

THE VOICE OF RENEWAL

The Newsletter of Lutheran Lay Renewal of America

Serving all Lutheran churches since 1971

MARCH, 2019

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MINISTRY IN UGANDA

In January our Executive Director, Bill Oehlschlager, traveled to Uganda at the invitation of Bishop Charles Bameka, Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Uganda, and the Rev. Peter Maganda, Dean of the LCU's Eastern Deanery and also Dean of Students at the Lutheran Theological College in Magamaga.

The primary purpose of the visit was to lead a three-day renewal conference for 80 pastors, evangelists, seminarians and lay leaders at the Lutheran Theological College. The first two days of the conference Bill led the attendees through our renewal weekend program, so that everyone could actually experience it for themselves. Three LLR Weekends were held in Uganda last fall and Pastor Peter wanted to familiarize the leadership of the deanery with our program. This was followed by an opportunity to talk about what people got out of the program, what they thought the benefits were and whether they thought our renewal weekend would be beneficial for their home congregations. The answer was a hearty and unanimous yes!



Small group session during the renewal conference

On the third day Bill led a retreat on 7 Lessons for Living the Spiritual Life, a retreat LLR has led in many congregations across the U.S. This was followed by a Divine Service, with Bishop Charles Bameka preaching.



Bishop Charles Bameka preaching at the closing Divine Service

While in Uganda Bill also had the opportunity to visit many congregations with Pastor Peter and other church leaders, to see first hand how the LCU is growing rapidly despite having very limited financial resources. The LCU started in 1994 and since that time has planted over 140 congregations, and has over 50,000 members.



With Dean Peter Maganda, Vicar Grace Kalamu and the congregation of Naigobya Lutheran Church, where a Lutheran Lay Renewal Weekend will be held March 9-10



In front of the temporary church building with Dean Peter Maganda, Pastor Emmanuel Batwawula and the congregation of Buzibirira Lutheran Church, where a Lutheran Lay Renewal Weekend will be held March 23-24

Bill also had the privilege of attending the first Sunday worship service at a new church plant - Bukabooli Lutheran Church in Luuka District.



The congregation of Bukabooli Lutheran Church after their first worship service. L – Pastor Emmanuel Bwaana, R – Dean Peter Maganda

FROM DEAN PETER MAGANDA

On behalf of the Lutheran Church of Uganda Eastern Deanery, I would like to send our great appreciation to Lutheran Lay Renewal of America for the training rendered by the Executive Director, Mr. Bill Oehlschlager. We are so grateful for the financial support towards the three-days conference. May God bless all congregations and individuals who contributed.

I would like to say that it was such a conference that left the Deanery changed, especially with how they are to minister to one another in prayer in small groups. I have been able to receive feedback from those who attended the training, reporting how they are teaching their congregations using the materials given to them. I will be sending you written messages from the congregations expressing their gratitude for the training.

At a Deanery level, all the leaders are very grateful for the training as well. It's through these trainings that they see the growth of Christ's body in the Deanery. They asked that this partnership should not stop but be solidified so that all churches benefit.

The LLRW program is such a significant factor towards all the seven LCU deaneries, and this calls for future considerations to reach them with the training and if God allows within the next year. I would like also to inform you that LCU is looking forward to a strong partnership in the Deanery and at the seminary.

I am also committed to ensuring that the programs are organized at local congregations through those who participated in the January conference. I will be also giving reports on the progress of the different Renewal Weekends from different places/congregations. I pray for God's guidance and provision especially with transport facilitation to the communities which I plan will be monthly for the sake of making follow ups.

I will be also sharing with you the Deanery strategic work plan coming out next month and this will include LLRW activities. I call upon LLRA to continue serving alongside LCU in whatever ways God is calling to work together to the glory of His name.

May the Lord continue to strengthen you as you serve Him in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

Rev. Peter Maganda
Dean Eastern Deanery, Lutheran Church of Uganda

RICHARD OKELLO APPOINTED LLR REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE EASTERN DEANERY

Mr. Richard Okello has accepted an appointment from Dean Peter Maganda to be the Lutheran Lay Renewal Representative for the Eastern Deanery of the Lutheran Church of Uganda. Richard is a teacher at Trinity Lutheran School in Iganga, a well-respected lay leader in the deanery and led the men's group during our renewal conference in Magamaga in January. We are excited to have Richard on our leadership team and look forward to working with him as this ministry continues to grow in Uganda.

FUNDS AND BOOKS NEEDED TO HELP THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE IN UGANDA

The Lutheran Theological College in Magamaga was built in 2016 and currently has 56 students training to be pastors, with 28 more expected in the next year. The college is in great need of financial support for students and to finish construction projects, as well as to provide books for the students and the library.

Lutheran Lay Renewal's first priority is to help the seminary by collecting books and the funds to purchase books. Dean of Students Rev. Peter Maganda would like, first, to be able to give every student a Lutheran Study Bible and second, Luther's Small Catechism. Books for the college's library also are greatly needed.

Any congregation or individual willing to help may send a check or books to our national office in Butler, PA. Checks should be payable to Lutheran Lay Renewal with a memo “for Uganda” and are tax deductible. If you prefer to work directly with the LCU, please contact our Executive Director and he will be happy to give you more details and contact information. We plan to send a shipment of books around the end of March so please have funds or books to us before then.

It’s amazing to see how much the Lutheran Church of Uganda is accomplishing and how fast it is growing with very limited resources, and any financial help can go a long way in helping our brothers and sisters in Christ in Uganda.



This will be the chapel at the Lutheran Theological College when it has the funds to build the roof.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In our last newsletter, I referenced the Christmas season and the miraculous birth of our Lord and Savior. As we approach March, Christians will observe a tradition that has been celebrated since the 16th century. Shrove Tuesday, known as “Pancake Tuesday” or *Mardi Gras*, the French word for “Fat Tuesday” or *Fastnacht Day*, is observed the day before Lent begins. Shrove Tuesday was named after the Christian custom to be “shriven” before the start of Lent. The word “shrive” means to “confess.” A popular Protestant and Roman Catholic tradition is the ringing of the church bells to “call the faithful to confession before the solemn season of Lent” and for people to “begin frying their pancakes” (Wikipedia). The eggs, butter and sugar create the hearty meal of pancakes, which is the “meat.” The following day, Ash Wednesday, we, as Christians, go to church and receive, on our foreheads, the sign of the cross with the ashes to begin the 40 days of Lent to await the eventual horror and sorrow of our Christ’s crucifixion on Good Friday.

During the next two months, before we publish another newsletter, Easter will be greeted with joy, gratitude and thankfulness because of what Christ’s resurrection means to all Christians, the promise of eternal life. We are reminded of the scripture reading in John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. - John 3:16 KJV

The assurance that Christ is always with us through the presence of his Spirit, causes the heart to leap for joy. Be sure to read the excellent article by one of our Board members, Rev. David Luecke, who causes one to ponder where we are in our church communities regarding our familiarity and experience with the Holy Spirit who prompts us. He, also, has a weekly blog and the web site is www.whathappend.church. Among his

writings he speaks of the six perspectives of the Spirit. It causes one to ask what is our role as Christians as we continue our spiritual journey? The scripture verses in Micah 6:8 say it so simply but profoundly;

*He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God. - Micah 6:8 NIV.*

Our Executive Director, Bill Oehlschlager, continues to be in correspondence with the LLR ministry in Uganda and will share some of that information in this newsletter. Bill is ardent in his outreach for LLR, to contacts from the East to West Coast and will be visiting us, here in California, in a few weeks.

In LLRA, we continue to feel blessed by the spiritual, prayerful and financial support all of you give us. We thrive on knowing you are there praying for our ministry and we are optimistic about God's plan for the future of LLRA. Please pray for our country and others in the world.

Elaine Schomaker, LLRA President

WHAT'S YOUR SPIRITUAL TEMPERAMENT?

Did you know that you have a spiritual temperament? This means some activities help you feel closer to God than others things you do. And people have different spiritual temperaments. So if you want to be drawn closer to God spend more time on the spiritual pathways that work best for you.

These are insights from a new branch of psychology associated with the names Myers and Briggs. The Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory is the most-used testing instrument in business human resource management. One familiar distinction from their work is between introverts and extraverts.

I first ran into the insights on spiritual temperaments reading the book *Who You Are Is How You Pray*, by Charles Keating, who applied the Myers and Briggs personality types to members of religious orders to help candidates find the right one. He highlights the view of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, who urged those seeking to be closer to God to try out different approaches and disciplines to find the one that is "sweet" for each. Don't just imitate what someone else does. Had I been born Catholic, I probably would have become a Jesuit. One of the biggest blessings in my life is that I was born and raised in a vibrant Lutheran community.

Do you feel closer to God when you are hiking in nature? Or when you are caring for others? Or when you are alone thinking about God? Or when you are with other believers praising God with high emotions? Or when you are out crusading for peace and justice? Or when you are worshiping in a building with lots of symbols using special rituals? Or when you are pondering God's word? These questions reflect types of spiritual temperaments recognized by Gary Thomas in his book *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Pathway to God*.

I can make the most sense out of my spiritual journey as traveling the pathway of loving God with the mind. Thomas calls this the way of the intellectual. I am also an Activist who likes to try things out to see which way the Spirit is leading. But these pathways are very different from what works for most others, especially the Enthusiasts and Caregivers.

Yet unfortunately it is the Intellectuals who have provided most of the leadership in traditional church bodies. Martin Luther was a university professor and John Calvin a highly sophisticated lawyer. Their church bodies have little room for Enthusiasts, Caregivers and Contemplatives. Lutherans in recent decades doubled down on liturgical ritual and symbols. We have actually narrowed our appeal to focus on one small segment of the general population.

For those who want to get closer to God, the usual encouragement is to set aside time for a devotion and prayer in the early morning. That does not work well for me. As near as I can tell, true morning people are only about fifteen percent of the population. I get frustrated with two-paragraph devotions because I want to dig deeper. I have trouble sticking with a rigid discipline. Yet I find that my conversation with God flows freely during the day.

Try this out as a theological insight. There isn't anything we can do on our own to draw closer to God. He is the one who reaches out to change your heart to give you new motivations. That is the specialty of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught that the Spirit changes human spirits and will serve as his advocate in our lives. All we can do is put ourselves where the Spirit can work on us. Those sacred pathways differ. But common to all ways is that the Spirit draws us closer to God in a community of believers who take God's word seriously and share its impact on their lives.

The Rev. David Luecke, Ph. D., LLRA Board Member

SCHEDULED EVENTS

March 9-10	Renewal Weekend Naigobya Lutheran Church Naigobya, Uganda Grace Kalamu, Vicar
March 16	Spiritual Transformation Retreat Calvary Lutheran Church Modesto, CA The Rev. Michael Mechsner, Pastor
March 17	Sharing Your Faith Workshop Peace Lutheran Church Fresno, CA The Rev. Dennis Wenholtz, Pastor
March 23	Sharing Your Faith Workshop St. Columba Anglican Church Fresno, CA The Rev. Canon James Snell, Rector
March 23-24	Renewal Weekend Buzibirira Lutheran Church Buzibirira, Uganda The Rev. Emmanuel Batwawula, Pastor
June 22	Summer Renewal Conference St. Luke's Lutheran Church Saxonburg, PA The Rev. Roger Keller, Pastor
August 17	Men's Retreat Oakhurst Lutheran Church Oakhurst, CA The Rev. Jason Johnsen, Pastor

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

“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 successful knee replacement surgery for Kathie Klueg and healing for Dan and Kathie
 - 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 the Lord’s blessings on our ministry in Uganda
 - For wisdom and guidance for the LLRA Board of Directors, as we seek to grow and expand this ministry
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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.

Don’t forget to direct Choice Dollars®

Grant funding from Thrivent Financial through its Thrivent Choice® program can help support organizations you care about. Don’t let Choice Dollars expire.

*Eligible Thrivent Financial members who have Choice Dollars available have until **March 31, 2019** to direct any remaining 2018 Choice Dollars. Help support Lutheran Lay Renewal. Go to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice to learn more. Or call 800-847-4836 and say “Thrivent Choice” after the prompt.*

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 - and now also to Uganda!

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