

# THE VOICE OF RENEWAL

## *The Newsletter of Lutheran Lay Renewal of America*

*Our mission: To promote spiritual renewal and spiritual growth of people and congregations through our renewal weekends, retreats, workshops and conferences.*

**September, 2021**

### LLRA Board of Directors

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### **CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON KYABAZAALA LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL, UGANDA**

A groundbreaking service was held on August 26 at Kyabazaala Lutheran Church and School in the Eastern Deanery of the Lutheran Church of Uganda, Bishop Charles Bameka presiding. Funds to begin this building project were provided by Lutheran Lay Renewal, thanks to a very generous donation of \$5,000 from a Lutheran couple in the Pittsburgh area. This donation provided fifty percent of the funds needed to complete construction. Kyabazaala Lutheran Church already owns the land and has the bricks and sand on the property.

Currently three school classes meet in the one room adobe building: preschool, first and second grades. Once the new brick building is completed, the church will have space for preschool through seventh grade, as well as ample space for worship. A new church/school will be a great blessing for the entire community, as Kyabazaala children in grades 3-7 now have to walk 7 miles round trip to go to school.

Lutheran Lay Renewal is still working on raising the additional \$5,000 needed to finish construction. Donations may be made directly to Lutheran Lay Renewal or, if you prefer to donate directly to the Lutheran Church of Uganda, we can put you in touch with church leaders or give you wire transfer instructions.



**Bishop Charles Bameka leads the worship service at the groundbreaking ceremony**



Center to right: Bishop Charles Bameka, Eastern Deanery Dean Peter Maganda & Pastor Buluba Erifazi

## NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH CONVOCATION, CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

Lutheran Lay Renewal was present with a display table at the North American Lutheran Church Theological Conference and Convocation in Corpus Christi, TX, August 3-6. We have had a presence at every convocation the NALC has held, which has led to many ministry opportunities for us. These convocations are always a good opportunity to distribute information about our ministry and also network with church leaders.

Would you like us to be present at your district convocation, synod assembly or other regional or national event? Just contact our national office. Our Executive Director will be presenting a Sharing Your Faith workshop at the Mid Northeast Mission District Convocation of the NALC on October 30.



Grace Spell (L) and Rev. Jennifer Gold (R) of Commission Expeditions visit our display table in Corpus Christi

## IS YOUR CHURCH SCORING HOME RUNS OF SHARING CHRIST WITH OTHERS?

In his *Purpose-Driven Church*, Rick Warren offers the analogy of church life as running the bases on a baseball diamond. Getting to first base is Knowing God and becoming part of a Christian fellowship. Second is learning about and Growing in Christ. Third is Serving God through ministry to others.

Getting to the fourth base (home) is what I am focusing on here. This is Sharing Christ in mission to others. Base-running means Knowing, then Growing, then Serving, and finally scoring the run by Sharing. The purpose of Christian churches is to be in the mission of sharing the Gospel in Christ. That purpose puts the rest of church life in perspective. Many theologians argue that any understanding not focused on reaching out to share Christ is inadequate for a biblically based Christian church.

Almost all churches do reasonably well at the first base of Knowing Christ. Mainline churches with classical theology heritage don't do well on the second base of Growing. That heritage emphasized being faithful more than becoming closer to God through the sanctification of more Christ-like living. Most churches understand the third base of serving others, at least in theory if not much in reality. The fourth, home base, may be honored as a symbol but typically generates little energy.

Disputed today is whether a project is a true mission without directly proclaiming the Gospel. Otherwise, it remains a service project. My answer is to be sure the Gospel gets presented somewhere in the process. I have participated in eyeglass clinics in other countries through MOST Ministries. The last stage for all in line is presentation of a simplified Gospel. We have helped Lutheran churches in Haiti build out their campuses through physical labor as well as administering funding. Those congregations have a pastor and do several worship services a week.

Less clear is sending church teams to do house repairs in a county in the foothills of Appalachia. This is clearly service. But it is done under the sponsorship of a Christian welfare service with staff who do share their Gospel motivation. My congregation works with a distinction between service within the congregation, and mission beyond the congregation. We explain and leave behind a special grace and mercy coin that allows a quick three-phrases summary of the Gospel. It is available at [hiscoin@gmail.com](mailto:hiscoin@gmail.com).

I teach that the purpose for doing mission projects through a church is two-fold. Half is to serve and evangelize those we are reaching out to. The other half is to provide opportunity for church participants to experience mission and get them engaged in other mission efforts. We do an annual Garage Sale that increases mission awareness and generates funds to cover the travel expenses of the next mission trip by participants.

Our mission planning team is evolving a strategy for identifying new mission opportunities. We want to support a mission that is within a short airplane trip so that our people can be involved. This means, for us, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Again, the purpose is to get our people and their friends out and engaged.

The second base of Growing in Christ and the third base of Serving can in reality be interchanged. Getting people involved in service can be the springboard for Growing in Christ, which otherwise takes special motivation. To serve others comes easily for most Christians. It does not take special skills, and the motivation is not complicated. This makes it a good starting point.

Verbally sharing the Gospel is a daunting challenge for most ordinary church people. Getting to home base is beyond their reach, and so mission stays on the fringes of their church life. The leadership challenge is to make the next step of personal growth in Christ as easy as possible. One way is to surround participants with mission outreach efforts. Feature missionaries beyond the congregation and present opportunities to support them. For congregations in a denominational structure, move beyond supporting their mission in general to sponsoring individual men and women out in the mission field.

I once visited a large Evangelical church that featured a display of about twenty missionaries they were supporting. That message alone conveys a congregation that knows why it exists. It probably also has an exciting church life. – The Rev. Dave Luecke, Ph.D., Pastor Luecke is a member of our Board of Directors

**How much emphasis does your church put on getting its people out in mission to others?**

### LAST CALL FOR OUR JANUARY, 2022 ISRAEL TOUR!

The dates for our Israel tour are January 10-19, 2022. We have 52 exciting Old and New Testament sites on the tour that will greatly expand your knowledge of Christianity, Judaism, biblical history and archeology. Walk in the footsteps of Jesus in Nazareth, Bethlehem, Capernaum, Magdala, Bethany, Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Jordan, Mt. Tabor, the Mount of Beatitudes, Caesarea Philippi, and enjoy a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. We'll also visit Masada, Qumran, Herodian, Jericho, Caesarea Maritima and many other historic sites.



***We need to hear from you by no later than September 14 if you plan to go with us!***

A tour of Israel truly is an experience you will treasure for the rest of your life. Tour arrangements are being handled by Imagine Tours and Travel, a company that has led hundreds of tours to Israel for many decades. Call or e-mail our office for a brochure and registration form, or download them from the Scheduled Events page on our web site.

**MORNING SKY OVER JERUSALEM**

**imagine**  
TOURS & TRAVEL

### WE'RE CELEBRATING OUR 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY!

2021 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Lutheran Lay Renewal and one way we are celebrating is by sharing stories and quotes from pastors, and parishioners of churches, about what this ministry has meant to them and their congregations. Do you have a story or quote to share with us about what the Lord has done in your life or in the life of your congregation through one of our renewal weekends, retreats, workshops or conferences? Please send it to our office and we'll share it in an upcoming issue of this newsletter. Perhaps these quotes will encourage your congregation to schedule an LLR event this year:

*Greetings from Uganda.*

*Thank you so much for the newsletter, and especially for including the Diocese of Northwest Ankole.*

*May the living God bless you abundantly in return for your tremendous support to our young Diocese.*

*Blessings,*

*Amos (Bishop Amos Magezi, Diocese of Northwest Ankole, Church of Uganda)*

*"A great "army" of 23 came to minister to us. A HUGE SUCCESS!" - Pastor David Miller, Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Moreno Valley, CA*

*"Early in the fall of 2011, 8 wonderful faith-filled people came to our congregations of Berea and Saron Lutheran Churches for our Lay Renewal weekend. The entire weekend was one of great blessing to us all. Stories of faith, of hope in the midst of pain, of love for one another and for Christ were shared so freely and wonderfully. This would not have been possible without the living witness and example of the lay renewal folks who came to lead us. It was such a boost to our lives in Christ! My folks are still talking about it." - Pastor Mark Fischer, Berea and Saron Lutheran Churches, Youngsville, PA*

*"Fantastic!! Those who participated in the entire weekend were truly blessed. We were all blessed by the testimonies of the team members and encouraged to begin to tell our own. I think folks loved the small group meetings and a chance to sit and talk with one another about faith and life. Thanks again to the team for a wonderful weekend." - Pastor Bob Stevens, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Pasadena, MD*

*"Your team showed the Spirit at work to many who had retired from the Lord's work." - Pastor George Thune, Christ Lutheran Church, Reedley, CA*

*"A new spirit is blowing. The youth group is growing. There is a lot of participation in things going on in help and attendance. Three Bible study groups have been organized - one a men's group meeting for breakfast - a couple's group - and a single's group that is so big it is being split into two groups. We are looking at a young women's group." - Pastor Barbara Love, Zion Lutheran Church, Harmony, PA*

*"The sincerity and willingness of team members, as well as their faith stories, was very powerful. Dick's sermon stressing service and witness was extremely well done and inspiring." - Pastor Donald Carlson, Calvary Lutheran Church, Grants Pass, OR"*

*"Thank you (Liz and Mike Lawless) for coming to Messiah, Citrus Heights, yesterday and making your presentation on lay renewal. It was fantastic and just what the Lord had in store for us as we seek to do His will. He sent us lay people and not a pastor to teach us lay renewal and so continued to fulfill for us what He is teaching us through His Apostle Paul, who writes in Ephesians 4:11-13, "It was He who gave some to be pastors and teachers (along with apostles & evangelists), to prepare God's people (including you two) for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up . . . etc," - Pastor Robert Visser, Messiah Lutheran Church, Citrus Heights, CA*

*"As pastor of Immanuel congregation, I was thrilled with the experience and the aftermath of the Renewal weekend held in September 2014. It brought joy to my heart to see our members reflecting on their relationship with the Lord and expressing their faith in small group settings. There was a spirit of joy and unity among the 80+ individuals who participated. Members of Immanuel became more familiar with each other and learned to ask for prayer from one another. This weekend sparked a renewed enthusiasm for service to the Lord and participation in small group Bible studies. I am deeply thankful to the team of lay witnesses who gave of themselves. They did an outstanding job in leading us in renewal." - Pastor Kevin Graudin, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Easton MD*

*"We had the pleasure of hosting Pastor Dave Luecke in May. He led members of our congregation and neighboring churches in his How to Spot the Holy Spirit Workshop. This was a great way to cover a lot of material in a short time, meeting time challenges most of us encounter. The workshop was broken into four segments of learning and small group discussion. The topics started as individual perspectives, then grew to our role in the church. The discussions in the small groups were excellent and helped to develop our relationship with the Holy Spirit and between congregational members. The concluding section was focused on our role in the church and many good ideas came from the discussion that should help our church grow in faith. We are planning several reunion meetings to keep us growing in the Holy Spirit. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the workshop and thought the time just flew by as the Spirit moved us in wonderful ways. We appreciate Dave's passion and perspectives on how to grow the church through the Holy Spirit." - Jerry Kuhn, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Irwin, PA*

## DIOCESE OF NORTHWEST ANKOLE, UGANDA

Our partner, the Diocese of Northwest Ankole, (Anglican) Church of Uganda, will be hosting a virtual Youth and Children's Convention January 6-9. Funds are needed to pay for the major expenses of the conference, such as radio airtime, equipment for livestreaming, etc. If you or your congregation are willing to help, please contact our office or Kuruka Amutuhaire, Diocesan Youth Coordinator, at k.amuts2017@gmail.com.

### SCHEDULED EVENTS

October 30, 2022                      Sharing Your Faith Workshop  
Mid Northeast Mission District Convocation  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Sarver, PA

January 10-19, 2022                      Tour Israel With Us!  
Call or e-mail our office for a brochure or download it from our website.  
***We need to hear from you by September 14 if you're interested in going!***

**"Like" us on Facebook - Lutheran Lay Renewal of America**  
**We post all of our upcoming events on our Facebook page.**

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### PRAYER REQUESTS

- Healing for Elaine Schomaker, Alexis Gurnard, Julie, Dan and Kathie Klueg
  - For the Lord's protection over all doctors, nurses and other hospital workers, police officers, firefighters and all men and women in our armed forces
  - For peace, harmony and reconciliation in the United States
  - For the Lord's blessings on our ministry in the U.S., Uganda and Rwanda, and for the financial resources that are needed for this ministry
  - For wisdom and guidance for the LLRA Board of Directors, as we seek to grow and expand our 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!***

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*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 in Uganda and Rwanda!*

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