

The Spirit of Southern

Web Edition - March/April, 2016



A Personal Easter

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” (Rev. 5:12a)

The spiritual battle Jesus won was cosmic in scope. The Lamb of God died, nailed to a cross, so that all people throughout history might have the opportunity to live forever. By his resurrection, he defeated the power of evil and rendered it helpless before the throne of God. It is impossible to put into words the magnitude and wonder of the effects of this event. It is too awesome to comprehend and fully grasp.

And yet the real wonder is that the resurrected Christ is a personal God, who seeks us out one by one. He knows our innermost being and meets us where we are, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. He cares for us individually, and knows our needs and how best to meet them. He calls us to himself individually, that we may serve him and be fulfilled.

Jesus met Saul on the road to Damascus when Saul was bent on destroying him. Saul was focused on his mission with all his emotion, intellect, and will. Jesus met him in a flash of light and in his resulting blindness. Their encounter was tailor-made: force meeting force, power meeting power. Saul would not have listened to anything else, and Jesus gave him the name Paul and changed the direction of his life.

Peter was fishing. He was discouraged, fearful, ashamed, and disappointed in himself for his cowardice. Jesus met him at his job in his particular state of mind. He helped him with his fishing, provided breakfast, and quietly spent time with Peter reestablishing their relationship, assuring him of his forgiveness, and changing the direction of his life.

What he does for individuals he does for groups as well. The disciples were huddled in fear and doubt together behind locked doors. Jesus goes to them, invites them in their doubt to touch his nail pierced hands, and breathes on their fearful souls his peaceful, powerful, Spirit. He changes the direction of their life together.

Jesus, the resurrected Christ, the living God, is seeking out all of us personally and corporately, to uniquely touch our deepest need and give us a renewed direction of life. Where do you need Jesus' personal Easter? Where is the living Jesus giving direction to your congregation?

Open our hearts, Father, that we may receive personally and corporately, your resurrected Son, anew. Amen

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

District & Synod News

Outreach Workshops A Huge Success!

Since January your Mission and Ministry Facilitator, Eric Johnson, has been conducting Outreach Workshops, teaching our district congregations the steps necessary to effectively get outside the walls of the church building into the community to connect with people relationally, and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

So far this year Eric has conducted 6 workshops, training 30 congregations and over 300

people in Outreach 101, with two more workshops planned this spring. The next Outreach Workshop is hosted by St. John - Lake Charles, LA on April 23rd. The second will be hosted by Church of The Pines - Waveland, MS on June 4th.

One of the keys to follow through and implementation of an effective outreach plan is coaching. Pastor Johnson is a certified Mission Coach, and offers his coaching service free of charge to district congregations. Because there is such a need for coaches in the Southern District, Eric will be training a small cadre of new coaches this summer to help coach congregations in Outreach.

Sign up for Rev. Johnson's e-newsletter, Crosspoints, at southernlcms.org in order to stay connected with what is happening in mission within our Southern District. If you would like more info on Outreach Workshops or coaching please contact Eric Johnson at e.johnson@southernlcms.org, or 985-796-7175.

Rev. Eric Johnson, Mission and Ministry Facilitator

Southern District National Lutheran School Accreditation Training

On January 28 and 29 the Southern District hosted a NLSA Training Seminar. The training was conducted by Mr. Terry Schmidt, the Director of Schools for the LC-MS. Terry conducted two sessions for us; one at the Southern District Office in Slidell, Louisiana and one at Grace Lutheran School in Huntsville, Alabama. We had a total of 25 teachers and principals representing eight district schools.

The meeting was arranged by our Southern District Commissioner for Accreditation, Ms. Donna Behnken; Grace Lutheran School - Huntsville, Alabama. The purpose of this training was to build more awareness among our schools for National Lutheran School Accreditation in our district, and to train people to serve on accreditation teams as team members and team captains. Our accreditation commission is trying hard to help more of our schools go through NLSA. It is the best way we have for a school to take a good look at itself and find ways to improve. It is also valuable as a marketing tool. I was pleased with the turnout and the enthusiasm of the attendees.

President Kurtis Schultz



Southern District Disaster Response

In late February numerous tornadoes, straight line winds, and heavy rains raked across the Southern District. The next morning, as the storms began to leave our area, the Southern District Disaster Assessment system was activated. Although many areas were hit, we are thankful to report there was minimal damage to LCMS members and churches.

In March, historic flooding continues in many areas of LA. Because the water is rising to record levels, many are not covered by flood insurance. The Southern District Relief efforts are being coordinated through Pastor Ed Brasher. He will be working in partnership with Camp Restore, who is offering their volunteers.

The Southern District is gathering information concerning unmet needs of those affected and will be issuing grants to assist them in their recovery. You can help in the process: **You can report** - yours or your neighbors needs. This is best done through your church or Circuit Visitor. **You can volunteer** - to help with the cleanup. Contact Pastor Ed Brasher at 205-296-3714, shepherdsheartministry@yahoo.com. **You can give** - to supply grants those with unmet needs. Offerings can be accepted through the Southern District website, www.southernlcms.org.

Spirit of Southern Welcomes New Editor

Mrs. Cheryl Pitts made a serious commitment to church ministry when she graduated from Concordia Teachers College (now Concordia University - Chicago) in 1970. She ventured into the ministry as a young graduate teaching first grade at Faith - Harahan, LA.

After five years on staff at Faith, and several "volunteer years," she continued her ministry as an assistant to Rev. David Kruger at St. Stephen - New Orleans. When St. Stephen called Rev. Mark Hayman, Cheryl continued as his assistant for nine years.

She not only served St. Stephen in their office, but also served the congregation as an active member. Her thoughtful input as well as her baking skills were always well received at any committee meeting. She continues to actively serve her current congregation, Ascension - Daphne, AL. She is retiring as Editor from the Spirit of Southern after twenty years. The Southern District is so very grateful that Cheryl chose to serve this district from day one of her ministry. Cheryl plans to return to her keen interest in sewing, of which she is a master.

Marion Kennedy

I'm pleased to announce that Spirit of Southern will be transferring to the very capable hands of Mrs. Daisy Olmstead, Administrative Assistant to President Schultz. Daisy will bring a fresh face to our communications and I hope that the task will bring her as much joy as it has to me. I am most thankful to all who have contributed material and become friends over the years, as well as district staff, past and present, who helped make communication a team effort.

Please note that Spirit of Southern will have a new email address, sos@southernlcms.org, which you can begin using for your May/June articles.

Cheryl Pitts

Concordia College Alabama - Selma, AL

Concordia College - Alabama plans to expand its academic reach once again by developing a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (BSN) to be established in the near future. This program is being designed for individuals who have already been licensed as Registered Nurses, but want to pursue a Baccalaureate of Science Degree in Nursing.

Heading up the new program is CCA's Health Sciences Division Chair, Dr. Constance Smith-Hendricks. "I have said we need a nursing program in this area for the last 20 years, so I am just excited to have the opportunity and be the one selected to come and hopefully make this dream a reality," Smith-Hendricks said.

A proposal for the program has been submitted to the accrediting agency Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and the college hopes for approval and implementation of the program by summer 2016.

Upon approval, the BSN program will join Concordia's other baccalaureate programs of Business Administration, Teacher Education, Criminal Justice, and Social & Behavioral Sciences.

Abby Campbell

Camp Restore - New Frontiers of Service

If we were to look back over the past ten years, we might see that RAI Ministries and Camp Restore were founded by the human reaction to care for and love those who were hurting. We did that without thinking too much, and worked with great zeal. Our roots are in love and service to one another, and there is no end to that need among us.

We are in an exciting new phase of work exploring what God has in mind for us here. How might we show love to one another, understanding that not all people have the same chances in life in terms of education, economic standing, circumstance, race or religion? We are in the place of thinking, looking, trying things that help people. Together we are trying to see how we can influence and change the systems whose failures Katrina highlighted.

We are beyond talking about how much longer 'this' is going to go on. The stream of volunteers coming to New Orleans continues unabated. People are still wanting to make a difference in the lives of others. We at Camp Restore facilitate that. We help those coming and those that are being served to fulfill their goals. We act as a catalyst.

We are also finding out more about how being together and working together affects us. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has provided us with a grant to work with local young men of color, helping them discover the power of their voices and God-given gifts and talents. We are looking beyond anecdotal evidence and are gathering empirical evidence that the experience changes people when they work together.

In the coming months we'll be sharing more about our new frontiers of service, as we also return to familiar territory and assist with the Southern District's response to the flooding from recent rains.

Whether it's at www.camprestore.org, on Facebook, Instagram or in person, we hope to see and serve with you soon!

Rev. David Goodine, Executive Director



Save The Date - Coming Events

LA-MS LWML Convention

The convention is hosted by the New Orleans Zone.

Date: Friday, April 22, 2016 to Sunday, April 24, 2016

Where: Houma, LA

Theme: "Bountiful, Sow, Nourish, Reap"
(2 Corinthians 9:8)

LCMS National Youth Gathering

- In Christ Alone" -

Date: July 16-20, 2016

Where: Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans
Complete information can be found at lcmsgathering.com

LWML Gulf States District Convention

Direct my footsteps according to your Word. Psalm 119:133

Date: April 29, 30 & May 1, 2016 The convention starts at 3 p.m. Friday, and ends Sunday before noon, following a beach worship service and some business.

Where: Courtyard by Marriott, Gulfport, Mississippi. Register directly to the hotel by calling 1 (800) 442-0887.

(Spealers, pictured left to right):

Keynote Mission Speaker: Rev. Rudy Schaser, pictured with his wife, Dorothy, spent many years as a pastor in the Southern District and is now the director of "With God's Little Ones."

Humorous Interrupter & Saturday evening banquet: Jan Struck with "Struck with Laughter".

LWML Representative: Rev. Dr. Robert M. Roegner,

Senior Pastoral Counselor for LWML. Pastor Roegner is no stranger to the Gulf States District, having attended our Biloxi convention in 2004 as the Mission Speaker when he was the Mission Executive for the LCMS.

Bible Study Leader: Rev. Dr. Kevin Wendt, pastor of Grace - Destin, Florida, since 2012. He is husband to Jen, President of the Emerald Coast Zone

Mission Speaker: Dr. Merle Golnick of Ocean Springs, MS, who, with his wife, Dorothy, served as missionaries for over 26 years at Concordia Middle School (CMS) in Chia-Yi, Taiwan, retiring in 1993.

Bea Daily



Congregation & School News

Prince of Peace – Corinth, MS

After the December 23rd tornado at Holly Springs, MS, Prince of Peace - Corinth, MS brought enough food, clothing and cleaning supplies to the FEMA distribution center to fill a table. The people working there were very appreciative of what we brought. At the same time, the church brought a small cash donation to deposit in the town's disaster fund.

Prince of Peace helps people in need on a continuing basis with a small food bank at the church and making homeless packs to distribute to the many homeless persons in the community.

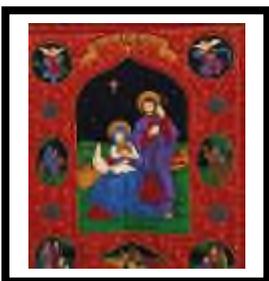
Pastor Michael Dixon

Trinity Lutheran School – Mobile, AL

Wheat Ridge Ministries recently awarded a Joshua Grant in the amount of \$4,600 to Trinity Lutheran School – Mobile, AL for their project "Healthy Hearts, Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives." Joshua Grants are one year, matching grants of \$1,000-\$5,000 to Lutheran congregations, organizations and agencies committed to launching new ministries of health and hope in their community. The congregation or organization requesting funding must contribute matching funds equal to 50% of the Wheat Ridge grant award.

The project is a two-generation project to provide students and their parents with activities, information and hands-on learning about making healthy lifestyle choices. This project builds on the "church family" to reach out to young single parents to build relationships that encourage healthy spiritual, physical and educational living. The project addresses chronic health issues among impoverished African American families in the South to help prevent disease and build healthier communities.

St. Paul's – Foley, AL



Last fall, the LWML of St. Paul's – Foley, AL held their annual Fall Bazaar and Bake Sale. They raised funds for various mission projects and to help with funding of special church projects such as a new roof for the fellowship hall. Pictured is a wall hanging that was purchased at the bazaar and hung in the sanctuary for Christmas.

On Sunday, January 31, 2016 Pastor Ryan Cramer welcomed 11 new members of the St. Paul's congregation. The LWML welcomed the new members with a special reception.

On Sunday, February 21, the congregation held a special luncheon for all of the "Snowbirds" that attend our services during the winter months (pictured). The LWML ladies furnished prizes for the attendees and arranged for Mike Stapleton to provide special music during the luncheon and conduct a sing-a-long.

During Lent several families and other members of St. Paul's have been taking turns each Wednesday evening to provide a delicious meal before the Lenten services. The church was blessed to receive the "The Stations of the Cross" tapestry wall hangings given by an anonymous donor. Pastor Cramer explained the meaning of the "Stations" during the Lenten Season.



Laura J. Johnson

Amazing Grace Preschool – Pensacola, FL

Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me and do not hinder them for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

In the year 2000, the need for preschool education for little ones was identified. Amazing Grace Christian Preschool was opened under the direction of Amy Onkka. Amy has a Masters degree in Educational Leadership and has been working in preschool ministry for 25 years.

The focus of the school is for 2, 3 and 4 year olds to expand his/her self-confidence, feeling of self-worth and love for Christ and others. It provides a learning environment where a child can learn and grow at their own developmental pace spiritually, socially, intellectually, physically and emotionally.

The school also provides VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten), a free Florida state program for 4 year olds

preparing children to enter elementary school ready to learn.

The children have opportunities to see Jesus as they go to chapel, sing songs and learn how much He loves them. The school reflects diversity as well -- there are students from other cultures and denominations making it an active mission field

Susan McFarland

Bethel – Point Clear, AL



On March 5, 2016, Bethel – Point Clear, AL hosted a "Let's Talk About It" Workshop. This was a event where we talked about exploring and sharing new possibilities in the church and the community. Pastor Ulmer Marshall is pastor of the congregation.

Praise God for all His servants who gave up their Saturday to join in the conversations in building of the Kingdom of God.

Cheryl Bagby

St. Paul – Picayune, MS

In December 2015, St. Paul – Picayune, MS, along with a Thrivent Action team, held its first Ugly Christmas Sweater contest. Along with food and fellowship we had a great deal of fun. The event was held to raise money for the youth to go to the LCMS National Youth Gathering (NYG) in 2016. We played bonco and one of the teams lost every game! Prizes were given, along with a generous amount of laughter. A framed Ugly Christmas 1000 piece puzzle was won by the "Ugliest Sweater".



On March 5, the St. Paul LWML, along with a Thrivent Action Team, held a spaghetti dinner fundraiser for the youth. As we Lutherans know when ever there is a food event, we all come to enjoy the three F's, Fun, Food, Fellowship.

Mary Ohrmundt

Faith – Shreveport, LA

The youth of Faith – Shreveport, LA, under the direction of Mrs. Glenda LaFitte, have begun “Celebrating a Year of Service”. We began our year with a visit to the Progressive Care Nursing Home this past summer where the youth sang and gave each patient a throw made by the LWML of Faith.

In October, 2015, we bought goods to give to the homeless which were given out during the Thanksgiving break. In December, in conjunction with the Postal Service, we gave Christmas gifts to special needs persons.

In January, 2016, we baked cookies and took some to the nursing home and gave some to the members at our church; the cookies were enjoyed by all. In February, we went to St. Paul - Shreveport to



participate in the worship service. We sang and praise danced.

We have begun preparations for our Easter program. We now have a Praise and Drill Team and a Youth Choir. We continue to thank God for our youth and His many blessings.

Arlene B. Ferguson

Redeemer – Fairhope, AL



Redeemer - Fairhope, AL, recently hosted a "Lands of the Bible" seminar, led by Dr. Paul Maier. Dr. Maier is one of the country's leading authorities on Biblical world history and a widely acclaimed author and speaker. The presentation focused on how ancient history and archaeology provide fascinating additional details, which not only correlate admirably the Scriptures, but also add a fresh dimension to them. Dr. Maier (center) is pictured with the congregation's pastors, Rev. Andrew Lehman (left) and Rev. William Parsons.

The proceeds of the event benefited the building fund of the growing congregation. Improvements to the facilities include relocation of the administration offices, expansion and remodel of the fellowship hall, addition of a new kitchen, and new driveway with covered drop off.

George Miller

Immanuel – Bossier City , LA

Immanuel – Bossier City, LA, hosted its 18th annual Women's Weekend on February 20, 2016. Our theme for the day was “Well Women – How Jesus has Gifted Women to Change the World”.

Our program for the day included two in-depth Bible study sessions on the Woman at the Well (John 4) led by Vickie Kleinsasser of Immanuel. A focus on John 4:39a, “Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony,” emphasized the impact

the Samaritan woman's testimony had on her community. Four additional topic sessions on getting filled when your well runs dry were led by members of Immanuel.

Following lunch, Sara Ardis, a representative from the Shreveport-Bossier Rescue Mission gave an informative outreach presentation on the work they are doing in our community. Their mission is a ministry that reaches out to feed, clothe, shelter and provide healing services to homeless men, women,

and families with children. Immanuel collected 2,500 bottles of water to benefit the Shreveport-Bossier Rescue Mission.

Music was provided by Butch Tinker and our Praise Team. Door prizes were given, breakfast, lunch and fellowship were enjoyed by all.

We praise God for this opportunity to grow spiritually through worship and sharing His Word.

Shirley Fortune

Holy Cross – Hattiesburg, MS

The “Sweethearts for Sweetpea” second annual 5k run/walk was held at the Longleaf Trace, University of Southern Mississippi (USM) main entrance on January 30, 2016. Holy Cross – Hattiesburg, MS helped sponsor the run that benefits the Elaina Spradley "Sweetpea" Endowment at University of Mississippi.

Joey and Lisa Spradley, parents of Elaina are members of Holy Cross. They started a scholarship in her memory at her Alma Mater, USM, in February, 2015. Elaina graduated in December of 2013 with her degree in Tourism Management. She was tragically killed in February of 2014.

Holy Cross recently dedicated a Sanctuary Lamp purchased with memorial gifts in Elaina's honor.



James Killingbeck

St. Mark's – Elberta, AL

The Bible is the best-selling book in history, but how many people are actually reading it? A Gallup survey reports the average American household has four Bibles. However, research by Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2008) found that only 16 percent of Americans read the Bible every day.

St. Mark's – Elberta, AL is hoping to reverse this trend, starting with its own congregation. They are using *The Story*, a Zondervan best-seller, to increase Biblical literacy, helping readers understand God's story from Genesis to Revelation and how their own stories intersect with God's. Consisting of 31 chapters of carefully-selected Scriptures sequenced in chronological order, *The Story* presents the Word of God in an engaging format, reading like a novel.

The Story Church Campaign is a unique program providing up to 31 weeks of curriculum for children, teen and adult Sunday school and up to 31 weeks of corresponding sermons. Everyone in the church is learning the same thing each week. St. Mark's began the experience on Sunday, January 17. Adult Bible class attendance jumped to about 100 each week since they started the study.



Diana Ringers

Redeemer – Pensacola, FL



The ladies of Redeemer – Pensacola, FL love to study the Bible, celebrate, and share good times and friendships. On Sunday, February 21st, they held their annual congregational Valentine Love Luncheon. This delicious meal (especially the bread pudding) was catered by Redeemer School

alumnus, Heather Moody Smith. There were plenty of door prizes and fun games to make for a wonderful afternoon!

The ladies also participate in Bible study led by Karla Heinicke and Melanie Cole every other Tuesday morning. These studies, all would agree, have caused us not only become closer to our Lord, but also closer to each other.

Many of our ladies have joined in donating their talents and gifts to create seven gift baskets for the annual Redeemer School Gala that will take place on April 16th. One of our donations this year will be a "Dessert of the Month" oral auction item. We continue to donate items to the Curry House, a refuge for troubled children sponsored by Lutheran Services of Florida.

As you can see, we stay busy serving our church, our community, each other and our Lord.

Cynthia Henderson

Open Arms Ministries – Slidell, LA

Open Arms Ministries is proud to announce the grand opening celebration of Open Arms Community Center on April 26, 3:30pm to 4:30pm. The Open Arms Community Center is located at 1410 8th St. in Slidell.

The \$1.7 million, 10,000 square foot facility was a longtime dream of Bethany – Slidell, LA who, through their SHINE capital campaign, raised 1.2 million of the funds. The completion of the Community Center led to the rebranding of Bethany to Open Arms Ministries. This name change unites all three of our facilities under one campus name, with the Child Development Center, the Church and now the Community Center all working together to meet the needs of our growing and diverse community.

Open Arms Community Center offers multiple meeting spaces, two state of the art computer labs, as well as a full size basketball court. Currently we are taking registrations for our summer camp and we are also host to the Slidell Upward Sports Basketball league. Future plans include homework help and tutoring programs for area students. Slidell residents will also be able to rent the facility for various events.

For more information, please contact Laurie Becnel, Outreach Coordinator at 985.643.3043 or Cheryl Scaglione, Director of Open Arms Community Center at 985.259.4781.



Laurie Becnel

Good Shepherd Lutheran School – Gulf Breeze, FL

As part of the Celebrate Reading Across America Week, students at Good Shepherd Lutheran School - Gulf Breeze, FL participated in many events. Dr. Seuss, whose birthday was March 2nd, was celebrated in several ways to commemorate the special week. Did you know that Dr. Seuss was Lutheran?

Students had green eggs and ham, read Dr. Seuss books to each other, made red fish blue fish crafts and hats like in *Cat in the Hat*, and ate Dr. Seuss snacks. There were different themes for every day such as crazy sock day, hat day, stripes day and green day.

The culminating activity was a visit from *The Cat in the Hat* along with Tiger, Dog and Lion from the Dr. Seuss book *Ten Apples Up on Top*. Ladies from the Early Learning Coalition of Santa Rosa County visited us in costume on Friday to share the book with us! *The Cat in the Hat* read the book while the Tiger, Dog and Lion demonstrated what was going on in the story.



The children enjoyed the week! Thank you Dr. Seuss for your enduring gift to our children!

Bonnie Karmie

Shepherd of the Bay – Lillian, AL

Palm Sunday certainly heard a joyful noise when the Heinecke family presented special music before, during and after the Divine Service at Shepherd of the Bay – Lillian, AL. Paul and wife, Ruth; brother, Kurt; and sons, Clayton and Wesley, contributed their special music.



Paul and Kurt are sons of the late Betty and Fred Heinecke, who were members of Shepherd of the Bay for 20 plus years. Betty served as organist and Fred was a cellist. Betty and Fred left the family with a strong legacy of faith and music.

Their sons now carry on the legacy. Paul, a trumpeter and guitarist, has a music degree and has taught community bands and award-winning high school jazz bands in his home town of Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin for decades. His wife, Ruth, plays piano and organ and is a piano teacher with a degree in Music Education.

Kurt, began as a band and church music director until he became involved with the highly-successful children's series, *Veggie Tales*. As their Director of Music for 20 years, he has co-written, composed, and produced most of the songs and music from the series. Clayton plays violin, viola, and trombone, while Wesley plays violin and trumpet.

After the service, the family was honored with a special fellowship time to thank them for taking time out of their busy schedules to honor us with their special musical talents.

Marie Anderson

Share Your News

The deadline for the May/June edition of the *Spirit of Southern* is May 15, 2016. 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 "sos@southernlcms.org." 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 District office phone number: 504-282-2632

Note: New Spirit of Southern email address: sos@southernlcms.org