



NEWSLETTER

timeline

2ND QUARTER • 2017



REV. DR. ROOSEVELT GRAY, JR.

“To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.”

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

ONE GREAT GIFT OF WORKING in Black and Immigrant Ministry for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is meeting so many pastors, deaconesses and lay leaders who strongly believe in mission to their home communities — here and around the world. Many put “sole” into their ministry by returning home to share God’s love in Christ in Word and deed.

This summer issue celebrates some of the ministries “back home” which have landed our pastors and deaconesses in places as diverse as Gary, Ind., Bronxville, N.Y., Haiti and Eritrea.

The Rev. Delwyn Campbell has returned to his hometown of Gary, Ind. as a national missionary. The city has changed drastically in the nearly 40 years he’s been gone, but he is dedicated to bringing the hope of Christ, a new school and strengthened Word and Sacrament ministry to the hurting.

Deaconess Rahel Musa and her husband, Pastor Zerit Yohannes, returned to their home country of Eritrea as LCMS missionaries. They served nine years, helping establish a seminary and reaching out to those with HIV/AIDS. They are now both serving in Lansing, Mich., and Musa continues her work with Eritrean and other refugees.

The Rev. Blaise Marin was a student at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., when the 2010 earthquake devastated his home country of Haiti. He went on 29 mission trips over the next few years to help rebuild his father’s church. He now serves in Tulsa, Okla. in a church with multicultural ministry and is planning a mission trip to Haiti this fall.

Finally, in May the Rev. Dr. Victor Belton returned as campus chaplain and vice president of leadership to his beloved alma mater, Concordia College–New York. He will be helping raise up a new generation of young men and women to serve in the LCMS here and around the world.

For me, there is a welcome homecoming as well. This summer, the Black Ministry Family Convocation will be held

in Birmingham, Ala., July 12–16, just a few miles from my hometown of Montgomery. I know I will see many of my Alabama family during this time, as we come together to worship and praise His Holy Name. I hope you all are making plans to join this reunion of your family of faith as we celebrate living our lives All for Jesus.



Dr. Carlos Hernandez, Rev. Blaise Marin and Dr. Roosevelt Gray at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Tulsa, Okla. (Gospel Seeds ministry)

BACK HOME AGAIN

A lot has changed since the Rev. Delwyn Campbell left his hometown of Gary, Ind. nearly four decades ago. Campbell has changed as well: after a career in banking, radio and teaching, he has returned to Gary as a national missionary. He serves with LCMS Urban Ministry to manifest Witness, Mercy, Life Together in a struggling urban community and as pastor at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, organized in 1870.

Named by the U.S. Steel Corporation that developed it, Gary has been known historically as "Magic Steel City." The city elected its first African-American Mayor, Richard Hatcher, in 1968 but suffered rapid economic decline when cheap foreign steel was dumped on the markets. In 1970 there were 30,000 people employed in the steel industry; by 1990 there were only 6,000. Campbell left his hometown in 1979 when there were signs of struggle in the steel industry, but the neighborhoods and schools were strong.

"When I arrived in December, it was impossible not to notice how things had changed," Campbell says. "Many homes and schools were empty, crumbling shells that had little hope for rehabilitation, and people outside of Gary were, with one accord, prophesying its imminent demise, claiming that the combination of a horrific crime, economic desolation, and, according to many, political indifference, both within and without the city, would suffocate any efforts at revitalization."

Undeterred, Campbell preached his first service at St. John's on New Year's Day, just days after arriving from California with his family. Campbell is working with

the four remaining LCMS congregations to encourage evangelistic outreach and financial independence.

He is also working with The Lutheran School Corporation of Indiana, Lutheran Urban Mission Initiative and Our Savior Lutheran Church in Gary to re-establish an elementary school at the site of the former Gary Lutheran School. Members of Our Savior, who worship at the site, have been renovating the building the past two years to bring it up to code. "We are recruiting our first kindergarten and first grade classes and expect to be running when the 2017-18 school year begins in September," he says.

Campbell brings a varied career to his position, from his work in banking and radio stations in Las Vegas to substitute teaching in southern California. In 2015 he graduated from the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center program at Concordia University, Irvine, Calif. This program, with the support of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, combines distance learning with onsite classes. He served as vacancy pastor for two California congregations before the call to Gary, a sweet journey home.

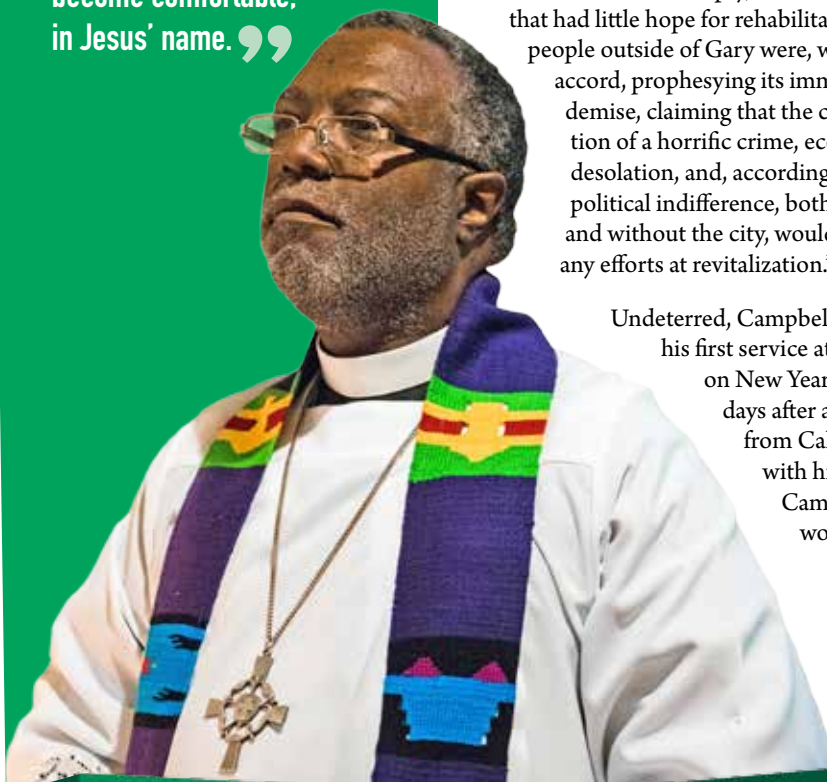
"I am glad to be here because my family gets to spend time with my mom, I get to be a blessing to the city where I grew up, and I get to see the Cubs more often. Most importantly, I get to fulfill the vocation for which I have been prepared by some great professors and pastors, and some fervent prayers have been answered. I am happy to be here, not only because it is my hometown, but because I have been called here, by God, to serve in the *Missio Dei*, preaching the Gospel, comforting those who are discouraged, and challenging those who have become comfortable, in Jesus' name."

To learn more about LCMS Urban and Inner-City Mission, see lcms.org/urban-and-inner-city-mission.



Pastor Campbell talks with Anthony King, who takes care of his parents across the street from St. Philip Lutheran Church in the Tarrytown neighborhood of Gary, Ind.

“I am happy to be here, not only because it is my hometown, but because I have been called here, by God, to serve in the *Missio Dei*, preaching the Gospel, comforting those who are discouraged, and challenging those who have become comfortable, in Jesus' name.”



Pastor Campbell prepares for worship.

CROSSING CULTURES AND CONTINENTS FOR CHRIST

Blaise Marin was a seminarian at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. in January 2010 when a catastrophic earthquake devastated his home country of Haiti, affecting three million people. Over the next two years, he flew home 29 times, often with seminary classmates and staff, to serve the people of his father's church, Eglise Maranatha Lutherienne de Thomassique. They helped begin the process of rebuilding the church and school, fed children, reached out to those living on the streets, taught classes and led worship.

Returning home to serve God and His people was only natural for Marin, who was born in Port-au-Prince and pursued ministerial studies at the same seminary his father, the Rev. Jean-Claude Marin, attended years earlier. Blaise's seminary graduation in 2014 was "a day I have always dreamed about," his father said. In 2016, Marin's brother Josias received his master's in religion from Concordia, Fort Wayne and is working alongside their father in Haiti.

Rev. Marin now serves at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Tulsa, Okla., where he is organizing a mission trip to Haiti this fall as well as encouraging his congregation to embrace the cross-cultural ministries sharing their church building. In fact, the monthly potluck suppers that follow their joint monthly worship services now feature Haitian plantains, Hmong eggrolls and Hispanic tamales in addition to traditional casseroles and gelatin salads.

Pastors serving at Good Shepherd are the Rev. Bernardo Rangel, with La Iglesia Luterana El Buen (Good Lutheran), and

Vicar Wangdoua Chang, The Good Shepherd Hmong Lutheran Church. Both have studied with the Ethnic Immigrant Institute at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (see spring 2017 Timeline).



Rev. Bernardo Rangel, Vicar Wangdoua Chang and Rev. Marin

This spring, Good Shepherd brought the Rev. Dr. Carlos Hernandez and the Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray to implement the Gospel Seeds ministry. "We met our neighbors and found we are really changing from older residents to younger families with children — and people from all ethnicities," Marin says. "We are perfectly located to proclaim Christ and serve our neighbors."

"We're going to have a big block party in June so our neighborhood can meet each other," Marin adds. The principal of the local elementary school, who is a member of the church, has asked for volunteers to work

with students. Marin sponsors a weekly young adult class at his home, which has successfully brought new members into the church.

Marin also serves as the LCMS Oklahoma District representative for Lutherans for Life, a movement he got involved with while at the seminary.

It's clear his passion is reaching out with Word and works to the hurting in the community, regardless of their culture or background. This spring, Marin joined LCMS pastors on a mission trip to north Togo, as he speaks French, one of the languages in Haiti as well as the official language in Togo. (For more about the trip, see *engage*. lcms.org/theological-education-in-to-go-spring-2017.)

"We want the Church to grow here in our neighborhood in Tulsa, in my home country of Haiti, in Togo and around the world as we preach Christ and live out His great commission," Marin says.

Building a new church in Haiti

Blaise Marin with his father Rev. Jean-Claude Marin at Concordia Theological Seminary



Rev. Marin's father's ministry in Haiti



FAITH-FILLED MISSION HOME IN ERITREA AND BEYOND



Deaconess Rahel Musa is following in her family's faith footsteps.

Born in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea in northeast Africa, Musa was raised in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea. Her grandfather was a Lutheran pastor, and her father was a Lutheran educator, Bible translator and general secretary of the church. She attended Lutheran schools.

Musa knew she wanted to serve others, especially women and children, and to base her work in theology, a degree she earned in Tanzania. But she could not return home to Eritrea to serve because of the oppressive Communist regime.

So she and her husband, Pastor Zerit Yohannes, produced Christian radio programs that reached people in countries where Christianity was banned (Sudan, Saudi Arabia) and where there was no access to the Church.

From Africa, they were called to Toronto, where Musa worked among Eritreans at St. John's Lutheran Church and helped her husband establish two Eritrean-Lutheran congregations. She also worked with Canadian Lutheran World Relief as a refugee case worker.

As she considered studying to become a deaconess, Musa and her husband got a call in 1994 from the LCMS Board of Missions to be missionaries to Eritrea.



All Saints Day, Nov. 6, 2016 - Pastor A. Trevor Sutton, Pastor Elamin Baggor, Deaconess Rahel Musa, her husband Pastor Zerit Yohannes and Pastor David Davis

“God has given women special talents and skills, and these are a natural fit to deaconess ministry.”

“This was an opportunity that the Lord made!” she says.

Returning home, they helped establish a theological seminary and revived their radio ministry. Musa also trained women to serve those in need, from people impacted by HIV/AIDS to those who had dropped out of high school. She also helped the poor establish small businesses.

In 2005 Pastor Yohannes was called to Michigan, where he serves with St. Luke Lutheran Church at the Christ campus in Lansing. Musa then realized a dream by becoming a deaconess through colloquy at Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.

Musa is teaching young people, including immigrants, but her primary work in her congregation is “to connect people with Jesus.” She also works with refugees who find themselves new to the city, new to the Church and often new to Christ. She helps them adjust to the culture, meets social service needs, shares the Gospel, prays and visits them at home.

“God has given women special talents and skills, and these are a natural fit to deaconess ministry,” she says. “I believe that a calling to the deaconess ministry is truly a service to our Lord and communities.”

Musa continues: “In my language, Tigrinya, there is a proverb that when translated says, ‘A woman is the light of the house.’ Deaconesses can share this light with many people, in many ways, in many places. I hope the story of how I became a deaconess illustrates that it's not just about gaining the academic knowledge but living a Christ-centered life of light.”

Photos above from Eritrea mission field, left to right: Skills training for former sex workers; First Deaconess graduating class; High school drop out support program.

HOME AGAIN AT BELOVED ALMA MATER

The Rev Dr. Victor Belton recently returned “home” to his alma mater, Concordia College–New York, where he was named campus pastor and vice president for leadership.

Belton, who served as pastor at Peace Lutheran Church in Decatur, Ga., for 27 years, is glad to be “home again” in Bronxville.

“I feel really honored to be given the opportunity to return to a college I love, a place where I learned to think critically, and to be able to help in the formation of some of the next generation of leaders of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod locally, nationally and internationally. My experience at Concordia, Bronxville included a great many notable and excellent educators, and I am very pleased to be able to become for the current and future students what they were for me.”

In his new positions, Belton will help Concordia “expand future opportunities to rise purposefully in its historic mission of preparing people for lives of service to the Church and society,” according to the college press release. “Pastor Belton’s work will focus on nurturing the vocational and the spiritual flourishing of the students, staff and faculty.”

Belton will be responsible for overseeing daily chapel services, enhancing the spiritual climate on campus and helping create opportunities for student service. He is looking forward to helping youth develop leadership abilities

that will serve well in the Church in called positions or as lay leaders.

“Victor’s affirmation of the Spirit’s call to Concordia is utterly thrilling to me and to this community,” states the Rev. Dr. John Nunes, president of Concordia, Bronxville. “What a big-impact blessing he will be with the love of Jesus Christ, touching the lives of students in our small school who will be prepared to then touch lives for decades to come on our complex, pluralistic planet.”

Belton’s impact for the sake of the Gospel is both global and local. A highly sought-after conference speaker and man of prayer, Belton has traveled on mission projects to Ethiopia and South Sudan. He helped establish ministry in Sudan, Africa through evangelist Vicar Bafel Paul Deng. From 2004 to 2016, Belton served on the LCMS Board of Directors

As pastor at Peace, Belton was active in the community, helping form the DeKalb County Consortium of Churches and serving as chair for Partners in Action for Healthy Living and DeKalb County Community and Human Development Citizens Review Board.

Belton was born in Washington, D.C. and attended public schools. He worked as a brick mason laborer, then earned a certificate in data processing and spent a number of years as a computer operator. After graduating from Concordia, Bronxville in 1982, he received his Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1986. Concordia, Bronxville awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2006.

His installation will be Sunday, Sept. 24, 2:30 p.m. at Village Lutheran Church in Bronxville, N.Y.; the preacher will be the Rev. Gregory Walton, president of the LCMS Florida-Georgia District. All are invited to attend and be part of the community that welcomes Pastor Belton home again.

To learn more about Concordia, Bronxville, visit their website at concordia-ny.edu.

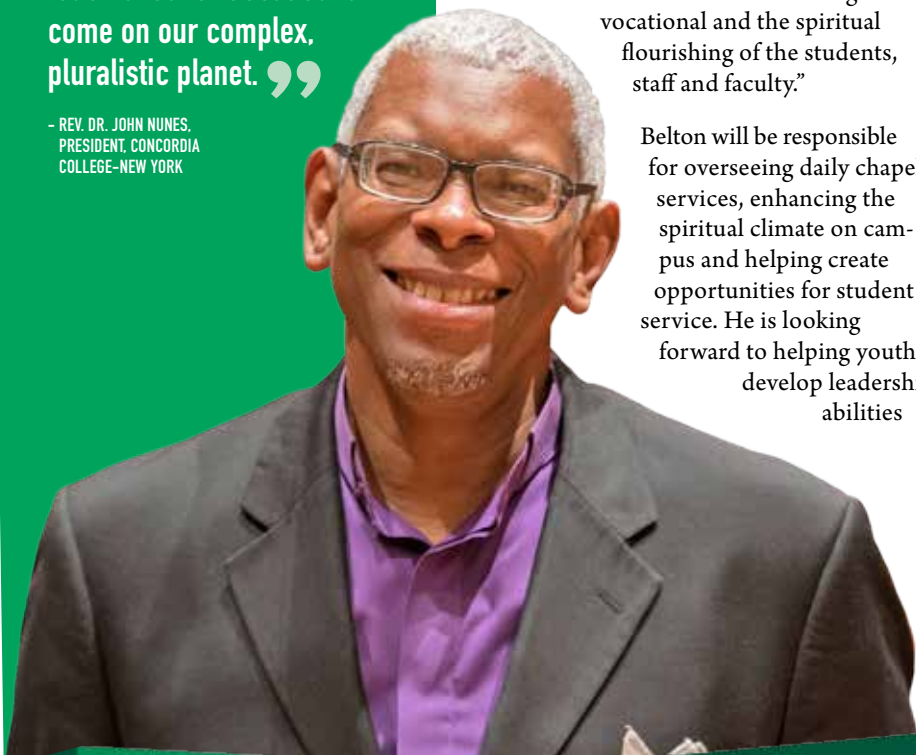


Left photo: Rev. Dr. Victor Belton leads worship at Peace Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ga., where he served for 27 years.

Right photo: Rev. Dr. Victor Belton blesses Sudanese Evangelist Vicar Bafel Paul Deng at Peace Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ga., before his mission trip to South Sudan.

“What a big-impact blessing he will be with the love of Jesus Christ, touching the lives of students in our small school who will be prepared to then touch lives for decades to come on our complex, pluralistic planet.”

— REV. DR. JOHN NUNES,
PRESIDENT, CONCORDIA
COLLEGE–NEW YORK





Black Ministry

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SHARE YOUR STORIES

Please send your articles to Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray, Jr. at roosevelt.gray@lcms.org by the end of the month prior to the respective quarter (i.e., Dec. 31 for the 1st quarter newsletter) so that we can share your news in our next edition.

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COME HOME TO THE BLACK MINISTRY FAMILY CONVOCATION

IT'S NOT TOO LATE!
BIRMINGHAM, ALA., JULY 12–16

“ALL FOR JESUS”
**“Jesus Christ — Know Him,
Confess Him, Serve Him”**

**Celebrating 140 years
of Black Ministry**

— and —

**500 years of God's Grace,
Mercy and Life Together**



Join your family of faith at the LCMS Black Ministry Family Convocation, July 12–16, 2017, in historic Birmingham, Ala. The biennial convocation offers opportunities for worship, Bible study, devotions, fellowship and learning about new ministry outreach practices.

The convocation offers insights for all ages. An exciting calendar of events is set for preteens (grades K–5) and teens (grades 6–12). For younger youth, there will be Bible talks, group games, creative crafts, a service project, movies and a trip to the McWane Science Center. Older teens will hear from LCMS youth leaders and participate in a servant event. They will also visit 16th Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park and the Civil Rights Institute, key sites for the Civil Rights Movement of 1963–65. They will cap their experience with the Saturday Night Youth Explosion led by pastors involved with the national LCMS youth gathering in New Orleans last year.

Keynote speakers for the convocation are the Rev. Dien Ashley Taylor, pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church, The Bronx, N.Y. and first vice president of the LCMS Atlantic District; the Rev. Gregory Seltz, Speaker for The Lutheran Hour; and the

Rev. Dr. John Nunes, president, Concordia College—New York.

Workshops feature leaders from local parishes and the national office who will share their insights on ministries in early childhood education, evangelism, church planting, developing future leaders, building community, reaching ethnic communities, planting Gospel seeds, expanding campus ministry and engaging youth.



ALL FOR JESUS
FAMILY CONVOCATION
- 2017 -

REGISTRATION for adults is \$145;
children 5 and older: \$50 for one child;
\$40 for each additional child; children 4
and under: free (no program available);

LCMS GROUP HOTEL ROOM RATE:
\$119/night at Sheraton Birmingham Hotel,
(205) 324-5000; sheratonbirmingham.com.
(Rate guaranteed only through May 30.)

For registration details: [calendar.lcms.org/
event/2017-black-ministry-family-convocation](http://calendar.lcms.org/event/2017-black-ministry-family-convocation).