

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!

May, A.D. 2025

GROUNDBREAKING AT OJEBURUN LUTHERAN CHURCH, UGANDA



Presiding Bishop Charles Bameka (R) and Rev. Peter Maganda break ground

On Wednesday, May 16, Lutheran Church of Uganda Presiding Bishop Charles Bameka and Eastern Deanery Dean, Rev. Peter Maganda, held a groundbreaking service at Ojeburun Lutheran Church. Two years ago Lutheran Lay Renewal provided the funds to purchase land for this remote congregation in Serere District and this year LLR is providing the funds to construct the first Lutheran church in this area. Construction is scheduled to begin soon and the congregation already has been accumulating bricks for the project, but more funds are needed. Local leaders are very happy and excited to soon have their own building, which is sure to be the center of this community. LCU church leaders also have encouraged the congregation to start a primary school when the building is completed, as the nearest school is now too far away for younger children to walk there.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Congregation members celebrate the groundbreaking with Bishop Bameka and Dean Maganda



Bricks awaiting construction near the large mango tree, under which worship and other congregational activities are now held

DISASTER RELIEF IN BUHWEJU DISTRICT, UGANDA

In early March our office received the following email from Vicar Godwin Ngabarino in Buhweju District: "I am writing to inform you of a devastating rainstorm that recently hit our village leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. The storm which occurred on Monday 3rd March, 2025 brought with it strong winds and heavy rainfall that caused widespread damage to our community. Unfortunately, our banana and coffee plantations, which are a

vital source of livelihood for many of our congregants, were totally destroyed. The strong winds and heavy rainfall uprooted the banana and coffee plants, leaving them in a state of ruin. This has not only affected the livelihood of our congregants but also threatens their food security. Furthermore, the storm also caused significant damage to the houses in our community, many of the houses were dismantled, my temporary house inclusive. This has created a humanitarian crisis, with many of our congregants in urgent need of assistance."



Crop damage caused by a severe storm

LCU leaders in the Southwestern Deanery visited Buhweju District and coordinated the response. Lutheran Lay Renewal provided funds that were used to repair some homes, one belonging to an elderly widow, as well as funds to provide food for people whose crops were destroyed.



Food delivered to Buhweju by deanery leaders

UPDATE FROM HANGA

Construction is proceeding rapidly on the church building for Hanga Lutheran Church in the LCU Midwestern Deanery. This project also is being funded by Lutheran Lay Renewal.



Hanga Lutheran Church construction on April 29

CONSTRUCTION OF TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, KYAHENDA

In January our Executive Director led a one-day renewal conference at Trinity Lutheran Church, Kyahenda in the LCU Southwestern Deanery. Kyahenda is a very remote place in the highlands of Buhweju District and people from six congregations in this district attended the conference. A member of this congregation donated some of his own land for the building of a church and Lutheran Lay Renewal is providing funding for the project, which is now under way.



Construction is under way in Kyahenda

SPRING RETREATS AND A WORKSHOP

On Saturday, March 1, **St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Saxonburg, PA** hosted our 7 Lessons for Living the Spiritual Life/10 Stops on the Road to Transformation Retreat. "The retreat that we had at St Luke's was enlightening and reminded us that God works through our weaknesses. God wants our availability and He will do the rest. Obedience is the key. Forgiveness is necessary. Be silent before God and listen to Him speak. Praise and prayer are also of the utmost importance." - Susan Beatty

Zion Lutheran Church, Concord Township, PA hosted the same retreat on Saturday, March 22 and **Grace Lutheran Church, Jackson Center, OH** hosted a Sharing Your Faith workshop on Sunday, May 4. "Thank you. We enjoyed your visit. Thanks also for your dedication in serving our Lord Jesus in so many ways of sharing Jesus and equipping and renewing lay people for life and the ministries they are called to participate in." - Pastor Bert Schultz

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!

"I was impressed by the Spiritual Transformation Retreat held for my congregation put on by Lutheran Lay Renewal. It was well organized, informal and actually a lot of fun. I was particularly interested in the focus upon the spiritual life of the laity. The first session, 7 Lessons for Living the Spiritual Life, was upbeat and easy to apply to the normal everyday Christian's spiritual life. I highly recommend this half day retreat for any congregation that is hungry to walk closer to the most exciting person ever to exist, our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ." - Pastor John Kulczycki, Saint Matthew Lutheran Church, Baltimore, MD

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

Martin Luther Evangelical 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, Martin Luther Evangelical 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 for the financial resources that are needed for this ministry to continue to grow and flourish
- Additional funding so that we can soon be able to lead renewal conferences in Kenya, where Lutherans are requesting our help

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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