



Our purpose...

To grow faithful and generous stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

4G Networking is a “fresh” approach to year-round stewardship as an *expression of faith* and way of life. This ministry is to provide *networking opportunities for pastors, congregations and seminarians through year-round educational opportunities. Theology and applications—drawing on stewardship specialists, theologians and scholars; Bible studies, resources for preaching, family systems approach—learning to be a student of yourself and raising congregational awareness of emotional response to money; Synod website with links on current stewardship theology/practice*

Biblical Principles:

God	Everything we are and all that we have comes from and belongs to God [Deut 8:17-18; 1 Chron 29:14; Ps 100:1-5; Ps 104: 27-28; 1 Cor 6:19-20].
Grace	Faith in Christ is a gift from God. Our poverty is replaced by His wealth. His riches are free; and all that not because we deserve it, but because Jesus is gracious [Jn: 3:16-17; Eph 1:7; 2:8; 2 Cor 9:8; Mark 6:4].
Gratitude	When the grace of Jesus penetrates the human heart, it rebounds back to God as gratitude, an expression of faith [Eph 4:6; 2 Cor 8:2; 9:15; Acts 20:35]. Gratitude and generosity work both ways. Generosity leads to rejoicing 1 [Chron 29:9] and joy leads people to give generously [2 Cor 8:2].
Generosity	God gives because God loves. We give out of glad and generous hearts as an expression of love and devotion to God by freely offering ourselves and our possessions to God [2 Cor:1:5; 2 Cor 5:17; 2Cor 9:11; 1Jn 3:1].

Goals for 2013....

4G Networking’s kick-off event featured Mark Allen Powell on April 20 at Trinity Lutheran Seminary. Workshop I: hosted over 27 congregations with 55 lay and rostered leaders attending. Mark Allen Powell [commitment, lifestyle changes/renunciation, give freely and joyfully—both duty and delight; 2) grow congregational giving and mission support through educational breakout sessions: Money follows Mission and the Relational Ask; Youth and Family—Its Never Too Late; Capital Campaigns Made Simple; and Telling Our Story/Sharing Our Resources. Reviews were very positive and verifies the importance of 4G Networking as an on-going ministry in our synod.

Workshop II features Margaret Marcuson on August 24 at Trinity Lutheran Seminary. Marcuson will explore “Money in Ministry:” family of origin issues of money—giving, receiving, borrowing, exchanging and trading self; explore personal values regarding money; and learn how all these things influence the congregation as an emotional system, as we learn how to regulate and manage our reactions to money. We will also learn how to celebrate our giftedness as congregations and write autobiography on faith and money practices.

4G Networking Team: Pr Pat Badkey, Tracy Goodpaster, Pr. Janet Hatch, Pr. Steve Kimpel, Pr. Lynn Spatz, John Mittermaier, Pr. Ed Williams-DEM, and Pr. Dona Johnson, chair. If you would like to join 4G Networking ministry please contact the synod office.

4G Networking is the Southern Ohio Synod’s approach to the ELCA Macedonia Project, a two-year initiative to grow faithful and generous stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Southern Ohio Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

April 30, 2013

At our recent Synod “God Sightings” events, Amazing Grace Day Camp was the single most-frequently cited example of “the Southern Ohio Synod” at its best. This ministry is not only a highly-effective sharing of the Good News of God’s amazing grace in Jesus Christ with children and families, but it is also a model of collaboration, being a partnership between the Synod, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio, and congregations & individuals working to support this ministry.

Our vision of presenting the Gospel to the un-churched and providing a camping experience to those who may not be able to go to resident camp continues to take us into new places. Thanks to the support of many gifts from congregations and individuals from across our synod, we were able to provide funding for 16 camps (nearly 600 campers) in 2012.

Amazing Grace Day Camps during summer 2012 were:

St. John, Stovortown; St. Paul, Ironton; Augsburg, Cincinnati; Pleasant City Lutheran Parish; St. John, Zanesville; Emmanuel, Coshocton; St. John, Sidney; Messiah; Urbana; St. John, Martin’s Ferry; First English, Columbus; Holy Trinity, New Lebanon; St. Paul, Bridgeport; Bethel, Springfield; St. Luke, Marietta; Holy Trinity, Newark; Roselawn, Cincinnati.

Many thanks are due to the AGDC Task Force members for their dedication and their tireless efforts to help make AGDC run smoothly. Those serving on the Task Force with me are as follows: Rev. Jeff Wick (Synod Representative), Rod Pearce (LOMO Representative), Trina Thornton, Rev. Grace Werzinske, Dana and Rev. Bryan Kittner, Rev. Karen Torrez, and Bette Backus. I also would like to thank the Rev. Justin Van Orman who has faithfully served on this Task Force, including a term as chair, but is now stepping down from his position.

As we are all aware, budgets have been reduced across the Synod. AGDC is one of those ministries that have felt the effects of the budget cuts, even as the costs of ministry are rising. The Task Force has already cut the “extras”: Bibles, T-shirts, Christmas gifts, etc., which we used to provide. Synod funds go entirely toward the costs of LOMO programming, and we still have a shortfall: The projected cost for Amazing Grace Day Camp for 2012 is approximately **\$55,000**. The Synod budget for this ministry is **\$25,000**. For this reason, we must lean very heavily upon the third “leg” of our partnership: individuals and congregations who support this ministry with their generous contributions. Those host congregations who are able have contributed some share of the cost of their camp, but we very much need the support of other congregations and individuals. As we look forward to this summer’s camps, please keep our campers, host congregations, and LOMO counselors in your prayers, and we ask that you prayerfully consider supporting this ministry with a financial contribution. We are the Southern Ohio Synod, and this is *our* ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Katie Kerrigan,
Chair – Amazing Grace Day Camp Task Force



AUGSBURG FORTRESS

Dear Partners in Ministry,

It gives me great pleasure to share with you some of the exciting things happening at your ministry of publishing, Augsburg Fortress. Here are a few things you might not know about us:

1. We have three divisions: [Augsburg Fortress](#) focusing on creation of group use faith formation, worship and music resources for congregations (mostly ELCA and ELCIC); [sparkhouse](#), focusing on creation of group use faith formation resources for the ELCA and other mainline denominations; and, [Fortress Press](#), focusing on publishing text and reference materials for colleges, universities, seminaries, and individual readers in the areas of religion and theology.

2. One of our most exciting new resources for 2014 is [Prelude Music Planner](#), a web-based subscription resource for church musicians! Church musicians on our staff created *Prelude* to help fellow church musicians spend more time making music and less time planning for it. Here are a few features:

- *Prelude* allows church musicians to create plans easily in just a few clicks. Quickly browse hundreds of pieces based on lectionary days, keywords, skill level and more. Everything needed to create comprehensive plans is accessible from one place.
- Use date, day, voicing, skill level and other filters to help you quickly find the right music for your worship. Simply drag the anthem or other work you want to use into a folder, on screen. Planning couldn't be easier!
- Discover and purchase new music in *Prelude's* multi-publisher library. Download complete pieces to your computer instantly—with audio and full sheet music previews, you can feel confident in your new music purchases. You may also preview sheet music and listen to audio before purchasing.
- You may organize your church's existing music library by adding into your *Prelude* library. When you do this, you'll have a fully integrated planning system.

Augsburg Fortress is offering free 14-day trials for *Prelude Music Planner* and free webinars for an overview & to have specific questions answered. For more information or to sign up for these free offerings, go to <http://Preludemusicplanner.org>.




3. In addition to our extremely popular [Spark Sunday School](#) that has been offered for the past several years, in 2012 we launched two new Sunday school resources for kids:

[Holy Moly!](#) (Sunday school for preschool-grade 4)

[Connect!](#) (Sunday school for "tweens" kids in grades 5 & 6)

New content has been added in 2013 for both of these faith formation resources for kids. You can see samples of both resources (print learner & leader resources and videos at wearesparkhouse.org).

Office: 100 S. Fifth St., Suite 600, Minneapolis, MN 55402

Mail: P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209  Phone: 612.330.3300  Toll-free: 800.328.4648  Web: augsburgfortress.org



AUGSBURG FORTRESS

4. Over the past couple of years, we have launched several innovative print & video based confirmation and youth resources that have been very well received by youth and their leaders!

These include:

[re:form](#)

[re:form Traditions](#) (with versions for Lutheran, Reformed & Methodist traditions)

[re:form Ancestors](#) (Old Testament & New Testament)

Samples of the print learner & leader resources and videos are available at wearesparkhouse.org.

5. [animate.faith](#) is our first ecumenical introduction to Christianity resource from sparkhouse.

Published in August 2012, it is being used in both traditional small group or adult forum settings, but also in “theology on tap” settings in pubs, coffee shops and other non-traditional faith formation settings. Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber, outstanding preacher at the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering, is one of the seven featured teachers on the animate.faith video. In August 2013, a second resource will be published, animate.bible. In addition to Nadia, other teachers on animate.bible include Phyllis Tickle, Rachel Held Evans & Will Willimon. See wearesparkhouse.org for samples!

6. In November 2012, [Fortress Press](#) announced a new brand at the AAR/SBL (teaching theologians) conference. But, more important than the brand re-launch is our investment in Fortress Press. We have added editors and expect to publish more books (both print & a variety of digital formats) per year over the next few years in three primary areas: Fortree Education (textbooks); Fortress Academic (monographs); and Fortress Reference. You can learn more about our Fortress Press publishing plans on their website, fortresspress.com.

Thank you for your interest in and continuing support of your ministry of publishing! If we may assist you in finding faith formation or worship & music resources, please check our websites or don't hesitate to contact our Customer Care team at 800-328-4648 or your assigned Congregational Resource Representative.



I hope that you have a blessed and inspiring synod assembly! Please don't hesitate to let us know how we may assist you!

Beth A Lewis, President & CEO

ceo@augsbουργfortress.org

[@bethalewis](https://twitter.com/bethalewis)

Office: 100 S. Fifth St., Suite 600, Minneapolis, MN 55402

Mail: P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209  Phone: 612.330.3300  Toll-free: 800.328.4648  Web: augsbουργfortress.org

Brazil Companion Synod Task Force

The Brazil Task Force was busy during 2012-2013.

We were able to host two students from Sinodo Espirito Santo a Belem for the 2012 ELCA National Youth Gathering. Juliana Burzlaff and Rebeca Foester traveled first to Chicago for orientation, then to Southern Ohio Synod and finally on to New Orleans. One of our youth, Kendel Strasser, also was part of the Chicago orientation and accompanied the students throughout their stay. While in our synod, Juliana and Rebeca gave several presentations about Brazil and saw many of the ministries of Southern Ohio, met with Bishop Holloway and his staff, and even managed a day with youth from St. Jacob, Anna, Ohio at King's Island. Among the benefits that have come from this experience is the constant contact with several of the youth with each other (isn't Facebook great?) and the beginning of a relationship with a couple of the St. Jacob youth who are the same age as the sisters of Juliana and Rebeca. Thanks to St. Jacob Lutheran, Anna for sponsoring this endeavor.

During the year we added some members to our Task Force: Rev. Ralph Wolfe, Clinton Heights Lutheran and Jane Raeuchle and Rev. Bob Carter, St. Paul, Botkins. We also began a partnership arrangement between St. Paul, Botkins and the parish in Domingo Martins (Rev. Valdeci Foester). There are a couple of other partnerships that we are pursuing but that have not yet been established.

A major project has been preparing to greet and extend hospitality to Rev. Joaquin Borhardt, Pastor Sinodal (Bishop) of Espirito Santo and a delegation of four others, including Rev. Antonio da Luz from Vila Velha, who will be attending the Synod Assembly in June and an additional five others who will be arriving on Sunday the 9th of June for a full week of being in our Synod. A wide variety of visits and activities are being planned.

Thank you to all the Task Force members who have worked so diligently to make this companionship work and grow. Special thanks to Ed Williams for his support from the Synod staff. We are looking forward to another fruitful year in 2013-2014.

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Michael Althaus

St. Jacob Lutheran Church, Anna, Ohio

Chair, Brazil Companion Synod Task Force Southern Ohio Synod, ELCA

Capital University

Ask. Think. Lead.

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY: WHERE BEING A LUTHERAN INSTITUTION MEANS SOMETHING

In July 2012, I accepted the appointment as director of Church Relations at both Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary.

I am proud to be an additional liaison between the university and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, its congregations, pastors and assemblies. I will serve as an ambassador for Capital among synod assemblies in ELCA Region 6 and beyond; coordinate with our president to represent Capital at churchwide assemblies; and explore opportunities to represent Capital and the Seminary jointly.

Capital President Denvy Bowman and I are working closely together to better define, enhance and communicate the role of our university as an institution of the Lutheran Church. Upon my appointment, Dr. Bowman wrote, "As a graduate of Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Gary Sandberg brings dual perspective and special insight shaped by nearly 25 years of service to the Church and higher education. His education, pastoral experience and work in administration position him to reach out and strengthen relationships among constituencies both of our institutions value."

Also helping us strengthen our church ties is a good friend of yours and mine. Many of you know Pastor Denny Asp, who retired from Capital after serving for more than 30 years as director of Church Relations. Pastor Denny is now serving at Christ Lutheran Church, right across the street from the university. He is helping to facilitate a revival of the historic relationship that Capital and Christ Lutheran have shared, including being intentionally welcoming to Capital students on Sunday morning.

University Pastor Amy Oehlschlaeger guides worship experiences on campus on Wednesday mornings and on Thursday evenings. Through her efforts, Capital and Trinity students have more occasions to worship together.

Capital welcomes students of all faiths. Nearly 20 percent of our undergraduates are Lutheran, and **we would love to have more!** Encourage the high school students from your congregation to take a look at Capital. Have you considered **a trip** with your youth for a campus tour and meeting with our Admission team? **Let me know when you are coming**, I would love to greet you.

I also am ready to bring Capital to you. Invite me to be with you on a Sunday morning or other times. I would be delighted to lead worship, preach or guide an education class.

Just down the hall from my office is a poster that begins, "By drawing upon the Lutheran principle of free inquiry, Capital University ..." These are the opening words to the Capital University Mission Statement. **Being a Lutheran university means something.** Capital stands ready to serve the church. Contact me to let me know what we can do for you.

In Service to Christ,



Pastor Gary Sandberg
Capital '84, Trinity '88
Director of Church Relations
gsandberg@capital.edu
office 614-236-7737 / cell 614-917-7066 (voice or text)

ELCA Region 6 Archives

In 2012, the Archives worked to share and care for Region 6's stories through preservation, cooperation, transmission, and outreach.

Preservation.

The Archives protects Lutheran stories through the proper storage of Lutheran records. The ELCA Region 6 Archives received a record 82 accessions in 2012—thank you to all of the synods, congregations, and individuals who donated records.

Cooperation.

The Archives cooperates with congregations, synods, organizations, and individuals to preserve and share Lutheran stories. Highlights for 2012 include:

- The Archives celebrated its 8th annual congregational history campaign. During the campaign, the Archives offered research assistance, congregational history help, and celebration ideas to congregations celebrating major anniversaries. The Archives also requested anniversary materials from congregations celebrating anniversaries in 2011. Thank you to all of the congregations that celebrated their history, recorded their history, and donated materials to the Archives.
- The Archives presented the “Records Management for Congregations” workshop at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and Southeast Michigan Synod Joint Assembly, and the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assembly, as well as a Congregational Archives workshop for the Southern Ohio Synod's Muskingum Conference Assembly.
- The Archives addressed 28 advice inquiries—questions from congregations and synods about preserving records, managing records, and other topics.
- The Archives received research, cataloging, processing, and other help from volunteer Rich Ferne and Trinity Lutheran Seminary students Emily Seitz and Ben Austin.

Transmission.

The Archives not only preserves, but also shares Lutheran stories. Assisting researchers is one way to share Lutheran stories: the Archives addressed 111 research inquiries in 2012. This year, the Archives continued action to better locate Lutheran stories for researchers. First, the Archives entered 50 records in the PastPerfect Cataloging software, which will allow records to be located more quickly and efficiently. Second, the Archives continued entering information into databases to better organize information about Lutheran history. Third, the Archives established a Photograph Archive to better preserve, organize, and access photographs of Lutheran stories.

Outreach.

The archivist mentored a total of 5 Trinity Lutheran Seminary Summer Sampler students in June and July. The Samplarians learned about the Region 6 Archives, Lutheran history, the role of an archivist in the church, how to become an archivist, the difference between libraries and archives, and had the opportunity to ask many questions. They also had the opportunity to do hands-on archival work, including processing papers, processing photographs, and researching inquiries, including a genealogy inquiry involving a German-language parish register. In addition, the Samplarians initiated research on topics of their own choosing—home congregations, family, and other topics of Lutheran history.

Respectfully submitted by

Jennifer Long Morehart
ELCA Region 6 Archivist



Graceworks Lutheran Services 2013 Report to the Southern Ohio Synod

Graceworks Lutheran Services helped more than 10,000 individuals rebalance their lives in the face of challenging or changing circumstances during 2012. Through a wide range of residential and community care services, we seek to help older adults, individuals with disabilities and persons facing financial or personal challenges restore balance in their lives so that they can better experience life in all its fullness. During 2012, Graceworks provided \$4.5 million of uncompensated charity care that was not paid by user fees or government funding.

Bethany Village A total of 764 older adults lived at Bethany Village. About 450 enjoyed active lifestyles and wellness programming in the residential area, 62 people lived in assisted living residences and 252 residents received full-time skilled nursing and memory supportive care.

Bethany Rehabilitation Center A total of 735 older adults experienced skilled nursing care and individualized rehabilitation programs as they recovered from surgery or hospitalization. Sixty-nine percent of the people served returned to their previous homes after recovery.

Consumer Credit Counseling Service More than 1,700 people experienced one-on-one financial counseling. Graceworks helped 877 people through a debt management program. Housing counselors assisted 28 families to become homeowners and helped 208 families avoid foreclosure. Nearly 430 individuals received bankruptcy pre-filing counseling and 208 persons received bankruptcy pre-discharge financial education. Approximately 950 individuals learned to manage their finances through classes. Another 1,600 individuals benefited from CCCS responses to inquiries.

Friends at Home A total of 164 older adults received companionship services through 39 volunteers. The program concluded on Dec. 31, 2012 when the three-year grant agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Foundation ended.

Graceworks Enhanced Living A total of 153 adults with developmental disabilities lived in safe, caring environments in 29 homes in Butler, Greene, Hamilton and Montgomery Counties. The day habilitation program in Hamilton County provided services for 35 adults with developmental disabilities.

Graceworks at Home Graceworks at Home provided health, therapy and personal care services to 331 older adults in Bethany Village and the surrounding Dayton-area community. Aides provided 16,360 hours of personal care with household tasks such as laundry, light housekeeping, meals, bathing, dressing, medication reminders, transportation and companionship for older adults or respite for family caregivers. Graceworks provided Medicare-certified health and therapy services for 231 individuals in their homes in Bethany Village and in the surrounding Dayton-area community.

Graceworks Housing Services More than 700 income-eligible elderly or disabled residents experienced affordable housing in 18 Graceworks apartment communities in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. Employees worked to establish caring, stable environments in well-maintained buildings and helped residents find and obtain needed services.

Once Around Shop and Emergency Assistance A total of 6,404 individuals received food, clothing, or financial assistance for shelter, utilities, and medications through the Preble County Emergency Assistance program. Thousands more received affordable clothing and household items at the Once Around Shop in Eaton.

Senior Companion Program A total of 164 older persons maintained independence in their homes with assistance through friendly visits and respite care. Elderly persons in Montgomery, Miami, Preble, Greene and Clark Counties received visits from 39 trained volunteers. Senior Companions offer companionship, friendship and light assistance to mostly elderly persons.

We are thankful for the many congregations of the Southern Ohio Synod and other congregations, donors, volunteers, staff, and other friends who are an important part of the balance that enables Graceworks Lutheran Services to achieve its mission through its many ministries of Faithful Caring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Willis O. Serr II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "W" and "S".

Willis O. Serr II

President and CEO
Graceworks Lutheran Services

www.graceworks.org

Report of the Hunger Task Force

“They have eaten everything that moves!” – Rita Doppenberg, a Christian with a core conviction to end malnourishment in Guatemala

On a recent congregational immersion trip to Guatemala, by the grace of God we came into contact with a Canadian family with a passion to confront hunger and bring an end to malnourishment. I immediately felt a kindred spirit between us. The family had made several trips to Guatemala, each of increasing duration, and they had recently decided to relocate from suburban Toronto to rural southeast Guatemala, among the indigenous peoples. I was impressed by this family’s conviction and passion; even three teenage sons were on board with the move! An innocent, friendly conversation with the parents ended up in a Holy Spirit moment that I will hold onto for a long time.

Henry) So what do you think you will miss about Toronto?

Geoff) The weather. I like the cool weather. It is brutally hot here.

Rita) I think I will miss the wildlife. I love to be outdoors, walk in the woods, and enjoy the wildlife in Canada. There is no wildlife here; not even a squirrel running around. The people have eaten everything that moves!

We had only been with the family a few hours but her comment struck me! It was eerily silent in this rural Guatemalan village. This context was an example of survival of the fittest at the most literal and foundational level! Based on their testimony, it was clear to me that God had called this family into this setting. Like Abraham of old, in faith, “they went.” (Genesis 12:4)

Since the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA has declared that confronting hunger is a core conviction of our Church. There seems to be a wide range of interpretations in our congregations as to the meaning of that resolution. The interpretation of the Hunger Task Force is something close to the faith conviction of Geoff, Rita, and their sons! We believe that hunger is an affront to an abundant God and baptismal faith calls us to actively engage this sin!

Also, I was recently reminded that hunger is not limited to developing-world countries. The *Take Your Place* social action campaign is a coalition of concerned organizations and individuals in the fight against hunger. (<http://www.takepart.com/place-at-the-table/alliances>) One of their supporting organizations is *Bread for the World*. The campaign recently released a documentary titled, *A Place at the Table*. The most compelling statistic of this study of hunger in the United States is that one in six Americans is food insecure! Brothers and sisters, there is still much work to be done and if we truly believe that confronting hunger is a core conviction of our Church and Synod, then we must be engaged in the effort. In that spirit, we offer our report.

Our primary means of communication with congregations and hunger leaders in our synod is our hunger newsletter *Feed My Sheep*. The newsletter is e-mailed every two months and includes stories of congregational hunger efforts, new ideas, updates on resources available from the ELCA, seasonal information and other helpful assistance regarding hunger education. Persons interested in receiving the synodical hunger newsletter may contact Susan Truchses (struchses@gmail.com) to be placed on the mailing list. Past issues can be downloaded from the synod web site. If your congregation is doing exciting hunger ministry, Susan would appreciate a report from you that she can craft into an inspiring story. Additionally, we send out a brief hunger e-mail report as needed to communicate major events and news. The contact to be added to the distribution for this resource is Pastor Monte Stevens (montenrlc@aol.com).

Our primary effort in 2012-13 was to offer the first ever, congregational hunger leaders’ day held on March 9, 2013. Our Task Force believes that making hunger ministry a “core conviction” of every congregation in our Synod is dependent on having one local leader in every church. Toward that end, we offered this program with a goal of educating and equipping pastors and lay leaders to organize, advocate and network with others of like interest. Bishop Ralph Dunkin of the West Virginia/Western Maryland Synod was our keynote speaker. Jessica Fairfax, Coordinator for Volunteer Engagement, was our representative from the ELCA World Hunger staff. We offered a variety of workshops, some

introductory and some advanced. We shared best practices of hunger ministry in our congregations and we had a special hunger-focused worship service which provided participants with a liturgy to take home and use in their congregations. Twenty-nine persons participated and members of our Task Force all made significant contributions. By all accounts, the day was beneficial. One comment spoke for many of the participants, "Wow! I have learned so much and will go home with many wonderful ideas. Next is planning. All in all, excellent!" We have already begun plans for the second hunger leaders' day; likely late spring 2014 in the Dayton area. Our hope is that the word will get out and this program will gain a large following in our Synod.

Our Task Force would like to give a shout out to the teenagers in our Synod. Many of them participated in the ELCA *100 Wells Challenge* leading up to the 2012 National Youth Gathering. The goal was \$250,000 and our teens ended up raising over \$500,000! Many of them dropped off their offerings, walked with water jugs in an interactive learning activity, and built foam rubber wells at the Gathering with great exuberance. It could be that our teens have something to teach us about the meaning of a core conviction!

The Southern Ohio Synod was awarded ten hunger grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,500 by the ELCA in 2013, a total of \$22,100.

Our Hunger Task Force continues to work collaboratively with other organizations that are involved in confronting hunger. In 2012-13, we participated with *Kids Against Hunger* in a meal packing servant event involving teenagers. We also work closely with *Hunger Network of Ohio* in advocacy efforts at the state level and *Bread for the World* on the national and international levels.

Giving to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal in fiscal year 2012 amounted to \$18.6 million. Giving for Southern Ohio Synod congregations amounted to \$290,036, or \$4.15 per baptized member, significantly higher than prior years. The ELCA goal is \$5 per baptized member (which our Task Force believes is woefully inadequate!). We are grateful for the increase in giving and that our Synod is approaching the ELCA goal, yet considering that confronting hunger and poverty is a core conviction of the ELCA, our sincere hope is that our Synod can raise giving to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal dramatically. We trust and pray that each congregation in the synod will commit itself to growing its hunger ministries and we covenant to be a resource to assist you with that work.

I am grateful to the members of our Task Force for the passion that they bring to the ministry of confronting hunger and poverty. Unfortunately, we continue to lose key lay and clergy members of our Task Force and we are always looking for more help. We would be most appreciative of pastors or laypersons with a passion for this ministry to consider joining in this work.

Peace,

Pastor Henry Zorn, chair
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
Cincinnati, OH

Members of the Task Force:

Mr. Nick Bates, Pastor Glen Bengson, Mr. Dave Drumm, Ms. Linda Hall, Pastor Joene Herr, Pastor Don Moeser, Pastor Mary Molnar, Pastor Mike Poole, Pastor Monte Stevens, Mrs. Susan Truchses, and Pastor Jeff Wick, Synod Staff.



Bringing people together to experience Christ through our natural settings a programs

LOMO Synod Assembly Report

Summer Camp Retreats Environmental Education



“It was a great chance to spend time with people from my school that I don't get to spend much time with! “

“Spending time in this ‘place apart’ truly helps renew our relationship with God.”

Awesome...amazing. A true journey. You can make what you want of it...it's totally what you want to take away.



Camp is such a refreshing wonderful reminder how Christ's love can shine



“I just love the chance to set aside time for devotions as a family. It is always a refreshing time to think and pray more and feel God's presence.”

“I tried, and enjoyed, new things that I'm sure I never would have tried at home.”

“All of the staff we encountered were friendly and professional.”

“It's a fun place to be at, we do lots of things all week.”



Mental Wellness and Recovery Task Force

Our Mission...

To educate and serve our congregations and communities concerning the needs of those working towards mental health, wholeness and recovery.

The Mental Wellness & Recovery Task Force (MWRTF) is a newly developed ministry in the Southern Ohio Synod, a ministry whose focus is to raise awareness, de-mystify and de-stigmatize the myths of mental wellness and promote recovery in our congregations and local communities.

On Nov 9-11, 2012, the ELCA Church Council adopted a social message on mental illness. Declaring that the mental and emotional pain of those suffering from the disease could be one of the most far-reaching issues the ELCA will encounter. With the recent increase in school shootings [Sandy Hook elementary, Newtown, Conn and others], mental wellness is now coming to the forefront as a systemic healthcare issue. And we as a society need to ardently support thorough compassion and funding.

Mental Wellness and Recovery Task Force Vision 2013-2014:

- 1) **Published our first of three annual newsletters “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.”** The newsletter informs and educates our congregation on current topics of mental health, mental illness and recovery. Our Summer issue will include Depression and resources.
- 2) ***Equipping the Faith Community to Support Mental Health Recovery*** will be presented by by mental health advocate/professional Renee Kopache from Mental Health and Recovery Board, Hamilton County, OH, at SynodFest 2013.
- 3) **Developing a faith-based recovery/support model** to be used within our congregations for those who have mental illness and their families. Christ Lutheran, Heath has produced a video of their support group for educating our congregations.
- 4) **Dayton community Mental Illness Awareness—National Day of Prayer Event October 8, 2013**—a faith-based initiative will be organized by Christ the King-Centerville and hosted at The Castle, social/recovery program-5013c.

Links: www.SouthernOhioSynod.org;
<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements-in-Process/Mental-Illness.aspx>

Other websites: www.nami.org, <http://www.bringchange2mind.org/>
 www.nami.org/namifaithnet/ www.pathways2promise.org

Members of MWRTF: Helen Jane Brown, Susan Clem, Greg Darling, Sue Hanna, Pastor Bob Skipper, Pastor Kirs Sanitago, Pastor Bill Schwochow, Lynn Spatz, Yvette Van Dyke, Joyce Williams, Pastor Ed Williams-DEM, Contact Dona Johnson, chair for more information ctk.donajohnson@sbcglobal.net

Mission Interpreters
2013 Annual Report
Tell the stories of how God is changing lives through our giving

Do you have a Mission Interpreter in your church? If not, you should! Mission Interpreters tell the stories of how God is changing lives through our giving. These stories show how God is at work through the ministries of congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the ELCA, in large part, because of the faithful giving of our members. This ongoing sharing helps members to understand how their offerings support mission throughout the church. It also helps them to appreciate their importance and connection to the wider church. Finally, it is yet another way for members to be thanked for their support of the Lord's church.

The 1993 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted Financial Stewardship Strategy that specifically formed a Mission Interpretation ministry. Each congregation of the ELCA is invited to identify at least one person to volunteer to serve as a Mission Interpreter. In the Southern Ohio Synod we currently have 26 active Mission Interpreters. Our goal is to have at least one in every congregation.

As the coordinator for this ministry I communicate through e-mail with my MI's and provide a variety of stories for them to share with their congregations once a month.. We hold an annual training event for our Mission Interpreters which helps them learn how to best serve in this role and gives them the opportunity to meet one another and share their thoughts and ideas.

In the past year Mission Interpreters of the Southern Ohio Synod also offered a workshop at the Global Mission Gathering in Cincinnati prior to the start of Synodfest 2012. This was just one more way to help ELCA Lutherans understand just what it is that Mission Interpreters do and why it is so important.

Every year the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the ELCA conducts a workshop for Mission Interpreter Coordinators from synods across the country. I will attend this again in August. It is a valuable resource and is always a joy to meet others who are passionate about the work of our church!

During Synodfest 2013 Mission Interpreters will bring you a few "Mission Moments" so you can catch a glimpse of what we do!

We want to grow this ministry! WE NEED YOUR HELP! If you know someone in your congregation who is passionate about the work of the church and would enjoy sharing the many different stories with your congregation and thanking them, then please have them contact me at janborchers6@hotmail.com for more information.

This is a fun ministry! I have learned so much about our church as I have undertaken this role, and I am so proud of all the wonderful work being done out there by ELCA Lutherans! We are truly living up to our motto, "God's work. Our hands." All of this is possible because of the faithful giving of our members! "Thank you" cannot be said enough!

Jan Borchers
Mission Interpreter Coordinator
Southern Ohio Synod
janborchers6@hotmail.com

Mission Strategy Team for Congregational Ministries and Support Annual Report to the Synod Assembly

The Mission Strategy Team for Congregational Ministries and Support in its reconstituted form is less than 18 months old. Much has been planned; some has been accomplished. The realities of budget constraints, both in the Synod and in the congregations, have led us to explore ways of providing support to congregations in ways different from the past. Our work has begun to focus almost entirely use of the Synod website: southernohiosynod.org.

Our discussions led to a section of the website called: *Into Your Hands*. The inaugural edition of *Into Your Hands* listed resources you can use in the parish. We started with people who want to send you “stuff” or places you can get “stuff.” We listed bookstores and other resources from our educational and ecumenical partners. Other editions are in the works now.

The four corners of our area of responsibility remain worship, adult ministries, lay ministry and adult education. As you may remember, we surveyed congregations last year to find out what mattered most to congregations.

Our intention is to make the listings time sensitive and to encourage submissions by pastors and congregations who would like to share their successes or describe areas of continuing concern. As we do that we remain sensitive to the great variation in congregational needs. Just as an example, “visibility” might mean one thing to a small rural congregation not at a crossroad and not in a town and mean something quite different to a small congregation in a large building in a declining downtown, even though they might have the same number of worshipers each Sunday.

We continue to work on the areas listed in last year’s report. Our next editions of *Into Your Hands* are planned to include: Hospitality, Visibility, Music for the Parish, and Estate Planning: Things to Think About. In late summer we will have suggestions for those who find themselves writing the Christmas program every year. Those who would be willing to share some of their own efforts will find us grateful indeed.

Southern Ohio Mission Strategy Team for Congregational Ministries and Support

Pr. Violet Meek, Chair vmEEK@columbus.rr.com

Pr. Grant Eckhart, granteck@gmail.com

Mr. Tim Fink, finktl@frontier.com

Mr. Will Lapp, wandklapp@aol.com

Pr. Mary Molnar, mrmolnar488@gmail.com

Mr. Bob Ray, 740-536-9087

Pr. Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt, Assistant to the Bishop. sddillahunt@netscape.net

Muskingum Conference
2012 Report to the Southern Ohio Synod

The Muskingum Conference continues to work to bring our congregations and pastors together to support ministry in Southeastern Ohio. Year after year, the highlight of our ministry together is our annual Fall Assembly. In 2012, our Fall Assembly was hosted by St. Paul Lutheran Church in Bridgeport, as a part of their 125th Anniversary celebration, where we were blessed with great worship and a wonderful meal. Our assembly included a presentation by Ms. Jennifer Long, the Region 6 Archivist, who taught us about how to maintain a congregation's archives.

The pastors of the conference continue to meet regularly for Bible study and collegial support. Our monthly gatherings offer the opportunity for study, worship, and fellowship. We are blessed with our pastors and congregations, grateful for the various gifts and perspectives that they bring to our fellowship.

We had some cause for celebration this year, as we welcomed Pr. Mike Poole to the Pleasant City Parish.

In all of this we give thanks for the blessings of our sister and brothers, as we are bound together in our baptismal identity and our common calling to service in God's kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Mark A. Combs,
Muskingum Conference President

Northwest Conference Report

The Northwest Conference continues to be a mission laboratory where congregations and pastors attempt to forge ministry, not as isolated actors but as parts of larger clusters that coordinate their mission and aid one another in it.

The conference gathered at Fairborn in February to share the stories of mission attempted, both successful and failed. The Springfield cluster reported a ministry centered in joined worship services and youth events. The Northern Exposure cluster reported on ministry by the cluster clergy to one another. The Stillwater cluster is likewise developing clergy support strategies. The Lutheran Saints in Ministry Cluster is developing a separate 501c3 in the hope of developing cluster wide ministries including staff. A common worship life has been developed and shared cluster wide VBS and Adult Education programs have been developed for the summer and fall. A common Stephen's ministry was laid aside as not feasible at this time.

The clusters continue to discover that cooperative ministry serves the mission of the church very well. We commend the cooperative model to our synod as a good way to fulfill the constitutional mandate to the conferences to be together for mission.



Oesterlen continues to adjust to our country's new economy, changes in service delivery and to adapt to the ever changing health care arena. Over the course of Calendar Year 2012, we began to experience a moderate leveling out of our Residential Program, albeit at a reduced level from years past; moderate growth in our Community Counseling Program, Foster Care Program and Community Based Programs—Wraparound / Parent Aide and Intensive Home Based Treatment. The Board, staff and stakeholders have remained loyal and supportive and for this we are blessed.

I am very proud of the flexibility and agility that our dedicated staff has shown through these significant changes. Downsizing is always more difficult than growing. We are definitely doing more with less, but trying to be smarter and more efficient with the same effort and to remain good stewards of all our resources. All hands have risen to the tasks, keeping good spirits and the safety and well-being of our children above all else. Our spectrum of mental health and social services for children and families is stronger and broader than ever before. Our staff continues to take leadership roles in the community and at the state level which is beneficial at a number of different levels to Oesterlen, our client base and the professional field.

In 2011, I reported the loss of Oesterlen's long term Residential Department Director, Jerry Kramer to cancer. The loss of Jerry and the resulting adjustment has been a challenge for us all but the program has been held together due to staff commitment and fortitude. A number of staff stepped up in very significant ways to help us continue with programming and to wrestle with the impact of Jerry's loss.

In 2012, Oesterlen was and continues to be blessed with a cadre of staff attending graduate school for their Masters in Social Work. These individuals (four) are afforded internship opportunities that in turn result in direct and indirect support of Oesterlen clients and programming. Additionally, Oesterlen supports graduate and undergraduate students in internships from nearby Colleges and Universities—typically anywhere from 2 - 6 interns. As can be imagined, this is additional work for the staff supervising the interns but it is gratifying and helpful work as well.

We are looking and praying for a better Calendar Year in 2013, and that our "trimming" will have the intended impact on scales of efficiencies to help Oesterlen continue to be a quality provider of services.

As always Oesterlen appreciates our 20 member Board of Directors and would ask that you extend your blessings and appreciation of their service to our ministry as you encounter them in your community. We thank the following Board members for their years of service on Oesterlen's Board: **Mr. Mark Roberts**, (Good Shepherd Lutheran, Springfield, At-Large Member representative), our immediate past President; **Mrs. Beverly Craig** (St. Johns/St. Paul, Akron, NEOS representative); **The Rev. Robert E. Linsz** (St. Lukes, Cuyahoga Falls, NEOS representative); **Mrs. Marli Elsass** (Grace, Wadsworth, NEOS representative); **Mr. Roger Sherrock** (First Lutheran, Springfield, SOS, representative); and, **Mr. Al Croucher** (Springfield, At-Large representative).

The current Officers for the Board of Directors are: **Mr. David Runk** (English Lutheran, NWOS, Bluffton) serving as *President*; **The Rev. Steve Nelson** (First English Lutheran, Wapakoneta), serving as *Vice President*; **Mrs. Janice Moreland** (Zion, SOS, Middleton), serving as our *Secretary*; and, **Mr. Thom Goodfellow** (Springfield, At-Large Member) serving as our *Treasurer*. SOS synodical Board Members and At-Large (AL) Board members not already noted are: Mrs. Kay Labosky, (All Saints, Worthington); Mrs. Ann Russell (Christ, Bexley), Pr. William McKee (Fifth Lutheran, Springfield); Dr. Mary Jo Zembar (AL, Springfield); The Rev. David Buchenroth (AL, Galilee, Russells Point); Ms. Jeanne Pamer (AL, Springfield); Ms. Sheila Rice (AL, Springfield); and Mr. Jay Littler (AL, Peninsula).

Yours in service to the Lord, **Donald L. Warner**, LISW-S, ACSW, CSWM , Executive Director, Toll Free (800) 404-5437; or Direct (937) 398-0211 or dwarner@oesterlen.org

2012 Annual Report from Seafarers and International House

Mission Rationale

Seafarers and sojourners (i.e. asylum seekers, domestic violence survivors and local disaster survivors) are people who travel under duress or difficult circumstances. Our mission responds to their physical, emotional and spiritual needs by offering pastoral care, hospitality, social assistance, advocacy and prayer.

Whether as a tenet of faith or as an expression of secular humanity, in the global village, there should be no outsiders. We are called to welcome the stranger as our neighbor.

Message from the Executive Director

I will fulfill the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars in heaven . . . and all nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring. (Genesis 26:4)

There are over seven billion people in the world today, occupying nearly 200 square million miles of land, divided into 196 nations, 61 colonies and a half-dozen disputed territories, conversing in 1,300 different languages on 1.16 billion telephone lines and 3.15 billion email accounts. God kept his promise—we are numerous, but with all this statistical volume, how much of a blessing are we?

Even in our own little mission niche, there are over 1.25 million active seafarers, reportedly 15.2 million refugees and as many as 30 million asylum seekers. Over the least several years, Seafarers & International House has grown in its financial resources, in its port chaplain staff and in the number of seafarers and sojourners served—just look at our mission outreach in the last three years. Still, given the number of active seafarers, refugees and asylum seekers, how much of a statistical impact can we possibly have?

But statistics only tell part of the story. There are no numerical pre-requisites for being a blessing. Within a couple of hours our port chaplains can re-connect seafarers with their families by telecommunication, bring them up-to-date with newspapers and Internet hubs, and offer comfort and assurance in the face of loneliness and distress. Within a few hours, an asylum seeker is transformed from an abused inmate in an immigration detention center to a welcomed guest at our Manhattan guesthouse.. A blessing only takes a moment, but it has to be a very intentional, caring moment.

Every member of our board of directors and our staff are focused on making the lives of the seafarers and sojourners we serve just a little better. It's not about statistical victories and it's not about building monuments to mission greatness. It's just about the moment that any of us might take to be a blessing to another human being.

Peace,

Marsh Luther Drege



Southern Ohio Synod
Women of the ELCA
Annual Report

The Southern Ohio Synodical Board of Women of the ELCA has been busy during this past year.

At the Board Meetings we have spent time planning for the upcoming Convention.

The 2013 Convention will be held at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Lancaster. The dates are September 13-14, 2013 and the theme is "Bloom Where You Are Planted". The registration material will be available at the Synod Assembly and can also be found on line at www.soswomen.org We hope that many of you will join us in Lancaster.

REPORT OF TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY – SPRING 2013



This is a year of transition at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and that makes it a good time to look back at what God has accomplished through Trinity and its graduates, and to look forward with enthusiasm and awe as we contemplate the future of theological education. What does God have in mind for the Church? What is our role in that future? How can we work together to prepare the next generation of leaders for the Church?

A Presidential Transition. After twelve years as Trinity's leader, President Mark Ramseth retired at the end of January. Mark and Carol are looking forward to enjoying the next phase of their lives near family in Montana. A Presidential Search is now underway, with the expectation that Trinity's next leader will be in place by August 2013. I have taken on the responsibility of guiding Trinity through this transition, and hope to leave the seminary in a strong position for the next President.

A Curricular Transition. Trinity's faculty is acutely aware of the changes underway in higher education today, and especially in theological education. Society is changing, the Church is changing, and seminaries need to respond to these changes with appropriate adjustments to courses, degree programs (including the traditional sequence of MDiv requirements), teaching methods, and practical experiences for seminary students. The Trinity faculty is hard at work on a revised curriculum that will make a seminary education more accessible to a wider range of students, and will prepare graduates to serve in a wider range of settings.

Building on Strengths. How can any institution survive in this period of transition and uncertainty? Trinity is anchored to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that rock provides a center of gravity amidst the storms of change. Trinity also has a loyal, dedicated faculty and staff that daily demonstrate their commitment to God's mission in the world, and to Trinity's role in preparing leaders for that mission. Trinity has amazing students, alive with the power of the Spirit, eager to spread the Gospel and serve the Church, even in these uncertain times. Trinity also has strong Board leadership with a genuine commitment to theological education within the ELCA, combined with a vision for ecumenical partnerships.

Partnerships for the Future. By all accounts, the future of theological education involves networks and partnerships that can offer academic training and spiritual formation to more people in more places. Here are some examples from Trinity.

- Trinity students benefit from regional, national and global partnerships to provide contextual learning opportunities in authentic mission settings ranging from inner city and Appalachian experiences to indigenous ministries around the world. For example, I've been on Trinity's campus only a few weeks, but already I've had numerous conversations with students whose lives have been changed and whose future ministries have been strengthened by recent experiences in global mission contexts in Mexico and in the Mideast.
- Trinity students and faculty benefit from the presence of Bexley Hall Episcopal Seminary on the Trinity campus. Bexley Hall students participate fully in the Trinity curriculum and our shared worship. The new relationship between Bexley Hall and Seabury-Western Seminary offers an opportunity for Seabury-Western's expertise in online and hybrid courses to strengthen the distance education offerings of both Trinity and Bexley Hall.
- Trinity students, staff, and faculty benefit from the proximity to Capital University. There are active discussions underway to explore new ways to build on this proximity for more effective collaboration that could advance the mission of both institutions, perhaps in a broader partnership that could include the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. We are also seeking ways to strengthen our historic connection to Wittenberg University.

In spite of all these changes and challenges, I am lifted up by the constant refrain of Dr. Brad Binau, TLS Academic Dean: *"What a great time to be the church, and to be a seminary, and to be in a position to make a difference!"* What we need most from you at this time of transition are your prayers and your students. Your students make us a seminary of the church, and without students, seminaries have no reason to exist. In return, we pledge to deliver graduates prepared to serve your congregations and synodical ministries with missional leadership for a gospel that the world needs now, more than ever. We deeply appreciate your support and partnership.

"Trinity Lutheran Seminary forms leaders for Christ's Church at work in the world."

Thomas Ludwig, Interim President

WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY
ANNUAL REPORT to the SYNODS
2012

Our Mission statement: "Reflecting its Lutheran heritage, Wittenberg University challenges students to become responsible global citizen, to discover their callings and to lead personal, professional and civic lives of creativity, service, compassion and integrity."

Dr. Laurie Joyner, PhD., has been inaugurated as the 14th president of Wittenberg University and its first female president. She came to Wittenberg after serving as vice president for planning and dean of the college at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. President Joyner's academic emphasis has been in the area of sociology. Dr. Joyner actively emphasizes that Wittenberg continue to be student-centered and mission driven.

Wittenberg University continues to recognize and celebrate its Lutheran heritage in numerous ways. For example:

- The Festival Choral Eucharist for Reformation service was held on Sunday, October 28, 2012 with The Rev. Dr. Donald P. Kreiss, bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod, preaching.
- Lessons and Carols for Advent & Christmas was celebrated on December 7. This service offers a time of reflection as the Advent season unfolds. Many Wittenberg musical groups performed and members of the Wittenberg community read advent scriptures.
- The Kenneth H. Sauer Luther Symposium presented Dr. Mark Schwehn of Valparaiso University who spoke on "Lutheranism, Liberal Learning, and Work in the World"
- Wittenberg students continue to be incredibly involved in service to others. Some examples include conducting a Crop Walk, 30 hour Famine, Habitat for Humanity projects to name only a few.
- The Wittenberg Choir toured Germany and presented 8 choral performances as part of the "Year of Music", an emphasis of the 10-year celebration of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's 95 theses.
- Fifteen students and faculty engage in a semester of studies, internships and cultural emersion in Wittenberg Germany. Students live one block from the historic Castle Church.

Wittenberg has joined with the Lutheran World Federation to plant a tree in Luthergarten in Wittenberg Germany and on the Wittenberg University campus in celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and in witness the communion within the Lutheran World Federation. The trees are a sign of the fellowship and reconciled diversity among the Christian Churches. The tree and plaque on Wittenberg's campus are located near the statue of Martin Luther and Weaver Chapel.

Weaver Chapel has been recognized as one of the 30 most beautiful college cathedrals in the world by Best College Reviews. (www.bestcollegereviews.org/features/the-30-most-beautiful-college-cathedrals/) You are invited to visit our campus and judge for yourself.

Thank you for your continuing prayers and support for Wittenberg University. The rich heritage of our relationship with the Lutheran Church continues to inform our vocation, mission and ministry.