We can all share the Good News with our neighbors and others.

The history of Christian vocation has always been centered around the Gospel: reaching others with Christ-centered preaching, teaching, evangelizing and serving. From Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16), to the Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:16–20), we hear the proclamation of Christ and the command to reach all people — at home and around the world — with the Good News of the Gospel.

The mission work of Christ, centered on Word and Sacrament, historically has reached His people through worship and the proclaimed Word, Sunday school, parochial school, vacation Bible school, congregational life and acts of mercy. As pastors, teachers and lay members, we can encourage all believers (1 Peter 2:9) to discover their God-given gifts to serve Him. We can encourage one another to equip the saints for the work of ministry and to build up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, Savior. (Eph. 4:11–13).

More than 140 years ago, the Lutheran Church responded to the Great Commission by reaching out to the African American community. The first African American Lutheran Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church and School in Little Rock, Ark., was founded in 1877. It started with a Sunday school, and grew to a parochial school and congregation that encouraged educators and pastors in vocations of faith and life.

Hundreds of professional church workers came from this systematic process of Sunday schools, parochial schools, VBS, and Word and Sacrament ministry in congregations. On the Alabama mission field, we see clearly how Lutheran schools and churches raised up generations of African American Lutheran pastors and teachers to carry the Good News to others. As members see pastors, educators, deaconesses and other vocations in active evangelism and acts of Christian mercy, they too seek to serve Christ and His church.

As I have been encouraged personally to be a servant, pastor, recruiter, facilitator of mission and ministry in the work of congregations, the Seminary, LCMS districts and Synod, I have encouraged others to seek to serve Christ and His church as pastors, educators and in other Christian vocations. Strong and committed lay leaders also help build the kingdom through their church ministries.

In this edition of our LCMS Black Ministry TimeLine newsletter, you will read about those who have encouraged me and others, and some I have personally encouraged in the mission and ministry of our Christian vocations. These stories show how the church encourages, equips and empowers the work of the Gospel of salvation to all people.

We all can share the Good News with our neighbors and others. We also can help build the kingdom by painting a picture of the wonderful value of encouraging others to serve Christ in the work of Christian vocation, especially through Word and Sacrament. Have you encouraged someone to become a pastor, teacher, deaconess, missionary? Please do. Christ needs you, because the world needs Christ!
Let the Little Children Come: St. Paul, Dallas Opens Christ-Focused Education Center This Fall

The Rev. Byron Williams, Sr., at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Dallas, had a vision for reaching families in need, single parents and the unchurched in the community. His congregation shared his vision and worked together to make it happen. On Aug. 19, they opened St. Paul Christian Academy. The first phase offers Early Childhood Education for infants through four-year-old children and after-school tutoring for students up to age 12.

“We are walking by faith, committing our plans to the Lord (PROV. 16:3) and working hard to serve Christ in our community,” said Pastor Williams. “It’s a new season in the life of St. Paul.”

St. Paul hosted a celebration service Saturday, Aug. 17, “A New Season” (ECCL. 3:1–8), to mark the opening of the Academy. The service was filled with singing, Scripture readings, prayers, liturgical dance, and a message from LCMS Texas District President Rev. Michael Newman, who commended the congregation for its faithfulness.

Preaching on the “new season,” Pastor Newman said, “This is God’s right time — Kairos — for pouring the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the lives of little children. This is kingdom work and it will change the world.”

The “right time” included talented members who could teach and lead, dedicated leadership from the elders, and support from Becca Jones at the Texas District Church Extension Fund (CEF). The Academy’s opening was preceded by years of patient prayer, inspirational preaching, building leaders, expanding mercy ministry and bringing the congregation together to see past obstacles to possibilities.

“We have the right people, the right place and the right plan,” said Pastor Williams, who has kept the vision alive through the years. Before becoming a pastor, Williams was head elder at Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Houston under Pastor Roosevelt Gray, which also had a child development center. In 1996, he graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and received his first call — to Trinity Lutheran in New Orleans.

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Pastor Williams knows about church challenges. Trinity Lutheran Church was in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans and his family had just built a new home.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina besieged the city, the levees failed, and 17 feet of water rushed into his church. “I saw our organ floating down the street,” Rev. Williams said. Heartsick, he returned to his home state of Texas, missing his church family. Later he was called to Dallas — and was delighted to find several of his Trinity members already there.

The pastor credits church leadership with supporting this ministry opportunity, especially congregation president Katari McDonald who never hesitated to embrace the vision and move forward. McDonald was a visitor to St. Paul, where his wife was a member, when Pastor Williams called him one day and asked if he could pray for him.

Academy Director Jean Addison, a New Orleans native and one of Pastor Williams’ Trinity parishioners, took a pay cut to fill the key position of directing the new ministry. She is proud of the members who have volunteered, and those who serve as teachers and staff, bringing decades of educational experience to the ministry. Within a month of opening, there were 31 students enrolled: 19 full time, 1 drop in, 2 part time and 9 before- and after-school students. Ages range from 8 weeks to 4 years during the day and 5–10 years in the before- and after-school programs.

“I love it,” she said. “This is our time and our season to be a beacon of Christ’s light to this community. There are so many children who need someone to care, not just a place to stay.”

“We already see the lives we are touching, for children and single mothers, foster parents and grandparents,” she said. “We are here to listen, pray, teach and serve.”

Lalonni Hagerman, who joined St. Paul after attending VBS as a child, serves as treasurer and all-around helper. “I love singing in the choir and being the treasurer; most of all I like the feeling of being like a family here,” she said. “Our pastor has a way of encouraging people to step out in faith.”

Member Tracy Jackson brought her five grandchildren to the opening celebration. “I’m excited for the community to come see how great this church is,” she said. “I know it first-hand because I just recovered from breast cancer and they lifted me to the Lord in prayer, brought meals, helped with transportation, brought communion and helped in every way.

“We have a great big God; our God gives our pastor a great big vision. We shouldn’t be afraid but be faith-filled and joyful.”

(Continued from p. 2)
ALTHOUGH I WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO DISTRIBUTE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL IN THAT MANNER IT WAS WIDELY ACCEPTED, ... PEOPLE ASKED ME TO CONSIDER PUBLISHING MY DEVOTIONS AND PRAYERS.

A CHILDREN’S MESSAGE CHALLENGE LED TO THE MINISTRY — THE STORY OF REV. JEROME TERRY

A CHURCH ACROSS THE STREET
Lifelong New Orleans resident Jerome Terry has always loved the church. Beginning as a child at Mount Rose Baptist Church, Terry sang in the choir and participated in most church activities.

When he was 14, he visited Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, the oldest black Lutheran Church in the city, which was across the street from his church.

“I obviously heard something which resonated in me that drew me to the Lutheran church. I began to alternate between my Baptist church and the Lutheran church; and some Sundays, I would attend both.”

In 1967, when Terry was 17, his parents purchased a home in the Lower Ninth Ward. Trinity Lutheran Church was three blocks away, so he and his mother went through adult confirmation with Pastor Dan Otto and were both confirmed Feb. 25, 1968, remaining members for decades.

THE INSPIRED CHILDREN’S MESSAGE
Later in the 1980s, his Trinity pastor, Rev. Jimmy McCants, asked him to do the children’s message each Sunday. “In the beginning, I resisted the idea, but he would not relent.

“I eventually agreed to do it, and found I liked it and looked forward to preparing the message each week. I found that the kids, as well as my pastor and adults in Church, were anxious to hear what I would teach each Sunday. I began to do more teaching: I was a youth counselor at Trinity and a Respect-Teen Officer for the local Lutheran Brotherhood Chapter.”

When Pastor Byron Williams was called to Trinity in 1996, he appointed Terry as Sunday School Superintendent. Terry was also elected to the Board of Elders. In March 2001, after consulting with LCMS Southern District President Rev. Orv Mueller, Terry went to Bethel Lutheran to serve as lay leader while completing the Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO) program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (DELTO was replaced in 2007 by the Specific Ministry Pastor program).

Pastor Terry graduated from Concordia Seminary in 2006, a year after Hurricane Katrina, and continues serving today the congregation of Bethel Lutheran. [Trinity Lutheran was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and the failed levees in 2005. Many members and Pastor Williams moved to Texas (see the story on page 2 of this newsletter)].

A Vietnam veteran who served two tours, Rev. Terry has had a varied career. He worked for South Central Bell telephone company, was one of the first blacks working in the local trade union “Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Union Local 60,” and served with the U.S. Postal Service, all while running his wholesale/retail business.

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DAILY I RISE

While working for the Post Office as Information Systems Coordinator, he began posting a prayer each morning over the network.

“It caught on immediately. Although I was not supposed to distribute religious material in that manner it was widely accepted, even by those in authority. The prayer grew into a devotion on the network. Again, it was accepted. I then began do the same on Facebook. People asked me to consider publishing my devotions and prayers.

“After Hurricane Katrina I began again while studying at the seminary in St. Louis to post a daily Scripture, meditation and prayer on Facebook. I also would write a daily devotion which I added to my ever-growing email list which numbered more than 500 people. I kept getting requests to be added to the mailings. Five years later, in 2011, I began composing a devotion to become a book. Each Scripture was selected through my readings on the Bible with meditations and prayers inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit. I wrote the book as an opportunity to share God’s Word with God’s people outside of a brick-and-mortar church.”

When you’ve been in the jungles of Vietnam and the floods of New Orleans, you need a faith that endures outside the brick-and-mortar walls of a church building.

To learn more of Rev. Terry’s story, visit jeromenterry.com. For autographed copies of his book, contact him at iamapreacherman@att.net. Copies are available at Westbow Press, Amazon, and Barnes and Noble, $33 for hardcover and $17.95 for paperback.

When you’ve been in the forests of Vietnam and the floods of New Orleans, you need a faith that survives and thrives outside the brick and mortar buildings.
Gwen Lavalais Marshall grew up a pastor’s daughter and a big city girl, born and raised in the booming city of Philadelphia. Her father, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Lavalais, served St. Philip’s Lutheran, a black LCMS church of 500 members founded in 1917.

Her parents were both from the South (they met when her mother, Elizabeth, was his nurse in an Alabama hospital), and Gwen remembers trips to the Deep South as a child. Every summer, their family drove to Alabama to visit her mother’s people in rural Wilcox County — with an outhouse, a metal tub for a bath, and an icebox — then to her father’s hometown of Mansura, La. Mosquitos, allergies, hot, humid weather and “nothing to do” made it a miserable “vacation.”

When her father was elected 2nd Vice-president of the Synod (in 1971, the first African American elected to a leadership position in the Synod), he applied for a vicar, since he knew the extra traveling would make it difficult to keep up with everything at his large parish.

When the new vicar, Ulmer Marshall, arrived, Gwen didn’t pay much attention. She could tell he was not familiar with city life, a quiet and reserved young man from Buena Vista, Alabama, a town she had never heard of. Besides, her mother had told her years ago to never marry a pastor: The shepherd tended to his flock and was often away from home.

And Gwen was busy: She was studying microbiology at Hahnemann Medical College, working in the finance office at night at Mercy Douglas Hospital and helping keep the home running smoothly for her very busy father. Her mother died when Gwen was just 18, and she eventually transferred from Howard University to Hahnemann to help at home.

Gwen and her friends felt sorry for the small-town vicar, so on rare days off they would show him city life; they also took him to Atlantic City and the beach. A few times — when her father asked — Gwen took Vicar Marshall to the hospital where she worked so he could visit the sick.

The vicar told her about life in his beloved Buena Vista, (Spanish for “Good View”) but she was not interested. Alabama was a state both of her parents had moved away from; in fact, her father, who had served Alabama churches for five years, was the first African American Lutheran called to a pastor a church north of the Mason-Dixon line.

But slowly things changed. The vicar’s kind, gentle spirit, his compassion for the congregation and his love of family — 7 brothers and 3 sisters — attracted the hard-working city gal and they fell in love. All the vicar had to do was drive 1,300 miles to Mansura, La., to get permission from the family matriarch, Mary Lavalais — Rev. Lavalais’ mother. A year later, on June 16, 1973, after Marshall graduated from seminary, Pastor and Gwen were married. They loaded his car, added a small U-haul, and headed to his first call: in Alabama.

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Gwen cried the whole way. The car couldn’t handle the load, so the air conditioning went out. Gwen broke out in hives. But they were headed to beautiful Buena Vista, a place that sounded something like a luxury golf course, so she was comforted by that.

When they turned off a two-lane highway onto a red dirt road — no paved street, no sidewalks, and big water-filled ditches — she asked where they were. “Buena Vista,” Pastor replied.

“You have GOT to be kidding me.”

To Pastor, this was Sweet Home Alabama. They pulled up to the family homestead, a simple wood house with a tin roof, and were greeted by chickens, dogs, and Ulmer Marshall, Sr. That night, sleeping in the front bedroom, Gwen was sure the raucous chorus of crickets and cicadas were going to lift the house off the ground and dump them in the woods. In the morning, Pastor’s dad loudly greeted them with the news that he had caught — and killed — a snake in the hen coop and it was hanging on the fence, if anyone wanted to see.

It was a short visit.

When they finally arrived in Mobile, at Pastor Marshall’s first parish, Trinity Lutheran Church and School, they were greeted by a small unassuming church sitting on a dirt road next to the swamp-like community of Trinity Gardens.

They are now in their 46th year of service to the Trinity congregation and school, which has expanded in size and outreach. It sits on a paved road with a large sanctuary and expanded school in a community its members strive to reach with the Word and deeds of mercy. Rev. Dr. Marshall also serves as pastor at Bethel Lutheran in Spanish Fort. They have one son, Jermaine, and a grandson, Landon, 6.

“I KNEW NOTHING BUT LWML.”

Gwen brings a lifetime of identity with the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League to her newly-elected position as president of the Gulf States District (Alabama, the Mississippi Gulf Coast and the Florida panhandle).

Gwen grew up attending Lutheran Women Missionary League meetings from childhood. “We knew nothing but the LWML,” she said. Wherever their mother went, Gwen and her sister followed, to meetings, retreats, mission projects. “We had no idea anyone thought of it as an ‘old ladies’ society,’” she said. “Our mother was very, very involved, and we were there with her.”

The family mite boxes were faithfully filled at every meal. “Back in those days, families ate together. When we came to the table, we knew to put our change into the mite box. Those boxes stayed pretty heavy.”

It’s no surprise that she became active in the LWML at Trinity, which has become one of the largest in the state. She has served as vice President, secretary, and chairperson of Christian Growth, the Annual Tea fundraiser, the Mother’s Day luncheon and the Annual Prayer Breakfast. She is past president of the Azalea Zone of the LWML and has served on the Board of Directors of the LWML Gulf States District as Zone President and First Vice President. She is also a member of the LWML at Bethel Lutheran Church, Spanish Fort, which her husband has pastored for 35 years.

The Trinity LWML is active and engaged with the community, and with the congregation. It works on several mission outreach projects including the Penelope House for battered women, and raises money for the national mission projects. Its members take dinner to homebound members, sponsor special meals for seniors and mothers, provide school supplies, support children in Trinity’s school, give high school graduation gifts and provide college scholarships, and of course, worked very hard on hosting the LWML 2019 Convention.

“I must say very humbly it was a mountaintop experience to be one of the Host Districts for the Convention to be held in Mobile and for my husband to have been the proclaimer for the opening worship service. To God be the Glory!”

In her early years in Mobile, Gwen fulfilled her promise to her father by completing her bachelor’s degree at the University of South Alabama with a triple major in Biology, Psychology and Sociology. After teaching one year at Trinity’s school, she got a job at AmSouth Bank, where she worked for 30 years, serving as assistant vice president, personnel officer, branch manager, and loan & investment officer. She is an independent sales director with Mary Kay Cosmetics, and has been with the company for 22 years, reaching many sales goals.

As a member of Kiwanis International she was recognized as Kiwanian of the Year in 1995 and has held many leadership positions with Business Networking International. Gwen sings with Trinity’s Gospel choir, serves on the altar guild, and is a youth Bible study teacher. One of her greatest joys is serving on the board of House of Grace, a Christ-centered residential recovery program for women addicted to drugs or alcohol. They also run Hannah House, a drug/alcohol recovery program for addicted expectant females to become drug free before their baby is born. Through this program over 300 babies entered this life healthy and not
addicted to drugs or alcohol.

“I felt such a sense of peace when I first walked onto the campus that I knew this was something I wanted to be involved with,” she said. “No one is turned away and they receive no federal money. Many of them have attended Trinity on Sundays.”

MISSION CONNECTIONS: ROSA YOUNG, MOTHER OF BLACK LUTHERANISM IN ALABAMA

Gwen has deep connections to Lutheran missionary Rosa Young, who was born in 1890 in rural Alabama and helped start over 35 Lutheran churches and 30 schools serving black students.

Gwen’s father — one of 13 black pastors who came out of St. Paul, Mansura, La. — served as circuit rider preaching at several of those church schools from 1938 to 1943, including Good Shepherd, Vineland, Messiah, Bashi, St. Matthew, Arlington, St. Luke, Lamsion and Bethany, Nyland.

Gwen's husband Ulmer grew up in one of Young’s schools, attending St. James Lutheran in beautiful Buena Vista. Rosa Young recalls starting the church-school in her book, *Light in the Dark Belt* (CPH):

“I first went to Buena Vista on August 20, 1916, having been invited there by a man who wanted a Lutheran mission established. I rode in an oxcart with Sister Luella McCants, who had moved from Sedan (a nearby community with St. Andrews Lutheran church-school). The following evening, I spoke to a large crowd. Quite a number expressed the desire to have a mission. After making a second trip, I organized a Lutheran Sunday School and called it St. James.”

Pastor Marshall also attended Alabama Lutheran Academy in Selma where Miss Young was his eighth-grade teacher.

When the rural Alabama families moved to urban areas, they took their love of their Lutheran church and school with them, starting Lutheran churches and schools in Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Pensacola and Mobile. One of those church schools was Trinity, and it is the last school begun through Young’s ministry that is still in operation. That is due to Pastor Marshall’s deep commitment to Christian education and to continuing the legacy of Rosa Young. There are 130 students enrolled in the school and day care ministries.

“Rosa Young was such a humble woman with a devout spirit to bring the light of the gospel to those in spiritual darkness,” Gwen said. “I’m amazed at how passionately she persevered despite great odds against her. Through her faithfulness to the Gospel she brought about a revolution in black ministry through Christian education for our children (and future pastors). We need more Rosa Young’s today.”

In her 46-year marriage, Gwen has learned that her mother was right: The shepherd of the flock is committed to his people, his church, his community and is rarely home. But she cherishes the opportunity to serve alongside the esteemed Rev. Dr. Ulmer Marshall, who has come a long way from the shy vicar in Philadelphia, to leadership positions in the Synod, the St. Louis Seminary and the Southern District and proclaimer of the Word at many national gatherings.

Asked her favorite Bible verse, Gwen says, “That’s easy. Isaiah 40:31: ‘But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.’”

“That’s because we’re always running — to church, to school and out in the community — sharing our love of Jesus.”
LUTHERAN DAY SCHOOL REACHES SECOND GRADER, NOW THE REV. ELSTNER LEWIS

THE CHURCH ACROSS THE STREET

When Elstner Lewis’ family moved to Chicago’s South Side in 1963, the pastor at the nearest church, St. Peter Lutheran, walked across the street and convinced his parents to send him to the Lutheran school.

At the time, the family was not attending church. But Elstner and his mother began attending St. Peter’s and both became members through the evangelism of Pastor Howard Foard.

“My Lutheran education has become the very foundation for my life as a Christian,” he said.

Rev. Lewis serves as pastor at St. Philip Lutheran Church in the Woodlawn community of Chicago, where he was called in 1998. St. Philip is the oldest Lutheran church serving African Americans in the Windy City and was begun in 1924 by Rev. Marmaduke Carter (see the related story in this newsletter).

That same year, when nearby St. Peter Lutheran Church and School closed, many of its members joined St. Philip, where a son of their church was serving in the pulpit.

Rev. Lewis’ journey to the pulpit in some ways began when he was young.

“Quite frankly the Lord started me as a young acolyte, then later as an elder, a lector, then as lay assistant for the pastor, assisting with worship.

“Finally, one morning He woke me up at 4:00 am and I felt His voice telling me to go to the seminary. I told my wife and she agreed (by the way, she never wanted to be a pastor’s wife). We quit our jobs [Lewis had spent 14 years in college admission recruiting and counseling], sold the house, packed up the kids and have never looked back.

“And believe me, we have never been without. Praise His Holy Name!”

Although the membership at St. Philip is not what it was in earlier years, it plays a vital role in proclaiming the Gospel and serving the community.

“We still give God’s love to the community and we get it back,” Rev. Lewis said. “In an area that is changing [due to gentrification] we continue to serve when and however we can. We are older now, but my congregation is of one heart and mind in service to our risen Christ.”

“We are proud of Dr. Carter’s legacy and seek to continue what the Lord gave to him, that is, the love of Christ Jesus for the people of the Woodlawn community of Chicago.”
St. Philip, the first African American Lutheran Church in Chicago, was founded by the Rev. Dr. Marmaduke Carter (March 7, 1881–Oct. 14, 1961) in 1924. The first two years, the congregation worshiped at a local YMCA until funds were raised for a church building.

Rev. Carter, a second-generation Lutheran pastor, was born in Hanover County, Virginia, the oldest of 11 children. Both of his parents were born into slavery. He taught at Immanuel Lutheran in Greensboro, N.C., before arriving in Rosebud, Alabama, in 1917 to serve as a teacher at the “mother church and school” Christ Lutheran. He eventually became its first black pastor; then served Lutheran churches in Possum Bend and Camden and started a ministry outreach in Birmingham.

He left Alabama in 1921 to raise funds for Lutheran Black Missions in the Midwest. When he saw that most Lutherans spoke German, he taught himself to speak German fluently. He continued raising funds for St. Philip by preaching — in German — in churches in Chicago and the area. A theologian and Luther scholar, Pastor Carter owned 25 volumes of Luther’s Works in German.

Rev. Carter had a passion for sharing the Gospel and built his church to more than 500 members. The church has been in continuous use since its founding.

View a history of the church video at: facebook.com/WeAre.StPhilip/videos/875284939151207/
Our Savior Lutheran Church keeps tutoring despite devastating church fire

Tutoring, mentoring, teaching, feeding and reaching out to local students is an important ministry for members of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Indianapolis. So when a fire devastated the historic building in April 2018, causing $1 million in damages, they were committed to keeping their tutoring program going.

Led by Jim Boyd and Pamela Elliott, the program is based on Rebecca’s Garden of Hope Tutoring and Mentoring program founded by Lutheran Sanya Parson in Orlando, Fla. Parson trained congregation members three years ago, and the church ran the first school year tutoring program from Sept. 2016 to May 2017.

More than 30 students from kindergarten through fifth grade are tutored in the program with homework help, grade-appropriate activities, a meal and Bible activities for two and a half hours two nights a week.

Through a partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, located across the street, Our Savior’s tutors include education majors who participate through a college service project. The college also offered classrooms for the program after the church fire.

The church, though small in membership, took on a big project, filling 260 backpacks with school supplies for local students.

This year, after the local Christian academy for which the church was tutoring moved, Our Savior has partnered with Edna Martin Leadership & Legacy Center on the east side of Indianapolis. The center provides transportation to their site for 8–9 elementary schools, including two of the schools many of the scholars from last year attend.

Edna Martin Center will also provide hot meals to the scholars, tutors and volunteers and a designated space for tutoring and Bible activities, including an area for storing tutoring supplies. In addition, the Center provides 12 iPads to assist the tutors in working with students.

Through the fire, Our Savior members developed a stronger and more effective tutoring program, showing that “the Lord provides,” said coordinator Jim Boyd.

To learn more about the fire, read the following news excerpt:

“INDIANAPOLIS — A historic, 70-year-old church caught fire Tuesday morning, leading to about $1 million in damage. At about 9 a.m., Indianapolis Fire Department Firefighters responded to Our Savior Lutheran Church at 261 W. 25th St. The fire was found in the basement. It caused about $1 million in damage, according to IFD.”


Our Savior Lutheran Church in Indianapolis holds a unique place in Indianapolis’ social and religious history, a symbol of racial unity during a period of widespread segregation in Indianapolis, the state, and the nation. Situated on a triangular site at West 25th Street and Boulevard Place on Indy’s mid-north side, the church is also a rare example of a historically black house of worship located in a historically white neighborhood.

(Source: indianalandmarks.org/2018/06/our-savior-lutheran-church-transcends-traditional-division/)
LOOKING FORWARD TO 2020: LCMS BLACK MINISTRY FAMILY CONVOCATION

It’s time for congregations, pastors and youth leaders to mark their calendars for the next LCMS Black Ministry Family Convocation scheduled for July 2020 in Mobile, Ala.

“We are excited about the opportunities and challenges as we prepare for the third decade of this 21st century,” said the Rev. Dr. Roosevelt Gray, director of LCMS Black Ministry. “The challenges are real, but the opportunities are countless, not because of who we are, but, whose we are. ’Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is’ (1 John 3:2).”

The 2020 Convocation will be an opportunity for congregations in Black Ministry to take “ownership” of the triennial gathering. During a meeting of the Black Ministry Think Tank, Black Clergy Caucus and the director of LCMS Black Ministry this fall in Memphis, it was decided that the convocations should be run by and promoted solely by congregations in Black Ministry. Therefore, this 2020 Convocation will be supported by congregations and members in Black Ministry.

Congregations and districts are encouraged to support the gathering of LCMS members in Black Ministry, as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Office National Mission continues our partnership through the director of Black Ministry as advisor and advocate for LCMS Black Ministry.

Local leadership will be provided by Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Mobile, and the Rev. Dr. Ulmer Marshall.

The pastors meeting in Memphis developed a mission vision around five critical values:

- REVITALIZATION
- RECRUITMENT
- COMMUNICATION
- OWNERSHIP
- MINISTRY FOCUS FOR 21ST CENTURY BLACK MINISTRY

These mission values will be used to strategize work in the coming years.

Read more about the work of the Think Tank here: blogs.lcms.org/2019/black-ministry-think-tank-meets-in-memphis/.