

# THE VOICE OF RENEWAL

*The Newsletter of Lutheran Lay Renewal of America  
Serving all Lutheran churches since 1971*

**SEPTEMBER, 2018**

## LLRA Board of Directors

**Elaine Schomaker, President**  
**Fred Schneider, Vice President**  
**Linda Shipman, Secretary**  
**Karen Ferrari, Treasurer**  
**Bill Oehlschlager, Executive Director**

**Dan Klueg**  
**The Rev. David Luecke, Ph. D.**  
**Lou McKibben**  
**Judy Moser**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

School children have returned to school and college students will be returning to their college campuses. The pursuit of learning is exciting for many and, for others, it seems to be a necessary chore. We have many challenges in our nation, at the present time, and it can be very confusing and disheartening to many as we live our daily lives trying to be as we were meant to be in God's image. It brings to mind those wonderful passages from Philippians where we are to:

*“stand firm in the Lord...” “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” - Philippians 4:1, 8 (NASB)*

It seems difficult, at times, to know what God's will is for us as individuals and as a nation. There is great comfort when we look to some of the passages in the Old Testament. One of the verses in Jeremiah comes to mind:

*“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” - Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV).*

In LLRA we feel blessed with the members of our Board. Be sure to check out the article from one of our Board members, Pastor Dave Luecke, as he shares thought provoking information that is valuable to all of the Christian community. Please look over the results of our recent Board Elections that are noted later in this newsletter as we welcome two new Board members. Also, a thank you to three outgoing Board members.

Our Executive Director, Bill Oehlschlager, continues to make contacts to church congregations, from Coast to Coast, giving them the opportunity to learn about and participate in the various ministries that are available and offered by LLRA. He is very committed to this ministry.

As a ministry we welcome feedback, from all of you, as you read our newsletter. Your support, prayerfully and financially, is invaluable to us. We know God has a mission for us to reach out and share the amazing love of Jesus Christ. That is our mission in LLRA.

Prayers for our nation are needed. Please “storm” heaven with prayers that God's will be done in our beautiful United State and the world.

Elaine Schomaker  
President - LLRA

## THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES HUMAN SPIRIT

Nicodemus was a prominent Jewish leader who came to Jesus under cover of darkness. He wanted to find out more about this new rabbi who was in town. Jesus was proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand, but no one can see it until he or she is born from on high

Tell me more, Nicodemus said. Jesus explained, “No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

That phrase “Spirit gives birth to spirit” can have revolutionary meaning today for traditional Christians from mainline churches.

An appropriate translation of the key verb is “the Holy Spirit *changes* human spirit.” Human spirit is one of the words the Bible uses for “soul” or “heart,” or “inner convictions.” A modern equivalent is “motivation.” The Spirit can and will change the motivations of those who are open to him.

The annual New Year’s resolutions many make show that most people want to change something about how they live. They know the behaviors they want but their key problem is motivation. A biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit would hold out the hope that the Spirit can really change their personal motivation for better follow through. The Spirit works his changes best in the context of believers who share God’s word and are in a fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

What’s revolutionary is to recognize that the supernatural can intervene in the natural. John Calvin taught that we can no longer expect miracles to happen. They were needed in Bible times but don’t happen anymore. Few educated Protestants in our modern era are willing to recognize the miraculous. I like the definition of a miracle as an extraordinary event for which there is no natural explanation. After years of searching I have come to believe that indeed miracles do happen in our times. More on that in a later column.

Once you change your worldview to recognize that the supernatural God can intervene in natural life, you can appreciate the significance of Jesus’ claim that the Holy Spirit actually changes the motivations of real live people today. Paul tells us that the product of the Spirit’s work is the fruit described in Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Who would not want more of such fruit in your life? Who would not want to live with more love, joy, or peace? In discussions I’ve led the first choice for most is patience.

What are those characteristics? Usually they have been seen as virtues. They are then preached as behaviors we are each to pursue in our Christian living. I think they are better described as feelings or affections. Out of changed affections and motivations come virtuous behaviors. The motivations are more important than how these express themselves in specific behaviors in daily living.

The core of the Bible Gospel is that we can claim life everlasting through the salvation won by Christ’s death and resurrection. Consider how belief in the Spirit’s intervention into our human spirit really amounts to additional Good News for living in this world. We are not on our own to become the person God wants us to be. His Spirit helps us.

The kingdom of God Jesus preached will be fulfilled in the next life because of what Jesus did. It is initiated in this life because of what the Spirit does. What a wonderful double Gospel.

The Rev. David Luecke, Ph. D.

Pastor Luecke is a member of our Board of Directors

Check out Pastor Luecke’s web site at <https://growthinthepirit.net>

## NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH CONVOCATION, DENVER, AUGUST 14-17



Friends of Lutheran Lay Renewal at the convocation: (L to R) Pastor Al Towberman, St. Mark's, Butler, PA, Pastor Sandy Towberman, Holy Trinity, Grove City, PA, Micah Keller (delegate) and Pastor Roger Keller, St. Luke's, Saxonburg, PA. LLR has a display table at the NALC Convocation every year.

## SHARING YOUR FAITH WORKSHOP, REDEEMER LUTHERAN, ALBUQUERQUE, AUGUST 19



Some of the attendees at the Sharing Your Faith workshop

“In the middle of August, over thirty members of Redeemer Lutheran Church were privileged to hear Bill Oehlschlager, of Lutheran Lay Renewal, present how to share the Gospel faith! The stories, passages and truths Bill shared captured the attention of everyone that warm summer morning. Inspirational, insightful, eye-opening were some of the comments! So affected were the people that they told Bill and me that they wanted more!”

“One of the things we learned or were reminded of was the truth that everyone has a need or a wound or is hurting. As we meet and greet our neighbors and acquaintances, we are talking to someone who is presently distressed or injured by some hurt or need. What an opening to Gospel conversations! Thanks, Bill! Thanks, Lutheran Lay Renewal!” – Pastor John Heffelfinger

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

We are pleased to announce that at our August 19 board meeting the following people were elected to board positions:

**Frederick (Fred) Schneider, Vice President** – Fred is 79 years of age. He trained as an attorney but has not practiced law since 1969. He taught at the Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University for 43 years and retired for the second time in 2014. His wife of 53 1/2 years, Karen, passed away in June, 2017. Fred has served on a number of LLR weekend teams. He and his wife co-led one renewal weekend and he led another weekend. He has been a member of the LLR Board of Directors for 2 years. Prior to LLR activity, Fred had been active in Episcopal Cursillo and Lutheran Via de Cristo since 1979. He has given most of the talks and served as weekend leader one time, and was active in the national leadership for a number of years. Fred has 3 children and 11 grandchildren. He has served in many positions in the leadership of Trinity Lutheran Church, Mt. Healthy, Ohio, including 2 terms as President.

**Karen L. Ferrari, Treasurer** – Karen is a retired RN, former educator and administrator. She is a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Evans City, PA, where she is a past president of the church council, co-chairperson of the Fellowship Committee, Secretary of the Mission Endowment Fund Committee, Chairperson for the LLRA renewal weekend at St. Peter's and she has been active in LLRA since that time. Karen has been the Treasurer of LLRA since 2014.

**Pastor Dave Luecke** – Pastor Luecke is a semi-retired Missions Pastor at Royal Redeemer Lutheran Church in North Royalton, OH, where he has been for 25 years. In the last four years he has published three books on the Holy Spirit: *Your Encounters with the Holy Spirit*, *How to Spot the Spirit's Work in Your Life*, and *How the Spirit Shapes Prayer*. He is about to launch his new website [www.WhatHappened.church](http://www.WhatHappened.church), which will send out a weekly blog on regaining Spiritual energy. The already written 52 blogs will appear in his book *What Happened to Our Churches: A Collection of 52 blogs on Regaining Spiritual Energy*. It expands on eight perspectives on the Spirit: Motivated by the Spirit, Recognizing the Spirit, Discipled by the Spirit, Waiting on the Spirit, Culturally Shaped Experiences of the Spirit, and Organizing the Spirit's Fellowships. The website should be live in mid-September along with the book.

**Lou McKibben** - Lou and his wife, Janet, live in Pittsburgh, PA and are members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Wexford, PA. Lou has one son - Michael McKibben. Lou graduated from Duquesne University with a degree in Accounting and is a CPA. He spent most of his career as an auditor for the Office of the Inspector General, Florida Department of Transportation. He currently is employed as a salesman for Frank Winne & Son, Inc. Lou has been very active as a volunteer with Kairos Prison Ministries for over 25 years, both in Florida and Pennsylvania. He also has served on many LLR teams since his first weekend with us in Beatrice, NE in 2008. His hobbies are numismatics, travel and morning walks with Jesus.

**Judy Moser, MS** – Judy serves her congregation as church council secretary, member of the Executive and Personnel committees: member of the Pastor's weekly Prayer Circle, the monthly prayer team, altar guild, funeral dinner ministry team, and church choir at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Saxonburg, PA. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BS in Human Resource Management (1995) from Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA and MS in Organizational Leadership (1999). She earned an Excellence in Government award and gubernatorial appointments to PA Historical and Museum Commission's County Records Board. Currently, Judy serves as member at large, and elected chair (2017). Previously she served in leadership positions for church and civic organizations including the Board of Directors for Butler County Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, Butler County Chapter of Pennsylvania for Human Life (secretary), Butler County Citizens for Decency (Admin. Asst.) and Christian Conciliation of Western PA (Admin. Asst.).

## FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO THREE LLRA BOARD MEMBERS

All three Board members - Lori Sardiga, Mike Lawless and Andy King, have served their Lord and this ministry faithfully in many ways, as renewal team members, leaders and faithful Board members.

A special “thank you” to Lori Sardiga, retiring Vice President, who was elected to the Board in 2012, then elected as Vice President in 2013 to complete the term vacated by Elaine Schomaker, when Elaine assumed the presidency. Lori was re-elected as Vice President in 2014 and 2016. Lori brought much energy and enthusiasm to the Board and we will miss her leadership.

Mike Lawless was elected to the Board in 2015. He and his wife, Liz, were committed to the mission of LLRA and willingly gave of their time and energy to support LLRA’s ministry. We will miss their dedication and enthusiasm.

Andy King was elected to the Board in 2015 and was an active renewal team member for many years prior to his election. We greatly appreciate his service.

To all three outgoing Board members, a very sincere “thank you” for your past participation in LLRA’s ministry. God’s blessings in all your future endeavors!

### SCHEDULED EVENTS

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| September 16 | Sharing Your Faith Workshop<br>St. Mark’s Lutheran Church<br>Butler, PA<br>The Rev. Dr. Alden Towberman, Pastor      |
| October 19   | Sharing Your Faith Workshop<br>Atlantic Mission District Annual Convocation<br>Messiah Lutheran Church, Lebanon, PA  |
| October 21   | Sharing Your Faith Workshop<br>Reformation Lutheran Church<br>Lancaster, PA<br>The Rev. Luke Seamon, Pastor          |
| October 28   | Spiritual Transformation Retreat<br>Concordia Lutheran Church<br>Kingsburg, CA<br>The Rev. Douglas Schoelles, Pastor |
| November 4   | Sharing Your Faith Workshop<br>Holy Cross Lutheran Church<br>Reno, NV<br>The Rev. Scott Trevithick, Interim Pastor   |

*More events are in the planning stages so check our web site often, where the calendar is always up to date.*

## FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

I am honored to be elected by the Board of Directors to be your Vice President. My first service in LLR was at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Evans City, PA. My late wife and I were surprised when Dick Brown walked us to our car at the end of the weekend and invited us to continue working with LLR. We did so full of joy.

I will miss the Board of Directors who did not run for reelection this year: Lori Sardiga, Mike Lawless and Andy King. We served on teams with all of them and were blessed by their participation, each of them in their own unique way. I thank them for their service on the Board. I hope to serve with them in the future.

Fred Schneider  
Vice President, LLRA

---

**“Like” us on Facebook - Lutheran Lay Renewal of America**

**We post all of our upcoming events on our Facebook page, as well as a thought for the week every week.**

---

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- For Kathie Klueg's father, for the Lord's healing & strength
  - For healing for Dan and Kathie Klueg
  - Our board member Dan Klueg asks to be lifted up in prayer for wisdom as he deals with degenerative disc disease, Hashimoto's disease, diabetes, neuropathy, a cyst on his brain, and possible pre-Parkinsons; on how God is going to use this in him to bring honor and glory to him. Also, for Kathie and the kids to join in the joy of the Lord he has as he slowly deteriorates.
  - For healing for Dick and Bev Brown
  - For the Lord's protection over all police officers and firefighters
  - For the Lord's protection over all men and women in our armed forces
  - For wisdom and guidance for the LLRA Board of Directors, as we seek to grow and expand this ministry
- 

*Lutheran Lay Renewal of America is eligible to receive Choice Dollars Grant Funds from the Thrivent Financial Choice Dollars program. We are grateful to Thrivent Financial, and those individuals who designate their Choice Dollars to us, for their support of LLRA and its ministry.*

*LLRA is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization and depends on contributions from churches and individuals who have benefited from our ministry to help us continue to bring this ministry to more and more congregations all across America.*

**Lutheran Lay Renewal of America  
209 Thornwood Drive  
Butler, PA 16001  
724-287-5151**

**[LLRAJ316@gmail.com](mailto:LLRAJ316@gmail.com)  
[www.lutheranrenewal.com](http://www.lutheranrenewal.com)**