



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 51 years!

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JULY, A.D. 2022

RENEWAL WEEKENDS IN UGANDA

Renewal Weekend at Kamuli Lutheran Church

“The event in Kamuli was a wonderful one. Thanks be to Rev. Erifazi and Vicar Charles Wambi, who organized the congregation and the school for the event. The event was attended by mostly school children in upper primary of class seven, teachers and the Christians of the congregation who come from the town of Kamuli. This event took place on 29th – 30th May. It started at 2:00 pm on Saturday and closed on 30th May with a Divine Service which included Baptism of one girl, a former Muslim.

The event started with an opening devotion by Rev. Peter Maganda, who serves as the Dean of Eastern Deanery. The congregational Chairman/Head of Laity, Mr. Emmanuel Lumaga, welcomed the members and also introduced the members by name. He encouraged the Christians to participate and share how the Lord is using them to serve in the communities around the church right from their homes.

The Dean led the participants into sharing how the Lord was using them to serve or sharing their faith with others. It was such a great discussion, as many discovered that they were serving the Lord without realizing it. One of the teachers of Kamuli Lutheran Nursery and Primary School, who serves as the religious teacher, said that he had not known he was serving the Lord when he taught Christian Religious Education as a subject. According to him, he was just doing it for pay. He said the Renewal Weekend helped him to realize he was not just teaching, but also serving the Lord Almighty as he served the little ones.

It was also quite challenging to the parents who attended the Renewal Weekend with their children as they learnt of their roles as Christian parents, which before they had not known. An example was when they were asked how they were role models to their children as Christian parents. Some parents realized that it was their responsibility to teach faith to their children, which they thought was the responsibility of the church and the schools. The children reported that in their homes only mothers are the ones who teach them about faith, not fathers. They said this was happening because most of the times their fathers are not found at home. Parents were grateful for the event since they were hearing of this for the first time from their children.

The Christians also shared how the Lord is using them. The Head of Laity said that the Lord has used him to reach many Christians within the community using the school, which he serves as the chairman of the school management committee. He uses this opportunity to share with different parents about Jesus. The Vicar also said that the Lord uses him to serve the children of the school, teachers and parents of the school every week. He said that over 400 people are reached weekly in the chapel on Wednesdays.

Rev. Maganda organized them into pairs and asked them to share their needs so then they would pray for one another. This was a great session. Some members were found not knowing how to pray. A wife to the teacher of the school said it was the first time for her to hear her husband praying for her. It was such an amazing time for all of them.



The day ended with singing of hymns and a closing prayer by Rev. Erifazi Buluba. Day two of the weekend: participants attended the service. There was baptism of one girl who was a Muslim. She was Shadiah but now baptized and called Bridget.” – Rev. Peter Maganda, Dean, Eastern Deanery



After Sunday worship at Kamuli Lutheran Church

RENEWAL WEEKEND AT ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, KYAMUJWARA

“Greetings my faithful Lutheran brother and friend. This is Kyamujwara Lutheran Church of Uganda, together with the serving Vicar, James Alinaitwe Hudson. We give our thanks for the good services rendered to us by Lutheran Lay Renewal of America. We send our thanks to the Executive Director, William Oehlschlager, for the support and good work. As the congregation, we take this chance to inform you that the weekend went on well from June 11th to 12th. We started with the opening prayer being led by Vicar James Alinaitwe Hudson. Then we started our studies. Many people were happy to attend and the weekend became so nice for them depending on what was taught. According to the interviews made after the weekend, the following was learnt by those who attended:

Summary of the results. 1. We should be free and able to share our faith with other people, especially friends and those we don't know. 2. We should have to deeply commit ourselves to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. 3. We should struggle to build Christian communities in the deepest spiritual level. 4. We should aim to launch other new ministries in Christ Jesus. 5. We should greatly commit ourselves by being involved in the lay ministry. 6. The work of sharing our faith to others is not for only Pastors and Vicars but also for the lay people. Matthew 28:19 talks of the Great Commission. Jesus has sent us to proclaim the good news to all people. Oh Lord God, our Heavenly Father, help us to live a renewed life and walk in your holy life forever and always. Amen.” - Reported by Vicar James Alinaitwe Hudson, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kyamujwara, Uganda.



“The group photo is of the congregants who cooked food for us, though they also had time to attend the activities. They learnt a lot. They thanked Lutheran Lay Renewal for such great news. One man in a red T-shirt said that much is good for them and they learnt to build the Christian communities on a more spiritual stage.”

“Lastly the group of Christians thanked the organization of this event and promised to keep you, all our fellow Lutherans, in prayers. They also said that they learnt how to commit themselves deeply to Christ Jesus our Lord God.” *(Editor's note: This was the first Lutheran Lay Renewal Weekend held in the Midwestern Deanery of the Lutheran Church of Uganda.)*



Vicar James Alinaitwe Hudson (L) with the congregation of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kyamujwara at their renewal weekend

YOUTH MINISTRY

DIOCESE OF NORTHWEST ANKOLE

YOUTH LEADERS CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP

As the way of strengthening the ministry, through the months of June to August we are visiting every archdeaconry, meeting with the youth leaders as part of ministry support, and equipping them with new ideas in the ministry.



CONTACT US:

REV. KURUKA AMUTUHAIRE

DIOCESAN YOUTH
COORDINATOR

DIOCESE OF NORTHWEST
ANKOLE.

TEL: 256 7949237

k.amuts2017@gmail.com



Rev. Kuruka, during the Youth Leaders Training Workshop in Bigera Archdeaconry

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 3:14

BISHOP'S SPORTS TOURNAMENT 2022

As the way to reach out to the youth, we are planning for the Bishop's Sports Tournament for the youth that will be in sports like football, netball, volley ball and we are raising \$2400 to facilitate the event on 20th August 2022.



Youth ministry DNWA.



Rev. Kuruka, sharing with the youth after playing football

FOR GOD'S GLORY!

Editor's note: The Diocese of Northwest Ankole is a partner of Lutheran Lay Renewal and we are providing some of the funding for the diocesan youth ministry, thanks in part to donations from some of our Anglican friends.

Thank you for your continuous support to the youth ministry, you are changing lives through your support.

KYABAZAALA LUTHERAN CHURCH, UGANDA

Our regular readers will recall that last year, thanks to a very generous \$10,000 donation from a Lutheran couple in the Pittsburgh area, we were able to provide the funds to build a church/school in the village of Kyabazaala, which was completed early this year. The school offers education from Kindergarten through grade 7. Rev. Buluba Erifazi wrote and sent photos to us in May, letting us know there were many more students than seats, teachers needed tables and chairs, and the five teachers were not being paid, due to many parents in the community not having funds to pay the school fees.

In June, the same Lutheran couple who donated the funds to build the church/school, donated enough funds to buy all the needed benches for the children, tables and chairs for the teachers, and pay the salaries for the five teachers for one year. The salary for a teacher in the rural village of Kyabazaala is \$26 per month.



Seating arrangement in one of the classrooms at Kyabazaala Lutheran School, prior to LLR sending funds to purchase more benches for the children.

NAIGOBYA MEDICAL CLINIC

“I have some good news from Naigobya Medical Clinic. It was selected by the district to be the centre for training the Village Health Workers starting July up to August this year. Our Nurses are also going to be among the trainers.”
– Rev. Peter Maganda, Dean, Eastern Deanery, Lutheran Church of Uganda

Editor’s note: The Naigobya Medical Clinic in the village of Naigobya, Luuka District, is being funded by Lutheran Lay Renewal.

REFORMED LUTHERAN CHURCH OF RWANDA

This year our highest priorities for funding for the Reformed Lutheran Church of Rwanda have been the purchase of Kinyarwanda language Bibles and funds for the Lay Leaders Training Program. Pastor Jean Claude Maniragaba, President of the RLCR, writes that 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.

The Lay Leaders Training Program is training men, women and youth in Biblical studies, and to be leaders in their congregations. The RLCR also is training Lutheran adults to be deacons and deaconesses. Thanks to generous donations, we have been able to provide funds to help with both of these needs but more funds are needed.

Pastor Jean Claude also is requesting funds to purchase land and to build church buildings. “Our RLCR needs to build the Church building for the Congregation of Rwempasha and the Congregation of Ntoma. And the church does not have funds to do this hard work. And the believers of these congregations are poor. We need God’s grace.”

NAME THE SPIRIT AT WORK IN OUR LIVES

Anthropologist T. M. Luhrmann concluded from her study of two Vineyard Fellowships, “Coming to a committed belief in God was more like learning to do something than to think about something. I would describe what I saw as a theory of attentional learning—the way you pay attention determines your experience of God.”

Clinical Psychologist J. Harold Ellens often witnessed the joy and satisfaction they expressed when his clients recognized God was influencing and changing them supernaturally. He concluded, “It is important to name those movements and tell others about them, so we become people of the Spirit, cultivating a culture of the Spirit.”

Diane Butler Bass did presentations and discussion with mainline pastors. She observed that to put the words “experiential” and “belief” in the same sentence is asking for trouble in those circles. Noting how the modern Pentecostal movement first gave expression to the priority of experience, she reports the reaction of one pastor: “You mean we’re all going to become Pentecostals? My congregation would rather die first! Faith isn’t about feelings. It must have intellectual content.” Another said, “Why is it that the choice among churches always seems to be the choice between intelligence on ice and ignorance on fire?”

Moving the Middle

There is a middle ground between icy intellectual and fiery ignorance. The psalms point the way. Consider Psalm 23: “The Lord Is My shepherd.” What makes it so popular is its description of many feeling experiences. In the Lord I feel full and find peace. My anxious soul is refreshed. He gives me confidence. He takes away fear. My cup overflows with blessings. I trust him and feel his presence.

The second most popular is Psalm 51 with its description of a crushed inner soul. “Wash away my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a pure heart, God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation.”

Traditional mainline worship is full of rational explanations of the faith, especially in heavily head-oriented sermons. Yet provision was made for heart-oriented feelings by the extensive use of psalms and hymns like “I Know that My Redeemer Lives” and “Beautiful Savior.” Traditional worship did have a middle ground appropriate to its times. What’s happening today is movement of that middle more to emotions of the heart. Some Pentecostal worship is almost raw emotions. Plenty of traditional churches, though, are exploring worship with more subtle feelings.

For churches oriented to the Word, feelings need to be in a proper sequence of Facts, Faith and Feelings. Facts about God are proclaimed in the Word. Faith is not only the noun for beliefs but especially the verb for trusting those facts about God. God-pleasing Feelings then flow from such trust. Spiritual leaders can be more confident in their ministry when they expect the Holy Spirit to work through this progression of Facts, Faith and then Feelings.

Paul’s Experiences of the Holy Spirit

The apostle Paul had a dramatic experience of God on the road to Damascus. Often overlooked is his slow over-the-years formation by the Spirit. According to Paul’s report to the Galatians, a total of fourteen years passed after his conversion and before he joined with Barnabas on his first mission journey. Undoubtedly, Paul spent a lot of his unrecorded years explaining to others what happened to him. In those years, he worked out the centrality of grace in God’s relationship with his people. He also came to much greater depth of understanding how the Spirit works changes in the believer’s heart, as the Spirit did in his own life.

When Paul wrote about what the Spirit can do among God’s people, you can confidently assume this is what the Spirit did to him. He learned to look into the future based on his own past experiences of the Spirit. You, too, can do that.

Have you found that your understanding of faith has moved beyond the basics to greater willingness to live with Jesus as Lord of your life? That was the Spirit at work (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Have you experienced a lessening of fears that inhibit joyful living? The Spirit helps you become confident of yourself as God's child (Romans 8: 15).

Have you noticed yourself more inclined to be involved in your congregation, perhaps teaching Sunday School or taking on administrative responsibilities? The Holy Spirit has been working on you, giving you extra motivation to do what you now find satisfying (1Corinthians 12:7).

Have you found lately a greater sense of love, joy, peace and patience? That was the Spirit producing these fruits in your life (Galatians 5: 22).

Can you prove that any of these positive movements in your life came from the Holy Spirit? No more than you can prove God exists to someone who does not want to see him. These insights happen when the eyes of your heart are enlightened. It takes the Spirit to recognize what the Spirit has done.

How the Spirit Can Work in the Lives of Others

These can be seen as manifestations of the Spirit in your life. How does the Spirit work among *others*? Recognize the Spirit:

- Wherever someone encounters Christ's call and follows it (John 1:43).
- Wherever presentations of the Word bring greater insights and illumination to someone (Ephesians 1:18).
- Wherever two or three come together in the name of Christ (Matthew 18:20).
- Wherever Christians come together with special energy and sing with gusto and intensity (Colossians 3:16).
- Wherever a follower of Christ finds new levels of joy and peace through release from guilt and expectations of perfection (2 Corinthians 3: 17).
- Wherever a person is considering whether or not to attend church on a Sunday morning and feels the tug to do so (Hebrews 10:25).
- Wherever a fellowship of Christ is experiencing a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:26).

Some would understand the "new heart and the new spirit" as a one-time event—at conversion. But Luther understood it as a frequent, even daily process of drowning out the old nature in us through repentance and letting the new nature come forth and arise. Being made new again renewal—is the Holy Spirit's work (Titus 3: 5). The Spirit's way is movement, not status quo.

Paul explained to the Corinthians that the Holy Spirit transforms us into Christlikeness with the movement of "ever increasing glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18). We are being transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). The Spirit does this with individuals. But he also can do so with congregations.

Whatever an individual Christian or a congregation might be reaching for now, there is more the Spirit wants to give and do. Name what he has done so you can recognize what more he can do in the future. – Rev. David Luecke, Ph.D.

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.

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 a pastor or vicar. At least three motorcycles are needed. Pastors and vicars serving rural congregations must walk long distances every week to visit parishioners and still are 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 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.

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

July 16-17

Renewal Weekend
Mbulamuti Lutheran Church
Mbulamuti, Uganda
Rev. Michael Waiswa, Pastor

September 21-23

Lutheran Church of Uganda Partners Conference
Christ Community Lutheran Church
Kirkwood, MO

“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 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!

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!

Lutheran Lay Renewal of America
209 Thornwood Drive
Butler, PA 16001
724-287-5151
LLRAJ316@gmail.com
www.lutheranrenewal.com