



## *This Ministry That We Share*

*Southern District - LCMS  
December 1, 2015*



### **God's Gift**

***Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with a child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)***

Prophesying over 700 years before the birth of Christ, Isaiah spoke to King Ahaz of Judah about the deliverance that God would provide that besieged kingdom. This prophecy has provided the world with one of the clearest declarations of the Christmas miracle. God would come in the flesh to dwell among us. He would enter our world through the womb of a virgin. What a wonderful sign God gives to us to behold and believe.

It may be difficult to identify with King Ahaz of Judah. As reflected in 2 Kings 16:24, he was a young, arrogant king of "detestable" ways. In spite of this, the prophet Isaiah went to Ahaz to offer him spiritual strength in a time of national crisis. Because of his godless ways, Ahaz did not merit a sign or a faithful prophet. Yet despite these evil ways and his phony spirituality, a covenant-keeping God gave Ahaz a clear sign of what he would do, not only for Ahaz, but for our sin-darkened world through the Immanuel prophecy. What can we learn from God's actions?

We learn about the character of God. He is a God of tremendous mercy and tenderness. In the midst of the dilemmas that were entirely of Ahaz's doing, God came to deliver the king and his kingdom. We should never underestimate the depth of God's love for any of us. None of us is worthy, and still God comes. He comes into our lives with signs that are clear and understandable to us. He is not a God who would stay hidden and unnamed from a people He loves. As we worship Him, He extends to us a cup, the bread, and a cross. At Christmas we are presented with a star, a manger, a virgin, shepherds, and kings. As Jesus takes on our flesh, God presents us with tangible proof that He is indeed among us, to be known by us, in a personal relationship.



At Christmas, through signs and the messages, God continues to seek after us. Will we be onlookers who stroll past these familiar words and signs with casual interest? Or will we stop, open our eyes, ears and mouths, and dare to believe that a loving heavenly Father is here to cut through our fears, and to draw us to Himself? Ahaz. You. Me. God still desires that we believe and be saved. Christmas is a gift for such as us.



*Dear God, you know of no hopeless ones in this world.  
Help us to stop and realize that you are truly there for us.  
Enable us to believe. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## OUR STEWARDSHIP OF HIS RESOURCES

### District Mission Support Trends

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
<b><u>Total Budget</u></b>	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	\$ 900,000
<b>Budgeted Income through 11/30</b>	<b>\$ 1,008,334</b>	<b>\$1,008,334</b>	<b>\$ 825,000</b>
<b>Actual Income through 11/30</b>	<b>\$ 902,555</b>	<b>\$ 846,549</b>	<b>\$ 807,979</b>



## Stewardship Committee (November 2015)

Meet your new stewardship committee members . . . **Glenn Gerber** (District Exec), **Gary Grubb** (Chair), **Don Hennings**, **Rev Paul McComack**, **Rev Louis Boldt**, and **Don Panzenhagen**.

Visit the district website for a photo and brief profile of each to include which circuits and congregations they specifically serve. They have answered the call to serve you and each other regarding the Christian's total stewardship life including use of time, talents, treasure, and testimony for Christ. Concerning stewardship of testimony, consider "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. . ." (1 Peter 3:15)

Stewardship Southern Style . . . Stewardship Southern Style focuses on Making Disciples for Jesus. Walking together with Synod, we have defined stewardship in this manner: "Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes." We in the Southern District like to emphasize that the Love for Christ, generated by the Gospel, is the motivating factor for true Christian giving. For this reason we add the statement . . . "In response to the Gospel, stewardship is part of discipleship."

While December marks the start of a new liturgical year for the church, we are also involved in closing out the 2015 fiscal year ending December 31 in good and proper order. With that in mind, we ask you to conclude your 2015 partnership commitment to the Southern District for work in the district, synod and beyond! (See Business Office Letter, 10/14/2015)

The District Stewardship Committee is truly grateful for all the Churches that have generously supported this ministry that we share. We are also thankful for all that the Lord allows your congregation to give in the future.

May the coming weeks and months be a time of much growth for your congregation, and the entire Southern District.

*"May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Hebrews 13:20, 21 NIV)*



### **DATES FOR 2015**

December 6 4:30 - 7:00 PM	Retirement Celebration Pastor P. J. Moore	Rainbow City Community Center, Rainbow City, AL
December 6 10:30 AM	130th Anniversary Celebration Worship and Fellowship	St. Paul's Lutheran Church Cullman, AL
December 13 6:00 PM	Marigny Pops Christmas Music Concert	St. John's Lutheran Church New Orleans, LA
December 25	Birth of our Lord and Savior ~ Christmas ~	Mission Center Closed
January 19-21, 2016	Pastors' Conference	The Mission Center Slidell, LA
February 20, 2016 9 AM to 3:15 PM	Lands of the Bible Seminar Dr. Paul L. Maier	Redeemer Lutheran Church Fairhope, AL
April 20, 30 & May 1, 2016	Gulf States District LWML Convention	Courtyard by Marriott, Gulfport, MS
July 9-14, 2016	66th Synod Convention Upon This Rock: Repent, Confess, Rejoice Matthew 16:18	Milwaukee, Wisconsin

### **SMP COMPLETE!!**

The Southern District congratulates **Rev. Jack Onkka** on the completion of the SMP Program through Concordia Seminary - St. Louis, MO! Rev. Onkka serves as an associate pastor at Grace - Pensacola, FL.

### **~ CALLED TO SERVE ~**

#### **CALLS -- ORDAINED -- ACCEPTED**

~ Pastor Chad Ingle, Celebration - Seymour, TN; Called to Prince of Peace - Ozark, AL

### **IN TRANSITION: CALLING CONGREGATIONS**

Trinity - Gadsden, AL  
St. Stephen - New Orleans, LA  
Trinity - Panama City, FL  
Immanuel - Bossier City, LA  
Ascension - Daphne, AL

Christ the King - Natchitoches, LA  
Lamb of God - Slidell, LA  
St. Paul's - Decatur, AL



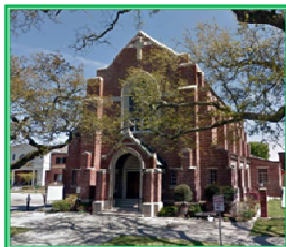
## RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

**Pastor P.J. Moore** has served Trinity - Gadsden, AL since March, 2004. A Retirement Celebration to honor Pastor Moore's many years in God's service is being held Sunday, Dec. 6 at the Rainbow City Community Center in Rainbow City, AL. The Celebration will be from 4:30 to 7:00 PM with a meal served at 5:00 PM. Contact Cindy Genz at [cindy\\_genz@yahoo.com](mailto:cindy_genz@yahoo.com) for tickets and information by Nov. 29.



**The Marigny Pops**  
**27th Annual Christmas Music Concert**  
**December 13, 2015 at 6PM**

You are invited to a wonderful evening of instrumental Christmas carols and music featuring Kim Jovanovich (piano), Ken Babin (trumpet), Paul Weiser (trumpet), Dustin Hymel (trombone), Renee Babin (cboe), Dominick Caronna (flute), Dawn Pembo (flute), Ken Lannes (guitar), Shawn Touro (bass), and Lloyd Lagrange (percussion). If you have attended this concert before, then you know how well it celebrates the festive Christmas season. Come bring your family and friends to this informal evening of your favorite Holiday music.



**This year's concert will be held at a new location:**

**St John Lutheran Church**  
**3937 Canal Street**  
**New Orleans, LA 70119**

**December 13, 2015 at 6PM**



## **Christmas Program** **Presented by Christ Lutheran**

**Christ Lutheran Church - Chalmette, LA** is presenting a Christmas program of traditional hymns, seasonal music and organ works on Sunday afternoon, December 6 at 3:00 PM. Attendance is free and the public is invited to join the congregation for the *inaugural program of a continuing monthly music series*.

In recent months, the Reverend Al Keller has been instrumental in reviving the music tradition of the church following substantial Hurricane Katrina damage. For a congregation that has a passion and love for music, this series is an important and long awaited addition to their ministry.

Although a new addition to the church's programs, future programs are already in the planning stage. Christ Lutheran expects to bring artists from many different backgrounds and styles to their monthly music series. The first artist performing on Sunday, December 6 is Van Glynn. Glynn is an accomplished musician who has served on staff of a number of Texas and Louisiana churches. He has taught electronic music composition and production at the university level and served as university Carillonneur at McMurryUniversity.

Christ Lutheran Church - located at 3300 Jupiter Drive, Chalmette, LA suffered severe damage during Hurricane Katrina. The congregation was one of the first to offer regular weekly services in St. Bernard Parish following Katrina. During the rebuilding of the church, the Rogers organ was installed.

We invite you to join us on Sunday afternoon, December 6 at 3:00 P.M.

### ***The Joyous Sounds of Christmas III***

On December 20, at 6:00 p.m., you are invited to join us for an evening of fine music and a presentation of the nativity story. Ensembles include our adult choir, youth choir, River of Praise, and handbells. Readings of the nativity story will be presented by our Sunday school children. Refreshments will be served after the program. **Atonement Lutheran Church and School** is located at 6500 Riverside Drive in Metairie.



### **"THE FIRST ROSA"**

"The First Rosa" film has been shown in various locations this fall, and Synod's plan is to distribute it to Synod congregations and schools, along with accompanying materials, beginning in January, 2016. We will have further information regarding the film as it becomes available.

It is a movie well worth seeing and will provide your congregations with excellent points for discussion!

### **MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES --- Celebrating the Ministry of Pastor and People**

**130th ~ St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Cullman, AL**

**Rev. John M. Bussman, Pastor**

***Worship ~ 10:30 AM Followed by an afternoon of Fellowship - December 6, 2015***

### **500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION**

There are a lot of great resources for you to use with your congregation as we prepare for the 500th Anniversary celebrations of the Reformation in 2017. If you haven't already checked out this site, be sure to visit it! [Visit this site!](#)



### **2016 LCMS National Youth Gathering -- In Christ Alone July 16-20, 2016**

2016 will come more quickly than any of us realize! Be watching for important information regarding this opportunity for the Southern District Youth to come together with others as a community of God's people!

#### ***Upcoming:***

~ August, 2015 -- Registration materials mailed to each LCMS Congregation

~October, 2015 -- Registration opens on a first-come, first-serve basis

**For additional information contact DCE Curtis Wiese -- Good Shepherd - Shalimar, FL, email: [familylifeminister@gsclcshalimar.org](mailto:familylifeminister@gsclcshalimar.org) cell: 785-220-1512. DCE Curtis is serving as the NYG Southern District Coordinator.**

You may also go to the Southern District web site at [www.southernlcms.org](http://www.southernlcms.org) or



## **WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER. . .**

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.  
The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;..."*  
**John 11:25 (NIV)**

### **These brothers and sisters in Christ coping with cancer:**

- Rev. Jerry Conley (Emeritus - Marianna, FL)
- Rev. Jack Betz (Emeritus - Miramar Beach, FL)
- Mrs. Gloria Moritz, widow of Rev. Victor Moritz (Emeritus - Metairie, LA)
- Rev. Sidney Ponseti (Emeritus - Baton Rouge, LA)
- Rev. Ed Rogers (Emeritus - Ozark, AL)
- Mrs. Doris Taglauer, wife of Rev. Jim Taglauer (Emeritus - Folsom, LA)
- Rev. Bill Wise (Emeritus - Destin, FL)

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

- Mrs. Melodie Rupp, wife of Rev. Bob Rupp (Emeritus - Pensacola, FL)
- Mrs. Rosemary Hollibaugh, mother of Rev. Karl Hollibaugh (Lamb of God - Slidell, LA)
- Mrs. June Ring, mother of Rev. Marcus Ring (St. Paul - Shreveport, LA)
- Rev. Robert Aumann (Good Shepherd - Slidell, LA)
- Rev. Weldon Brinkley (Emeritus - Destin, FL)
- Rev. Rory Hermann (Good Shepherd - Gulf Breeze, FL)
- Rev. Brandon Simoneaux (Christ Our Savior - Harvey, LA)
- Mrs. Agnes Belknap, wife of Rev. Bob Belknap (Zion - New Orleans, LA)
- Mr. Gene Menzel (Emeritus - Huntsville, AL)
- Rev. Dr. James P. Brown (Emeritus - Pensacola, FL)
- Dr. J. B. Marshall (Concordia College Alabama Board of Regents member)

***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)***

## **2016 LUTHERAN ANNUAL**

### **Go-to reference tool for the LCMS available at [cph.org](http://cph.org)**

The 2016 Lutheran Annual is now available for purchase through Concordia Publishing House. The Lutheran Annual is the official directory of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and it is the go-to reference guide for information on churches, schools, pastors, church professionals, and church agencies.

Purchase The Lutheran Annual at [cph.org/lutheranannual](http://cph.org/lutheranannual), or call customer service at 1-800-325-3040. Bulk discounts apply for orders of ten or more. You can also receive The Lutheran Annual by subscription. Contact customer service for details.



## **A TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND IS LIFE-CHANGING.**



***You'll never read the Bible in the same way again.*** Its scenes will come alive after you have bowed at the manger in Bethlehem, worshipped on the Sea of Galilee, followed the Palm Sunday crowd down the Mount of Olives, knelt in the Garden of Gethsemane, wept at Golgotha, and sung at the empty tomb.

Experience this spiritual pilgrimage of walking in our Lord's footsteps with your friends and fellow Christians. Pastor Keith and Diana Ringers (St. Mark's - Elberta, AL) will be joining a retired pastor and his wife, friends of theirs, who have spent 18 months in the Holy Land and have put together this customized itinerary that will include places where the standard tours don't go. We invite you to join us from March 28 - April 6, 2016. For more information, click on the link for a brochure or contact Keith Ringers at [kringers@gulftel.com](mailto:kringers@gulftel.com).

[Click here](#) If registering online, enter '**Ringers**' as Tour Host and ID number **56112**.

## ***ANCHORS AWAY!***



Time to hold your cabin on the next Southern District Cruise ~ Jan 22, 2017. At the request of many, we are sailing to Belize, Roatan and Cozumel. We realize it seems early, but an agreement was reached for smaller deposits with early registration. Further registration information is available online at <https://secure.jotform.us/form/50815449083155>. You may also contact Ginger Kramp with questions at [ginger@mcgeheecruise.com](mailto:ginger@mcgeheecruise.com) or 618-662-2117.

## ***Lands of the Bible Seminar***

***presented by Dr. Paul L. Maier, Ph.D., Litt.D., LL.D.***

***at Redeemer Lutheran Church***

***200 South Section Street; Fairhope, AL***

***Saturday, February 20, 2016; 9:00 am ~ 3:15 pm***

***\$12 for adults; \$8 for students (ages 12 and up)***

Limited seating - first come, first served. Register by Feb. 13, 2016. Contact Kim Clay at 251-279-9164 to register or for additional information.

**THE GIFT OF GENEROSITY-Electronic Giving**



A definition of generous includes this phrase:

***Freely sharing valuable things. Freely sharing***

***...no strings attached. ...no tit for tat. ...nothing expected in return. Valuable things: your child. What is more valuable than a life of someone you love beyond measure? As we reflect on this message, remember Those Who Don't Yet Know Jesus. Your continued support for the mission and ministry of the Southern District is requested.***

If you need a convenient way to make regular offerings, we encourage you to look into our electronic online giving options.

Visit [here](http://here) or contact Ronnie Giaise at the Southern District office for more information --- [r.giaise@southernlcms.org](mailto:r.giaise@southernlcms.org).

Illustration by Patti Miller, Member of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Fairhope, Alabama.

STAY CONNECTED



[Southernlcms.org](http://Southernlcms.org)

Southern District -LCMS

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