



This Ministry That We Share

*Southern District - LCMS
January-February 2014*



Light for What Ails Us

*"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light."
Isaiah 9:2a*

There are intensities of darkness. A number of years ago Becky and I visited Ruby Falls, which is deep under ground in a cave. We were led through a series of caves illuminated by hidden spotlights. I'll never forget the last one we entered. It was the deepest in the whole series, the "farthest from the light," as our guide phrased it. After he had the group all together, he turned off every light in the cavern - and we were in the dark. Perhaps it was no darker than other places in the world, but I could not see my hand in front of my face - and I still remember the sensation of being in that total obscurity far beneath the surface of the earth!



In a different way, I have been in various levels of non-physical darkness at times in my life-my hopes destroyed, the future I had designed destroyed, little guidance for the next move. Has not each of us similarly experienced the darkness of life's twist and turns?

Isaiah reminds us that, "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." When Matthew echoes the words of the prophet he tells us that the light is Jesus, who by simply being with us has brought us our dawn.

At the time of my darkest gloom faced with fear and the isolation that deep darkness brings, God has recalled His word of promise to me that Jesus is with me giving me His light of life. I cherish those times of darkness where the presence of Jesus was my only light. They have persuaded me that anywhere I go, no matter how deep the darkness becomes, Jesus is with me. Nothing can persuade me to

the contrary. Light, by its very nature, dispels the gloom. Jesus, by His very nature, disperses the confusion and death we encounter in darkness.

The Son of God comes with His presence in word and sacrament - guiding, correcting, admonishing, forgiving, and loving. He uses every means to lead us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Come, Bright and Morning Star; illumine our darkness and lead us from night to never-ending day. Amen

YOUTH ALERT. . .DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING

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

<http://southernlcms.org/youth/youth-ministry-leaders-conference/>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR & WATCH FOR DETAILS. . .

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.

A SPECIAL INVITATION TO VISIT WITH ...

Rev. Bill Wrede, Director of Admissions, at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

- Monday - February 24 at Immanuel Lutheran in Bossier City, LA (10-2)
- Tuesday - February 25 at St. John Lutheran in New Orleans, LA (10-2)
- Tuesday - February 25 at The Village Church-Lutheran in Lacombe, LA (4-8)

Appointments are preferred but not mandatory.

Please call Rev. Wrede at (314) 505-7221 or email him at wredew@csle.edu.

DATES AND LOCATION

SOUTHERN DISTRICT PASTORS' CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 15-17

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH - DESTIN, FLORIDA

INSTALLATIONS

On January 5th **Rev. Stewart Marshall** was installed by **Rev. John Karle**, Third Vice-President of the Southern District, as Sole Pastor of **Redeemer Lutheran Church** in **DeRidder, LA**. Prior to accepting this call, Pastor Marshall served **Prince of Peace** in **Ozark, AL**.

Rev. Steve Linck is now in place, as of January 1st, as the Executive Director of Southern District Church Extension Fund. Pastor Linck formerly served **Grace Lutheran Church** in **Pensacola, FL**, where he served the congregation for ten years.

Mr. Glen Gerber is now in place, as of January 1st, as Executive Director of Schools. He will also oversee the work of the Southern District Foundation.

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION



At left is **Rev. Jack Onkka** (SMP Pastor) being ordained by President Kurtis Schultz on December 8th at **Grace - Pensacola, FL**.

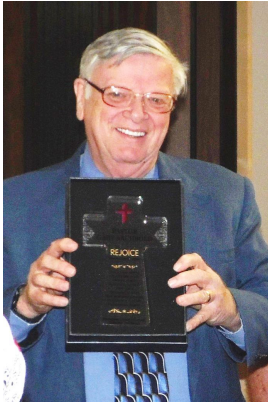
SMP Vicar/DCE Brock Cain can now be addressed as Pastor Cain. He was ordained and installed on January 12th as Associate Pastor of **Lutheran Church of the Pines** in **Waveland, MS**. Since

Pastor Cain is a local person, many of his family and friends were able to attend this celebration of God's call to one of His own. Pictured below, at left is Rev. Brock Cain; at right is Rev. Gary Faith; and, in the center is former Southern District President, Rev. John Ellermann.



RETIREMENTS APLENTY!

It's really apparent that the Baby-Boomers are bound for retirement as several of our pastors are headed that way.



Redeemer Lutheran in DeRidder, Louisiana ...

gathered to honor **Pastor Gary Archbold** on December 7th for his retirement at a dinner hosted by the Catfish Hut in DeRidder. Pastor Archbold received a Crystal Cross Award from the congregation recognizing his 19 years of service.

"Rejoice in your Accomplishments! God is surely smiling on you today as you celebrate 19 years in service to our Lord! 1994-2013. Wishing you a future filled with God's blessings, fulfillment, and all the happiness you deserve!"

~ ~ ~

Holy Cross Lutheran in Mobile, Alabama ...

recognized the retirement of their long time pastor, **Rev. William Meyer**, with a special presentation on November 24th. This was held after their worship service, lunch followed.

During a special presentation a video was shown. Various people that Pastor Meyer influenced over the years talked about how his ministry had made a significant impact in their lives.

~ ~ ~

First Lutheran in Birmingham, Alabama ...

gathered for a special retirement celebration for their pastor, **Rev. Arthur Porter**, on December 28th. The reception was widely attended by Pastor Porter's closest friends and family. The church Fellowship Hall was full. Dinner was served by a local catering firm and was delicious.

After a few remarks by Church Council President Glenn Thompson, several church members, family and church members from other states gave comments about Pastor Porter. Commenters all stated how much he had made a positive impact on their lives. The celebration closed with the presentation of a church gift to him.

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There will be a number of retirements in 2014, too. The following have announced their intention to retire: Rev. Warren Davis, Rev. Steven Koenig, Rev. Dr. McNair Ramsey and Rev. Arlyn Sturtz.

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



National Lutheran Schools Week is Sunday, January 26 - Saturday, February 1.

National Lutheran Schools Week provides our network of nearly 2,300 preschools, elementary schools, and high schools with the public opportunity to proclaim and celebrate God's work among us in Lutheran Schools.

We thank God for the opportunity to provide excellent academic preparation for the children we serve. We are most grateful for the opportunity to share Jesus' love with children and their families. National Lutheran Schools Week gives us an opportunity to proclaim these great blessings within the communities we serve. The theme for 2014 is "Witness Always - Raising Up Faithful Disciples." Our schools are amazing places for faithful witness of God's love for us through Christ by teachers and students alike.

---Glen Gerber

ADDRESSING HOPE and HEALTH through REVITALIZATION/TRANSFORMATION!

Persons have certain perceptions about what revitalization/transformation involves for a congregation. Many think that there is a "one size" that fits all congregations but this is not true in the work with revitalization/transformation. The pastor and leaders can choose from a variety of components that are offered. One congregation may choose to do a Hinge Assessment Survey to see how effective the congregation is in eight key components, helping to open doors to the community. Yet another congregation may choose to participate in a study of People of Passion, involving seven lessons/activities to help the congregation grow in outreach. For yet another congregation needing a jump start conducts a self-study and hosts a weekend consultation that offers insights along with some specific prescriptions. These prescriptions are offered on the basis of interviews and listening to the leadership. Revitalization/transformation offers a menu of options.

In listening to congregational leaders, it is often expressed we in the past have done several assessment/planning studies but nothing ever was done with the results. This is where it is important to have a coach walk along with the pastor and leaders to build accountability for implementation of developed plans. The coach is there to ask questions about how things are going along with helping to work through the obstacles that are standing in the way of making progress with the plans.

As a contractor for the Southern District in the area of revitalization/transformation, the District retains me to provide services for Southern District congregations. It's our ongoing partnership THAT THEY MAY KNOW JESUS! It is my privilege to network and help effect a turnaround, having the congregation grow in health and vibrancy. You can reach me at 504-495-7436 or contact me by e-mail at gwmenz@aol.com to explore dimensions of revitalization/transformation for your congregation.

LET'S LOOK FORWARD TO 2014

2014 PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENT

CALLING ALL CONGREGATIONS. . .CALLING ALL CONGREGATIONS CALLING ALL CONGREGATIONS. . .CALLING ALL CONGREGATIONS

The Business Office of the Southern District reports that twenty-four (24) congregations have submitted their 2014 Partnership Committee form as of January 23rd. The District Stewardship Committee is truly grateful for the churches that have submitted this document indicating their support to this ministry that we share.

If your congregation has not submitted this form, please share this with your treasurer and/or other leadership. These forms assure the accuracy of our records and brings to our attention any discrepancy in gifts sent to the District office.

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 1/15	\$1,125,000	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000
Actual Income through 1/15	\$965,786	\$1,028,147	\$972,002



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:

- Rev. Jesus Gonzales - Monte de los Olivos - Metairie, LA
- Commissioned Minister Ray Hauer - Huntsville, AL
- Rev. Rory Hermann (Good Shepherd - Gulf Breeze, FL)
- Rev. David Moerbe (Good Shepherd - Gardendale, AL)
- 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)

**THE 2014 SOUTHERN DISTRICT
ELECTED OFFICER FORM IS FINALLY USER FRIENDLY!**
**It is posted on our web site www.southernlcms.org
go to Churches and then Resources.**

MAKE NEW FRIENDS.

God continues to provide workers for the harvest. [Rev. Eric C. Johnson](#) has joined the Southern District Executive Staff as the District's Mission and Ministry Facilitator for Congregational Networking. His job is to support YOU in mission & ministry within the congregation and especially to those outside the congregation who don't yet know Jesus. Eric is busy developing a network of people and resources with the goal of helping to connect congregations and leaders with the best tools available in the areas of mission outreach and ministry support.

Areas where Eric can be helpful include, but are not limited to: Small Groups, VBS, Sunday School, Missional Evangelism and Outreach, Youth and Stewardship. When YOU need help with ideas and resources Eric is here to help. YOU can reach him by email e.johnson@southernlcms.org or by calling his direct line @ 985-445-9339.

His prior district membership was in the California-Nevada-Hawaii District where he served as a district missionary at Word of Grace in Rohnert Park, CA.



Rohnert Park is about fifty miles north of San Francisco. Eric and his wife, Lisa, have three children: Eric Jr., Zachary, and Emily. Lisa home schools their children. Southern roots emanate from Lisa; she is from Birmingham, Alabama. Her parents currently live in Mobile.

The current District President of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District writes "Pastor Johnson is able to translate and apply this theology and confession to a post-church world." Check out Pastor Johnson's blog [Click here](#)

Another worker new to the Southern District is [Mr. Glen D. Gerber](#). Glen will serve the schools of the District and oversee the Southern District Foundation. He has

been in education for more than 30 years. He has been the chief administrator of schools in Florida, Hong Kong, Missouri, and Texas. In his most recent position in Katy, Texas, he was hired to over see the construction and start-up of a new school. His school experienced positive growth every year in a time when private and parochial school enrollment has been declining, nationally.

Previously employed by Lutheran Hour Ministries as Director of Gift Planning, and Vice President of the LHM Foundation, he has also served as a District Representative and Assistant General Agent for the St. Louis office of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. He holds a master's degree in Administration and Supervision from Nova University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and a bachelor's degree from Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois.

Mr. Gerber currently serves as a Trustee of the Lutheran Hour Ministry Foundation Board and as a member of the Lutheran Education Association National Board. He is also on the board of directors of his church, Crosspoint Community Church.

Mr. Gerber is married to Judy, who is a Lutheran School Teacher, and has two grown daughters and two grandchildren.



Do you know a teacher who impacted your life in a very positive way and inspired you? The following educators are being recognized during Lutheran Schools Week for their 20 plus years of service to children in their communities. What better way for a child to know Jesus' love than through a teacher?!

TWENTY YEARS	Sonya Hebert	Baton Rouge Lutheran Sch.
TWENTY YEARS	Kathy Tucker	St. Paul's - Cullman, AL
TWENTY YEARS	Carole A. Thorsen	Grace - Huntsville, AL
TWENTY YEARS	Karen Moore	Concordia - Marrero, LA
TWENTY YEARS	Stevan Nielsen	Concordia - Marrero, LA
TWENTY YEARS	Tina Hellmers	Atonement - Metairie, LA
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS	Lisa Feindel	Faith - Harahan, LA
THIRTY YEARS	Judy Cantrell	Faith - Harahan, LA
THIRTY-FIVE YEARS	Alan Cypher	Grace - Huntsville, AL
THIRTY-FIVE YEARS	Paula Wood	St. John - New Orleans, LA

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS

Sandy Koester

St. Paul - New Orleans, LA

FORTY YEARS

Tom Naatz

Grace - Huntsville, AL

FORTY YEARS

Calvin Behrens

St. Paul - New Orleans, LA

FORTY-FIVE YEARS

Warren Paul

Redeemer - Pensacola, FL

Editions of:***Issues in Christian Education*****published by Concordia U Nebraska are available online.**

Topics that will be or have been addressed include:

"Revitalizing Congregations Through Older Adults" (available, Summer, 2014)

"Early Childhood Education: A Special Opportunity for Congregations!" (available, Spr, 2014)

"Connecting with the Non-Connected Through School and Church" (Fall, 2013)

"The Role of Apologetics in the Church's Mission" (Summer, 2013)

"The Sexual Revolution: How Shall the Church Respond?" (Spring, 2013)

"Intentional Family Ministry: A Golden Opportunity" (Fall, 2012)

"Needed: Marriage Education!" (Summer, 2012)

CALLS AND VACANCIES**CONGREGATIONS IN THE CALLING PROCESS FOR PASTOR****ALABAMA**

First - Birmingham

Our Redeemer - Florence

Grace - Mobile

Prince of Peace - Ozark

University - Tuscaloosa

FLORIDA

Grace - Pensacola

LOUISIANA

Holy Trinity - Covington

Trinity - Leesville

Christ the King - Natchitoches

Lamb of God - Slidell

MISSISSIPPI

Good Shepherd - Biloxi

Our Redeemer - Clinton

CrossRoad - Hernando

CALLS - ORDAINED - ACCEPTED

- **John Karle**, Christ the King - Natchitoches, LA, to St. John - Hattiesburg, MS
- **Timmothy Heath**, Lamb of God - Slidell, LA, to Christ the Life - Waukesha, WI
- **Stewart Marshall**, Prince of Peace - Ozark, AL, to Redeemer - DeRidder, LA
- **David McIntyre**, Emeritus to Zion - Clinton, LA
- **David Robatzen**, Resurrection, Pensacola, FL to Good Shepherd - Sarasota, FL
- **Mark Steiner**, Gulfport, MS, to Our Savior - Columbus, MS

CALLS - ORDAINED - DECLINED

- **David Robatzen**, Resurrection, Pensacola, FL to Good Shepherd - Sarasota, FL

THE GIFT OF GENEROSITY

This Epiphany season, we thank every person who supported the Southern District this past year with their time, talent and financial contributions.

We look forward to your support in the year ahead. If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings, we encourage you to look into our electronic online giving options.

Visit [here](https://www.southernlcms.org) or contact Janice Howard at the Southern District office for more information j.howard@southernlcms.org.



100 Mission Dr.
Slidell LA 70460

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