



This Ministry That We Share

Southern District -LCMS
Nov. - Dec. 2013



SALVATION IS NEAR

"Our salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand." (Romans 13:11 b and 12a)

In looking to the future, Christians have two options. One is to look at the power of darkness and conclude that things will get worse and worse. The other is to look at the power of light and conclude that at some time, in some way unknown to us, light will triumph and day will come.



The prophet Isaiah looked to the future and he spoke of hope and promise. He pictured all the nations making their way to the mountain of the house of the Lord." As they come they say, "Let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths."

That positive hope and image seem to be less viable today. Evil and sin are not only entrenched in human life, they seem to become bolder. There are so many signs of the disintegration of society that it seems almost "Pollyanna-ish" to hold up that positive picture of the future. From a human standpoint, we know that we don't know how to turn things around.

Advent's message is remember what God has done, prepare for what he will do, and receive his future.

Jesus warns us not to get discouraged or overconfident. Although we do not have the answer to the future, He does. Christmas proclaims that his plans will not get thrown off the track, no matter how sin and evil may huff and puff. God came as Emmanuel (God with us) to save his people. The victory over the devil *has* been won at Calvary, and the Spirit of God is at work drawing a people into that victory. We have been called to be a part of that People of God, the saved and saving Remnant. We have been called to look at life squarely in the face, with all its "impossibilities," and say, "Nevertheless, I do

believe that God will have His way!" That is what we call Christian Hope. And hope is what Advent and Christmas is all about.

How wonderful that we do not have to figure it all out! We do not have to waste energy and thought on what might lie ahead! God knows, and God is leading us along our journey. He has promised to be with us all the way, even to the end of the age. And every step, for each one of His children, brings "salvation nearer than when we first believed." What a glorious thought with which to begin our celebration of Advent and Christmas!

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your sure word of promise and hope. Quicken our vision to see that all things are hastening to the fulfillment of Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.



WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER. . . .

These brothers and sisters in Christ coping with cancer:

- Rev. Jack Betz (Emeritus - Miramar Beach, FL)
- Rev. Jerry Conley (Emeritus - Marianna, FL)
- Mrs. Gloria Moritz, wife of Rev. Victor Moritz (Emeritus - Metairie, LA)
- Rev. Sidney Ponseti (Emeritus - Baton Rouge, LA)
- Rev. Ed Rogers (Emeritus - Ozark, AL)

These brothers and sisters in Christ coping with various health issues:

- DCS Margaret Anderson - Birmingham, AL
- Rev. Jesus Gonzales - Monte de los Olivos-Metairie, LA
- Commissioned Minister Ray Hauer - Huntsville, AL
- Rev. Rory Hermann (Good Shepherd - Gulf Breeze, FL)
- Rev. Vic Moritz (Emeritus - Metairie, LA)
- Ms. Debbie Nelson (Preschool Director - Holy Trinity-Covington, LA)

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed. Thessalonians 2:16-17 (NIV)

RETIREMENTS APLENTY!

It's really apparent that the Baby-Boomers are bound for retirement as

several of our pastors are headed that way.



Rev. Stanley Clark who served **Zion - Clinton, LA**, moved to the Southern Illinois District on Emeritus Status. He and his wife, Judy, will move into a newly purchased home. They will be closer to Judy's mother who is in ill health. Pastor Clark has quite a history with the Southern District. He served many years as an educator at Concordia Lutheran School in Marrero, LA, and at Baton Rouge Lutheran School.

Rev. Floyd Smithey will leave **Our Savior - Columbus, MS**, after his last service there on November 24. Pastor Smithey is a second career pastor. He earned his MDiv from CTS-Fort Wayne. He will transfer to the Mid-South District on Emeritus Status where he and his wife, Sherrill, will remain residents of Tennessee. Pastor Smithey previous served Immanuel in Hazel Green, AL.

Rev. David Doroh and his wife, Dorie, will enjoy an "Appreciation Reception" on November 23rd. Pastor Doroh has served his entire ministry in the Southern District. Previously to his thirty-five years as shepherd of **Our Redeemer in Florence, AL**, he served Christ in Morgan City, LA. The district has benefitted from his service in a myriad of ways including Circuit Counselor, Treasurer and President of the So. Dist. Pastors Conf., Pastoral Delegate to Synod Conventions, to name just a few. He is currently serving as Second Vice-President. He will retire the end of the year.

Rev. Gary Archbold, pastor of the dual parish of **Redeemer - DeRidder** and **Trinity - Leesville**, will also retire the end of this year as well as **Rev. Arthur Porter** who currently serves **First - Birmingham, AL**. Details to follow in our next edition.

Rumor has it that **Rev. Steven Koenig** of **Our Redeemer in Clinton, MS**, is also heading in the retirement direction.

*Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The unity of heart and mind
Is like to that above.*

HE LEADETH ME: OH, BLESSED THOUGHT!



God continues to provide workers for the harvest. Specific Ministry Program **Vicar Jack Onkka** will be ordained and installed at **Grace Lutheran Church** in **Pensacola, FL**. His Rites of Service will take place on December 8th at 2:00pm. Southern District President, **Rev. Kurtis Schultz** will officiate. Former pastors of Grace, **Rev. Craig Bickle** and **Rev. Dan Esala** will give the Gospel Message. Jack earned a BA in Criminal Justice from the University of West Florida. He has worked at the Santa Rosa Sheriff's Office since 1985 and will retire in 2015 from that office.

As a member of Grace, Jack has been on mission trips to Haiti and Slovakia and; and, served as an Elder, Sunday School teacher and Licensed Lay Deacon.

He leadeth me; oh, blessed thought!

Oh, words with heav'nly comfort fraught!

Whate'er I do, where'er I be,

Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

He leadeth me, he leadeth me, By his own hand he leadeth me.

His faithful foll'wer I would be, For by his hand he leadeth me.

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS - EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE MANUAL



Lutheran schools are connecting places! If your congregation has or is looking to offer an early childhood ministry, it is strongly recommended a copy of the updated ***in His Hands*** Manual be purchased. This is a resource manual for **starting, expanding or improving a Christ-centered early childhood development ministry**. This edition of "In His Hands" is intended for **leaders and board members of early childhood programs** that are either free-standing or **integrated with a Lutheran elementary**

school.

in His Hands provides direction as new programs are developed while offering on-going support for established programs to raise the bar of excellence through the utilization of accreditation, technology integration, and innovative ideas. Produced under the auspices of LCMS School Ministry, the resource can be purchased and downloaded by clicking on the link below. The resource contains 178 pages and is being offered at a price of **\$20** through the end of 2013.

In His Hands (downloadable, pdf). . . .3rd Edition, ©2013

Product ID S08669-E. . . .<http://store.lcms.org>

YOUTH ALERT. . .YOUTH ALERT. . .YOUTH ALERT

Mark your calendar for the

- **2014 SOUTHERN DISTRICT YOUTH WORKERS CONFERENCE**

This annual event is for volunteer and professional youth leaders.
January 31 - February 2 @ the district offices in Slidell, LA.
Watch for further updates.

- **SOUTHERN DISTRICT SENIOR YOUTH GATHERING**

July 10-13, 2014 @ Camp Restore in New Orleans, LA
The planning team has begun making preparations.
Share the dates now with your youth leaders.
Further information will be released soon.

OUR STEWARDSHIP OF HIS RESOURCES

District and Synod Mission Support Trends	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Total Budget	\$1,125,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000
Budgeted Income through 11/15	\$ 937,500	\$ 916,667	\$916,667
Actual Income through 11/15	\$ 815,734	\$852,228	\$ 819,688

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SPEAK OF STEWARDSHIP???

God has charged us with taking care of all He has provided with on earth. However,

there are four specific acts He has charged us with when He gave us His church. These are **Testimony, Tithe, Time, and Talent**. How do we fulfill our obligation in each of these areas?

The Lord gave us specific instructions in this area, "Always be ready to defend your faith." This means whenever the opportunity arises, whether in church, in meetings or on the street. Daily in our lives we meet people that don't know of God's plan of grace. This could be in school, at work, during recreational time, or any time in our life. We should always be ready to **WITNESS**.

As described in the Bible, **TITHE** means to give ten percent of what God gives you back to God. Many people misunderstand this instruction and have the feeling that once they have reached ten percent they can quit giving. In reality, as described in the Bible, ten percent is not to be interpreted that way. You should strive to reach that level. (It may take several years to work up to that point, but if you increase your giving each year until you reach it, God will understand). Once you reach it do not feel you should quit raising the percentage. At the same time you should consider sacrificial giving. This is making a sacrifice in order to give money to the glory of God, it may be to a church drive, to a needy family, or any cause that you want to support over and above your normal giving.

TIME in stewardship means giving of your time in an way that glorifies God. It may be to a drive at church, to a cause for the needy, to help with a youth program. There are some people that measure this like giving money and strive to tithe there time. There are 168 hours in a week, therefore they give at least 16.8 hours a week to doing God's work. With all the organizations in your area that have formed to help the needy, it is easy to find one that could put you to work.

To give **TALENT** might be an area that you would struggle with more than the above, however if you are able to sing, read, organize, or are good at typing, filing, or other office type work you certainly will not have trouble finding a place to put your talent to work. Can you babysit, can you cook, can you teach Sunday School. Look around your church, around your neighborhood around your town, surely you will find something that would use your talent.

BUILDING HOPE THROUGH REVITALIZATION/TRANSFORMATION

TCN is not about changing doctrines/beliefs which are central to our Lutheran faith is about following God into the mission field with a forward looking posture and goals in mind. Even though statistics frequently cite congregational decline, aging, and even death, we know the mission field exists in each of our communities helps congregations return to a biblical, missional culture with an emphasis on spiritual renewal. Congregations can face the future with hope through a system of relationships where "wins" are celebrated and the church is reframed into action.

The 2013 National LCMS Convention adopted Resolution 3-08A (To Reaffirm Faithful Church Revitalization as a Priority of the Office of National Mission) by a vote of 915-39. Congregations and districts have been utilizing various programs and processes for sustaining and revitalizing (e.g. Refocus, Church Turnaround, In Focus Church, Natural Church Development, and Transforming Churches Network [TCN] - the latter a recognized service organization [RSO] of the LCMS). The resolves focused on: reaffirming church revitalization as a priority of the Office of National Mission that the Office of National Mission increases its ongoing focus on revitalizing congregations Networks for support and encouragement are foundational to revitalization & transformation. TCN offers a number of options for partnership and support:

- * Congregations (3 options)
- * Pastor and Leadership (2 options)
- * Pastor (2 options)

Please request a copy of the options by e-mail. Congregations have a variety of tools available in choosing what might best meet local needs. The follow-through is essential and that is where the networking of congregations and pastors or use of coaching can be instrumental to develop plans and put them into action. Congregations often develop plans but do not follow-through to put them into action. Together option(s) can be explored and being intentional to establish specific plans for transformation/revitalization.

As a contractor for the Southern District in the area of Transformation/Revitalization, I want to be certain to offer the tools that will help your congregation to grow in health and vitality. Kingdom growth is realized as the various systems are working well.

Gene Menzel
Contractor for Schools and Congregation Transformation
504-495-7436 or gwmenz@aol.com

CALLS AND VACANCIES

CONGREGATIONS IN THE CALLING PROCESS FOR PASTOR

ALABAMA

First - Birmingham
Our Redeemer - Florence
University - Tuscaloosa

FLORIDA

Grace - Pensacola

LOUISIANA

Zion - Clinton
Holy Trinity - Covington
Redeemer - DeRidder with Trinity - Leesville (Dual Parish)

MISSISSIPPI

Good Shepherd - Biloxi
Our Redeemer - Clinton
Our Savior - Columbus
St. John - Hattiesburg
CrossRoad - Hernando
Beautiful Savior - Olive Branch

CALLS - ORDAINED - PENDING

- **John Karle**, Christ the King - Natchitoches, LA, to St. John - Hattiesburg, MS

The gift of generosity

This Christmas season, we thank everyone who has supported The Southern District this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions and look forward to support from all of our members in the year ahead. If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings or if you plan to make an additional gift before the end of the year, we encourage you to look into our electric giving options. As the pace of life speeds up, especially around this time of year, you may find electronic giving a most welcome way to make contributions. Visit [here](#) or contact the District office for more information.



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