



# The Spirit of Southern

Web Edition - May/ June, 2015

## "Hope: Jesus Changes Everything"

*But God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love in which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses made us alive together with Christ. Ephesians 2:4-5*

St. Paul describes our past lives before we knew Christ in very stark and discouraging terms. Without Christ we were dead through our trespasses, we lived in our passions of our flesh and followed the desires of body and mind. By nature, he says, we were children of wrath. But surprisingly, Paul replaces and overwhelms this bleak description in an astounding announcement: "But God, who is rich in mercy, out of his great love... has made us alive together with Christ... and raised us up with Him and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places."

No matter who we have been or what we have done, no matter how badly we may feel or others may feel about us, we have the assurance that "But God" has been written over our past lives. Have we wasted years of our lives with habits of which we are now ashamed? Are we guilty of having wronged people, even family and friends, in ways that we never thought we were capable of doing? Have we regrets or sorrows? There is an answer---BUT GOD...

If we continue to feel guilty we need to step back from our past, from our preoccupation with our wrongs and passions, until we can see them framed by God's amazing mercy; until our perspective again includes God's great promises of forgiveness and restoration; until once more we can see the cross of Christ "towering o'er the wrecks of time". Then we will be assured again that God's grace is greater than all our sin.

Any guilt or condemnation presently in our lives can be swallowed up once we are willing to let go of it, and throw ourselves upon the overcoming mercy of God. If we have confessed our sins and have received God's forgiveness, then "But God..." covers the past and paves the way for the future. How thankful we can be that we have a Savior who truly sets us free.

*Oh God, whose glory it is to always have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word. Amen*

Rev. Kurtis D. Schultz, President, Southern District, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

**Hope**  
JESUS  
CHANGES EVERYTHING

**Southern District – LCMS  
74<sup>th</sup> Convention  
June 4-5, 2015**

Look for convention information on the Southern District website and in the July/August, 2015 Spirit of Southern.

## District and Synod News

### The Southern District Receives New Workers

April 27-29 were joyous days at the LCMS seminaries in Ft. Wayne, IN and St. Louis, MO as pastoral candidates and vicarage interns received their assignments. In the coming months, Southern District congregations look forward to welcoming these pastors, vicars and their families to lead them in ministry.

#### Concordia Seminary – St. Louis, MO

##### Pastors:

**Biernacki, Christopher:** Our Redeemer - Florence, AL

**Henze, Richard Scott:** Our Redeemer - Clinton, MS

**Miller, Wayne:** Grace - Mobile, AL

**Carlone, Brandon:** Peace - Oxford, MS

**Luttinen, Calvin:** First English - Metairie, LA

**Waffel, Derek:** Christ - Pascagoula, MS

##### Vicars

**D'Entremont, James:** Good Shepherd - Gulf Breeze, FL

**Drinnon, Roger:** St. Mark's - Elberta, AL



*First row, from left: Eve Waffel, Derek Waffel, Stephanie Biernacki, Katie Luttinen, Roger Drinnon, Wayne Miller, Rev. Kurtis Schultz. Second row: Brandon Carlone, Christopher Biernacki, Calvin Luttinen, James D'Entremont, Kristin D'Entremont.*

#### Concordia Theological Seminary – Ft. Wayne, In

##### Pastors

**Bradley R. Lessman:** Our Savior - Columbus, MS

**David L. Witt:** Our Savior - Mobile, AL

##### Vicars

**Christopher R. Clark:** Lamb of God - Slidell, LA

**George N. Fields:** Christ - Jackson, MS

*From left: Bradley Lessman, Kim Lessman, Linda Clark, Chris Clark, George Fields, David Witt, Dawn Witt, President Schultz*



### Camps and Campgrounds!

- ☞ As your family travels this summer, remember there are lodgings available at Lutheran camps around the country.
- ☞ Contact camps to see if there are cabins, campgrounds, or hotel rooms available!
- ☞ Visit <http://nloma.org/campdirectory.html> to find one near your destination.

## 2016 LCMS National Youth Gathering - In Christ Alone

Held every 3 years, the LCMS Youth Gathering (NYG) provides thousands of youth and adults the opportunity to come together as a community of God's people to learn more about Jesus Christ, the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity. The next NYG will be held July 16-20, 2016 in New Orleans, LA. The "In Christ Alone" Gathering theme is based on Paul's book to the Philippians. In a world that makes many statements about what we stand for or against, we will hear at the gathering the clear proclamation that it is in Christ alone we are able to stand. Save the dates, note the information, and plan ahead!

### Important Dates:

August 2015 - Registration materials mailed to each LCMS congregation  
October 21, 2015 - Registration opens on a first-come, first-serve basis  
Early Spring 2016 - Hotel information assignments  
Early April 2016 - Hotel deposit is due  
May 4, 2016 - Full Registration Fee is due for express on-site Gathering registration  
July 16-20, 2016 Youth Gathering!

**Age Requirements** - The Gathering is intended for high school youth ages 14-19.

**Registration fee** - The Gathering event fee is \$325 per participant through March 4, 2016 or \$375 following March 4.

**Housing** - All Gathering participants will be assigned to official Gathering hotels. There are no exceptions.

**Detailed registration information** is available online @ [www.lcmsgathering.com/Attend](http://www.lcmsgathering.com/Attend).

*Curtis Wiese, NYG Southern District Coordinator*



### Camp Restore - Celebrating 25,000 Volunteers!

This March we celebrated reaching the milestone of hosting 25,000 volunteers at Camp Restore since 2006! Chef Lorraine prepared a special menu for the evening meal, and while a jazz band from Chalmette High played on, our volunteers joined in a second line led by our senior center participants. Links to video and news stories by both WWL-TV and WGNO can be found by searching "25,000" at [www.camprestore.org](http://www.camprestore.org).

Thank you to everyone who supported Camp Restore in our first time participating in GiveNOLA Day! We raised 36 gifts and \$7,310 - way to go!

*Kurt Jostes*

## Missionary News

### Good Shepherd – Biloxi, MS

Rev. Steven Mahlburg, a newly-called missionary of the LC-MS to north Asia spoke to a small group of members of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Biloxi, MS on Palm Sunday evening. He told us he has been in pastoral ministry since 1995. During that time God has been preparing him and his family for missionary service overseas. He, his wife and five children are doing their preparation to go to Asia to spread the good news of God's love for people of the whole world.

Missionary Mahlburg invited our group and church to partner with them and other churches to help others know Jesus. "Together in Mission" is a program of the LC-MS through which congregations and groups can join together with other congregations and groups to participate in bringing the good news to others by supporting them with prayers and finances.

Good Shepherd members thank him for coming to visit and will support them prayerfully and financially.

*Merle Golnick*

### Togo, Africa

Missionary Fred Reinhardt, who calls Pensacola, FL home, has sent his latest report from Africa where he is assigned to Kenya.

He reports that he has been in Togo helping recently arrived Rev. Jacob Gaugert settle in to his community and work there. He also awaits the arrival this summer of team members Rev. Micah Widauer, his wife, Robin, and their three children. His letter details his work with Lutheran church partners in Africa and God's work there through missionaries and local church leaders.

Missionary Reinhardt invites everyone to join him on FACEBOOK for information, photos and videos of his work in Africa.

*To encourage the work of our LCMS missionaries throughout the world, the Synod offers Prayer Cards which are PDF files designed for those who wish to pray for and support LCMS missionaries and personnel. Prayer cards can be found at [www.lcms.org/prayercards](http://www.lcms.org/prayercards).*

## Concordia College Alabama – Selma, AL



Abeba, Ethiopia; Ntokozo Pamacheche, of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; and Danayt Hagos, of Addis Abeba, Ethiopia. They were led by faculty advisors Dr. Tawonga Moyo and Courtney Washington. Business Division Chair Glenn King, Jr., also attended the competition.

The team competed against seven other Concordia University System schools, working throughout the spring semester to research and develop a cooperative marketing plan to raise awareness of LCEF and how it impacts The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

The teams presented their research findings and resulting campaigns to a judging panel at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis. Winners were named at a banquet that evening. Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota, took top honors; Concordia University, Irvine, earned second place and Concordia College—New York placed third in the competition.

*Abby Campbell*



### Lutheran Ministries of Alabama

Leevones Fisher, executive director, Bay Area Women Coalition, Inc. and member of Trinity - Mobile, AL recently led a workshop on grant writing for pastors and lay people in New Orleans. The workshop, held at Holy Cross – New Orleans, was geared to support outreach ministries to those in need and sponsored by Black Ministry and the LCMS Office of Missions.

*Christine Weerts*

### Lutheran Bible Translators

Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) is a 50 year old organization that makes God's Word available to people in their mother tongue languages through Bible translation and Scripture engagement programs. The recognized service organization of the LCMS has produced forty New Testaments and four complete Bibles dedicated with an impact-audience of almost eight million people who would never have the chance to hear God's Word and come to faith in any other way.

The organization recently announced its relocation from Aurora, IL to the campus of St. Paul's Lutheran High School in Concordia, MO. LBT looks forward to the next fifty years of LBT missionaries and mission partners carrying the gospel to others in their own languages. Plans are to sell LBT's property in Aurora and use those funds towards relocation and mission expansion.

For more information about Lutheran Bible Translators, go to their website, <http://us.lbt.org>.

*Linda Gari*



### Thrivent Financial

Ed and Anna Burns of Lecompte, LA, members of Redeemer – Alexandria, LA, had a charitable remainder trust set up and named the Southern District as one of the recipients. The Burns were long time members of the LCMS Southern District and wanted to do something special upon their passing. Pictured is President Schultz receiving a check on behalf of the Southern District for \$126,922 from the Burns' son, Bill Burns of Jonesville, LA.

*Ken McQuirter, Thrivent Financial Consultant*

# Congregation News

## Ascension – Huntsville, AL

An Ascension – Huntsville, AL Thrivent member sponsored a service project to beautify our church. Members, visitors, and the children attending our Preschool & Child Development Center (CDC) will see the beauty of new plants and flowers as they enter our church, the classrooms and the fellowship hall. The project has involved volunteers from the church and some assistance from the children of the CDC.

A Community Impact VISA card with \$250 from Thrivent Financial was used to help make our project successful and to get the involvement of volunteers, Thrivent members, and the families and staff of the CDC. The T-shirts and banner were provided by Thrivent.

Mary Engel



## Immanuel – Bossier City, LA

It was indeed an unforgettable family experience. On Saturday April 4, 2015, Immanuel - Bossier City, LA held an Easter event called "Walk with Jesus." More than 30 members of Immanuel, ranging in age from twelve to 60 plus, worked together to put on the event which included a "Walk with Jesus" followed by an Easter party with a clown, balloon animals, indoor games and an Easter egg hunt.

During the "Walk with Jesus," participants experienced the Easter journey. Each guest traveled through five stations: they felt the excitement of Jesus arriving in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, learned the significance of the Last Supper, and experienced the darkness of Gethsemane, the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, and the joy of his resurrection. What a wonderful way to build relationships within our congregation, as well as with the guests who attended the event!



The education and evangelism committees worked hand in hand inviting members of the public through advertising with flyers, newspaper and radio announcements of the event. Everyone who attended including the volunteers walked away feeling personally and spiritually impacted.

Tami Rutten

## Redeemer – Mandeville, LA



Recently some members of Redeemer – Mandeville, LA got together to clean the church and make the flower covered cross for Easter Sunday. Standing in front of the cross are: Hannah Stinnett, Linda Ray and Lydia Stinnett in front. Also helping with the project was Myrelene Pertuit.

Linda Ray

## Trinity – Baton Rouge, LA

"Friendship Circle", a 5 yr old outreach of Trinity – Baton Rouge, LA for approximately 12 persons with special needs, gathers twice a month to learn the good news of the Gospel through music, Bible lessons and crafts. Some of the Friendship Circle group are unchurched.

God opened up another opportunity during the Sunday school hour with the help of TLC member, Mary Beth Tapia, a Speech Pathologist with 33 years experience. Mary Beth is very gifted in delivering a message at each student's level so that they understand the love and salvation God has for each of them.

TLC has been following the 31 week program, "The Story" which covers the Bible from Genesis to Revelation as one continuing story of God's plan for redemption and salvation. Mary Beth developed a multi-paged folder sectioned off for each lesson and had the students paste a picture she drew summarizing the story with Scripture telling God's provision for that story. There were additional crafts at times that were applicable to the story of the week.

When asked about teaching this group, MaryBeth replied that "like these students, throughout the Bible, God used the least expected people to carry out His provision of grace, love and salvation".

Dana Sanders

## **Faith – Madison, AL**

On Easter Sunday, Faith - Madison, AL celebrated its 25th anniversary with fellowship, thanksgiving, and a special cake honoring the occasion. Faith has held worship services from April 5th, 1990 to the present, looking forward to many more years in God's service!

We hosted our annual community Easter Egg Hunt on Palm Sunday which was well attended by visitors from the community. After the children heard the story of the resurrection in the sanctuary, they scattered all throughout the church and yard in the hunt of those goodie filled eggs. Afterward we all joined in the fellowship hall for arts and crafts, snacks and games.

But perhaps our most exciting news was when our very own Seminarian, Alex Garber (pictured), got his vicarage call to St. Peter's - Eastpointe, MI. We all watched the call service live online and it was a truly emotional and momentous event. Congratulations, Alex!!

*Iris Grimm, Sherrie Callahan*



## **Unity – Birmingham, AL**



The LWML at Unity – Birmingham, AL has a different trend in its quarterly Bible Study. After an honest and sincere request and desire by some men of the congregation to participate in the Bible Study, the ladies agreed and warmly welcomed them to participate. This has proven to be one of the most profitable decisions that the LWML has made. There has been increased attendance and participation, added enthusiasm, new insights, diversity and increased funds for our mission.

Ironically some men of the congregation, including the pastor, participated in a skit on Palm Sunday which was written some years ago entitled "Come to Calvary." Pictured are some of the participants wearing the names of the Biblical characters they represented. There was a response from the congregation to each one. Appropriate songs were used during the skit. It was such an awesome performance. We give all thanks, praise and honor to God.

*Elois Ramsey*

## **Good Shepherd – Slidell, LA**

Good Shepherd – Slidell, LA held their annual fish fry on Good Friday. Good Friday worship followed the dinner.

Easter Sunday was a day of celebration with worship, Bible study and an Easter Egg Hunt.

The Ladies League is busy preparing for a garage sale at the church on Saturday, May 2. Profits from the sale will benefit outreach programs.

*Sandra Davis*

## **Grace – Huntsville, AL**

The annual Youth Christmas Workshop will be held November 15, 2015 from 3:00 – 7:00 PM at Grace - Huntsville, AL. The event is sponsored by the youth at Grace and funded by the North Alabama Thrivent Financial Chapter.

In 2014, the group made 225 turkeys out of pine cones and 225 Christmas ornaments as tray favors for Meals on Wheels clients, made 267 Christmas cards for nursing home patients, wrapped 135 filled shoeboxes for "Operation Christmas Child", and had three shopping excursions to purchase Christmas gifts for 13 foster children under the direction of DHR and FOCAL (Foster Children's Alliance).

Youth groups and Thrivent members should mark their calendars now for this event. This will be the last year for this project so let's go out with a bang and accomplish even more. For further information, please contact the coordinator of the event, Charlene Lechner in Huntsville, at 256-881-4754.

*Charlene Lechner*

## **Redeemer – Fairhope, AL**

Redeemer – Fairhope, AL held its annual Sausage Dinner this year in conjunction with the area's Arts and Crafts Festival. The youth and their parents, along with many other volunteers, fed hungry festival goers over the course of the three day event. The proceeds will be used by the youth for outreach projects and a youth retreat this summer.

Cloice Day, a member of Redeemer, also hosted a show and sale of her original artwork during the dinner. Her secret to creating these masterpieces is using paint by number kits. Cloice started painting as a hobby about 15 years ago, and still enjoys it today. The proceeds from the sale of her work during the show benefited the church's building fund.

*George Miller*



## **Jehovah – Pensacola, FL**



In the twilight of its 90th Anniversary, Jehovah – Pensacola, FL installed Pastor Ferry L. Nye, Sr. as the eleventh called pastor of the historic congregation. On December 14, 2014, District President Schultz installed Pastor Nye with twenty local and nearby pastors participating in the inspiring service. Pastor Emeritus James Brown, Sr., former pastor of sister congregation St. Matthew - Pensacola, brought the message of the day.

Rev. Nye previously served United - Montgomery, AL for sixteen years. He is a native of Baldwin County, AL, raised in the Stockton Community. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree at Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, AL, a Master of Divinity Degree at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN and is a four year graduate of the Pastoral Leadership Institute located in Dallas, TX. He is married to the former Mary Luceil Phillips. They have three adult children and six grandchildren.

*Ida Henderson*

## **Our Redeemer – Florence, Alabama**

In May Our Redeemer – Florence, AL completed its 2014-2015 session of Adult Bible Study. This session included an in-depth study of the historical books and prophecy in the Old Testament and the book of Revelation in the New Testament. Last session (2013-2014) included two Gospels in the New Testament and the Pentateuch in the Old Testament.

The class, led by Tony and Betty Mabrey, decides which books of the Bible to study. There are twelve regular attendees that include six from

Our Redeemer and six from other denominations: United Methodist, Chinese Christian, Roman Catholic and Lutheran Church LCMC. Our next session will begin in early September 2015. All are invited!

*Tony and Betty Mabrey*

## **Grace – Pensacola, FL**

Grace – Pensacola, FL has a very active senior citizen group aptly called the OWLS, which stands for Older Wiser Lutherans. Every Wednesday morning there is a Bible study led by our Ministry Assistant, Karin Moore.

Once a month, the OWLS have a potluck luncheon after the Bible study and a program that is geared to those

of this age group. On May 13<sup>th</sup>, our program was in keeping with Organ Donation month. Life Quest Organ Recovery Services representative, Phil VanStavern, gave an informative program on the critical need for organ/tissue donors and the Florida Donor Registry. Also, Jim Morris, an organ recipient, spoke about his experience and how it affected his family.

During the summer months, OWLS do not have a program but go to a local restaurant for lunch together. It is an enjoyable time of fellowship for all.

*Susan McFarland*

## **University – Tuscaloosa, AL**

Pastor Patrick Fertitta and May graduates celebrated their achievements at a reception at University – Tuscaloosa, AL. Le'Roderick(left), graduating from Holt High School, joined graduates of the University of Alabama: Stephen Garber, BS; Caroline Parsons, PhD, and Rebecca Mast, BA.

*Marie Parsons*



## **Good Shepherd – Gulf Breeze, FL**



It was perfect weather on Saturday, May 2nd, when members of Good Shepherd - Gulf Breeze, FL participated in the 2015 American Cancer Society Relay for Life at Navarre High School. The event is described as “the world’s largest and most impactful fundraising event to end cancer. It unites communities across the globe to celebrate people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and take action to finish the fight once and for all.”

The event ran from noon to midnight. This was a first time event for the congregation and it proved to be a resounding success. The church raised \$3,013 dollars, exceeding its goal of \$2,500. Team Good Shepherd was a joint effort by many members of the congregation. Over 40 members walked the track or helped in the tent where Lumpia, Filipino spring rolls, were sold, and free

bottled water was handed out to walkers with information about the church on each bottle. Many members donated money while some cooked Lumpia for the event.

Over 44 teams from the community participated. Not only was this a great fundraiser, but it was also a community outreach event for the congregation. Members are looking forward to next year’s event.

*Bonnie J. Karmie*

## **Christ Our Redeemer - Hartselle, AL**

Spring cleaning time is ideal for Faith in Action to help neighbors with home repairs and yard clean-up. Christ Our Redeemer – Hartselle, AL gathered on April 12, 2015, to perform loving acts of service for a nearby neighbor. The congregation, already wearing work clothes, began their worship at church and then drove to the designated home. One visiting family, with children, thought it was such a good idea, they changed their clothes and volunteered also. What a terrific way to welcome new people into the church! Show them how we live in the Gospel.

Twenty people trimmed shrubs; planted flowers; added mulch to the beds; pressure washed the driveway, fence and house front; built stairs; replaced a dishwasher and spruced up the yard. Curious neighbors visited. Opportunities for witness were abundant and we were able to share some extra mulch with the neighbor. After the work was completed, volunteers and the grateful family gathered in the driveway for the closing of the worship service with singing and prayers.



*Donna Bessken*

## **St. Paul – Montgomery, AL**

On May 16, 2015 the inaugural Elwood Hintz Freedom Run was held at St. Paul – Montgomery, AL to honor and support those currently serving in the U.S. Military. Lt. Col. Elwood Hintz was a founder of St. Paul, an Air Force leader, and active runner.

The run was organized by Adam Warnke and Bob Cortes. Many from the congregation ran as well as contributed. Nearly \$2000 was raised for Operation Warm Heart which helps military families.

*Ken Crum*

### *Share Your News*

The deadline for the July/August edition of the *Spirit of Southern* is July 15, 2015. Materials received after that date will be included in the web edition.

The preferred means for receiving material, text and pictures, is e-mail to "sosstuff@yahoo.com." Please send photos as a separate JPEG file. Material can also be mailed to the district office: The Spirit of Southern – Southern District LCMS – 100 Mission Drive, Slidell, LA 70460-5221. Please allow two additional weeks for mailing.

**District web site: [www.southernlcms.org](http://www.southernlcms.org) District office phone number: 504-282-2632**

### **Hurricane Preparedness 2015**

By the time you read this issue of *Spirit of Southern*, we will be in "Hurricane Season." The Southern District takes this subject very seriously and wants to help as much as possible. First and foremost, if you receive a mandatory evacuation order, please heed it. Then, please take a few moments to register with the district so that information can be on file. This can be done by phone, or on the District website, [www.SouthernLCMS.org](http://www.SouthernLCMS.org). This box can be saved in your evacuation file. It contains all of the information that you will need if and when the time comes.

If you can provide shelter, or are looking for shelter, you can also use the website to provide or receive information.

### *Clip and Save - Southern District Evacuation Reporting*

In the event of hurricane evacuation, please contact the Southern District with the following information:

Name, Congregation, City, State

Evacuated (yes or no) If yes, to: City, State

Contact Phone Number

**Report information to: [www.SouthernLCMS.org](http://www.SouthernLCMS.org) or call:**

**Church Workers (mandatory reporting) – 985-635-4232**

**Congregation Members – 985-635-4239**

If you can provide shelter, or are looking for shelter, you can use the website to provide or receive information.

**Please update any changes.**