

2024 FLGA District Pastors Conference - Meet our Speakers

Rev. Dr. Rick Armstrong

Rev. Dr. Armstrong is the Ministry Care Coordinator at Lutheran Counseling Services. Rick focuses on relationship issues, depression, anxiety, grief/loss, crisis management, and spiritual growth. He also does leadership coaching and organization/team consultation.

Contact info: rarmstrong@lcs.org 407-644-4692

Rev. Dr. Victor Belton

Retired, assisting occasionally with Messiah in Brunswick. District VP and coach for a number of congregations and ministers.

Contact info: vjbelton@gmail.com | cell: 678-662-7989

Rev. Dave Ficken

Dave Ficken is the North American Director at PLI. PLI trains and invests in pastors, spouses and key leaders of churches to accelerate a movement of the Gospel. We invest in you so that you can influence the people of God to work together for the sake of the mission of God—bringing the salvation of Jesus to every person in the world.

Contact info: dave@plileadership.org | 615-601-9078 | plileadership.org

Rev. Scott Gress

Rev. Scott Gress is an ICF Professional Certified Coach and believes in Growing People for Ministry by focussing on leadership, discipleship and teamwork. He is the founder and president of The LCMS Coaching Network. Scott authored A Christian Coaching Guidebook: How To Come Alongside Others For Ministry Results and writes The Coaching Leader column in the FLGA Lutheran Life magazine which is also the title of his podcast.

Contact Info: email scottgress@me.com | scottgress.com | 561-542-4472 for a sample coaching session.

Rev. Paul Heins

Retired at the end of 2005, and my wife and I moved to Cartersville, GA that year. Since then I have focused on small groups, house churches, prayer meetings and many one on one discipleship and encouragement meetings. I am committed to giving away what the Lord has given me to whomever he puts in my path.

Contact info: pcheins@gmail.com | cell: 443-604-7231

Rev. Ben Hoyer

Ben has served as the pastor for The Cross Orlando since its founding in 2010. In January 2021 he also assumed the role of Executive Pastor for the Central Florida Cross Network. Additionally Ben leads Rally, a social enterprise accelerator he helped found in 2016.

Contact info: Ben@hclm.org

Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies

Rev. Dr. Chad Lakies is Vice President for Ministry Engagement within the United States at Lutheran Hour Ministries. His former life as a nonbeliever provides exceedingly relevant experience for thinking about how to engage with friends and neighbors outside the kingdom of God. He is the author of How the Light Shines Through: Resilient Witness in Dark Times (September 2024).

Contact info: chad.lakies@lhm.org | lhm.org

Rev. Dr. Peter Meier

Rev. Dr. Peter Meier, FLGA District Executive Director of Missions and Outreach. I provide training and resources to congregations and leaders in all things Disciple-making, Church Planting, Outreach and more.

Contact info: pmeier@flgadistrict.org | cell 952-221-0362 | flgadistrict.org/missions

Mrs. Kathy Meier

Mrs. Kathy Meier, Lutheran educator for 25 years serving in Michigan, Indiana and Minnesota. Now retired, I enjoy sharing visual faith practices and how it can impact your personal devotional life.

Contact info: kathy.meier.km@gmail.com | cell 952-994-7021

Rev. Dr. Tilahun Menedo

Rev. Dr. Tilahun Menedo serves as the Associate Executive Director for Lutheran Bible Translators. Dr. Menedo spearheaded the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus effort to develop a strong, accredited training system. The effort utilizes many local Bible schools and training institutions the church has throughout Ethiopia. He served as the seventh President of Concordia University in Selma, Alabama from 2010 – 2016.

Contact info: Tilahun.Menedo@lbt.org | 251-751-1289 | lbt.org

Mrs. Megan Miessler

Megan is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Megan began working with children and youth as a DCE in the Lutheran Church. She received her MSW from University of Central Florida and her DCE from Concordia St. Paul. Megan works with children and families and focuses on play therapy, depression, Anxiety, Crisis Intervention, School Counseling and Marriage Therapy.

Contact info: mmiessler@lcsfl.com | 407-644-4692

Mr. Nick Moss

Director of Christian Education at St Paul Lutheran Church in Lakeland

Contact info: nmoss@stpaulakeland.org

Rev. Matt Peebles

Director of The Karios Network, a discipling and church planting training group.

Contact info: Matt@thekariosnetwork.com

Rev. Ron & Barb Pennekamp

Ron is 5 years retired Pastor now serving as the Circuit Visitor for the Winter Have Circuit. Barb is 1 year retired teacher from St. Paul, Lakeland FL. We are both focused on making discipling in our neighborhood, in churches, and out to the world.

Contact info: rpenne5253@aol.com

Rev. Andy Schermbeck

I have been serving as pastor at Faith Lutheran, a mid-sized congregation on the 'space coast', for a little over three years now. Faith's ministry includes a Preschool, a robust Caring Committee, and an active Outreach Committee. We recently brought a new DCE on staff and have made small group ministry a focus.

Contact info: pastor@faithlutheranmi.org | 813-399-0048

Mrs. Anette Shanks

Anette Shanks - St. John Lutheran Church in Ocala, Florida where I serve as the Family Life Director and I am a Pastor's wife. My email is anette.shanks@stjohnocala.org. My husband (Pastor Jeff) and I have a website where we offer free downloadable materials of chapel skits, children's messages, etc.

Contact info: anette.shanks@stjohnocala.org | 352-629-1794 | 48thlane.com

Mrs. Jennifer Tanner

Jennifer Tanner, a graduate of Concordia University at Austin, has dedicated 25 years to school ministry. As the Executive Director for School and Youth Ministry, she offers guidance and encouragement to assist churches and schools in their discipling mission. Jennifer strives to be an Along-Sider who lives with joy, serves with love, and leads with grace.

Contact info: jtanner@flgadistrict.org | 407-857-5556 x3 cell 904-710-0472 | flgadistrict.org

Rev. William Utech

For over 35 years William Utech has served church and world as pastor, seminary professor, and district mission executive by preaching, teaching, presenting, and writing in ways that encourage pastors, leaders, and congregations to think, plan, and act in missional ways, so that they are able to break free from old and unhelpful status quos, and move, more and more, toward health, vitality, and starting new ministries that reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Contact info: utechw@gofast.am

Rev. Paul vonWerder

Paul vonWerder is a discipleship pastor who has been serving the Orlando area for 30 years (Woodlands 5 & Hope 25). His last decade has focused on a lifestyle of making disciples through micro and small sized groups. He and Juli (RN) share four adult children and three "grandz" who have all grown to enjoy a love for God and His church.

Contact info: pvonwerder@gmail.com | 407-312-4556

Rev. Dr. Gregory S. Walton

Rev. Dr. Gregory S. Walton, President Emeritus, The Florida-Georgia District; VP, LCEF Ministry Solutions, Grace Place Wellness, St. Louis, MO. Grace Place Wellness advocates for church worker wellness, providing workshops, retreats, and conference gatherings on wellness topics, including the Lutheran Wellness Wheel, Church Worker Support Teams, and Ministry Sabbaticals.

Contact info: greg.walton@lcef.org 314-885-6609 | lcef.org/grace-place-wellness/

Rev. Dave & Sally Wesche

Dave has been in the District since 1962. He has served as a Teacher, Minister of Youth & Family Life, and now as Pastor at ASLC, Blairsville for 20 years. Sally has served as a youth minister at Grace, Winter Haven and teacher at St. Paul, Lakeland, and for the last 20 years at Union County (GA) Elementary School. In 2025, we will more fully transition from ministry at All Saints to discipling and making disciple-makers around the Blue Ridge mountain communities.

Contact info: revdavewoohoo@gmail.com | 706-745-7777