

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 53 Years!

March, A.D. 2025

LUTHERAN LAY RENEWAL RETURNS TO UGANDA



Bishop Amos Magezi, clergy and spouses of the Diocese of Northwest Ankole at the retreat

Our Executive Director traveled to Uganda In January, spending nearly four weeks there, leading retreats and renewal conferences for Lutherans and Anglicans, as well as visiting with many congregations and church leaders. The first stop was St. Paul's Cathedral, Ibanda, for a 2-day retreat January 16-17 for diocesan clergy and spouses.

"As the Diocese of Northwest Ankole, we began the year 2025 in style and renewed. The retreat was unique in its only way, where a total 126 clergy and spouses got a chance to be away from home to gather and have time together. On this note I would like to thank Lutheran Lay Renewal of America for funding the retreat, it was worth having. The retreat was focused on the Seven Lessons for Living a Spiritual Life. These lessons were so relevant to us and our ministry callings, where God had called us in full time ministry. On this note I would like to thank our facilitator of the retreat, Bill, who allowed God to use him to really explain the lessons, and with clear examples, that made the retreat meaningful. During the retreat, after every lesson, we had group discussions to share our experiences in small groups. This gave everyone a chance to speak and share their mind about a particular lesson. We also heard a few people share with the entire group, and I want to really thank God for the testimonies that were shared. In testimonies you would see that there was a great impact, especially when we would open up and also give life stories on how God has challenged and sustained us over the years in ministry." – Rev. Kuruka Amutuhaire, Youth Ministry Coordinator, Diocese of Northwest Ankole

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RENEWAL CONFERENCE IN BUHWEJU

On January 18 our Executive Director traveled with Rev. Moses Ahimbisibwe to Kyahenda, Buhweju District, to lead a one-day Renewal Conference. This is a very remote area in the beautiful highlands of Southwestern Uganda, not far from the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. The Lutheran Church of Uganda has planted six congregations in this district and all are currently being served by either an evangelist or seminarian. About 140 people attended the conference, most walking several miles to get to Kyahenda.



Our Executive Director and a team of seminarians and evangelists pray for the needs of those who attended the conference

"Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. On behalf of Trinity Lutheran Church in Buhweju, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to you, facilitator Oehlschlager, Executive Director Lutheran Lay Renewal of America , for teaching us on Christian Renewal on 18th January, 2025.

We deeply appreciated your engaging teaching, enriched by your life experiences and interactive approach. Your stories, your prayers and encouragement inspired us to grow spiritually. Your guidance on how we can live a Christian life. We also cherish the brotherly manner in which you interacted with us, making our ministry living experience truly enriching.

Please extend our warm greetings to your family, as well as your congregation. May God abundantly reward your dedication and continued support.

Thank you again for your selfless service. May God bless you always."

Yours in Christ,
Vicar Ngabirano Godwin

RENEWAL CONFERENCE IN IBANDA

A 3-day Renewal Conference was held at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Ibanda from January 20-22. The first two days our Executive Director took the clergy and lay leaders through our Renewal Weekend program and the third day taught 7 Lessons for Living the Spiritual Life. Those who were present were honored to have Lutheran Church of Uganda Presiding Bishop Charles Bameka open the conference.



Presiding Bishop Charles Bameka opens the conference with Rev. Humphrey Asimwe assisting



Clergy and lay leaders from all over the Southwestern Deanery attended the conference

FROM THE LCU NATIONAL HEAD OF LAITY

"Accept our heartfelt appreciation for having funded the Lutheran Lay Renewal Conferences and Retreats in Southwestern Deanery of the Lutheran Church of Uganda. I witnessed the Spirit working through the teaching about forgiveness. The teaching made almost all participants to realize that failing to forgive or keeping a grudge in one's heart is like keeping an atomic bomb that can explode at any moment leading to self-destruction without harming the person you hate.

I witnessed some saints shedding tears as they got delivered from bondage of unforgiveness, some publicly confessing while others coming forward to be prayed for. Bearing in mind that in African culture, Moses's law of a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye is encouraged, the teaching on forgiveness was timely and relevant. I pray that renewal conferences and retreats be extended to other places within the deanery and beyond."

Fred Magezi
National Head of Laity
Lutheran Church of Uganda

GROUNDBREAKING AT HANGA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Two years ago, after our Executive Director visited with Rev. Raymond Kaija, Dean of the LCU Midwestern Deanery, Lutheran Lay Renewal provided the funds to purchase an acre of land for Hanga Lutheran Church in Hoima District. Hanga is an extremely poor village, with many people being refugees from other countries. This year we are providing the funds to build a church for this congregation and a groundbreaking ceremony was held on Sunday, January 26, led by Rev. Kaija. There is a brick kiln on the land, where the congregation has been making bricks for the building project. The congregation is very excited to have its own church building, which should be finished later this year.



Rev. Raymond Kaija (R in blue jacket) leads prayers at the groundbreaking ceremony

RUSOLERA LUTHERAN CHURCH, KAKUMIRO DISTRICT

January 27-29 a 3-day Renewal Conference was held at Rusolera Lutheran Church, Kakumiro District, for the six Lutheran congregations in this district. Rusolera congregation has its own land but not the funds to build a church, so the event was held on the church property under tents, which were donated by Mrs. Robinah Nabbanja, Prime Minister of Uganda, who is a native of Kakumiro District. Prime Minister Nabbanja also sent her greetings to all the attendees through two district government leaders, who also spoke to the gathering.



Participants sit under the tents provided by Prime Minister Mrs. Robinah Nabbanja



Group photo at the close of the conference

"The participants were from different congregation of the Lutheran Church of Uganda and other community members within Kakumiro, Kikuube, Hoima, and Masindi Districts. Other participants were drawn from other religious denominations: Anglican, Roman Catholic and Pentecostal churches. In total, the training was attended to by 77 people, both males

and females, youth and children. The three days training was aimed at fostering spiritual renewal for the Christians within and around the area.

As the Midwestern Deanery under the LCU, we are so thankful and appreciative for the tremendous support to God's people! We pray that the Lord will continue empowering Lutheran Lay Renewal of America to continue with the spiritual renewal of his people in Uganda. We are so much looking to have this same conference take place in another district of Kikuube where we have refugees and six newly planted churches." – Rev. Raymond Kaija, Dean, Midwestern Deanery

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF UGANDA, EASTERN DEANERY

In the Eastern Deanery, our Executive Director spent two days visiting many congregations in the deanery, as well as the Naigobya Health Clinic which we have been supporting financially for six years. In addition, he led another 3-day Renewal Conference for church leaders in the deanery. This conference was held at Our Savior Lutheran Secondary School, Magamaga, and also included dozens of students from the school.



Renewal Conference at Our Savior Lutheran Secondary School

Dear Rev. Maganda,

Thank you for inviting me to be among the participants who attended the Lutheran Lay Renewal Conference. As a student at Our Savior Lutheran Secondary School, I enjoyed the lessons taught, especially I learned how I would be supportive in the church when I go back home at the end of every term. After the conference, I shared with my fellow students in my class (Senior Three Class) who missed what we learned, and I continue to share with many students here at school using the materials the conference provided. I will be also sharing with my parents about the responsibilities they ought to play in the church and at home. I pray one time you will come and talk to my parents about church as well. Yours sincerely, Rebecca Nakangu

Does your congregation need a spiritual boost? Are your people in need of deeper spirituality and understanding? Maybe it's time to schedule one of our retreats, a workshop or renewal weekend. Call our office or check our website for details and informational flyers!

SCHEDULED EVENTS

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| March 1 | Seven Lessons for Living the Spiritual Life Retreat St. Luke's Lutheran Church Saxonburg, PA |
| March 22 | Seven Lessons for Living the Spiritual Life Retreat Zion Lutheran Church Chicora, PA |
| May 4 | Sharing Your Faith Workshop Grace Lutheran Church Jackson Center, OH Revs. Bert & Shelly Schultz, Pastors |

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

\$4,500 will pay for all the annual expenses at Naigobya Health Clinic on the grounds of Naigobya Lutheran Church and School. This clinic serves the people of five remote villages in Eastern Uganda.

\$355 will pay the salaries of 6 teachers & the principal at a primary school for 1 month. Due to poverty in these areas, we are providing support as we are able for both Naigobya and Kyabazaala Lutheran Nursery and Primary Schools.

Diocese of Northwest Ankole, (Anglican) Church of Uganda

"We are looking for partners to work with us to address the matters of education, health, food security, household income, clean water, sanitation, hygiene and afforestation. We, therefore, request a partnership in any of these matters, especially assisting the youth and children to attain education so that they might be released from poverty and ignorance." – The Rt. Rev. Amos Magezi, Bishop

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

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.

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.

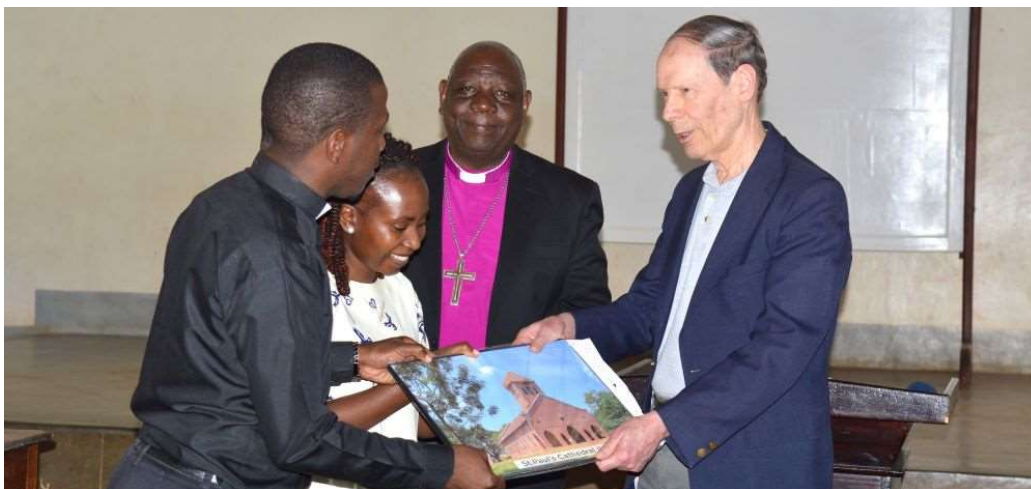
PRAYER REQUESTS

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

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 (tax ID#35-2442848) and depends on contributions from churches, and individuals, that 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!

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(L-R) Rev. Kuruka and Brenda Amutuhaire and Bishop Amos Magezi present Bill Oehlschlager with a gift at the close of the diocesan Clergy and Spouse Retreat