



The Lutheran Beacon



Let your light shine . . .

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Don't forget about your leaders who taught you God's message. Remember what kind of lives they lived and try to have faith like theirs. Jesus Christ never changes! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb. 13; 7,8



The Rev. Dr. Albert Michael Marcis was called home to glory on Friday, March 24, 2017.

He is survived by his wife, Sylvia, of Winter Springs, FL and Parma, OH; his son, Michael of Parma OH; and three daughters, Ruth Marcis of Perry, OH, Lois Marcis of Middleburg Heights, OH, and Karen Springer and her husband Daniel of Kirtland, OH; and four grandchildren.

Albert Marcis was born March 14, 1928 in Tarentum, PA, where he was baptized into Christ and confirmed his faith, receiving the blessing of Revelation 2:10c, **Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life.**

He graduated from Concordia High School, Ft. Wayne, IN and received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Concordia College in Ft. Wayne, IN. He went on to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO; vicared in Fort William, Ontario, Canada and graduated from the seminary on June 4, 1954. Soon after graduation, on June 13, 1954 he married Sylvia nee Karjalainen, whom he met while on vicarage.

From seminary Rev. Marcis was placed as Pastor and Mission Developer at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Blue Island, IL (1954-57). He was then Called as Pastor and Mission Developer to Calvary Lutheran Church, Parma OH, serving there until his retirement from parish ministry in 1994. As a pastor, he supervised and mentored many young men who served as his vicars at Calvary.

Rev. Marcis was instrumental in the transition of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC), to the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, to the non-geographical SELC District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He was elected as the first District President of the newly formed SELC District and served in that capacity from 1971-97, making him one of the longest tenured District Presidents in the LC-MS. He was an important leader in the growth and development of the Lutheran Haven in Oviedo, FL, a ministry of the SELC District which provides independent, assisted, skilled nursing, and memory care services to retired Lutherans.

During his amazing record of service to the Church, Rev. Marcis served twelve years (six as Chairman) of the LC-MS Commission on Theology and Church relations; was the Chairman of the Task Force on Conflict Resolution; twelve years (four as Chairman) of the Commission on Constitutional Matters; and in 2011 was appointed by the Synodical President to the Commission on the Synodical Handbook and was intimately involved in the preparation and editing of the last four Synodical Handbooks.

In recognition of his distinguished service Concordia Seminary, St. Louis conferred on Albert Marcis the Doctor of Divinity Degree in 1980.

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MANAGING DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

RELATIONSHIPS

The word “stewardship” means “manager”. God owns everything. Christian stewardship is the management of all things according to His will, which includes the management of human relationships. God created us social creatures. We instinctively desire to associate with others in relationships (marriage, family, friends, school, recreation, church, etc.) Some relationships are pleasant. Others, upsetting. Personality clashes are often the cause. Differences in upbringing, experiences and education also make people different, sometimes to the point of disliking one another. Psychologists indicate that, among a host of friends, the average person has only five very close ones whom they totally trust and with whom they feel thoroughly comfortable.

MANAGING DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS

Marie G. McIntyre, a workplace coach, offered this advice to five women workers who seemed to hate each other: “Since you don’t get to choose your co-workers, you probably won’t like all of them. But you must be able to work with everyone, regardless of how you feel about them. Specifically, you are expected to be consistently pleasant, helpful and cooperative.” Jesus leads us a step further: “Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you.” (Luke 6:27-28). We are encouraged to engage the power of Christian love to ease or overcome troubled relationships - even in the Church.

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CHURCH

A pastor once remarked that he attended every church meeting because, if he didn’t, some troublesome members would clash disruptively. Psychologists indicate that, on average, one person out of every five families has a some kind of emotional instability, which, though not seriously mental, can disrupt human relationships. Consequently, a congregation with 100 families could end up with seven potential troublemakers. If such hold office or influence, trouble could potentially brew on any horizon, especially regarding issues proposing beneficial change.

St. Paul wrote epistles encouraging harmony to congregations with troubled member relationships, for example, the Corinthian Church.

TIPS ON HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT PEOPLE

> **Keep Your Cool** - Avoid an escalation of the disruption. The less reactive you are, the better your chances of easing a bad confrontation. Think before you speak to avoid saying or doing something you may regret later. In heated conversation, remember Prov. 15:1, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

> **Recognize the Difficulty of Changing Someone** Realize that it may be a waste of time to try to change, correct or convince someone entrenched with negative attitudes. Sometimes silence is the best response. Jesus remained silent before Pontius Pilate. (John 19:8-10)

> **Understand the “Why” behind Troublemakers** Remind yourself that some disruptive people might be behaving the way they do because of inherent emotional problems or warped personalities. Perhaps they also might be undergoing difficult life issues regarding health, spouse, children, work, etc. An understanding of root causes will help make you more proactive than reactive.

> **Address the Issue not the Person** - Address the problem at hand without attacking the problematic troublemaker. At all costs, do not insult the personhood of someone by angrily shouting: “You don’t know what you’re talking about! Stop being so stupid!” St. Paul once insulted the High Priest Ananias calling him a “whitewashed wall”, for which he later apologized. (Acts 23:1-5)

> **Shift the Focus from Yourself** - Negative aggressive types tend to criticize others. When attacked, politely shift the focus from yourself to the issue or the troublemaker by asking a question. Jesus did this frequently. Instead of answering deceitful “trapping” questions, he responded by asking his enemies a question. (Matt. 21:23-27)

> **Stand Up to Bullies** - Tom Huddleston writes: “When people don’t like themselves very much they have to make up for it by being bullies.” Bullies tend to exalt themselves by belittling others. Don’t cave into bully behavior. Engage the support of others and ward off whatever verbal and possibly physical abuse might occur. Many bullies are inwardly cowards and, when opposed, will back down.

Springtime at the Haven

by Diane Leining

Even though Florida does not get the four different seasons as much as the rest of the country, we can tell that spring is in the air.



The past few weekends have seen several events that remind us of this wonderful time of the year. A *Spring Fling Art Luncheon*, complete with beautiful original artwork and lovely giveaways was held in our Fellowship Hall recently.

Early Easter Celebrations for the families and residents of *The Lodge*, our memory care center, our nursing home and assisted living have been taking place to the delight of everyone. Young and old alike colored eggs, made tie-dyed t-shirts, played games...all under the watchful and playful eye of the Easter Bunny himself!! A wonderful time for families to get together and enjoy each other.

Our *Spring Flea Market* is April 28th and 29th where the Haven transports itself into a well-organized and smoothly run machine selling almost anything you can imagine.

Our volunteer residents work on this twice a year project all year round. Donations are brought in from all over the Oviedo area, residents sort through every item and get them ready for the next sale. It takes four days to set this extravaganza up along Haven Drive and our Fellowship Hall. Our residents volunteer to work every area and all that hard work results in over \$25,000 each Flea Market. All of the profits go to our nursing home and assisted living facility for items that make the lives of our residents easier and more enjoyable. We also have this sale in the fall, so as soon as our spring sale is over, we are right back to getting ready for the next one.



Also a little later this spring, we are so very proud and excited to announce the groundbreaking of our newest venture here at the Haven. The Landings, which are villa homes set in a two-story building complete with a commons area that will house dining areas, café, salon, wellness center, library and much more will break ground on Monday, May 22nd.

As we enter into Holy Week, we all know of the sadness and then the great joy this season brings to those of us who truly know that...

He is Risen, He is risen indeed...Alleluia!

Easter Blessings from your friends at Lutheran Haven!!

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Celebrating 100 Years

submitted by Marie Zavodny

Immigrants from Slovakia arrived in Wisconsin as early as 1890, where they congregated in an area five miles north of Boyceville and soon became known as the Slovak settlement. After a time, intermarriage took place and yet, some Slovaks are still with us. Holy Trinity Lutheran



Church is an example. On June 25, 2017, we will celebrate our 100th anniversary.

Rev. John Pekikan of Pleasant City, Ohio came to visit friends; among them Mr. Daniel Dinga and Mr. John Jurkovic, Sr. of Haugen, Wisconsin. They informed Rev. Pelikan of the need and desire of the Slovak people in the Boyceville area to organize a church. They came and met with several Slovak families — and that was the beginning. Holy Trinity was organized August 1, 1917.

Until a church could be constructed, church services were held in the Pleasant Hill School, Happy Valley School, in private homes, and in the Slovak Hall. Through their efforts, the Church took on a great awakening as it grew spiritually and membership. During the years 1918-1919, Student Pastor Michael Lucansky taught the children in the school building and started a 30 member choir. The choir helped the Church membership grow because the Slovak people loved to sing.

The construction of the first church began on August 9, 1919. The members chose to build their church on a small hill. It was a large two story structure, consisting of a sanctuary and a balcony on the first floor, and the school room and kitchen in the basement level. The high tower was built with a seven foot cross on top and the ringing of the bell could be heard for miles.

On September 19, 1920 a threefold festival was celebrated; the laying of the cornerstone, the dedication of the new Church and the ordination and installation service for the first resident Pastor, Rev. Michal Gotthardt. A year later, a parsonage was built. Rev. Gotthardt served the congregation until 1921 and at that time Rev. Andrew Boda came to minister to the newly formed congregation. Slowly the congregation kept growing as more Slovak people settled in the area.

Pastor Andrew Boda stayed until 1926. Rev. John Prok accepted the call and came in June 1926. Rev. Prok not only administered spiritual guidance, but also guided members with legal counsel as many of the Slovak people were not familiar with the English language. His guidance was especially helpful when the depression came upon them in the 1930's.

At this time the Slovak people kept up their old traditions and every summer held their Slovak School in the church basement. But slowly the English language kept moving in as the young people grew up and began to intermarry with their English speaking neighbors. The inevitable finally happened—the first English services were held in August of 1943. In 1948 Rev. Prok left the congregation which he served for 22 years. Rev. Joseph Fabry then came to minister to the congregation at that time. It was with Rev. Fabry's guidance that a Sunday school was organized.

In 1950 the people of Holy Trinity were making preparations for the celebration of the 30th anniversary of their church. A year before this, the church was remodeled inside and out and was happily awaiting the day of the anniversary when they planned to dedicate the newly remodeled church. This was to have taken place on September 17, 1950, but on June 1, 1950 the church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. "*So it happens, man means, but God changes*". Spiritually they were prepared for their anniversary and although the church was destroyed, they still held their celebration in the Tiffany Town Hall.

Immediately, members began making plans for the construction of a new church. On July 12, 1950 the foundation began with prayer and singing, "With The Lord Begin Thy Task". The need for a church building was great and the will power of the congregation was strong. Their dedication and effort was to put into the building of the new church. On August 13, they celebrated the laying of the cornerstone with Rev. Joseph Fabry officiating. On September 21, they rang their new bell for



the first time and at the end of October, held their first church service in the new structure which was built on the same location as the old church.

The 40th Anniversary of our church was celebrated on August 4, 1957 with Rev. Fabry guiding the preparation of this event. Soon after, God called Rev. Fabry unto Himself. In 1958, Rev. John Klein came to minister to the congregation. In 1965, Rev. Louise Kerestes accepted the call to be pastor of Holy Trinity and served for 35 years. After his retirement in 2000, Rev. Curtis Brooks (of Faith Lutheran in Menomonie) was called to serve Holy Trinity as a dual parish. He serves to this day.

Our celebration will be held June 25, 2017 at 10:30am with lunch to follow

The Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

100th Anniversary

Submitted by Barry Nelson - Centennial Committee Co-Chair

Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sharon, Pennsylvania is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year! A **Centennial Committee** was established in 2016, as well as important sub-committees. Several congregation members have been working hard to make 2017 a special year in our history!



A **Committee on our Heritage** has been established. Members have been working to develop a church heritage/history book that includes a written history and many pictures from 1917 – 2017. Pictures and documents have been provided by several congregation members, depicting our participation in past Luther League Conventions, Vacation Bible Schools, church picnics, Christmas programs, fellowship dinners, the building of the churches, youth group activities, Altar Guild, and Luther Laymen's League activities. A Powerpoint presentation that will be used at Centennial functions is also being developed.

Other *Committee on our Heritage* activities include the development of a church pictorial directory, and a plan to take care of our important church historical documents.

A **Religious Services and Banquet Committee** has also been established. A special commemorative service and banquet are set for June 11, 2017; this date is near the actual date of our official establishment as a church. Other divine services throughout our centennial year will also include special activities. We have invited pastors who have served us in past years to conduct different services throughout the year. Several former pastors of Saints Peter and Paul, as well as many area Lutheran pastors, are participating in the commemorative service and banquet.

An **Outreach Committee** has been established to develop plans for outreach, “back-reach”, and “in-reach” to help our congregation show sincere appreciation to the many people and families who worked so hard over the last 100 years to make us a special church.

A **Music Committee** was established to develop and conduct special music offerings throughout our centennial year. A “favorite hymns survey” was created,

and congregation members have filled it out and been able to hear some of their favorites before, during and after many divine services.

The **Centennial Committee** also developed another interesting idea—a Saints Peter and Paul Time Capsule, which will be sealed December 31, 2017 and opened in 25 years on June 11, 2042. A student at an area public school has made the Time Capsule in his industrial arts class, and is donating it to our church. The Time Capsule will be filled with items of interest about our church, our centennial activities, and 2017 in general.

A special Centennial banner is being created by a dedicated congregation member. Another devoted member is interviewing long-serving congregation members for their thoughts and memories; these conversations will be included in the Time Capsule. Other members have designed t-shirts that will be sold to congregation members, who will wear them with pride at centennial functions.

Church members have really “pulled together” to raise funds to make our centennial celebration a reality. We made and sold a lot of *halusky* at a large community event on Labor Day 2016. We also have sponsored free-will offering centennial breakfasts that have generated important funds to help us accomplish our goals.

With God's guidance and blessing, the Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church Centennial celebration has generated a lot of pride in our church and its heritage and history.



by Sharon Roegge,
LWML SELC District President

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! LWML

President Patti Ross announced before March 31st that we had reached our \$2,000,000 goal. All that comes in postmarked by the 31st will go toward the 2017-2019 Mission Grants. This month's LWML Mission Grant is for "We are God's Workmanship" for \$32,500. This grant will be to assist in supplementing the expenses of six Saint Paul Lutheran High School (boarding school) in Concordia, Missouri. These scholarships will be for students from impoverished countries who intend to return to their

homes as pastors, teachers, missionaries, or in other church work. For 132 years the school has been blessed to provide many students with an education in a Christian environment. The school's goal of nurturing the student's relationship with Christ, while providing a quality education, has prepared many young adults to serve the Lord.

Forty-five percent of Saint Paul's students are from countries across the globe. The scholarships will enable these international students to be the hands and feet of Christ spreading the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. More details on this and other mission grants can be found on www.lwml.org.

LWML SELC District Grants – There's a change of our SELC Mission Grants. Family of Christ suspended the Back to School/Back to Church campaign for which they had applied. We asked they reapply in the next biennium. Next on our list is Concordia Lutheran Church in Macungie, PA, for \$2,000. They have now completed their remodeling of their church and preschool. Ribbon cutting and Open House will be on April 29th and a Church Blessing and Celebration will be on April 30th. Next on our grants list is for \$2,000 for ABRAS SE – Brazil Mission for the expansion of the ABRASSE day care facilities to a capacity of 110 children to include newborns to 6 years old. We have about one fourth of that as of the end of March. We have until March 31, 2018, to receive the remaining \$5,000 to cover the last 3 grants, the 25% that goes toward the national grants, and 10% which goes to our general fund for administration. If you would like mite boxes or the remittance form to send in with your mites, please notify Nona Schipull, district treasurer, or myself. Our information is in the SELC District Directory.

JESUS CHRIST ABOVE ALL is the theme of the 37th Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League to be held in Albuquerque, NM, June 22-25, 2017. This theme will be carried out the four days through Bible study, our Keynote Speaker, the worship services, the mission speakers, special luncheon speakers, The Above all Exhibit Hall, and the 75th Anniversary celebration. Those attending will be reunited with friends they've not seen for two years and make new friends as well. Above all, we'll be together with our 4,000 plus sisters and brothers in Christ. Come join us for a mountaintop experience! Check out the winter issue of The Lutheran Woman's Quarterly for more details or go to www.lwml.org. We are now up to 17 attending the convention from the SELC District.



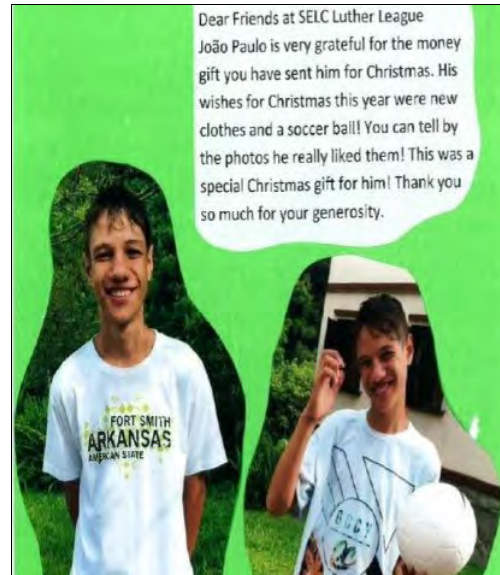
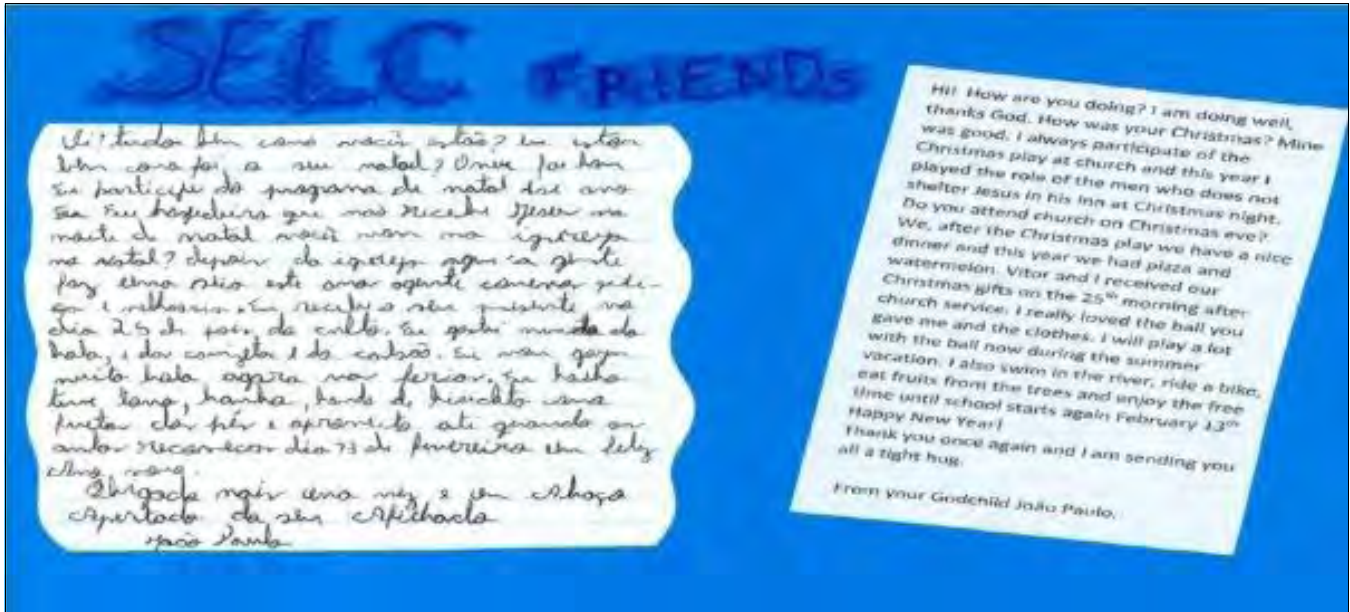
Luther League Mission News

by Tim Hasko

Did you know that currently the Luther League is sponsoring two children through the LCMS ministry "Point of Grace – Brazil Missions" (formerly the "Brazil Mission Society")? We were put in touch with brothers Vitor and Joao Paulo through Rev. Paul Biber when he was pastor of St. Lucas in St. Louis.

The annual sponsorship is \$420 for each boy for a total of \$840, plus we sent an additional \$50 for Christmas gifts. We are asking each SELC youth group to take a freewill offering at your church *sometime between now and May 15th* to help support Vitor and Joao Paulo.

Here is information to help you get to know them a little better. **Donations can be made online through the Luther League website (www.lutherleague.com) or by sending a check to: Pentecost Lutheran Church, Attn: Luther League Treasurer, 2213 Coolidge Ave., Racine WI 53403. (Make checks payable to "SELC District Luther League").**



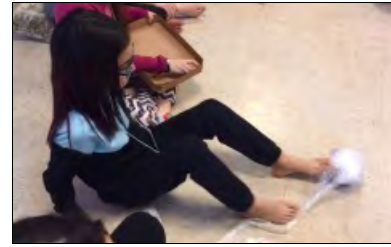
Important Dates to Remember

- April 30, 2017: Early Registration Deadline for Luther League Youth Gathering "Garden of Grace"
- May 15, 2017: We encourage youth groups to take a free will offering to support Vitor and Joao Paulo
- June 1, 2017: Deadline for Luther League Scholarship Applications (transcripts can be turned in later)
- July 20 – 23, 2017: Luther League Youth Gathering "Garden of Grace" hosted by St. John, Bound Brook NJ



The Luther League East Winter Retreat was held on President's Day weekend, February 17-19, at the Fellowship Deaconry Retreat Center in Basking Ridge, NJ.

The theme of this year's retreat was ***Our Feet Follow Jesus.***



Activities included bible studies, devotions, skits, photo scavenger hunt, Family Feud, and Kangaroo Kourt. All activities dealt with being a follower of Jesus. A total of \$170.00 was raised for the Luther League Scholarship Fund during the Kangaroo Kourt.

Dr. Doug's Disaster Corner

By Doug and Nona Schipull
SELC-DDRCs (District Disaster Response Coordinators)

In another life and another time, I was principal of a Lutheran school. As part of my duties, I was a member of an accreditation visiting team. My area of expertise was administration. One of the items we had to look for was a weather alert system to include a weather radio. We did not recommend one brand of radio over another, but we did recommend schools look for radios with THE Public Alert and/or the NOAA Weather Radio (NMR) All Hazards logo. The Public Alert Standard (CEA-2009-A) was developed by the Consumer Electronics Association in conjunction with NWS. Radios carrying the Public Alert logo meet certain technical standards and come with many, if not all, of the features listed below. NWS has evaluated radios carrying the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards logo for user friendliness and performance capabilities.

Prices for residential grade radios vary from \$200.00 and up, depending on the model. Among the more useful features in a radio are:

- 1) Tone alarm: NWS will send a 1050 Hz tone before broadcasting most warnings and many watch messages.
- 2) technology: SAME (Specific Alert Message Encoding) allows you to specify the particular area for which you wish to receive alerts.
- 3) Selectable alerting of events: while SAME allows you to specify a particular area, some radios allow you to turn off alarms for certain events which might not be important to you.
- 4) Battery backup: Since power outages often occur during storms, having a radio with battery backup can be crucial.
- 5) External antenna jack: While most radios come with a whip antenna, you usually can extend it to improve reception. Depending on location, you also may need an external antenna for better reception.

Charitable Planning Shares the Vision of Life

by Robin Paris, SELC District Gift Planning Counselor

The famous renaissance artist, Michelangelo, had a vision of life. He painted and sculpted the visions of what he saw with unmatched beauty. He left a legacy that has inspired and been enjoyed for millennia.

History tells us that Michelangelo died a pauper. His one-line last will and testament reads, "I die in the faith of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, with a firm hope of a better life to come." He was a generous man. Martin Luther tells us that the famous artist used his vocation or calling to give untold treasures that serve mankind and the cause of Christ beyond measure.

Like Michelangelo, you have been given gifts from the heavenly Father. Each baptized believer has been given the Father's Spirit and gifts from His Anointed Son, Jesus Christ, to serve the Church and world. These gifts are ours not because we earned them, but because God loves His creation and He loves you.

Whether it is recognized or not, each person has a vision of life. For some, that vision serves to guide aspirations, hope and action. For others, vision may be unrealized as one never reaches their potential.

Each person has a call to vocation to serve God and serve others. This encompasses many possibilities. Charitable gift planning is one such opportunity that promises joy to those who serve.

Charitable planning shares a vision of life that includes thankfulness for God's love and enables others to know that the Lord's love abides for them as well. For many, charitable planning promises to positively impact their world and other people's worlds like few other visionary actions.

We can help you. Call Robin Paris, our SELC District Gift Planning Counselor, to have this conversation. You may reach her at 937-477-9713, or her email is Robin.Paris@lfn.org.

[Marcis - continued from Page 1]



Throughout his ministry, Dr. Marcis had a close connection to the Florida congregations of the SELC District. After his retirement, he and Sylvia, began spending winters in Central Florida and in 2011 became members of St. Luke's Lutheran Church where they loved to worship, participate in the activities of the congregation, and enjoyed the fellowship of many pastors and friends at the Lutheran Haven.

The words of Jesus chosen for his funeral service are a fitting summary of his life:

Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. Matthew 25:21.

NOTE: It's that time of the year when our Beacon becomes a two month issue. June & July and August & September will be combined.

Articles & Photos are welcome! Send submissions to:

email: gailpete37@yahoo.com

Phone: 321-752-5519

Deadlines

June/July issue — May 12th

August/September issue — July 12th

Balance of the year — the 12th of each month



Taking a break!

More Reasons Why Luther Remains So Important

by Pastor Ken Ballas, EM

It has often been said that among the most influential of Martin Luther's voluminous writings for Christians of all ages are his hymns and catechisms (cf. Hymn 865, LSB; 477, LW; 288, TLH).

Both of these practical resources for Christian living conveniently come together in a number of catechetical hymns found in various editions of hymnals currently in use in the LC-MS (see the helpful grouping of catechism hymns on page 993 of synod's newest hymnal, Lutheran Service Book).

Although certain melodies may not be that familiar to some, reading and praying the *words* (preferably out loud) of English translations of Luther's German hymns can be surprisingly instructive. (One is also amazed at the skill of certain translators who must be proficient in two languages.)

Consider, for example, the Reformer's hymns on the Ten Commandments or our Lord's Prayer, both of which provide excellent summaries of these key biblical teachings in his Small Catechism.

Luther would likely remind us that his Hymn 581, LSB or "These Are the Holy Ten Commands" ("That Man a Godly Life Might Live" in Hymn 287, TLH) is also well worth spending time with, especially within the Christian home.

Hymn 954, LSB, "We All Believe in One True God," Luther's setting of the Nicene Creed, if not already used in your congregation, can be learned in parishes blessed to have a dedicated church choir or gifted vocalist or cantor. Some may also remember the *Slovak* creedal Hymn 253, TLH.

As stated in a footnote in LSB, Luther uses the biblical narrative concerning our Brother-Savior's Baptism to teach the meaning of Christian Baptism for our daily lives. (Note the *two* musical settings for this catechism hymn, "To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord" in LSB 406/407; LW 223.)

Note Luther's familiar setting of our Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, Who from Heaven Above." (LSB, 766; LW, 431; TLH, 329) Again, we suggest that for optimum instructional purposes of longer catechetical hymns, the *words* of many, if not all, of the inner stanzas be *spoken* or prayed in unison.

Related to the Office of the Keys is the Reformer's meaningful hymn based on Psalm 130 regarding confession and absolution. "From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee". (LSB, 607; LW, 230; TLH, 458) for which Luther also composed the music.

The LSB index of catechism hymns on page 893 also notes Luther's translation of John Hus' communion Hymn 627, LSM, "Jesus Christ Our Blessed Savior." (Hymn 236 and 237; LW, 311, TLH). Also well worth considering are stanzas 2 and 3 of the fine communion hymn, "O Lord, We Praise Thee," the text of which is also attributed to Martin Luther. (Hymn 617, LSB; 238, LW; 313, TLH.)

During the coming post-Easter season, may you also be refreshed by your periodic reviewing of the practical genius of Luther's Small Catechism encapsulated in so many of the Reformer's hymns!

Note: Especially for those within driving distance of Cleveland area central circuit SELC District congregations, plan now to attend the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation festival service at Grace, Lakewood, OH at 4 p.m. on Sunday, October 22, 2017. Scheduled preacher is the Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb who is also the author of the highly uplifting April 2017 Portals of Prayer devotions.

Reaching Rural America for Christ

A newsletter of LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission

Volume 8, Issue 4 • Newsletter

April 2017



Rural & Small Town Mission

Our "Life Together"

- To follow the core beliefs of the LCMS
- To equip rural professional and lay leaders
- To support congregations in community engagement

Remember: RSTM is eligible for Thrivent Choice Dollars!

Please Pray for These Important Dates

April 27 - Webinar
"re:Vitality for RST Churches"
with Rev. Mark Wood, director,
LCMS Witness & Outreach
1-2 p.m. CST

May 25 - Webinar
"Teaching the Faith: Sunday School"
Angela Kollbaum, youth director,
St. Paul's, Concordia, Mo.
1-2 p.m. CST

Nov. 9 - 11
National RSTM Conference
Hilton Kansas City Airport
Kansas City, Mo.
lcms.org/rstm/conference

If you have an idea or story for Rural Outreach, contact Amy at the RSTM office.

Phone: 888-463-5127
Email: amy.gerdts@lcms.org

"And we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and fervent love toward one another through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord" (Post Communion Collect, LSB)

Strong Faith, Fervent Love

Time to Get Hands On!

Here at LCMS RSTM we spend a lot of time developing resources and training groups of folks how to reach out with the love of Christ to those around them and to those who have become lost along the way. This training is great and I am so glad we have the opportunity to partner together with districts and congregations in order to bring these valuable resources to bear.

However, one of the biggest drawbacks to training is, that it is just that ... training. After we leave it is all up to the congregations and their members to carry out their ministries in their respective places. There is little else we can do but equip and encourage. Unfortunately, while intentions are good and plans are made, when faced with the daunting task of getting beyond ourselves and carrying out these ministries, they often fall flat. As busy schedules fill up and routines set



Community outreach event

back in, it becomes easier and easier these congregations to slide back into their old self-interested ways.

So, by way of encouragement, I urge you to get hands on! Take some baby steps and start doing. You don't have to eat the whole elephant in one bite, just start DOING. There is no substitute for trying. Even if it doesn't turn out the way you'd like or hoped it would, there

RSTM Events Update

Don't forget: RSTM provides free monthly webinars on topics important to congregations in town and country settings. Up next is "re:Vitality for RST Churches" with Rev. Mark Wood, director, LCMS Outreach & Witness, on April 27, followed by "Teaching the Faith: Sunday School" with Angela Kollbaum, St. Paul's, Concordia, Mo., on May 25. Find past webinars in the webinar archive on our website as a free resource for use when you need it.

Register for our Engaging Your Community events (EYC) and our Engaging the Wandering (ETW) events at lcms.org/rstm. You can also see our full calendar.

Don't forget to check out all the RSTM National Conference details at lcms.org/rstm/conference.

Now is a great time to register! Contact our office at 888-463-5127 or rstm@lcms.org.





The group on a field trip to the Hemme Bros. Dairy & Creamery



One highlight was getting to learn to drive a tractor

Thoughts from a Seminary Student on a

RURAL IMMERSION

Contributed by Craig Rinkus, seminary student, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.

During an unseasonably warm week in November, I and a group of four other students from the LCMS' Fort Wayne seminary, along with beloved professor, Dr. Timothy Quill, had the opportunity to visit Western Missouri for several days to get a taste of rural life. Having been raised in various cities around the country, we students had much to learn about parish ministry in small towns and rural areas.

The week before Thanksgiving, the Synod's Office of Rural & Small Town Mission kindly hosted our small group of city slickers on the campus of Saint Paul Lutheran High School in Concordia, Mo. There, we were treated

to several days of presentations, field trips and new experiences. The field trips were some of the most enlightening and engaging parts of our stay. We were able to visit the typical stomp- ing grounds of an average small town parish pastor. Schools, farms, funeral parlors and even homes of local LCMS members welcomed us. They eagerly taught us about their way of life, what they expect from their pastors and what future pastors can expect in the unique environment of rural America.

We were also able to hear from a motley group of speakers, ranging from Synodical officials, to farmers, to young students from Saint Paul High School. Each group of presenters had its own unique bit of advice for us student pas- tors. For people accustomed to city liv- ing, it was eye-opening to hear presenters mention how they are able to keep their doors unlocked at night. And, that am- bulance helicopter insurance is actually



quite common in rural areas. And, that a hot topic of conversation in many small towns often concerns the current price of corn and beans.

While each group of presenters had their own distinct bits of advice to share, we noticed several common warnings running through them all. One of which was, "Be careful what you say, because everybody knows everybody in a small town."

On behalf of Dr. Quill and my fellow students, I would like to extend thanks to Amy Gerds and Pastor Todd Kollbaum for their warm hospitality, and for work- ing overtime that particular week to ensure that our stay in Concordia was informative and intriguing.

LCMS Rural & Small Town Mission supports and encourages rural and small-town congregations in engaging their communities and growing together in Christ through Word and Sacrament.

Learn more about RSTM at lcms.org/rstm or by calling Amy at 888-463-5127. "Like" us on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/lcmsrstm](https://www.facebook.com/lcmsrstm).

Click the Give Now button to support the work of RSTM.

Give Now

Strong Faith, Fervant Love, *continued*

is great value in trying. Because, the more you try, the more seeds you scatter. The more seeds you scatter, the easier it becomes to continue sowing, even in some cases, watering and tending.

Trust the Lord and get hands on! It will be a blessing!

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salva- tion, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'" (Is. 52:7).