



Grace of God Lutheran, Millsboro, Del.—shown here at worship and receiving pledges during a recent stewardship campaign—is one of two congregations to be officially received at this year’s synod assembly.

Assembly celebrates reception of two congregations

This is not something you see every day,” said Bishop Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane when announcing that two new congregations were to be received into membership in the Delaware-Maryland Synod during its 2011 assembly, June 2-4 at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center in Ocean City under the theme “God’s Work. Our Hands: Stewards of God’s Good Creation.”

Indeed! The last time the synod celebrated the reception of a mission congregation was in 2004, when People’s Community Lutheran, Baltimore, was received. Now it is the turn of Joy Reigns Lutheran, a mission congregation in Edgewater, Md., that began in 2003, and Grace of God Lutheran, Millsboro, Del., under development since 2005.

Joy Reigns organized as a full-fledged ELCA congregation on April 3 and called mission developer Barbara “Nikki” Parrish as its first pastor. Likewise, as this issue of “FaithLines” went to press, Grace of God was to meet on May 15 to organize and call its mission developer, Judith Moller-Gavlick, as its first pastor. Both congregations were started with financial support from the synod and ELCA churchwide.

Other highlights of the assembly include:

- A keynote address on the assembly theme of stewardship by noted theologian and author Mark Allan Powell and two Bible study sessions led by Marty Stevens of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (Pa.).
- Worship experiences in various styles, including jazz vespers and a youth-led service, with sermons by the Rev. Stephen Bouman, executive director of ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission; Linda Chinnia, assistant the bishop; and our bishop.
- Budget hearings, reports and recommendations from the bishop,

Synod Council, mission teams and task forces. Keith Mundy will be the official ELCA churchwide representative to the assembly.

- A “Gospel Shop Bookstore” and workshops by Powell, Kati Kluckman-Ault, Mundy and Kim Winchell that will cover such topics as “Stewardship and Mission,” “Stewardship 101” and “Stewardship of Creation.” □

Joy Reigns Lutheran Church, Edgewater, Md., is well known for its contemporary worship band. Here, children try out their musical abilities and make a joyful noise unto the Lord.



Delaware-Maryland

Members of the Coalition of Lutherans Advancing in Mission Executive Board gather at St. Mark Lutheran Church, Baltimore. Front row, from left: Marian Gayle; Mydea Karpeh; Jennifer Arnold, CLAIM coordinator; Lucy Holman; and Lois Errickson. Back row: Angie Ellis; Cory Cobb; Jack Roeder; John Carter, board chair; and Linda Chinnia, assistant to the bishop.



CLAIM-ing Baltimore for Christ

ELCA congregations in metropolitan Baltimore are joining forces in a new synod mission table called the Coalition of Lutherans Advancing in Mission (CLAIM). It seeks to foster collaboration and collegiality among rostered leaders, empower and equip lay leaders, strengthen congregations in witness and outreach, and provide a forum for making decisions closest

to the point of ministry.

In February, rostered leaders and laypeople met to launch CLAIM at St. Mark Lutheran Church, Baltimore. Attendees gathered for a liturgy of lessons, carols and prayers, followed by the installation of the executive board. Later, breakout sessions were held for each of CLAIM's five committees: rostered leadership, lay leadership,

congregations, ministry resources and community partnerships.

CLAIM's board has hit the ground running with joint advertising for Easter services, an investigation of collective purchasing agreements for supplies and services, and plans for a Lutheran Heritage Event this summer.

For more information about CLAIM, visit [www.demdsynod.org/Mission Through Congregations/CLAIM Mission Table](http://www.demdsynod.org/MissionThroughCongregations/CLAIMMissionTable). □

St. John's plans Pentecost revival

Revivals may be an unfamiliar phenomenon to many Lutherans in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, but to Meheret Caruthers they were a regular part of her church experience growing up in Ethiopia.

Now serving as an intern at St. John's Lutheran Church (Pimlico), Baltimore, the seminarian at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (Pa.) said congregations of the Ethiopian Evangelical [Lutheran] Church Mekane Yesus typically had as many as four revivals a year, which serve as an opportunity for spiritual renewal among parishioners as well as outreach to new members.

As many as 4,000 people would attend the outdoor events, which involved three days of singing, prayers and preaching, she said. They were typically held in small towns

and rural villages.

As part of her internship project, she hopes to bring this experience to the inner city context of St. John's. With a grant from the ELCA, Caruthers is planning a three-day revival at St. John's on June 10-12, culminating with a festival service on Pentecost Sunday.

Referring to the book of Acts, Gregg Knepp, pastor of St. John's, said, "We pray that the Holy Spirit will move among God's people in the same way it blew on that first Pentecost."

Knepp said St. John's had plans for an evangelism emphasis for 2011, which included its first revival. "We had received a 2011 partnership grant in the amount of \$10,000 from ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission for a major

evangelism training and ministry in the congregation," Knepp said. "Upon her arrival, Meheret was excited to take on this task as her internship project and to help lead the congregation's outreach efforts."

"If this is successful, we hope it can be a model for other Lutheran congregations in their outreach and evangelism efforts throughout the synod," he said.

The tent-style revival will include guest preachers, choirs, free hot dogs, a community health fair and flea market.

Part of the preparation includes creating postcards to be mailed to 6,000 households in the neighborhood, as well as preparing parishioners for monthly door-to-door canvassing to invite neighbors to be part of the celebration. □

Faith at home and on the road

What are you doing this summer?" is a common question for people of all ages. "What are you doing to deepen your family's faith this summer?" isn't quite as common, but it is an important question. With time off from school and work and a welcome break from routine, summertime offers many possibilities for families to grow in faith together.

If you are going on vacation this summer, think about how it can be a time of Sabbath rest for your family. It's tempting to pack a trip away from home with places to go and things to see. But vacation time can give your whole family a chance to slow down and be renewed by spending time with each other and with God. So before summer gets into full swing, take a moment to discuss with your family how you can weave faith into your adventures. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

First, talk about how you want to spend your Sabbath time overall. Do you want to be plugged into your iPod, cellphone or laptop during your vacation or days off at home? This goes for kids and adults, of course. Or would you rather have some time

away from your electronic leashes? Talking about this ahead of time and agreeing to how much you'll be "roughing it" without your computers, cellphones and other gadgets are first steps toward finding rest and renewal as a family.

If you are traveling on vacation or staying home, summer can be a good time to start a routine for devotions. You could let your child choose a devotional book and start each day of your vacation with a short reading and prayer. Another option is to read a story every night together from a children's Bible. You could also take your Bible outside, read a verse to your family and have quiet prayer time in God's creation, either by the light of the sunrise on the beach or under the stars in your backyard.

When you visit relatives or friends during the summer, look for opportunities for them to join in your family's faith activities. If you're spending time at grandpa and grandma's house, find out if their church offers vacation Bible school. Just imagine the joy on those grandparents' faces when they get to see their out-of-town grandchildren sing in their con-

gregation's Bible school program.

A trip to see your child's godparents is another wonderful way to deepen relationships between your children and the caring adults who help them grow in faith. Bring a scrapbook from your child's school year or pictures of your baby's milestones to share with their godparents. Talk about how God has been active in your lives since you last saw each other.

Congregational mission trips, family camping trips and the many offerings at Mar-Lu-Ridge (see page D) are also wonderful ways for people of all ages to deepen their faith in the company of their brothers and sisters in Christ. You can also use Sunday mornings while you're out of town to worship in new settings as a family. Children will pick up on differences between worship services back home and the ones you visit. Be sure to talk about the service afterward. You might be surprised at what they notice as you experience worship as guests.

After all of the bags are packed, or the tent is set up in the backyard, or other preparations are complete for your summer adventures, remember to begin your time with God's word and prayer. As you prepare to go on the road as a family, get your faith ready for the road as well. Psalm 121 is a great text to read aloud before you leave home. Remind yourselves and your children that "the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" (verse 8).

Have someone in the family pray aloud for safe travel, refreshing Sabbath time and growth in faith through all the roads you travel this summer. □

*The Rev. Paige G. Evers
Evers is a member of Reformation Lutheran Church, Milford, Del.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF RODGER THOMAS

New to service

Three deacons were set apart for service in the Order of St. Stephen, Deacon (OSSD) during a festive liturgy in March at Epiphany Lutheran Church, Baltimore. Richard Apfel was called as a chaplain at Fort McHenry; Doug Wittich is deacon of Epiphany; and Robin Schaefer is the visitation and hospitality minister at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Lansdowne. From left: Apfel; Bishop Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane; Wittich; Schaefer; Robin Simpson Litton, OSSD chaplain; and Gail Wilson, archdeacon for the order.



Mar-Lu Ridge offers something for everyone



This cross stands near the Mar-Lu Ridge Chapel, overlooking the mountain valley and the Potomac River.

Each year, Mar-Lu-Ridge serves thousands of children and adults who enjoy this peaceful camp and retreat center in the Catoctin Mountains of central Maryland. Since 1959, it has been our privilege to carry out our mission statement: We welcome all people to a mountaintop experience of Christian community that changes lives, makes disciples, builds friendships and encourages care of God’s creation.

All are welcome. A variety of programming helps assure that people find what they are seeking from the experience. We are accredited by the American Camp Association.

The heart of our ministry is our seven-week Summer Camp. This year’s curriculum is titled “Jesus Chooses Us,” and we will explore what it means to be a chosen servant of the Lord. Staff members will lead campers in daily Bible studies. These young people are gifted to make the lessons and stories current and relatable for all campers.

We spend the majority of the week outside— swimming, large group games, ice cream socials, nature hikes, campfires and group-building.

Programming is offered to campers ages 6 to 17, and service projects and leadership opportunities help them realize their full potential as children of God. Our older campers can serve in the field as we begin our Mountain Outreach program this year. We will visit places such as SERRV, local shelters and

the National Lutheran Home. For adventurous souls, we offer canoeing, rock climbing, biking, white water rafting and more. Our popular day camp allows working parents the flexibility they need and a safe environment for children. Adults and families can spend time enjoying MLR as well—there truly is something for everyone!

It’s a joy to welcome people to our mountain home. Visit www.mar-lu-ridge.org or call 800-238-9974 for more information. We are here to serve you—come join us! □

Sarah Lefler

Lefler is executive director of Mar-Lu Ridge Camp and Retreat Center.

Mark your calendars:

Building on the tradition of the “Partners in Faith - Partners in Vision (PIF-PIV)” events, the Delaware-Maryland Synod will offer three identical daylong lay leadership events this fall to explore what it means for every ELCA member to be a missionary. Dubbed “Partners 2.0: Re-Tooling for Mission,” each training day runs from 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.:

- Nov. 5, Trinity, Hagerstown, Md.
- Nov. 12, St. Andrew, Dover, Del.
- Nov. 19, St. John, Parkville, Md.

News briefs

Retirement community planned

National Lutheran Communities & Services announced plans for The Village at Crystal Springs, a new continuing care retirement community in Annapolis, Md. Pending state and city approvals, phased construction will begin in 2012. The village, to be developed along Forest Drive and Spa Road, will include residence apartments and one-story private and duplex homes for seniors, with a complete range of on-site holistic wellness and continuum of care medical services, including skilled nursing, assisted living and memory care.

LOPP becomes MEOPP

After the Lutheran Office of Public Policy closed in 2010 due to budget cuts, Bishop Wolfgang D. Herz-Lane approached our ecumenical partners to explore whether this important work of being the church in the public arena could continue. As a result, the Maryland Ecumenical Office of Public Policy (MEOPP) began its work on Feb. 15. Sponsored by the Delaware-Maryland and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., synods, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland and the Central Atlantic Conference of the United Church of Christ, MEOPP contracted with Shelley Franklin, an attorney from Millersville, to work as the part-time advocate in Annapolis. She will provide reports to the judicatories on the proposed death penalty repeal and immigration issues.