

The Voice of Renewal

NEWSLETTER OF LUTHERAN LAY RENEWAL OF AMERICA

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

Celebrating 52 Years!

March, A.D. 2024

LUTHERAN LAY RENEWAL CHANNEL ON YOUTUBE

Thanks to generous funding by one of our board members, we now have some short videos on YouTube. Just click on the links below to watch and find out more about our ministry, and please give us a "Like":

LLRA in the U.S. - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RfXq0HuerI&t=79s>

Lutheran Lay Renewal in Uganda- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVU2uNsJPek>

Teaching Lutherans to Fish - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7bKT0eFsLY&t=5s>

Yesu Angonza (Jesus Loves Me) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCuIkqo1IqM>

A new video will be coming soon on the Lutheran Lay Renewal of America Channel.

RETREAT AT KEMENZU LUTHERAN CHURCH, UGANDA

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, thanks be to God for his ministry you are doing. I give great thanks to God for his majesty and love towards the teaching yesterday on 30th January. Everything was fine and I prepared the teaching of youth, those who are preparing to go back to school, including the ministry there with their fellow youth.

In the midst I had also the elders, those who were very sick also attended and they gave testimony according to how God has healed them, it was through his love and mercy. Mostly my aim was to teach the youth to live in a spiritual life and spiritually transformed, and that our salvation comes through God's grace; it's a gift from God that we accept by faith. To the elders, I let them know what God said to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, that his grace is sufficient to everyone and his power is made perfect in our weakness.

We must live in the spiritual life and we must resist the temptation to serve God in our own way, our own power and our own wisdom. And we mostly must be open to minister in God's way, by God's power and wisdom.

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I thank you Bill and the board of Lutheran Lay Renewal for trusting me with your notes and giving me a chance to teach God's salvation to everyone. I appreciate and I hope even me as a leader, with the people I teach, that our lives have through these notes been blessed. I welcome the opportunity to lead this retreat again, as the community they were very happy to have this teaching. Thanks and may God bless you abundantly.

Your Brother in Christ,
Vicar Abigaba Edison
Kemenzu Lutheran Church
Midwestern Deanery, Lutheran Church of Uganda

SUPPORT FOR NAIGOBYA, KYABAZAALA AND MAGAMAGA LUTHERAN SCHOOLS

In February Lutheran Lay Renewal was able to provide funding for three schools in the Eastern Deanery of the Lutheran Church of Uganda. Funds sent to Naigobya Lutheran Nursery and Primary School were for the purchase of desks and chairs for the students. Previously the students had been sitting on benches and there were not even enough benches to seat all of the children (see photo below). We also provided funding to purchase tables and chairs for the teachers and office, as well as textbooks for teachers and students at Naigobya and also Kyabazaala Lutheran Nursery and Primary School. The lack of text books has been a major concern for a while.



Students at Naigobya Lutheran Nursery and Primary School prior to our donation

Lutheran Lay Renewal also provided funding for roofing for the new Magamaga Lutheran Secondary School classroom building and the girls' dormitory. Our Executive Director visited this school last year while it was under construction.



The girls' dormitory (foreground) and classroom building (background)



Some of the girls in the new dormitory

LEARN FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL HOW IMPORTANT THE SPIRIT IS

In his letters Paul referred to the Spirit 143 times. He referred to being "in Christ" 82 times. The centrality of justification by grace through faith has been recognized by many over the centuries as central to his theology. Yet several current exegetical scholars have concluded that "Paul's doctrine of the Spirit is far more central and characteristic than his doctrine of justification by faith."

In Paul's usage Christ and His Spirit are interchangeable. In my book *How to Spot the Spirit's Work in Your Life* footnote 36 cites nine instances where the same function is attributed to Christ and also to the Holy Spirit. Several are: We are consecrated in Christ; we are consecrated in the Holy Spirit. We are righteous in Christ; we are righteous in the Holy Spirit; we are righteous in both. We have life through Christ; we have life through the Holy Spirit.

In Paul's thinking Christ and the Spirit are two sides of the same coin describing God's presence today. We have a member of our church who designed and distributes a half-dollar sized coin with a cross on one side and a dove on the other. This coin is available by emailing kevincoin@gmail.com.

Look at the cross to be thankful we don't get what in our sinfulness we deserve. Look at the dove and be thankful we do get what we don't deserve. By grace (*charis*), Christ suffered the condemnation we deserve for our sinfulness. By grace (*charismata*) we get the spiritual fruit we don't deserve. The root for both kinds of grace is *chara*, which means joy. We are saved by grace to live by grace—joyfully.

Here are some of the passages that represent the centrality of the Spirit in Paul's thinking?

- Those who live by the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. Romans 8:5
- The mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. Romans 8:6
- You are controlled by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. Romans 8:9
- If by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13
- The Spirit helps us in our weakness. Romans 8:26
- I speak the truth in Christ—my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit. Romans 9:1
- We are ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Corinthians 3: 6
- Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 2 Corinthians 3: 17
- And we who reflect the Lord's glory are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3: 18
- I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Ephesians 3: 26

I don't recall over my many years of Lutheranism ever hearing reference to how we are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the

Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18). Paul, too, like Luther, anticipated what we now call the stage theory of faith development, a progression driven by the Spirit. The Rev. David Luecke, Ph.D. – *Dr. Luecke is a member of our Board of Directors*

OUR PARTNERS IN AFRICA NEED OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The financial needs of our partners in Africa are great, as Uganda and Rwanda are two of the 25 poorest countries in the world. Below is a wish list of current financial needs. Would you or your congregation be willing to help?

Lutheran Church of Uganda

\$100 will pay the salary of a nurse at Niagobya Medical Clinic for one month.
\$355 will pay the salaries of 6 teachers plus the principal at a Lutheran primary school for one month
\$1,500 will buy a motorcycle for a pastor or vicar. At least three motorcycles are needed. Many pastors and vicars serving rural congregations must walk long distances every week to minister to their congregations.

Triangular Communities – Iganga, Uganda

Vision: To see all children and girls enter adulthood with holistic skills and abilities necessary to contribute effectively to the development of Uganda.

Josiah Youth and Child Care Center – Ibanda, Uganda

Josiah Youth and Child Care Africa is dedicated to nurturing the potential of youth by providing a diverse range of educational, skill-building, and mentorship programs. Guided by our core values, we aim to foster personal growth, inspire leadership, and create a supportive environment where each individual can thrive.

REFORMED LUTHERAN CHURCH OF RWANDA

Funds are needed to build a church building for the Lutheran congregation in Ntoma, which currently is using a rental house. "Please, we need to build our own church building in Ntoma. Your prayers for the work of God in Rwanda will continue to be a blessing. Adult members are 120, and the total believers including youth and children are over 300." - Pastor Jean Claude Maniragaba, President, Reformed Lutheran Church of Rwanda

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

SCHEDULED EVENTS

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| April 27 | Spiritual Transformation Retreat Christ the Shepherd Lutheran Church, Schoharie, New York Rev. Colleen Quirion, Pastor Bill Oehlschlager, Retreat Leader |
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Does your congregation need a spiritual boost? Maybe it's time to schedule a retreat or a renewal weekend. Call our office or check our website for details.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Healing for Elaine Schomaker, Julie, Dan and Kathie Klueg
- For the Lord's blessings on our ministry in the U.S., Uganda and Rwanda, and for the financial resources that are needed for this ministry

Lutheran Lay Renewal of America is eligible to receive Choice Dollars Grant Funds from the Thrivent Financial Choice Dollars program. We are grateful to Thrivent Financial, and those individuals who designate their Choice Dollars to us, for their support of LLRA and its ministry!

Lutheran Lay Renewal of America is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization and depends on contributions from churches and individuals who have benefited from our ministry to help us continue to bring this ministry to more and more congregations all across America - and also in Uganda and Rwanda!

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



Students at the new Magamaga Lutheran Secondary School in Uganda