



The Voice of Renewal

NEWSLETTER OF LUTHERAN LAY RENEWAL OF AMERICA

*Renewing faith and promoting spiritual growth in individuals and congregations
with renewal weekends, retreats, workshops, and conferences*

Celebrating 50+ years!

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MAY, A.D. 2022

LUTHERAN LAY RENEWAL WEEKENDS HAVE RESTARTED IN UGANDA!

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

“After the pandemic periods of 2020/2021, we were grateful when the Deanery resolved to have the events organized again. So on Saturday 30th April through 1st May the congregation at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Magamaga met at the seminary chapel hall. This was attended by 16 youths, 13 men, 25 children and 12 women. They arrived and were given an agenda for the event.

The agenda included a devotion, self-introductions and welcoming remarks by Rev. Maganda. We asked the members to participate in sharing how the Lord is using them to serve His people as Christians. To do this they were put in groups of two. Vicar Felix Kunya introduced some Muslim youths who participated in the event.”



Vicar Felix Kunya with attendees of the Lutheran Lay Renewal Weekend at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Magamaga

“The head of Laity of the congregation, Moses Balikoowa, after a group discussion shared to the general group of how the Lord is using him to reach many people in his town. He said he lives in Musita town next to our

congregation. The town is mostly concentrated by Muslims. However, most of his friends are Muslims and he has a good working relationship with them, which has given him a platform to witness to Christ to them.

He said some, after talking to them about Christ, start distancing themselves from him, but still the majority continue to listen to him. He promised he will continue to witness to Christ amidst all circumstances. He acknowledged that God placed him in such a town so that he can be used to reach many unbelievers.

After the group discussion, members dived into singing hymns of worship and had a devotion. Members went home from church at 6:30pm. Most important to share is that the Saturday Renewal Weekend Event was inclusive as it also involved Muslim youths who belong to the church soccer team.

On 1st May, 2022 we ended the weekend event by having a Holy Communion service. Rev. Peter Maganda, the Dean for Eastern and Pastor at Our Savior, preached and consecrated the elements. Vicar Felix Kunya led the liturgy. After service, the participants were introduced in church, some Muslims also attended the service. We are grateful that this program is revamping and it will enhance the growth of the church. We look forward to having this organized in other churches as well.”

Rev. Peter Maganda, Dean, Eastern Deanery

LUTHERAN LAY LEADERS TRAINING PROGRAM

In the Eastern Deanery of the Lutheran Church of Uganda, there are 56 congregations and 12 preaching stations but only 13 ordained pastors. This program trains men to lead worship and preach, so that they are able to serve in congregations that do not have pastors. Some of these men realize that God is calling them to ordained ministry and later go on to the Lutheran Theological College in Magamaga. It takes a great deal of dedication, and much financial sacrifice by everyone involved, clergy and laity, to make this training program successful. Lutheran Lay Renewal is providing funding for this program to ease the financial burden on the deanery and all who participate.



**Early April session of the Lutheran Lay Leaders Training Program, held at Christ Community Lutheran Church & School, Kawete. L- Rev. Buluba Erifazi, R- Rev. Peter Maganda, 3rd from right – Rev. Michael Waiswa, 4th from right – Fred Waako
Pastors Erifazi and Waiswa are the primary instructors for this program.**

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.” – Hebrews 13:7

THE HEAD RULES THE BELLY THROUGH THE CHEST

I am intrigued by an insight from C.S. Lewis. Jeff Dryden highlights Lewis' metaphor that "the head rules the belly through the chest." The chest is the heart seen as the seat of emotions. The belly is irrational passions. The chest has to be trained to love what the head recognizes as good, otherwise it will not have the power to overcome the passions.

Dryden confesses that he is of a generation of seminary students who were trained in head truths. He is a Presbyterian. That's my experience as a Lutheran. There was a time when I could recite the history of doctrinal developments over twenty centuries of Christian theology. But then comes the realization, who cares? The assumption was that the right knowledge will lead to right behavior. Really?

This rationalistic formation model doesn't really work for humans because we are not thinking-willing machines. It produces "men without chests." As a corrective, Dryden finds himself drawn to the spiritual formation movement. But too often that leads to men without heads because of its focus on emotions. The challenge in theological education is to get the head and chest in the right relationship. That is best done with examples of teachers who have the right balance. He offers the simple but powerful observation that "We cannot take students somewhere we have not been."

My big take-away from years of pastoral ministry is that the basic job is to help participants grow closer to God, or become more like Christ. In my heritage that is called sanctification, being made holy.

Lutherans are squeamish about focusing on sanctification lest it be confused with justification, being made righteous before God. But it's really hard to talk about sanctification without a good understanding of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit provides the missing link between being made just and becoming more like Christ. The Spirit changes our inner being and stirs up new motivations. This new life is the Spirit-infused life to serve and witness to others.

I like "energy" as a good word to describe congregations. Thank God for congregations that have developed energized ministries. Worry about those that seem to have run out of energy in general. They have inevitably run out of spiritual energy. It is easy for congregations to become just another social organization with a veneer of holy words.

So how do you get a Christian church "re-energized"? The process starts with the leader. Like theology professors cannot take students somewhere they have never been, so pastors cannot take a congregation where they have never been personally.

That's why I will devote the first part of these weekly Reflections to recognizing the Spirit at work in a personal life and in a congregation. I will offer practical steps to be drawn closer to God using the acronym GROWTH. There is hope for aging, declining congregations. But there is no simple formula or easy program. Re-energizing is the slow process of enriching personal spiritual lives. Even when there is no growth in membership, there can be soul-satisfying growth in the Spirit's fruit of love, joy, peace and hope.

Show me a passionate congregation and you will find a passionate pastor.

The Rev. David Luecke, Ph. D. – Dr. Luecke is a member of our Board of Directors. If you would like to subscribe to his weekly blog, you may contact him at dsluecke@aol.com.

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." – Titus 3:4-7



Dear friends in Christ and partners of Lutheran Lay Renewal,

Marianne Foundation for Youth Development, your partners and friends in Uganda, is **EXPLODING!** Our programming is growing, our reach in the communities of rural Ibanda District is spreading and we are truly making an impact on the lives of girls and women living there. We invite you to learn more about this organization, our current programming and future plans. If you feel so called, this is a wonderful opportunity to partner with us, support our work and see a direct impact on Ugandan-led community development work.



Marianne Foundation envisions economically independent communities sustaining themselves through utilization and conservation of resources while being supported by community engagement and access to services.

Our mission is to empower girls and women to lead their communities in innovative solutions to challenges through mobilization, training and strong partnerships.

MFYD connects with necessary partners in order to implement programming and develop strategies for sustainability. Here are some ways we would like to expand:

Economic Empowerment: Entrepreneurship and Financial Planning

- Add 50 women to the Village Savings and Loaning Association (VSLA)
 - VSLA trains women on how to manage their savings and lending activities
- Add 50 women to the Ibanda Marianne Women Craft Making Cooperative

Youth Empowerment: Skills Development

- COVID-19 was a difficult time and many girls dropped out of school, got married or became pregnant, we want to recruit and train these girls in marketable skills such as tailoring and hair dressing

Health Empowerment

- EmpowerPads: continue and expand production and distribution of reusable pads made at the skills center by women who are no longer in school
- Expand programming at Kitagwenda Medical Center near Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement to include health outreach events

As MFYD expands, we are encouraged to seek financial support for programming, data management, and program evaluation to keep up with the impact of our work in these communities and to reach more girls and women in Ibanda.

WAYS TO DONATE

There are multiple ways to contribute! Clare Killian and Carly Cote, our public health consultants, will ensure MFYD receives all donations and that you are given receipts.

Feel free to reach out to Clare at clare.killian2@gmail.com or to Justus, our Founder and Executive Director, at fyde.org@gmail.com with any questions.

 clare.killian2@gmail.com



Checks may be made payable to Clare Killian with the note for Marianne Foundation and sent to 61 Crescent Ave #3, Boston, MA 02125

MINI RETREATS IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Zion Lutheran Church, Chicora, PA has been hosting one or two mini retreats each month this year, led by our Executive Director. The church has had a dinner each time, followed by teaching and lots of discussion time. The next retreat is scheduled for 5:30 pm on Tuesday, May 10.

“These retreats are quite special for me. After losing both of my parents in 2021, I needed to know God is always there for us during difficult times. These retreats have given me so much peace, comfort and understanding during these trying times.” – Lisa Hoffman

With life getting back to normal in the U.S., perhaps it's time for your congregation to schedule one of our renewal weekends, retreats or workshops.

“The team that led the spiritual transformation workshops at Holy Cross was first-class. They knew their material well, demonstrating not only an academic knowledge of the subject, but an experiential acquaintance with the spiritual life in the deep Christian tradition to buttress it. Their passion for Christ, Lutheran grounding in the dynamics of Law and Gospel, and familiarity with the tradition catholic gave their presentations (particularly the question and answer sessions) a profundity often lacking in the slickly produced offerings of ministries promoted by major publishing houses. I would highly recommend them as an integrated part of your congregation's catechetical and Christian formation ministries.” - Rev. Brett Jenkins, STS, Pastor, Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church, Nazareth, PA

OUR PARTNERS IN AFRICA NEED OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The financial needs of our partners in Africa are great, as Uganda and Rwanda are two of the 20 poorest countries in the world. Below is a wish list of current financial needs. Would you or your congregation be willing to help?

Lutheran Church of Uganda

\$100 will pay the salary of a nurse at the Niagobya Medical Clinic for one month.

\$200 will buy a three-month supply of medicines at the clinic.

\$2,500 will pay for a student to attend the Lutheran seminary for a year.

\$2,700 will purchase land for the Lutheran congregation of Serere, so they can build a church.

Funds are needed to buy uniforms, lunch and Bibles for school children.

Funds are needed to support the Lutheran Lay Leaders Training program.

\$1,500 will buy a motorcycle for our good friend Vicar James Alinaitwe Hudson, who serves Kyamujwara Lutheran Church in the Midwestern Deanery. Currently James must walk long distances every week to visit parishioners but is still not able to reach all of them.

Anglican Diocese of Northwest Ankole, Uganda

\$90 per year will pay for school fees, scholastic materials, a uniform and school bag for a child in a rural primary school.

\$211 per year will pay for school fees, scholastic materials, a uniform and a school bag for a student in a rural secondary school.

Funds also are needed to support the growing youth ministry of the diocese.

Reformed Lutheran Church of Rwanda

Funds are needed to purchase Kinyarwanda language Bibles for new believers, so they can read the Word of God in their own language. \$70 will pay for 10 Bibles.

Funds also are needed to train deacons and deaconesses, to purchase land and build churches.

One hundred percent of any donations to Lutheran Lay Renewal will go to the need designated by the donor or, if you prefer to work directly with a church in Africa, contact our office and we will put you in touch with church leaders there.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

May 10, 2022

Retreat
Zion Lutheran Church
Chicora, PA
The Rev. Karl Schoch, Pastor
Bill Oehlschlager, Retreat Leader

May 28-29, 2022

Renewal Weekend
Kamuli Lutheran Church
Kamuli, Uganda
The Rev. Buluba Erifazi, Pastor
Charles Wambi, Vicar

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

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Healing for Elaine Schomaker, Julie, Lou McKibben, 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

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 in Uganda and Rwanda!

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