



FALL 2010



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# TimeLine

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF LCMS BLACK MINISTRY TO ENCOURAGE FAITH SHARING AND MULTIPLYING NEW MISSIONS FOR CHRIST

## THE LCMS RESTRUCTURE

# Praises and Blessings in Trials and Storms

By Rev. Quentin G. Poulson,  
Director of Mission Networking  
LCMS Black Ministry Services



Praise the Lord! Most of us would not sing during these present circumstances as Black Ministry enters the realm of the unknown in the midst of LCMS corporate changes. In fact, many are discouraged and depressed by the demise of the board.

But we could sing about a God who is in control of all circumstances. We could believe "God is able to do more than we are able to ask for or imagine according to His power that is at work within us" (Eph. 3:20). I say praise the Lord because the victory belongs to the people of God in Christ.

God chose us and anointed us with all spiritual blessings and living hope. We can praise God for the present blessings, for what God is accomplishing here and now in our families and local ministries all over the United States. God, who made heaven and earth, is our help in times of trouble. God is Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the

Father of all mercies.

The present turbulent times at the Synod are not new nor particularly centered on us. To a certain extent (in my opinion), they are related to the decline in authentic mission activity among us—the fruit of faith—and the heartbreaking reality people of all races and cultures do not have Jesus as Savior and are subject to perish for eternity. The great love of our Father is unknown to them. Isn't that far worse news than organizational structure?

We have the gift of repentance available with the understanding we in Black Ministry are not as strong in God's work as we think or hope to be. And we need to confront the brutal facts. But what strikes me as far more truthful is that we are never as weak as we appear either, especially when we rely on God's abundant grace and resolve to never to lose our courage for the fight.

The Lord gives life in faith that our belief in God's holy Word is truly possessing the power of Jesus Christ! We have a glorious ministry in



our preaching—it's the envy of the angels—renouncing the hidden sinful things and standing on the promises of Christ. We are God's chosen vessels, broken yet containing a treasure to be poured out in all seasons for the salvation and enrichment of many. I know that in all our disappointments and sufferings, that's what we were made for; that's what we live for so that Christ's message and work will expand from glory to glory.

What are disappointments to us? What is suffering? Our African-American ancestors walked daily in multiple trials and tragedies.

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# Black Ministry: Contextual Absurdity?

By Dr. Frazier Odom,  
Executive Director,  
LCMS Black Ministry Services



The Board for Black Ministry Services (along with the other program boards) is no longer an official entity of Synod. The 2010 Synod Convention took care of that. The staff at the International Center rolls right along with a business-as-usual mindset. “Continue doing what you have been doing” has been the mandate of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synodical Structure and Governance (BRTFSSG) for months leading up to the convention in Houston, Texas.

Change will come, however. Though it's likely to be subtle in form, it will be devastating in scope. And this is particularly true for black ministry. Attitudes relative to the future of black ministry will be interesting. Some, no doubt, will gloat over its demise; others will be angered. Some will view black ministry as a step back into segregation for they continually ask: “Why do we have a Black Ministry Department?” Others will want to know “Aren't we working toward unity in our church?” In a church and culture where blacks have been ignored for so long, why do we constantly have to justify a contextual ministry?

In order to examine the contextual relevance of black ministry, allow me to refresh your memories by citing a couple of historical moments. In the late 1960s and early '70s, a new phenomenon called Black Theology came into bloom. Black scholars/theologians like James Cone, Deotis Roberts, Joseph Washington, Gilbert Caldwell and a host of others proposed a new way of contextualizing the Gospel to make it understandable for oppressed people. If you lived during that era, you would know that these theologians were not out to rewrite the Word of God, but to reinterpret it in the

context of poor, oppressed people. This is applying the Word in the context of people's existential situation.

It was my privilege to serve as an instructor in the religion department at Valparaiso University during this era. What a joy to help both blacks and whites see the Gospel in perspective! I would always introduce my syllabus (whether it was “The Black Church in America,” “Interpreting the Negro Spirituals,” or some others) with this statement: “Now, you're in for a surprise. You are going to learn and work with Black Theology in a new way—it is the means of making the Gospel make sense to people who are oppressed ...”

Not only did I apply this principle to my teaching, but also to my Doctor of Ministry thesis, “A Pedagogical Treatment of Luther's Explanation of the Apostles' Creed, Based on The Black Experience.” As Dr. Luther used the 12 articles of the Apostles' Creed to fashion them into three articles for teaching the faith to German people, so I did with his three articles to teach the faith to my own people. Contextual? Yes! Scriptural? Yes!

The context of black ministry is the black experience. Do you understand the black experience? I'll be happy to discuss it with you. My point is this—black ministry is contextual. It is *not* an absurdity.

## TRIALS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

They would sing songs like “Glory, glory hallelujah! Since I laid my burden down” and by possessing Christ and standing on the promises they would hold out until a change would come.

It's typical to ponder through the letdowns and the setbacks: So what's God up to? What's the program? The answer is the same as always since Christ ascended to heaven: Reach the masses with the Gospel to claim souls for God—without gimmicks or slogans—and that Jesus is coming to claim His Church without spot or wrinkle. Paul writes in Rom. 1:16: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”



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Moving through these troubling times will reveal ultimately what God is up to on our behalf with grace enough to praise Him! Praise Him! I call on you all to be confident in the blood of Jesus, the hope of heaven for the people of God. So let's praise the Lord as He works matters out for our good. We'll feel better as we lay our burdens down, trusting that He has already provided the way through Jesus. Amen.

# GOD ... AND OUR FUTURE ... IS GOOD!

By Rev. Donald E. Anthony,  
*Ex-Chairman of the Board,  
Black Ministry Services*

God is good! All the time God is good. That is not just a phrase that is thrown around in church or by preachers to get a response from the crowd. It is the experience of many of us who gathered for the Black Ministry Family Convocation. About 300 Lutherans gathered in Houston for the Black Ministry Family Convocation.



that he was agitated and not in support of the proposed structural changes. The energy was intense as we continued to move through the agenda of the day. In my greetings, I was able to review some of the history of the Commission on Black Ministry and the Board for Black Ministry Services. Permit me to share a brief excerpt:

"It was an era where we as a people, actively and passionately focused on identifying the needs of Black Ministry, supporting the needs of Black Ministry, and cultivating an environment within this church body where the specific needs of Black Ministry could be met and identified. We were engaged and we were making history!

"The convocation became a part of the synodical structure. Rev. Warren Davis was elected first vice-president of the Southern District, Dr. Bryant Clancy was elected first vice-president of the Southeastern District. We were continuing to make history. Dr. Joseph Lavalais was elected second vice-president of the LCMS. A four-year curriculum was proposed for Concordia, Selma. Rev. William Parson was elected third vice-president of the Southeastern District. Requests were made for a non-geographical district. Rev Robert

King was elected third vice-president of the LCMS. History was continuing to be made through our collective efforts. Rev. James McDaniels was appointed as counselor for Black Ministry Board for Mission Services. The Black Agenda, a study document that addressed the uniqueness of being Christian, Black and Lutheran was developed and studied. History was continuing to be made. Efforts to strengthen our school ministry, the recruitment of professional church workers, even significant dollars for the support of black seminarians were secured. God was blessing in the midst of the struggle ... and a struggle it was. Every time we were blessed to reach a new level, we encountered some new devils, but God led us on. We had some of the largest graduating classes of students of African descent, our schools were thriving, relationships with Africa were strengthened, our African brothers and sisters welcomed us and told us they were glad to know that there were some other people of African descent in the Lutheran Church!"

Rev. Aaron Dickerson (photo at right), as he led the closing worship service, challenged the congregation to remember who God has created us to be. If indeed we are *Ablaze!* Empowered and Determined, there ought to be some evidence of God's power at work in our lives. He reminded us that we can be "at the table, but not at

the table."

We gathered in Convocation in 2010, 33 years after the 1977 Dallas Convention, to declare that the resurrection power of God still prevails. Black ministry is not dead! Our future as participants and leaders in this church is not hopeless. Our ministries do not have to cycle out and die. We are, by the grace of God, on the move and on the rise. We have a vision for the future. 2 Timothy says, "... for I know whom I have believed and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day."

The God who bought us will keep us. The God who sent His Son to save us will deliver us. The God who created us in His image will show us the way. Today and tomorrow, we have an opportunity to hear from one another, for fellowship with each other, to share goals, ideas and strategies to secure our future. Pray with us. Think with us. Struggle with us. Share with us, and let's watch God work among us and through us as His resurrection power leads us into the future. We are, by the grace of God ... *Ablaze!*



Photo©Herman Strozier

the audience. He indicated



# Education

## *Pastor treks long miles to help school*

Rev. Fred Hedt and Ed Coss of Ascension Lutheran Church, Landover Hills, Md., rode the entire Great Allegheny Passage from Pittsburgh, Pa., to Cumberland, Md., covering 129 miles for a great cause. They raised more than \$23,000 for the Ascension Lutheran Day School's scholarship fund. According to Pastor Hedt, the congregation at Ascension has always been very generous with their offerings to the scholarship fund, knowing that the area's need is great. In addition to the congregation's offerings and a fall fundraiser called Circle of Partners, the Great Allegheny Passage Ride (GAPR) was very necessary.

"The ride was a labor of love," Rev. Hedt said. "It's a great school with a great history. Scholarships are the only way to provide this opportunity for the area kids."

In fact, according to Pastor Hedt, \$208,000 in scholarships were given out just last year. These scholarships were not fully funded,



and donations still are needed to cover that amount. To learn more about this school or to make an online donation, visit [www.ascensionschool.org](http://www.ascensionschool.org). More photos and

comments from their ride can be found on Pastor Fred's blog at [www.alsgapr.blogspot.com](http://www.alsgapr.blogspot.com).

## *Bethlehem performs 'Cinderella'*

"Cinderellie, Cinderellie," the little gray mice sang. And then proceeded to dress Cinderella for the ball where she would go on to meet the handsome prince. You all know the rest of the story, but did you know that historic Bethlehem Lutheran Church in St. Louis put together this play with costumes, songs and props and performed it spectacularly after just four weeks of musical theatre camp? A lot of the credit for this goes to the superb leadership of Bethlehem's minister of music, Annette Silver-Betts. Through her mentoring and direction, a cast of 26 talented campers, four teens serving as volunteers, seven staff members and some more volunteers gave

this production its star quality.

Wickedly enjoyable to watch were the two evil stepsisters who nagged Cinderella and bickered with each other throughout the story. While the entire cast was immensely apt at capturing the audience's attention, the little gray mice, Cinderella's best friends, stole the show. Afterward, two elderly sisters in the audience, Anita and Doris Wegener, were heard raving about the play. "Annette does a terrific job with those kids. The play was well done and absolutely darling!" Both ladies were baptized, confirmed and attended school at Bethlehem.

One aspect not yet mentioned about Cinderella the play is how it was used as a Gospel outreach tool by

the church. Neighborhood canvassing was done by the church's dive bomber invasion evangelism strategy called "Taking Jesus to the Streets" (TJTTS). TJTTS entails



Bethlehem's performance of "Cinderella" featured Dajon Stewart as Prince Charming and Crystina Sydney as Cinderella.

# Urgent appeal

## Help the Children Come scholarship fund needs your help



You can save our schools while simultaneously supporting outreach to the African-American community. Did you know that this scholarship fund is entirely made up of your contributions? Did you know that without your help there are children who will not be able to attend a Lutheran school? Did you know this fund helps the continuing education of teachers? This fund is dangerously low, and we need your financial support at this time more than ever.

Children need the Gospel of the Lord and a quality education in a Christian setting.

The Black Ministry Lutheran Advisory School Team (B.L.A.S.T) developed a three-point appeal emphasis:

- Demonstrate God's love by giving to the National Scholarship Fund for Schools in Black Ministry.
- Schools in black ministry enable children and their parents to hear the Gospel for the first time.

- Many children that live within 10 blocks of most schools in black ministry are unchurched and cannot afford to attend the school.



### Ways to give

- Through your school or congregation.
- Return the postage-paid envelope (included with this issue of *TimeLine*) with your contribution.
- Go to [blackministry.lcms.org](http://blackministry.lcms.org).



targeting a neighborhood, sending a team of all ages to set up for Gospel singing, having a crafts team work with local children, and a pastor speaking touch points over a PA system. Then a hilarious pair of mad scientists does magic tricks to tell the Good News interspersed with a refrain, "WILAJ" which is short for "What I Like about Jesus." The audience catches on quickly.

They hand out snacks and do canvassing, which on certain occasions means promoting events like Cinderella and passing out free dinner tickets. Bethlehem catches on well. It runs with an ancient idea where God sends believers out into the real world to reach and teach unbelievers with the generous love of Christ and offer a friendship that's better than magic and make believe. It's a non-stop party. It's a kingdom that's out of this world. WILAJ!



## Pastors—continue your clinical education

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) can be a valuable experience for any pastor. CPE is a time of self-reflection and examination, learning about yourself, realizing who and what has most influenced you, and where your growth areas are. As a result of the CPE experience, many pastors feel better equipped in the area of pastoral care and practice.

Clinical Pastoral Education is normally offered through a local hospital. Those who have received four units or more of CPE qualify to serve as a hospital chaplain and are eligible for accreditation. If you are a pastor with at least one unit of CPE, our Synod has grant money for you to further your CPE education. If you go to the Synod's website and enter "give something back," the information will come up. The maximum grant is \$3,000 a year. Best wishes on your journey.



# Convocation Report

## *Black youth answer God's call in Houston*

**They did it! They answered God's call!**

A group of 18 teens and young adults, led by four youth team leaders, were on hand to roll up their sleeves and get dirty doing God's work. The 2010 Black Ministry Family Convocation Servant Event was held on Saturday, July 10, and sponsored by Lutheran Inter-City Network Coalition (LINC) Houston. LINC Houston is a network of local Houston churches that have joined together in a common mission to impact their city with the love of Christ. Their purpose is to reach the urban, multicultural and ethnic diversity and to be a catalyst for creating new ministries in urban Houston and support urban ministry in existing congregations. LINC Houston is supported by area congregations and the LCMS Texas District. For more information on LINC Houston, visit [www.linchouston.org](http://www.linchouston.org).

Upon arrival at the LINC offices where the work was to be done, the group was advised that a few of them would be driven to a local elderly woman's home to help pack up



all of her belongings and move them into a storage unit. Her home was in such desperate need of repair that she would be living elsewhere while LINC staff and volunteers made these major renovations and repairs. She had no family and no one to help her with the packing, storage and repairs.

The remainder of the group stayed at the LINC offices and were assigned the duties of clearing a classroom of all furniture and debris and then painting the room. This room was to be used as an ESL (English-as-a-Second Language) classroom for multiple ethnic groups within the community. This good-sized room was essentially unusable before this group got in there, cleaned it out and put a fresh coat of primer on all four walls. The group even got to pick out the paint color to be used on the walls from a selection of



donated paint. LINC had another volunteer group scheduled to come in and finish painting the walls. For many of the group, this was their first time painting and, while it did get a bit messy at times, the finished product was a valuable gift of time and effort.

In just one afternoon, these young people were rewarded with the opportunity to do for others in need. They made us smile too and, at the close of the day, gave us hope for the next generation of Lutheran believers. They answered God's call, "... through love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13).





## Educators, pastors honored for years of service to Lord

The LCMS 2010 Black Ministry Family Convocation Recognition Banquet was held July 9. Rev. Deric Taylor served as master of ceremonies throughout this superb evening.

Rev. James McDaniels and Rev. Donald Anthony had the pleasure of introducing and presenting plaques to church workers who have given the Lord and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod extended years of service. The honorees for a lifetime of dedication and achievement include the following Educators:

- Dr. Iri Skinner
- Mrs. Lucy Bridges
- Mrs. Ida W. Odom
- Mrs. Katie G. Wiggins
- Mrs. Mablean D. Scott
- Mrs. Agnes Clark Pegues
- Mrs. Geniece R. Herzfeld

The pastors who were recognized for 50 years or more of service in ministry to the Lord and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod include:

- Rev. Gulfrey N. Laurent (70 years)
- Dr. Robert King (60 years)
- Dr. William H. Griffin (60 years)
- Dr. Richard C. Dickinson Sr.
- Dr. Simon Bodley Jr.
- Rev. James Wiggins Sr.
- Rev. Arthur L. Bodley
- Dr. Bryant E. Clancy Jr.
- Dr. James B. Marshall
- Dr. Frazier N. Odom



The plaque for Dr. Richard C. Dickinson was awarded posthumously and a slideshow of images from his life of ministry was displayed on two large screens for the audience to see. A musical tribute to Dr. Dickinson by Shikina Bodley and three of Dr. Dickinson's nieces—Monique Nunes, Pamela Deloney and Ina Odom—was a beautiful sentiment of respect for this great leader.

This exquisite event was capped off with an advance showing of the video trailer for the upcoming film biography currently in the works chronicling the life of Dr. Rosa J. Young. The trailer was introduced by Mrs. Susan Hill, wife of Rev. James Hill of Detroit. Mrs. Hill is part of the task force spearheading the production. Her passion for this project is apparent as she, along with others, works diligently to get this film made and distributed so future generations will know of Dr. Young's inspirational and tremendous accomplishments to further the Great Commission.



*Photos © Rev. J. JayPBSig Creations*



# Mission

## *Unique health challenges ... unique need for grace*

By Kim Plummer Krull

As the pastor of a young mission church in San Antonio, Texas, Rev. Arturo Pena admits he's "occupied 99.9 percent of the time, trying to figure out how to pay the bills—both ministry bills and personal bills."

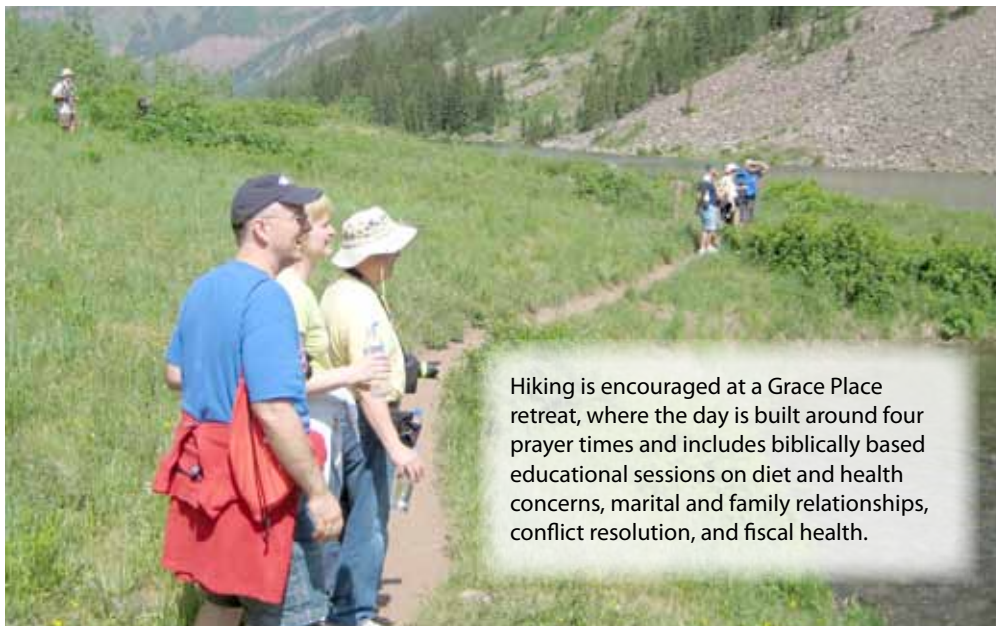
"It's quite challenging when you're in the field and don't have the money or the people you need to do ministry," said Pena, pastor of Abundant Grace Lutheran Church, a multi-ethnic congregation.

Since graduating from the Hispanic Institute of Theology in 2006, Pena says he has worked at least 80 hours a week and taken no vacations. "I'm one of those people who mentally takes work home with him," said Pena, who is married and the father of three young children. "Work never quits. It's always there."

All pastors face challenges as they serve others and, too often, neglect personal health and wellness. But making time to care for their own physical, spiritual and emotional needs can be especially important for black, Hispanic, and other minority church workers, says Dr. John Eckrich, founder of Grace Place Lutheran Retreats, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization dedicated to "preserving every shepherd we can preserve."

"The most challenging health issues for all Lutheran church workers, but even more prevalent among African-American and Hispanic people, are obesity, hypertension, and, in particular, the precursor to diabetes known as metabolic syndrome," said Eckrich, a physician and lifelong LCMS member.

Blacks and Hispanics are at greater risk for metabolic syndrome, which Eckrich describes as a newly recognized precursor to diabetes that includes insulin resistance, increased



Hiking is encouraged at a Grace Place retreat, where the day is built around four prayer times and includes biblically based educational sessions on diet and health concerns, marital and family relationships, conflict resolution, and fiscal health.

blood sugar, and elevated cholesterol and triglycerides. "Metabolic syndrome can lead to diabetes and hypertension, increasing the risk of stroke, bone and joint problems, and heart and vascular disease," he said. "But the good news is that when addressed early and appropriately, there are substantial preventable components."

### **Pause point for prevention**

Helping prevent health problems and professional burnout in Lutheran pastors and teachers is why Eckrich started Grace Place in 1999. After years of treating church workers in his St. Louis, Mo., family practice, this concerned Christian saw how ministry stress and struggles contribute to illness and a dwindling supply of church work professionals.

"Our church workers were burning themselves out while they cared for others but did not take care of themselves," Eckrich said.

Grace Place offers retreats as a "pause point" or "minisabbatical" for church work couples. Typically, 10 to 20 couples gather in a scenic

locale in Colorado, Michigan, Wisconsin or North Carolina. Retreats are customized for single church workers, fourth-year seminary students and for pastors in their second year of the Synod's Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) advanced training program.

One Grace Place alum is Rev. Quentin Poulson, the Synod's director of Mission Networking, Black Ministry. He knows firsthand the toll ministry challenges can take on church worker health. Early in his pastoral career, Poulson developed borderline hypertension that required monitoring.

"One doctor told me [high blood pressure] symptoms are not unusual for black ministers serving a black constituency," said Poulson. He speculates that minority pastors are especially vulnerable to stress, especially when they set unrealistic expectations for ministries that can be rife with economic, social and health challenges.

"Knowing ourselves realistically, handling daily stress and placing healthy boundaries in the midst of our vocational and personal relationships will make the tremendous



difference in safeguarding against the pitfalls of overworking, depression and falling prey to self-destructive behaviors,” Poulson said.

Grace Place helps reinforce those “healthy boundaries,” says Poulson, who took part in a retreat for single church workers last September in beautiful Snowmass, Colo., in the Rocky Mountains. He calls the experience an opportunity to “devote myself toward personal and spiritual needs by spending time with the Lord in a quiet, reflective place away from the noise of duties, expectations and pressures.”

## A “Safe Community”

The Grace Place day is built around four prayer times. Each morning begins with devotions and exercise to soothing music. Hiking and other recreational activities are encouraged. Biblically based educational sessions cover diet and health concerns marital and family relationships and conflict resolution.

Experts also help church workers address fiscal health. Few people are immune to financial concerns in today’s economy, but those issues can be especially burdensome for minority pastors struggling with stretched-thin budgets, both at work and home. Pena, for example, says he started his San Antonio ministry with a collapsing building and a congregation too small to support a pastor.

Along with educational and spiritual enrichment, Grace Place offers church workers a “safe community” to share ministry trials. When minority pastors and teachers participate, they enjoy opportunities to increase cross-cultural support and understanding.

“Our brothers and sisters in Christ care directly for each other, growing out of the special knowledge that only comes from ‘been there, done that,’” Eckrich said. “It’s nice to know that many of our stressors are similar, but it is even more revealing to understand the specific and unique ways Satan attacks ministry of the Word, even across



Rev. Quentin Poulson, LCMS Black Ministry director of Mission Networking, enjoyed a Grace Place retreat last September in Snowmass, Colo. He calls the “minisabbaticals” an opportunity to “devote myself toward personal and spiritual needs by spending time with the Lord in a quiet, reflective place.”

cultures and ethnicities.”

This summer, Pena said he hoped to carve time away from his work to take part in the Grace Place retreat presented as part of the PLI advanced leadership training program Oct. 18-22 in Fort Worth, Texas.

“I can relate to having no free time to relax,

exercise or concentrate on my spiritual emotions,” Pena said. “It (the Grace Place PLI retreat) sounds like a wonderful opportunity—a chance to get away and not think about ministry all the time.”

The pastor chuckled, adding, “Health wise, I’m still mentally sane, and I need to stay that way.”

## Caring for Church Workers Who “Accomplish Much with Very Little”

Along with making Grace Place retreats personally and professionally enriching, the ministry also strives to keep these minisabbaticals affordable. Gifts from donors and organizations that share the ministry’s concern for church worker health help underwrite actual retreat expenses.

Grace Place Executive Director Dr. John Eckrich and Rev. Quentin Poulson, LCMS Black Ministry director of Mission Networking, would like to see more minority church workers take part in these opportunities to recharge and grow. Providing financial support is one way to care for pastors and teachers who serve in challenging ministries.

“In my travels throughout the Synod’s schools and congregations, I am in awe of the people who manage to accomplish so much with very little in the way of funding, material and human resources—just faith, creativity and stubborn determination to touch lives with the love of Jesus,” Poulson said.

“Please value the contributions of black and Hispanic professional church workers who are grossly undercompensated for their services, face trials and dangers in their settings, are usually overextended and have few advocates speaking on their behalf,” he said. “They need a fresh touch from Christ that a Grace Place retreat can provide to replenish the parched places with His living water.”

For information about making a Grace Place gift, contact Annette Woehlke at [awoehlke@graceplaceretreats.org](mailto:awoehlke@graceplaceretreats.org) or call 314-842-3077.

To learn more about Grace Place, visit [www.graceplaceretreats.org](http://www.graceplaceretreats.org).

# Reflections on Eastern District Urban Renewal Conference

By Sandra L. Walker,  
*Chair, Deacon Board,  
The Lutheran Church of Our  
Savior, Buffalo, N.Y.*



When Pastor (Robert) Spilman shared with me the e-mails concerning the Eastern District Urban Renewal Conference (May 14-15, 2010, Rochester, N.Y.), my first thought was, “Oh no! Not another meeting!” There was no question about attending. This was one of those “must do” events. We made a list of our church leaders we would ask to attend, and then I started pushing for a commitment from them. We also told them to read the books of Nehemiah and Lamentations, as instructed.

I was the first to arrive from Our Savior Lutheran Church in Buffalo, N.Y., on Friday. It was exciting to see Deaconess Maggie Harris again. It was like we just saw each other yesterday. Agape love toward others just pours out of her. Her work in the Rochester inner-city spans many decades. She really knows her community. Maggie and Rev. Kenyatta Cobb from Hananiah Lutheran Church in Buffalo were primary movers for this event. La Santa Cruz in Buffalo was represented by Rev. Luis Javier and Marleny Florez. I began to get the feeling this was not going to be just another meeting.

I was truly impressed. They were ready for us. Pastors and leaders from all of our regions—Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Rochester and Buffalo—were “in the house.” Rev. Quentin Poulson from Black Ministry, Diane Martens from Lutheran Deaconess Association, District President Dr. Chris Wicher, several district vice presidents, Rev. David Werly, Chair, Board for Mission Services, and other Rochester community pastors and leaders were all there to participate, share, listen and learn. This was a growth experience—a busy agenda,

but not busy work.

Topics and Bible studies relevant to the city and urban communities such as “How do we become the ‘neighborhood’ church,” “How we can train women of color for the ministry,” “Money vs. Mission,” and “How do we get the training to organize leaders in our ministry” were explored and shared. The congregations were split up so that we had the opportunity to brainstorm about the changes, needs and plans the congregations were experiencing. As participants shared their work, many different and workable ideas were produced.

I no longer felt isolated from my sister urban congregations in the district. I found so much in common. I enjoyed bonding and unity. I found so many similarities in what we all wanted to do, especially in moving the church from behind the walls and into the community while we serve others in the name of Jesus Christ. We supported each other. There was no criticism. We were hungry to share and learn. We wanted to help each to follow the mandate in Matt. 28:19-20 and to bring Christ to our communities.

I thank God for this opportunity for growth. I thank God for the 40 people who attended. I thank God for all the people who organized, prepared, encouraged, prayed, contributed and believed in the importance of the conference. I pray we will continue in our work of renewing urban ministry. I pray that we will come together again to share our progress and support each other in the work of the kingdom of the Lord.



From left, Dale Erskine, Rev. David Bernard, Rev. Reholma McCants, Rev. Larry Schmidt, Rev. Howard Alexander, Rev. Quentin Poulson.

## Fun at summer camp



Four-year-old Adrian Taylor is very proud of the craft that he worked on after learning the story of Noah. This is just one of the many activities being offered at the Community Lutheran Ministry summer camp, Rochester, N.Y. This outreach ministry brings in children of which about 75 percent are unchurched. Each day, these children learn about Jesus during morning devotions and they also hear God's Word as they visit other churches that host camp sessions. This camp is where many of the children first hear about Jesus.



# Restore Trinity Claiborne, New Orleans

Hurricane Katrina (August 2005) caused devastating harm to lives and property, particularly in the lower 9th Ward where LCMS congregations suffered, and many were driven out of the area unable to rebuild homes and churches, resume their jobs, or find means of financial support for their families in New Orleans.

One such story of devastation to our Lutheran community is Trinity Claiborne, established in 1916 with the current building constructed in 1961. This church now stands as an empty building in the midst of a community hungering for humanitarian and spiritual care. Camp Restore has established a vision in cooperation with the LCMS Southern District for a multi-program community ministry focusing on youth and revitalizing the area in partnership with local institutions and businesses. The major piece to the vision entails reconstructing the property through a core of volunteers and students from the Concordia University System.

## A National Movement

Rev. Avery Watson, pastor of Holy Cross in New Orleans, is the chairman of the task force spearheading a powerful movement comprised of pastors in Circuit 1 of the Southern District, Recovery Assistance, Inc. Ministries (RAI), and Camp Restore to refurbish Trinity Claiborne which, prior to Katrina, was a vibrant ministry of more than 300 members providing a significant missional presence in the 9th Ward. Rev. Watson has brought together former Trinity members across the nation, plus residents of the 9th Ward, and he invites the entire LCMS Black Ministry family to join the restoration campaign. The movement spans northward to the Chicago region,



where a gathering of 75 believers held a worship service June 25 to endorse the campaign to raise funds for the restoration. Earlier this year, the Chicago team worshiped by candlelight at Trinity in a demonstration of faith in our awesome God to clarify the vision! They are known as the Chicago Area Mission Partnership.

Black Ministry is behind Pastor Watson, the task force and the Chicago team to fuel the flame of hope behind their determined effort to make the restoration vision a reality. Please donate, volunteer through Camp Restore (e-mail [info@restoretrinity.org](mailto:info@restoretrinity.org) to inquire), and partner with us by spreading the good word at your congregation and faith-based service organization about this important missionary effort.

Pastor Watson invites you to contact him at [ajwatsonjr@cox.net](mailto:ajwatsonjr@cox.net) or call 504-288-3437. His charge to us is “May God continue to bless our ministries and families until we meet our Savior face to face.”

## Pentecost 2010

By Deaconess Diane Marten

I'm smiling and crying through an exciting worship at The Great Commission (TGC) Lutheran Church in St. Louis. Faith-filled preaching and teaching. Meaningful prayers. Fabulous music! And dancing! You can feel the Spirit in that place—in that renovated building, on a corner, intentionally planted in St. Louis' north side. The area has seen better days. But on this day, a powerful wind of God is blowing.

Pastor Dwight Dickinson purposefully trains



the congregation to reach out to people on the street—to people on drugs, people in trouble, people in poverty. And they are ready. I know, because during the sermon, a fragile-looking woman wandered in and began to sob. An elder and a female usher immediately went to her and responded with comfort. They brought the woman into the circle near the altar at prayer time.

I was struck by the quick welcome that this stranger was given, a woman who might have been frightened and frightening

in another setting. I know a TGC ministry team will follow up later. They are prepared. “Welcoming” is their ministry.

On that day, I was a stranger too. TGC welcomed me, a stranger amid familiar faces. They made me not feel strange. We prayed and sang and shared a meal. As with Abraham and Sarah who welcomed a couple of strangers one day, may TGC be blessed for their servant ministry. I was.

*Deaconess Diane Marten is the Director of Education and Formation with the Lutheran Deaconess Association ([www.theLDA.org](http://www.theLDA.org)). Read about her sabbatical experience in the next issue of TimeLine.*

# Bibles for Uganda

By Rev. Quentin G. Poulson,  
*Director of Mission Networking*  
*LCMS Black Ministry Services*

Uganda is a beautiful nation in East Africa twice the size of Pennsylvania. Its neighbors are Congo on the west, the Sudan on the north, Kenya to the east, and Tanzania and Rwanda on the south. I had the unique pleasure of joining Pastor John Schmidtke with nine members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, St. Louis, on a short-term mission trip to Uganda in June in partnership with the Lutheran Church of Uganda at the invitation of Rev. Charles Bameka, LCMS missionary Jake Gillard and Lutheran Hour Media Ministries, which is based in the capital of Kampala.

We toured the country's cities, small towns and villages, carrying the Gospel of Jesus Christ through music, preaching, teaching and prayer, hoping God's Word would break hearts and save souls. We met the people; ate the food; visited churches, schools and orphanages; learned the culture; and explored the wildlife on safari. We made three profound discoveries by God's grace during the trip:

- God's people are everywhere, from the lowest to the highest stations, paving the way through toils and dangers in order for His message to be heard.
- There is such a hunger for divine truth



and thirst for righteousness by people in tiny villages who were told of our arrival months ahead, they would travel miles by foot or bicycle along dirt roads into the tiniest of villages just to experience God's power and mercy for their lives.

- The depths of economic poverty in most places we went to was so great that people who wanted Bibles couldn't afford them because the purchase price was prohibitive even to middle-class people like school teachers, local officials and business owners.

Our discoveries gave us pause to be thankful to God for His favor upon us and the countless blessings we would normally take for granted were it not for opening our eyes and giving guidance in His will. The Holy Spirit convicted my heart to do whatever I can to contribute funds toward the purchase of new Bibles in whatever way practical by

appealing to our black ministry congregations and schools to donate funds. We will send those funds back to our LCMS partners in international missions and Lutheran Hour Media to purchase and distribute to those people we reached who signed up for Bible correspondence courses, so that they will hear the Word of God in Christ and have proper instruction in rightly dividing God's Word, gain understanding, seek the gracious gift of Holy Baptism and apply it to their daily lives so they can obtain victory and further spread the Good News.

Formerly a British colony, English is the official language, but the people speak various languages like Ganda, Luganda, Swahili, Arabic and others. People need Bibles translated into their native tongue to grasp the power and grace of our Lord's salvation, to know and experience His great love. Dispensing Bibles is integral to evangelism and missionary work in Uganda and elsewhere.

You can partner with LCMS Black Ministry's global work when you donate for these new Bibles, which cost \$7 per copy; purchased in Uganda and distributed by hand to each person we reach. So there is no administrative cost to incur. Please help us touch lives for Jesus by making your tax-deductible donation to LCMS Black Ministry, noted "Bibles for Uganda." Together we will make a difference for the sake of Christ's kingdom.

## Help us plant new congregations, fight malaria

The Synod Convention endorsed to continue the *Ablaze!* Initiative: Congregations planting new congregations toward the goal of starting 2,000 new congregations by 2017 for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Recognizing the need for further awareness and training, the delegates voted to encourage National Missions in the development of Bible study and faith sharing tools for congregations. Black Ministry has committed to reaching 1 million people with the saving touch of Jesus, and we are praying

God's strength to plant new congregations through existing ones. We have a marvelous encouragement and clear challenge to move forward in faith in the strength of our loving Savior to build His Church on earth. Will your congregation take the bold steps toward mission planting this year? Contact us. We would like to help.

Secondly, the convention endorsed the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, which is a collaboration of all Lutherans to a global fight

against the disease responsible for the deaths of 1 million people worldwide annually. A majority of those deaths occur among people of color in Africa. If you or your congregation would like to become active in this urgent health program, drop us a line or call us in Black Ministry at 1-800-248-1930, and we will tell you how to join the fight. Imagine the global witness your community can make to the healing power of Jesus through ordinary means inspired by His grace working in us!



# Ethnic/Immigrant Ministries

## *EIIT thrives in Milwaukee*

Pastor Don Hougard wanted to share some of the recent fruits of the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) program they have experienced at Benediction Lutheran Church in Milwaukee:

On July 3 and 4, the French-African ministry had an outreach event to Somali Muslims. Here is how Vicar Kasongo Gui Kabeo, who was born in the Congo, described the event:

“We built a bridge between Islamic Somali Bantu and the Lutheran Sion through Kasongo Gui Kabeo, Ben Adetiba and Afam Ikanih. Twenty-two Somaliens came to our soccer game (photo, above right) on Saturday and five came to our worship service and picnic at Benediction on Sunday.” According to Pastor Hougard, “This French-African congregation, who mainly came from the Congo, started with about 30 members and has now more than doubled in size. These men and their congregations are thrilled to be a part of our Lutheran church. Their enthusiasm shows in their desire to share their Lutheran faith.”



This family of seven (photo, right) from the Hmong Ministry was baptized in July after attending the adult instruction class (also pictured are Rev. Hougard and Hmong Vicar Moua Vang). In early August, a family of five who also attended this class was baptized. Neither of these families knew anything about Christ when they first came to Benediction. During one of the baptisms, Vicar Vang preached a sermon on Matthew 28. Another woman happened to be visiting on that Sunday, and she requested to be a part of the next adult instruction class so that she can be baptized also. Pastor Hougard is thankful for these new Christians, but also thankful for the pastoral formation that the seminary has given to Moua. “I simply want to thank the EIIT program for its support in this ministry.”



## *Synod votes for Hispanic ministry development*

**Resolution 1-11:** To urge the prompt appointment of an individual for strategic development of Hispanic ministries.

*The following comment is from Rev. Aurelio Magarino, president of the fourth Hispanic National Convention of the LCMS.*



“This resolution is long overdue. The Hispanic community has been neglected by our synodical leadership. It is time they take a good look at the demographics of the United

States. I hope our leadership will realize that if the LCMS wants to break the pattern of non-growth and decline, then it must make a commitment to make sure this resolution is fully implemented.

In the past, there has been a lot of lip service, which in the long term will damage the mission and growth of the LCMS in the United States. If this resolution is applied

and there is a seriousness in reaching out to Hispanics, the church will benefit in the short and long term.

The LCMS has a lot to offer the Hispanic population, but the Hispanic population has a richness in cultural diversity that will also be very enriching to the LCMS.”

# Stewardship

## A layaway offering for Christ

By Rev. Melvin Amerson,  
Stewardship consultant,  
Texas Methodist Foundation

The Christmas shopping season seems to begin earlier and earlier every year. Yet, the season of Advent still begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. Perhaps the Wise Men in the gospel of Matt. 2:1-12, who brought Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to recognize and celebrate His birth, started saving and sacrificing early in order to present extraordinary gifts to our Savior.

Consumerism at times appears to overshadow the focus of the season of Advent. For many believers, Christmas has become little more than a season of exchanging gifts with co-workers, loved ones and family. Let us not forget about the exciting Christmas parties we attend. Sadly, there is a trend among believers who celebrate the season, attend parties, exchange gifts, take time off to relax with family and friends, yet fail to present the season honoree with a special gift fit for

a king. The honoree I am referring to is Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

Given the current economic downturn, many will say that they are unable to exchange gifts at the level of previous years. Retail stores—in response to the economy—have brought back layaway plans. For those not old enough to remember layaways, it was a purchase option without taking physical possession of the merchandise, that required weekly or biweekly payments until paid in full. This was the way many families and individuals bought things before the innovation of credit cards. Layaway helped us make the distinction between a need and a want. Further, it taught lifelong lessons in patience, diligence and self-control.

Consider establishing a church wide layaway plan for a special ministry gift that will honor

Christ. Weekly, beginning the first Sunday in November or the first Sunday in Advent, place an additional \$10,

\$15, \$20 or more each Sunday in a designated offering envelope as your layaway offering. The resources raised should be used to bless others, expand or enhance ministry. Your congregation's weekly offering/

installment will help members take their focus off the commercialism of Christmas and place the focus back on the birth of Christ.

Remember to start saving early—as the wise men probably did, so your offerings are reflective of an awesome gift that gives honor to the Prince of Peace, who brought joy to the world.

*Originally published for The United Methodist Church Center for Christian Stewardship. Reprinted with permission.*



Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Mo., recently became a "Safe Place" for the National Safe Place Agency. Safe Place is a national youth outreach program that educates thousands of young people every year about the dangers of running away or trying to resolve difficult, threatening situations on their own. This easily replicated community initiative involves the whole community to provide safe havens and resources for youth in crisis. Safe Place creates a network of "Safe Place locations"—youth friendly businesses, schools, fire stations, libraries and other appropriate public buildings that display the distinctive yellow and black Safe Place sign. In many communities, the local transit system takes part, designating buses as mobile Safe Place sites. To learn more about how your church can become a designated "Safe Place," visit [www.nationalsafeplace.org](http://www.nationalsafeplace.org). Pictured, from left, Don Strohmeier, lead organizer of the "Campaign for College Hill," Pastor Gary Lampe, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, and Karen Sieve, Youth In Need/Operation Safe Place.



# Extras

## Bulk rates available

Does your congregation need multiple copies of the *TimeLine* newsletter? This quarterly newsletter can be shipped to you in bulk for one of the following annual donation amounts:

- 25 quantity of each issue for a one-time \$25 annual donation.
- 50 quantity of each issue for a one-time \$35 annual donation.

Please make checks out to LCMS Black Ministry Services and mail to:

LCMS Black Ministry Services  
1333 S. Kirkwood Road  
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

Include name, address and quantity desired.



## The first Rosa

You can be a part of preserving the legacy of Dr. Rosa J. Young. A commitment has been made by The Rosa Young Movie Task Force to document the life and accomplishments of Rosa Young.

A feature film is being planned that will tell the story of this determined witness and the obstacles that she faced and overcame with the help of God.

To learn more about this fundraising effort, visit [www.rosayoung.com](http://www.rosayoung.com).



Rosa J. Young.

## Recipe: Leftover turkey idea

### Curried turkey salad

Serve this delicious turkey salad on lettuce leaves or in sliced toasted bread or rolls.

#### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons chutney
- whipping cream, as needed
- 1/4 cup celery, chopped
- 3 to 4 teaspoons curry powder, to taste
- 1/3 cup chopped dried cranberries or raisins
- 1 tablespoon chopped green onion
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans, optional
- 1 1/2 cups diced turkey

#### Preparation:

Combine mayonnaise and chutney in a small bowl, adding curry powder to your taste. Stir in a little cream to moisten. In a larger bowl, combine celery, chopped dried cranberries, green onion, pecans, if using, and turkey. Stir in the curried mayonnaise, adding a little more cream if needed to moisten more. Serves about 4 as a main dish or luncheon salad or about 6 as a sandwich filling.



## Upcoming Regional Events

### September

- Sept. 7-9 California-Nevada-Hawaii District DCE Retreat
- Sept. 11 Eastern District Lutheran Layman's League Convention
- Sept. 14-16 Indiana District Veterans of the Cross Retreat
- Sept. 17-19 Eastern District LWML 2010 Retreat
- Sept. 18 Rocky Mountain District Servant Leader Workshop
- Sept. 22-24 Florida-Georgia Educators Conference
- Sept. 24-25 Southern Illinois District LWML Convention

### October

- Oct. 1-3 Florida-Georgia District LWML Convention
- Oct. 2 Missouri District Connect Conference
- Oct. 4-6 Texas District Retreat on Prayer and Spirituality
- Oct. 8-10 Michigan District Lutheran Adult Gathering
- Oct. 10-12 Kansas District Educators Conference
- Oct. 14 Southeastern District Lutheran Educators Conference-North Carolina
- Oct. 15 Southeastern District Lutheran Educators Conference-Maryland
- Oct. 15 Michigan District North and West Teachers Conference
- Oct. 22 Michigan District South and East Teachers Conference

### November

- Nov. 3-5 Northwest District Teachers Conference
- Nov. 6-8 Florida-Georgia District Middle School Youth Gathering
- Nov. 21-23 Lutheran Educator Conference

## Upcoming Events

### September

- Christian Education Month
- Sept. 7-11 School Cabinet Meeting, Irvine, Calif.
- Sept. 11 Installation of Synod executives, board members, St. Louis
- Sept. 12 Grandparents Day
- Sept. 30- Oct. 1 Urban Ministry Conference, Concordia River Forest, Chicago

### October

- LCMS World Mission Month, Clergy Appreciation Month
- Oct. 31 Reformation Day

### November

- Nov. 7 All Saints Day
- Nov. 10 Martin Luther's Birthday
- Nov. 11 Veterans Day
- Nov. 17-19 Mission Partner's Conference, Nashville, Tenn.
- Nov. 19 LCEF Fall Leadership Conference, Nashville, Tenn.
- Nov. 21 World Relief and Human Care Sunday
- Nov. 25 Thanksgiving Day
- Nov. 28 First Sunday in Advent

### December

- Dec. 25 Christmas Day

## Feedback wanted

We would like to hear from you in regard to *TimeLine*. Please send your comments to [jennifer.duffy@lcms.org](mailto:jennifer.duffy@lcms.org), or send to LCMS Black Ministry Services, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

## Correction

The 2010 Spring issue of *TimeLine* ran an article titled "Conversations of Hope" which incorrectly referred to Janis McDaniels as a LWML regional president. McDaniels was at the symposium as a member of the Board for Black Ministry Services.

## Coming soon ...

The winter 2010 issue of *TimeLine* will include:

- "Race: The Struggle Within" (part 2) by Rev. Russell Belisle, *chaplain, Germantown Hospital, Memphis, Tenn.*
- "Sabbatical Reflections" by Deaconess Diane Marten, *director of Education and Formation, Lutheran Deaconess Association*
- "Short-Term Missions" by Jennifer Mustard, *short-term missionary service, LCMS World Mission*
- An Urban School Renewal by Monique Owunga, *vice principal, New Luther High School, Chicago*

## Get your articles in

Articles for the next issue of *TimeLine* are due by Friday, Oct. 1. Please send them by e-mail to [willamae.winston@lcms.org](mailto:willamae.winston@lcms.org). Please send us your local and regional news.

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- Rev. Quentin Poulson
- WillaMae Winston
- Jennifer Duffy
- Frank Kohn

For more photos from the 2010 Black Ministry Family Convocation, visit our website at [blackministry.lcms.org](http://blackministry.lcms.org).

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