat House on the campus of the University. The congregation eventually also met there with Sunday worship services. Other public sites used by the fledgling congregation were the Athens City Hall and Clarke County Courthouse.



Trinity organist Anne Weaver directs the choir at an after service practice. She's celebrating her third anniversary with Trinity.

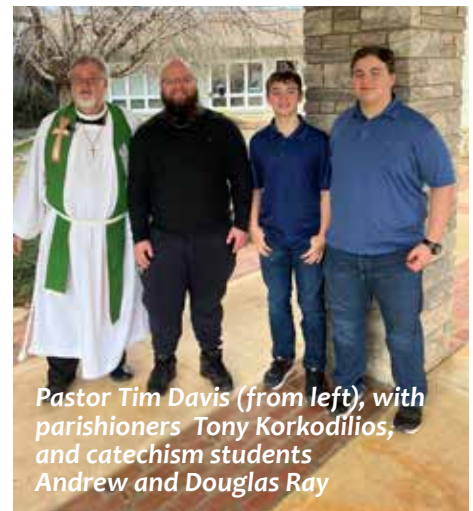
Trinity's founders had visions for a permanent ministry in both the "town and gown locales" and so provided service to the City of Athens and the students at the University of Georgia. They foresaw that growth would result in a separation into a campus congregation and an urban one.

Trinity's first building was at 1010 S. Lumpkin Street, which was known as the Trinity Lutheran Church and Student Center. The first pastor was Richard P. Deffner who was also missionary-at-large for the Athens-Gainesville area and coordinator of campus work for the Florida-Georgia District. He was also chairman of the District Commission on College and University Work. He served Trinity from 1953 to 1965.

In 1966, the congregation decided to separate the "Town Congregation" from the "Gown Congregation," a situation which was enhanced by the donation of 10 acres of wooded land on Jefferson Road by Mrs. Lorenzo Moss. The student work was continued by Trinity's second pastor, the Rev. Ed Ralph. Pastor Ralph has since retired and the student congregation has been renamed Christus Victor Lutheran Church and Student Center. Christus Victor is currently a town and gown congregation under the leadership of the Rev. Gregory C. Michael who also serves the FLGA District as Secretary.

The Rev. Wyatt Kimberley became the third pastor of Trinity in 1970. As a missions official in the FLGA District, he was on the ground floor in 1953 when Trinity was chartered. A Parish Hall and Education Building were erected on the Moss tract in November of 1971 and from this site Trinity has ministered to Athens through the efforts of a preschool beginning in 1987. Pastor Kimberley served Trinity from 1970 to 1984, leaving to become District's Director of "His Love, Our Response," a stewardship emphasis.

Trinity's fourth pastor, the Rev. Dr. David Bernthal, accepted Trinity's call in August of 1985 and led Trinity's ministry by overseeing



Pastor Tim Davis (from left), with parishioners Tony Korkodilios, and catechism students Andrew and Douglas Ray

the erection of the present sanctuary, an administration building, and a day care and preschool mission, Trinity Lutheran Academy, until September 2000. Vacancy Pastor Thomas Artelt lead the church until the congregation called Pastor Scott Heitshusen in November, 2001. Pastor Scott brought the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion to all services each Sunday, initiated a mid-week blended style worship service, organized Trinity's administration and updated the congregation's technology. Pastor Heitshusen was called to St. Mark/Houston, TX in July 2006.

Pastor David Heller accepted Trinity's call in November, 2007. Coming from service as a military chaplain, he brought a unique, compassionate perspective to his ministry and the congregation continued steady growth. □

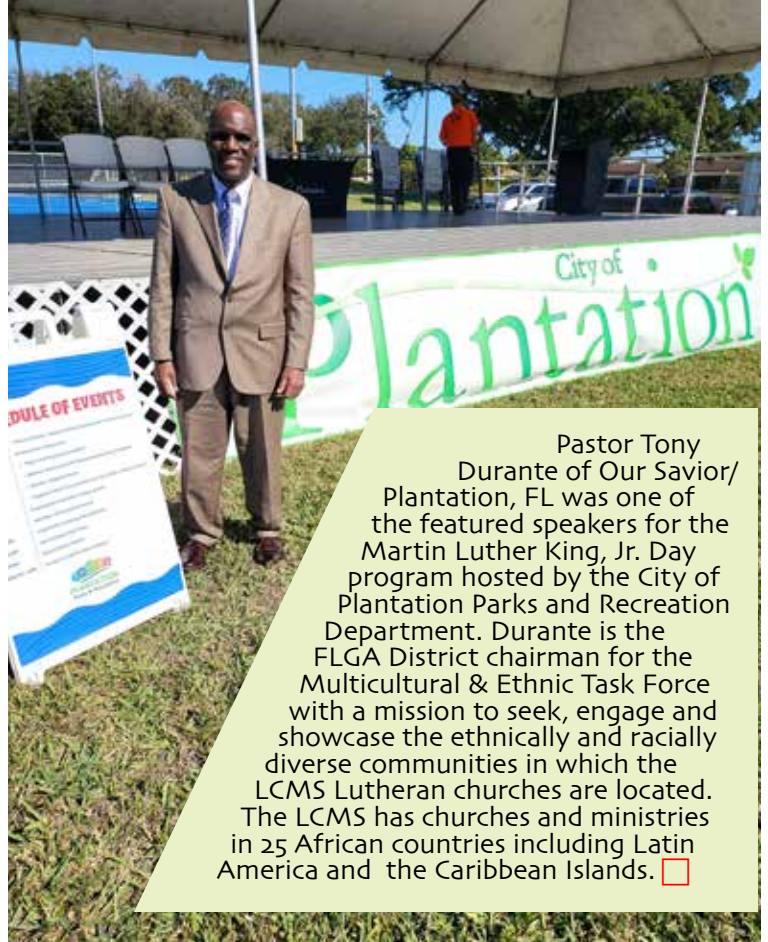


Parishioner Gerald Brunson and Pastor Tim Davis

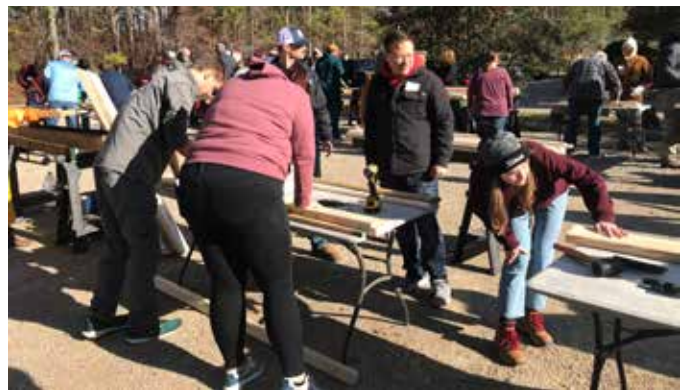


On Saturday, January 14th, **Our Savior / Plantation, FL** held the event Bless Plantation. On this day, church and school families gathered together for a day of service projects in the Plantation community. The volunteers served at Hope South Florida, **Good Shepherd/Fort Lauderdale, FL**, Super School, and 4-Kids Foster Families.

At Hope South Florida, individuals packaged and gave away food. Volunteers decorated for a winter wonderland at the Super School for children with disabilities. Meals were prepared and delivered to 11 foster families in local area. These families are supported by a Christian foster organization 4-kids. Lastly, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, individuals with a talent for handy work got to work installing fans at this Lutheran church that needed a helping hand. Everyone was able to use their gifts and talents in a unique way to serve the community. Individuals reflecting on the day reported it was a day full of blessing and witnessing how God is moving within our community. □



Pastor Tony Durante of Our Savior/ Plantation, FL was one of the featured speakers for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day program hosted by the City of Plantation Parks and Recreation Department. Durante is the FLGA District chairman for the Multicultural & Ethnic Task Force with a mission to seek, engage and showcase the ethnically and racially diverse communities in which the LCMS Lutheran churches are located. The LCMS has churches and ministries in 25 African countries including Latin America and the Caribbean Islands. □



In January **Epiphany/Tallahassee, FL** with the help of **University/Tallahassee, FL** and two other local churches, built 30 beds for children and one for an adult for Sleep in Heavenly Peace. This organization gives beds to children who do not have beds of their own. More than 70 volunteers participated and they delivered 23 beds to families in Tallahassee! □



Discover Nona Hope's UNtroduction to Church Planting



The Nona Hope – DANDI Dining group gathered in December at the home of Peter & Kathy Meier. Pictured from left: Chad Swanson, Juli vonWerder, Melanie Trout, Peter Meier, Dan Reichard, Matt Trout, Jay Wendland, Paul vonWerder, Andi Reichard, Meridith Swanson, Wynn Merryman, Mike Engel, Tina Eaton, Kathy Meier, John Hohe, Cathy Graf, Eric Sherwood, Andrea Sherwood

What is “Dinner Church”?

Dinner Church is a simple and fun way to gather with neighbors and friends around the Word of God. It has the potential to become a Word and Sacrament ministry as the Holy Spirit leads. This is the story of a new Dinner Church in the Lake Nona community near the Orlando Airport.

Dan and Andrea Reichard love to host dinner parties at their home. They also are known in the neighborhood as friendly neighbors — always willing to help out, say “hi,” or be a walking partner. Years ago, Dan and Andi began to invite neighbors and other friends over for regular “DANDI Dining” evenings.

After my arrival in the FLGA District to serve as Director for Missions & Outreach, Dan invited my wife Kathy and me to one of their DANDI Dining evenings. But I quickly discovered that it was more than dinner.

Here’s what we experienced. The evening begins with snacks and beverages, connecting and laughter. For many it is time to meet new people. Gathering in the family room, Dan or Andrea leads the group in a time of devotion, Bible sharing, discussion

and prayer. Guests are invited to contribute their own prayers too.

After a prayer of thanks for the meal we spread out to enjoy the food while getting to know each other. Andi has prepared questions which are intentionally chosen for that purpose. Laughter is always importantly included for the evening.

After a few months, the invitation list grew, and the gatherings became more regular. Pretty soon, the group could no longer fit around one table. Devotional leadership was shared with others. Sometimes music and singing is included. The focus is always on relationships in Jesus Christ. At various times, Dan used Thrivent dollars to provide a special meal. Attendees were invited to vote on local mission projects which would impact the Lake Nona community and beyond with Jesus’ love.

Many of those who come regularly are members of **Hope/Orlando, FL**. Pretty soon, we began to see this as a means of outreach from Hope, and the name “Nona Hope” stuck, since the group meets in the Lake Nona community. Lake Nona is a booming development and currently has no LCMS congregation. Hope’s vision is to start new faith communities, micro-groups and small groups, which can grow and multiply, like acorns

from a Might Oak. Nona Hope is one of these new faith communities, gathering as a “Dinner Church.”

This year, the focus is on adding more opportunities for time in the word, as well as our monthly meals and fellowship. Growing and multiplying joyful disciples is the primary purpose.

Last December — with help from Thrivent and matching funds— Nona Hope gathered \$2,340 which was distributed to several mission opportunities: A mom adopting two children, the Rafiki Foundation, and Nemours Children’s Health. Hope’s Pre-School Director, Tina Eaton, met with the mom to share the gift of more than \$800. Tina reports, “When I met with Heather and delivered the check tears came to her eyes, and then of course, I joined in. She was overwhelmed. She said we didn’t need to do this and she is sure that there were others who could use this. I assured her that she is such a blessing and God will continue to bless her in many ways. I also expressed that we are all in this together and will continue to keep her and the family in our prayers.” □

— Peter Meier

Plantation Kindergarten Class Visits China



The kindergarten class at **Our Savior/Plantation, FL** pretended to fly to China for an immersive experience back in January. Their teacher, Trisha DePasquale was their flight attendant.

DePasquale began her teaching career at Our Savior in 2007.

Students had boarding passes, a carry-on (their lunchboxes) and checked their backpacks. Their classroom was transformed into an airplane and they spent the

entire day pretending to fly. The photo below shows their seating chart for the international flight.

The next day they returned and received a Chinese stamp in their passports and retrieved their backpacks from "luggage claim." They spent the next three days learning about places in China. □



Trisha DePasquale



Paula & Pastor John "Jack" Mackowiak, Pastor Allen Deinert & Chris display a composite of their seminary graduating class.

Amazing Grace/Oxford Celebrates 90 Years of Combined Ministry

District President James Rockey recently honored Intentional Interim Pastor John "Jack" Mackowiak of **Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL**, and retired Pastor Allen Deinert for their 45 years of ministry. Pastor Mackowiak and Pastor Deinert both were in the first graduating class at Concordia Theological Seminar/Ft. Wayne, IN, in 1977.

"Pastor Jack," as so called by congregants, is presiding as the Intentional Interim Pastor at Amazing Grace and will assist the church in finding a new pastor. He and his wife, Paula, live in Clearwater, FL.

After serving more than 20 years as a resident pastor, Pastor Jack began his training as an Intentional Interim Pastor in 1999 and has served full time in that capacity since 2005. An Intentional Interim Pastor helps a congregation in its transition from one resident pastor to another and guides them through the call process for a new pastor.

In his 45 years of ministry, Pastor Mackowiak has served as either a resident or Intentional Interim Pastor for more than 20 congregations in five different states. Pastor Deinert, or known as "Pastor D" over the years, has served congregations from coast to coast and points in between. In 2019, Pastor Deinert and his wife, Chris, retired to The Villages in Florida where they are now members of Amazing Grace. "It is indeed an incredible honor to recognize these two great servants of Christ and His Church. For more than 45 years, these classmates have served in congregations around the country," said President James Rockey. "Without a doubt, they have not only faithfully fulfilled their duties, but have shared the joy of the Lord with their congregations and communities. Upon the anniversary of their ordination, I say "well done, good and faithful servants." □

St. Paul/Weston Youth Rock The Universe

Rock the Universe takes place at the Universal Studios in Orlando, FL. It is Florida's biggest Christian music festival. Concert performances take place on three open-air stages inside the park. **St. Paul/Weston, FL's** youth participated. Shown above are some of the youth's members led by Director of Christian Education, Jeremy Becker. □



The women of **Amazing Grace/Oxford, FL** enjoyed fellowship, inspiration and plenty of fun on Educational Opportunities' **Rock the Boat Women's Retreat Cruise** with three enrichment sessions led by well-known presenter and author, Drexel Gilbert. There were more than 110 women from across the country on this retreat cruise out of Tampa Bay, FL with ports in Key West and Nassau, Bahamas. □

Trinity/Athens, GA gathered for their annual Leadership Retreat earlier this year. Church officers and all board members attended for devotions, fellowship, and an overall planning session for calendar year 2023. Forty-one people attended. □

LCMS Black Clergy Caucus Hosted by St. Paul/Jacksonville

The LCMS Black Clergy Caucus (BCC) met at **St. Paul / Jacksonville, FL** February 7-9. The Rev. Stephen Wiggins was the host pastor, — welcoming a group of about 50 for their Spring Caucus.

The BCC includes all African-American, African Immigrant, Jamaican and Haitian LCMS clergy. The Black Ministry Family Convocation is the forum in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for these functions:

- Developing policies that will assist congregations in reaching out more effectively with the Gospel of Jesus Christ among African Americans and African Immigrant, Jamaican and Haitians;
- Evaluating the effectiveness and administration of plans and programs designed to coordinate and expand Black Ministry in the Synod;
- Representing the concerns of Black Ministry before the boards, commissions, committees and judicatories of the LCMS;
- Meeting for fellowship, sharing concerns in Black Ministry;
- Making decisions which direct the path of Black Ministry in the LCMS;

- Expanding a place for open discussion, planning, and promotion of the ministry in congregations, and the coming generations.
- The BCC is committed to walk together with the Word of God to develop and strengthen leaders and congregations in Black Ministry within the LCMS.

LCMS is still a 95% white church body, the FLGA District is more diverse and encourages every congregation to unite under the Priesthood of ALL believers.



Participants are shown laying on of hands and prayers for Seminary Representatives from Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO, Concordia Theological Seminary/Fort Wayne, IN and the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center of Concordia/Irvine, CA.

The gathering highlighted our LCMS Seminaries and training programs for pastors, the work of Mission Haiti, and more. The Fall LCMS BCC gathering will also be hosted by the FLGA District, October 10-12, 2023 at **Rivercliff/ Sandy Springs, GA**. Rev. Drs. Victor Belton and Wilton Heyliger together with Atlanta area

pastors will partner to plan and host the event.

Rev. Dr. S. T. Williams of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Los Angeles presided over the gathering which celebrated 145 years of African-American ministry. The theme was “Advancing the Next Generation,” as the BCC looks ahead to their 150th Anniversary and the 2025 Black Ministry Convocation.

Pastor Amos Gray, Youth Advisor, told the assembly to hold out their open hands. “What’s in your hands?” he asked. The future is there! We are called to shape it, bless it and advance it through our young people. The FLGA District, a sponsor of the Caucus, celebrates the ministry of many African-American, African Immigrant and Haitian pastors and congregations. While the



Stephen Wiggins



S. T. Williams, Jr.



Amos Gray



Victor Belton



Wilton Heyliger



Remembering Dorothea Rinkenberger

Editor's note — as the Florida-Georgia District celebrates

our 75th Anniversary, Lutheran LIFE will be profiling some of the "Pioneers of the District." Special thanks and credit to President Emeritus Gerhard C. Michael, Jr., Charles Hofman and Eileen Bishop-List for research, compiling and editing of the biographies.



One of the matriarchs of the Florida-Georgia District, Dorothea Rinkenberger, may well be remembered as being "most motherly." Her passionate service to the Lutheran Women's Missionary League ministry on both the District and National level was filled with joy and enthusiasm. Dorothea was very active in the St. Petersburg Zone. She was instrumental in the founding of the LWML scholarship committee. FLGA was the first District to have a scholarship committee.

While she was still alive and active in that zone, the LWML established the Scholarship Fund which subsequently became the Dorothea Rinkenberger Memorial Fund. At each rally, an offering is taken and sent to the Florida-Georgia District Scholarship fund in Dorothea's memory.

Dorothea was widowed early and devoted her life thereafter primarily to spreading the Gospel through the work of the LWML. Her LWML District Board career began in 1954, when she served

as Membership Chairperson for two years. During that period she was also in charge of the film and program library that loaned items to societies for Christian Growth programs.

In 1955 Dorothea attended a regional Leadership Training Institute and helped present zone workshops to the four zones formed at that time in Florida and Georgia. From early on Dorothea was known for her snow-white hair and her keen sense of humor as she graciously mothered whatever project she undertook. That sense of humor and her warm, colorful personality characterized all the projects in which she took part. She joyfully witnessed to others and worked with a cheerful enthusiasm.

Dorothea adopted the duties of the LWML Scholarship Committee and made that commitment "her baby." Even though she was extremely active in other offices and committees, she accepted the Chair of the Scholarship Committee and invested her love and attention to the recipients as though each one were her own child.

The first scholarships for pastoral students were granted in 1956, and until 1988, Dorothea undertook the self-assumed duty of a loving mother by staying in contact with every recipient during his or her college days.

As the scholarships were later extended to include all church workers, she reached out again and again in her concern and motherly care for each scholarship recipient, writing letters to each one and following the progress of each recipient from year to year.

Dorothea was elected LWML Tampa Bay Zone President in 1975-77, and once again proved to be an inspiring person and a ceaseless worker. In the 1970s and 80s Dorothea was the LWML Board matriarch whose unceasing service and buoyant leadership

distinguished her career in the District. She was famous for her keen sense of humor, which was evidenced in a retreat skit with a Funny Fashion Show theme put on each year by the LWML Board.

Dorothea's assignment was Ball Gown, and when she came out in a billowing aqua gown covered with nearly one hundred gold Christmas tree balls, the crowd laughed uproariously — especially the zone counselors. They laughed till the tears rolled. She did not just walk in, she glided and pranced and twirled even though she was well into her 70s with snow-white hair.

As in all of her other projects, she involved herself heart and soul, sharing her love with others. Of special note is that Dorothea was a breast cancer survivor yet continued to work faithfully in numerous leadership roles in LWML. Dorothea radiated joy in everything she did. In June 1991 at the 24th District Convention, Dorothea received the Doulos tou Christou (Servant of Christ) award for her outstanding work and leadership in the LWML.

The Lord surely wanted her to serve Him, and serve Him she surely did with joy. Her lifetime of loving and serving others and her record of contributions to the District well reflect the LWML motto: "Serve the Lord with gladness." (PSALM 100:2) □

ANNIVERSARY ARCHIVE

Pastor Emeritus Paul Hoyer Called to Glory

Paul Martin Hoyer — the founding pastor of **Holy Cross/Lake Mary, FL**, completed his earthly journey on the evening of Thursday December 29th, 2022. Hoyer had retired as Pastor Emeritus at Holy Cross.

Hoyer was a founding member and active board member of The Sharing Center. In 1986, leaders from 17 churches joined together to serve those experiencing hunger and homelessness. Today, The Sharing Center has grown to become the most comprehensive social services hub in Seminole County.

The Oasis was another of Hoyer's passions. The Oasis provides services to the homeless, including showers, laundry, haircuts by a licensed cosmetologist, computer access and cell phone charging. Their mission is to provide essential resources to those in need while ensuring dignity, reflecting Christian generosity, and sharing God's love.

Hoyer participated in several local boards and won the Leadership Legend award from Leadership Seminole (County, FL) in 2020. He and his wife, Betty, have four children and eight grandchildren.

An enthusiastic traveler, Paul was born in Fort Ord, CA on November 8th, 1954 to Hazel (Story) Hoyer and Martin Hoyer. He was the oldest of five siblings (Steve, Lisa, Jan, Jeff). He spent his formative years in the



Hoyer at the Louisville Slugger Factory and Museum in November, 2022

midwestern United States, where he cultivated his appreciation for baseball, hard work, antique cars, and comfort food. Always a leader, Paul was a wrestler, a well-known portrayer of "Harold Hill" in "The Music Man," and student body president in high school.

At St. Paul's Junior College, Paul met Betty Mueller. He might have said she was out of his league, but Paul started borrowing her notes from class and hung around long enough that Betty fell in love with Paul's charm and kindness. Paul and Betty dated through college and were married in the summer between college and Seminary, in 1976.

Throughout College and Concordia Seminary/St. Louis, MO, Paul worked several jobs — truck driver, railroad construction, bartender, auto mechanic, lumber yard assistant, pig farmer, and fancy waiter who made Caesar salad with real anchovies. Paul had so many "summer jobs" that his children started asking how many summers he actually spent in college.

Paul and Betty spent four years in and around St. Louis, MO as Paul completed his Master of Divinity degree. During their fourth year of seminary, Paul and Betty welcomed their oldest child, Sara. Paul received his first call as Pastor to St. Paul in Linkville, MI. Paul and Betty served there for three years where they also welcomed their next two children, Ben and Meredith.

In 1981 The SELC District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) bought 4.89 acres of land in Lake Mary for a new mission start. In 1983 Paul accepted the call to be the mission developer for what would become Holy Cross Lutheran Church & School. The first service was held in December of that year. It was in Lake Mary where they welcomed their fourth child, Jacob.

In Lake Mary Paul flexed his leadership muscle, bringing energy and determination to various efforts to serve and support missional and social endeavors throughout Central Florida and beyond. He led the planting of Holy Cross by walking door-to-door through the Lake Mary neighborhoods in the mid-eighties. As pastor of Holy Cross he was known to follow first-time visitors to their cars following services to shake their hands and make a personal connection.

In addition to his leadership at The Sharing Center and The Oasis, Hoyer loaned his wisdom

and support to efforts such as Kids House of Seminole, Shepherd's Hope and Lake Cares Food Pantry.

Regionally and nationwide, Paul was an influential leader for the Center for US Missions, the SELC District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod,



Thrivent Financial, and the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. While Paul was a dynamic leader in service, Paul was also never afraid to get his hands dirty.

Paul was always encouraging — to his wife, his children, his parishoners, his fellow board members and the many participants in the charities which he was affiliated. He would say that the world tries to keep people down, so he was eager to build people up. At the same time he was unrelenting with life lessons such as, "Sorry" doesn't do it. "Do it" does it." and "Life's not fair."

Paul loved coaching sports teams, sponsoring extra-curricular activities at his children's schools, coaxing vehicles into working condition, changing flat tires, completing home repairs, and driving across the country to help family members.

As Husband, Paul was faithful to Betty as a partner and an encourager. He supported her in her work across career changes and joined her on traveling excursions. He would often remind her of his love by completing DIY house renovation projects, and even more so by calling someone else to complete them faster. They learned to work together well and he was proud of their legacy of together building a church and school that have affected thousands of lives.

A Memorial Service celebrating Paul's life was held in January.

District School & Church Leaders Participate in Team Leadership Conference in Orlando, FL

School and church leaders came together for a School Leadership Team Conference held in Orlando in January. Dedicated time with principals and pastors to talk is critical for healthy ministry. Facilitated by consultant and leadership coach, Jacob Hoyer, the conference engaged leaders in strategic planning and courageous communication to enhance school ministry. "As teams planned practical next steps for ministry, there was an excitement to return to campus and implement new ideas," said Jennifer Tanner.



Above left — Principal Jim Knoepfel and Pastor Jeff Shanks of **St. John/Ocala, FL** work on identifying key ministry targets. Top right — **St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL** leaders included Principal Jim Richards, Pastor Steve Carretto, and Early Childhood Director Sarah Willox. At right, Pastor Josh Pettit and Early Childhood Director Andie Bell **Woodlands/Montverde, FL** plan for future growth.



District Youth Ministry Council Meets, Plans 2023

The FLGA District Youth Ministry Council (DYMC) was started in 2015 "In order to provide leadership in the area of Middle and High School Youth Ministry to the congregations, youth ministry leaders, and the youth of the church," Nick Moss offered. Moss is chairman of the council. Moss is Director of Christian Education at **St. Paul/Lakeland, FL**.

Participants include Jennifer Tanner, FLGA District Executive Director, School and Youth Ministry; Kessler O'Brien, DCE Intern at **St. Paul/**

Lakeland, FL; Kami Jo Mogelvang, DCE at **Grace/Naples, FL**; Shaina Grundstrom, DCE Intern at **Our Savior/Plantation, FL**; Trevor Fiala, DCE and PE Teacher at **St. Paul/Peachtree City GA**; Betsy Burnham, DCE at **Woodlands/Montverde, FL**; Mark Adrian, Pastor at **Messiah/Tampa, FL**; Bethany Hanel, Layperson at **Bethany/Leesburg, FL**.

The council brainstorms and networks while working together to provide exceptional youth ministry to the youth of the FLGA District.



Left-to-right — DCE Intern Kessler O'Brien from **St. Paul/Lakeland, FL**, Lay Leader Bethany Hanel from **Bethany/Leesburg, FL**, DCE Trevor Fiala from **St. Paul/ Peachtree City, GA**, Betsy Burnham from **Woodlands/Montverde, FL**, and Nick Moss, Chairman of the FLGA Youth Ministry Council and DCE at **St. Paul/Lakeland, FL**

Tim Tebow's Night To Shine Annual Prom for Special

Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom night experience, centered on God's love, for people with special needs ages 14 and older. On one night, 655 churches, from around the world, host Night

to Shine for 100,000 honored guests with the support of 200,000 volunteers!

St. Paul/Boca Raton, FL hosted their seventh prom — the first one that was "back to an in-person event

following the pandemic," stated the Rev. Stephen Carretto, pastor. "During COVID we did a drive-through event for the protection of our guests. It was wonderful to be back to an in-person event with the red carpet, exceptional food and dancing to a live DJ among dramatic decorations and lighting." □

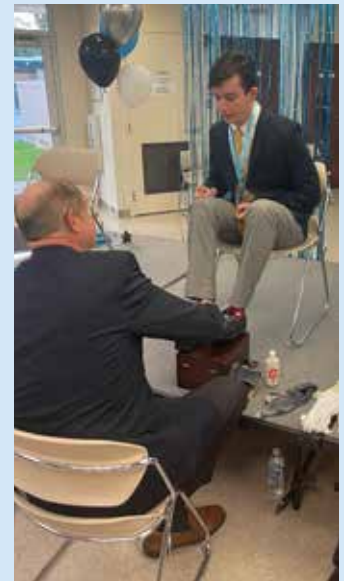


Arriving guests walked the red carpet with their buddies. Paparazzi cheered and flashed photos while Doug Whitney (at right) introduced each guest with names and their "likes."

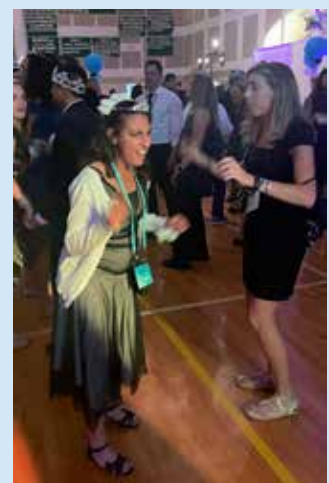
The gentlemen had their shoes shined while the ladies were treated to hairstyling and makeup applications.

The gentlemen received boutonnieres and the ladies received wrist corsages.

Below — Cheerleaders from Eagles Landing Middle School welcomed the guests as they arrived and began the registration process.



Karaoke, a photo booth featuring wigs and costumes and props, and a huge dance floor replete with lights and decorations contributed to the evening.



Needs Guests Deemed A **Red Carpet** Success



The leadership committee consisted of (from left) Greg Panos (Security), Sue Merritt (Registration), Mike and Joanie Dattalico (Food & Beverage), Arshalous Kantarjian (Volunteers), Marisa Neus (Buddies), Sandi Schuyler, and Dawn Zook (Chairwomen) Susan Franskousky (Registration), Karla Hardies (Corsages), Carl Schiefer (Shoe Shine), Holly Loeffler (Paparazzi), Judy Doyle (Hair & Makeup). Not pictured — Lisa Kennedy (Decorations), Marybeth Keenan (General Management), Lori Walsh (Respite Room). Hundreds of volunteers worked the event.



Below — Abbey Wargo and Tonya Haberlein had St. Paul's Comfort Dog, Jemimah, attend the event. As guests left the campus at the end of the evening they saw the lawn sign: "Jesus Loves You!"



A professional DJ kept the music flowing throughout the night. Guests and buddies danced "like nobody's watching" until the very end of the night.



Tim Tebow brought a video message and Vicar Anthony Sedotto (right) served as the Master of Ceremonies.



Broward County Icon Betty Berry Called To Glory

Betty Byrom Berry, beloved wife and mother, passed away on February 9th, 2023 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Lutherans in Southeast Florida — especially greater Broward County — will remember Betty as a stalwart from Downtown **Trinity/Fort Lauderdale, FL** with a passion for education, music and worship. She was an icon in the Lutheran community.

Betty was born in San Antonio, TX, on August 22, 1930. She graduated from Luther Burbank High School in 1948 — named for Luther Burbank, an American botanist, horticulturist, and agricultural science pioneer. Burbank was the only school in San Antonio to offer an agriculture program.

In 1950 Betty met Clifford Berry. They fell in love, were married in 1951 and moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Last June they celebrated 71 years of marriage.

Betty worked for Broward Bank until they started their family. While rearing six children she assisted Cliff in managing their many growing family businesses including Port Everglades Overnight Trailer Park and Poplar Lodge Supper Club.

Lutheran college students will have fond memories of spring break getaways — mine was from Valparaiso University's chilly north country — to the sunshine and palm trees and beach area bliss of Fort Lauderdale. We'd camp in the trailer park. Betty made sure we were always well fed and Cliff made sure we were in church at Trinity on Sunday morning, regardless how late we stayed out on our Saturday vacation nights.



Today that trailer park consists of the runway expansion of Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport. I smile each time I fly into FLHIA and think fondly of the Berrys when I think we camped where those runways exist today.

Pastor Dean Kasischke was serving Trinity when I was in college. The Berrys were devout members of Trinity — where Betty sang in the choir for more than 40 years. Early Trinity members including the Berrys were instrumental in the formation of Hope/Pompano; Prince of Peace/Hollywood; Good Shepherd/Fort Lauderdale; Miramar/Miramar; Our

Savior/ Plantation; and Gloria Dei/Davie. Anyone who was around when Lutheran High School was established knows that the Berry family were extremely generous philanthropists for that secondary institution as well as for Lutheran Central School (elementary) on the grounds of Trinity Downtown. I have fond memories of lengthy, passionate board meetings discussing Lutheran education in Broward County. Lutheran High School was a first among LCMS congregations in Florida.

Betty also volunteered in community activities and served as president of Broward General Hospital Auxiliary.

Cliff & Betty Berry founded Cliff Berry Industries (CBI) more than 65 years ago and grew it into a nationally recognized environmental services firm that is now led by Cliff Berry, Jr. CBI boasts more than 135 full-time employees across eight locations throughout Florida. CBI and the Berrys have been sponsors of

Wreaths Across America, helping place wreaths at the Jacksonville National Military Cemetery to remind us to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and teach our children the value of freedom.

Betty is survived by her husband, Clifford, her children Cynthia Berry, Sandra Berry, Candace (Donald) Church, Barbara Berry, Kimberlee (Joseph) Sawyer, and Clifford L. Berry II, along with 11 grandchildren and four great grandchildren. A celebration of life was held at Trinity on February 17.