

THE VOICE OF RENEWAL

The Newsletter of Lutheran Lay Renewal of America
Serving all Lutheran churches since 1971
SEPTEMBER, 2019

LLRA Board of Directors

Fred Schneider, President

Lou McKibben, Vice President

Judy Moser, Secretary

Karen Ferrari, Treasurer

Bill Oehlschlager, Executive Director

Elaine Schomaker, President Emeritus

The Rev. David Luecke, Ph. D.

BOARD ELECTIONS

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

Fred Schneider, President, Cincinnati, OH – Fred 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. He has been a member of the LLR Board of Directors for 3 years. Prior to LLR activity, Fred had been active in Episcopal Curisillo 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.

Lou McKibben, Vice President, Pittsburgh, PA - 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, Secretary, Cabot, PA – 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.).

We also are saying farewell to board members who are retiring from the board this year:

Linda Shipman, Secretary, Dillsburg, PA - Linda became a member of the board in 2012. She was elected Secretary in 2015 for a two-year term and re-elected in 2017. Prior to 2012, Linda had been a very active team

member and served on several LLR weekends. Over the years, she was active in LLR's ministry whenever possible. Always a smile and a willing heart for LLR.

Dan Klueg, Madison, OH – Dan was elected to the board in 2013 for a three-year term. He was re-elected in 2016 and would have been eligible to seek another term, but had to decline for health reasons. Dan had been an active LLR and Faith Alive team member prior to being on the Board and has led LLR weekends as the Coordinator. He demonstrated a great dedication to our ministry. In addition, Dan's wife Kathie has served on renewal weekend teams as a Children's Coordinator and their son Ryan has served on teen teams with us.

Elaine Schomaker, Clovis, CA – “I am now the Past President of LLR. As President Emeritus, I will remain on the Board, but not in any executive position. I decided not to run for re-election during the recent Board elections. I was elected as president, in 2013, when Dick Brown retired from the presidency and was re-elected in 2015 and 2017. I had become Vice President, in 1998, when Dick Brown became President. My involvement, in LLR, as a team member, dates back to the early 1980's. Most of my team involvement, on LLR weekends, has been as the Music Coordinator, but I did serve as the Weekend Coordinator on several occasions and just as a team member. No matter the role, it has been a joy.”

“I want to say thank you to all of you who have been faithful in welcoming our newsletters, giving financial support, prayer support and being involved in LLR in some way and your genuine interest in our ministry. That kind of support is priceless and appreciated more than words can convey. Now, as the President Emeritus, I extend my genuine thank you to the LLR Board for being supportive, encouraging and patient during my tenure as President. They have been, not just Board members, but endearing friends.”

IN MEMORIAM – BEVERLY BROWN

On Thursday, August 15, Bev Brown, wife of our former President, Dick Brown, was taken home to her Lord and Savior after a long illness. Dick and Bev became involved with LLRA when they served as host and hostess for a weekend at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in 1995. From that point on, they served on several teams together.

Bev was a very social person and could carry on a conversation with anyone, which made her a valuable team member. They especially enjoyed the weekend on which they served together at Bethany Lutheran Church in Montoursville, Pennsylvania in 2000.

For 8 years (2001- 2009) they hosted the annual LLRA Summer Conference at their home in Pleasant Hill, California. They prepared 8 meals each weekend for the 20 – 30 LLRA team members in attendance. To them, meal prep was easy and all those in attendance enjoyed the fellowship and time together.

Bev was always supportive of Dick in his role as LLRA President. For the many years that Dick was President and office manager, Bev was very involved in the administrative work of LLR and the many Summer Renewal Conferences held at the Brown's home. She will be dearly missed by her family and many friends in LLR and elsewhere. In addition to her husband, she leaves two children (Susan and David), and two grandchildren (Lauren and Cody).

Dick writes, “She will be greatly missed by her family and friends, but we know through our strong faith that we will someday be united again in God's Heavenly Kingdom.”

A memorial service for Bev will be held on Sunday, September 22 at 2:00 at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek, CA.

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”

LLR EVENTS IN CALIFORNIA IN AUGUST

MEN'S RETREAT AT OAKHURST LUTHERAN CHURCH, OAKHURST, CA – AUGUST 17

“Being a pastor who has led a lot of spiritual retreats, it's rare that I get to experience one that both challenges and nourishes my own spiritual growth. I'm not always optimistic when we bring in an outside speaker. Lutheran Lay Renewal exceeded my expectations. I learned some new things and felt encouraged in my walk with God. The speaker was well read and researched and was able to bring together good theology with contemporary knowledge, while keeping it relatable through sharing personal experiences and testimony. The retreat was for our church's men's club and we had never done a retreat together before... some of the men weren't sure it would be worth giving up 4 hours on a Saturday afternoon. The depth of conversation that opened up during the retreat also surprised me in a good way and I'm looking forward to seeing how the retreat might influence our regular monthly meetings. It's important for churches to bring in new voices sometimes to encourage new kinds of growth and Lutheran Lay Renewal is a really great choice!” - Pastor Jason Johnsen

SHARING YOUR FAITH WORKSHOP AT SIERRA LUTHERAN, AUBERRY, CA – AUGUST 18

“I have already been able to put into practice much of what Bill spoke about at our Sharing Your Faith workshop he led at our small church in the foothills of central California last week. I was especially touched by his encouragement to pray for people "on the spot." I was able this week to pray over 2 people who actually left our church but I have remained friendly with when I have seen them. Each had special family issues and I asked if I could pray for them 'right now.' Each was grateful and we connected through the Holy Spirit. I could feel it. I will continue to be ready to pray for anyone in need and not wait for later. Each of us attending the workshop felt a tugging of our hearts to reach out to those in need and not be afraid to do so. We felt that God brought Bill to us just when we needed a lift. We are without a Pastor right now so Bill was able to infuse in us a new drive and focus for the future of our church, knowing that God is leading us as He wishes. *Everyone can experience a renewal after listening to Bill!* - Lynda Qualls, Sierra Lutheran Church Admin. President

“Thanks, Bill, for a very inspiring workshop, reminding me to be ‘all in’ as a Christ follower and to be kind and loving to all, as we ‘salt the oats.’ I appreciate your time and wisdom.” - Reggie McLean

“The Sharing Your Faith Workshop was an inspiring one hour of great information and listening to the leader share his testimony. The Spirit has truly led him to where he is today and I'm so thankful I was able to attend this time with others. Now we can go out and feel confident to share the Gospel.” - Sallie Karp

CHURCH COUNCIL RETREAT FOR EMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH, MODESTO, CA, AUG. 24

“Thank you for a wonderful retreat time with our council! Everyone has commented saying ‘it was the best retreat in a long time’ or something similar. One person told me she was given a lot to think about with regard to some issues in her life and felt the material you presented is going to help her come to some resolution. Another said it was a ‘very spiritual morning’ and he was reluctant to leave the setting. And as I mentioned that day, the material you presented was exactly what I'd hoped for and will help set the tone for some big next steps in the life of this congregation. You may have gathered from the conversation regarding our opportunity for renewal and 85th anniversary year that we do have some deep thinking, spiritual growing, and meaningful work ahead of us. Thank you for sharing your notes - they will be most useful as we move ahead and help those who missed the retreat to catch up. Again, thank you for blessing our council retreat & we look forward to working with you in the future.” - God's peace, Pastor Lyn Crase

“Jesus provoked only three responses when he walked the earth: hatred, fear, or adoration. And yet many who profess to be Christians today respond only with mild approval at best. Why is that, and what can we do to awaken the world - and ourselves - to the uniqueness of Christ?” - Stefan Gustavsson

RENEWAL WEEKEND IN IKUMBYA, UGANDA – AUGUST 7-8

Greetings dear friends in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen. We are grateful for the prayers you send us, especially for the growth in ministry as we reach people with the word of God using the Lutheran Lay Renewal Weekend program. Here in the photos taken from the Ikumbya event, which took place between 7th Saturday and 8th Sunday August, it was well attended by the Christians of the church who also invited their non-Lutheran neighbors. The members on Saturday were required to contribute food from their homes which was to be used for the two days of the event.

According to the head of laity in the congregation, it was their first time to have such an event which showed unity among Christians, as they prayed, sang, and ate together. It was a new experience which he said was good for the church to have at least every year. Mr. Bameka Emmanuel attended the January event (led by LLR) at Magamaga and he had earlier on introduced the teaching of the LLR Weekend in the congregation.

After sharing issues of faith on Saturday, the following day, Sunday, was full of Christians in a small church structure. There was baptism of children, and one adult. The service as usual was crowned with sharing of the grace in a circle outside of the building. Thank you all for taking your time to read, to pray for us and wishing us the best as we minister to the communities in Eastern Deanery. May God bless. Amen. - Rev. Peter M. Maganda, Dean



Pastor Peter Maganda baptizes a baby on Sunday morning of the renewal weekend



Saying grace outside before a meal

LLR AT THE NALC CONVOCATION IN INDIANAPOLIS, AUGUST 6-9

Our display table at the NALC Convocation was a good place to talk to old friends, as well as meet lots of new people and tell them about LLR and what we have to offer. As usual, there was a lot of interest in our ministry!



Pastor Bob and Bonnie Stevens of Pasadena, MD



(L to R) Pastor Lenae Rasmussen, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, El Paso, Tx, Pastor Douglas Schoelles, Concordia Lutheran Church, Kingsburg, CA (Dean of the Central Pacific Mission District), the Rev. Dr. Amy Schifrin, President, North American Lutheran Seminary, Ambridge, PA, Pastor Carl Rasmussen, Institute of Lutheran Theology, El Paso, TX

ADVENTURES IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT

I've heard it many times: "It was a life-changing experience." Such is a frequent comment from participants in short-term mission trips through our church and other mission agencies. For some it is taking a step in faith and discovering rewards. For others this is a reaction to first encountering poverty in under-developed countries. For one woman it was the experience of helping repair an Appalachian mobile home without expecting anything in return. A fresh effort to serve others different from yourself feels good. It takes special energy—energy the Holy Spirit can provide.

Too often Christ followers routinely go to church but miss the adventure of fellowship life in Christ. Faithful church attendance can get boring. It certainly seems so to many unchurched observers.

But church life understood as a fellowship of the Holy Spirit opens up new, more exciting perspectives. Believers together can discover how the Spirit individually draws them closer to God through new insights and relationships. With encouragement from others, they can discover how their lives get better whatever the circumstances they face. Dare we say, within a fellowship of the Spirit believers can add more joy to their lives.

Keep in step with the Spirit, Paul challenged the Galatians (Galatians 5: 25). See how the Spirit produces new fruit in your life. The Spirit can bring you deeper experiences of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control. The Spirit can generate stronger motivation for acts of kindness, goodness, faithfulness. Discovering such life-affirming changes brings adventure to life in Christ.

Jesus announced that he came so that his followers could have life now in overflowing abundance (John 10:10). Accepting the redemption God's Son Jesus won for us, we can have eternal life with God. Allowing God's Spirit to work in our inner lives, we can grow in abundance the qualities that make life more fulfilling now. By the grace of Christ's gift of redemption we are saved eternally. By the grace of the Spirit's life-changing fruit we can live better now.

The Holy Spirit brings special energy into a believer's life. This was the observation and firm belief of the Apostle Paul. He planted and kept in contact with dozens of New Testament churches. In his letters he often encouraged them by noting how their love for others and their joy were increasing.

Paul's perspective on the special energy the Holy Spirit brings is highlighted in Gordon Fee's book *God's Empowering Presence*, his thorough study of all of the 143 references to the Spirit in Paul's letters. Fee's findings are summarized in his book *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*.

What is the level of special Spirit energy in your congregation? Look for behaviors you would not find in social clubs and organizations around you. Look for loving acts of investing time and effort in others without payback. The Spirit moves us beyond selfish motivations.

My community has a number of group homes for the developmentally disabled. Recently some of our leaders organized a "Night to Shine" at a local Holiday Inn in the form of a prom for these special guests. Anybody in the building that Friday evening felt that something special was going on just from the big turnout and the sound of people affirming others and sharing joy. That was special Spirit energy.

The Tim Tebow Foundation stimulated 650 churches to hold such an event this year. I don't think you could find many civic social groups sponsoring this kind of event. Being in step with the Spirit can be an exciting adventure—yes, even fun. Spread the word. Encourage others to serve unselfishly. Organize opportunities to do so.

The Rev. Dave Luecke, Ph.D., LLR Board member

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I am Fred Schneider. I am writing this Report under trying circumstances, as neither of my computers is working properly, so I am writing on a borrowed laptop without a printer. In August, I was elected President of Lutheran Lay Renewal of America. I am honored to be your President. I began my association with LLR at a weekend held at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Evans City, PA, accompanied by my late wife. We were on a number of the following weekends, and we jointly led a weekend in Mansfield, Ohio. I also led a weekend in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

I want to thank Elaine Schomaker, who stepped down as our President. I learned much from her during her excellent, fruitful time as President. Thankfully, Elaine will remain on the Board of Directors as Immediate Past President. Her long experience with LLR makes her wonderfully qualified to be one of our leaders. I also want to thank Linda Shipman for her faithful, excellent work as Secretary. Linda did not run for re-election. She will be missed on the Board of Directors. Both offered good ideas and are true leaders. Lou McKibben was elected as Vice President, replacing me in that position. Judy Moser was elected Secretary to replace Linda. She has contributed to recent Board Meetings in a helpful way. I am thankful for these two new Officers.

I am also thankful for Bill Oehlschlager, our Executive Director. We most likely could not survive without Bill, who has done so many important things for LLR over the years. From recent Newsletters you know about his work on our behalf working with church leaders in Uganda helping them get Lutheran Lay Renewal going there. Of course, that has been an expensive venture, but well worth it in God's Kingdom here on earth. Now we need to catch up on Bill's stipend; we are way too much behind.

Recently the Board authorized Lou McKibben to explore tours to Israel as a means for funds to support LLR's continued work. To that end Bill, his wife Joanne and Lou will be on a tour learning the ins and outs of tours to Israel, hoping that enough can be learned so that we can begin leading tours in a year or two. I know that there are many details for any such tour.

I serve you knowing that God's Church needs continued renewal and support, and that LLR can be an important part of that. We will see what God does about that. Blessings, Fred

SCHEDULED EVENTS

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| September 7-8 | Renewal Weekend Kainogoga Lutheran Church Kainogoga, Uganda The Rev. Titus Malijo, Pastor |
| September 8 | Sharing Your Faith Workshop Annapolis Evangelical Lutheran Church Edgewater, MD The Rev. Mark Metze, Pastor |
| September 14 | Spiritual Transformation Retreat St. Luke's Lutheran Church Monroe, NC The Rev. Christopher Metze, Pastor |
| September 21 | Spiritual Transformation Retreat Redeemer Lutheran Church Albuquerque, NM The Rev. John Heffelfinger, Pastor |

- October 5-6 Renewal Weekend
Butayunjwa Lutheran Church
Butayunjwa, Uganda
The Rev. Buluba Erifazi, Pastor
- November 2-3 Renewal Weekend
Bugono Lutheran Church
Bugono, Uganda
The Rev. Sossy Balise, Pastor
- November 16 Spot the Spirit Workshop
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Ambridge, PA
The Rev. Jill McGregor, Pastor
The Rev. Dave Luecke, Ph. D., Workshop Leader

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

- Healing for Dan and Kathie Klueg, and Kathie's father
 - Comfort, peace and healing for Dick Brown
 - Healing for Elaine Schomaker
 - For the Lord's protection over all police officers, firefighters and all men and women in our armed forces
 - For the Lord's blessings on our ministry in Uganda and on the Lutheran Church of 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.

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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