

**Thursday, December 3, 2009—12:00 noon**

**Saint Luke Lutheran Church  
9100 Colesville Road at Dale Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20910**

***“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”***

**ADVENT IN WORD, ART AND SONG**

Our program for December 3 is a change of pace from our usual format. The staff of Saint Luke: the Rev. Connie A. Miller, senior pastor; Ruth Manchester, Parish Nurse / Director of Caring Ministries and Art Historian; and Dr. Jeffrey Pannebaker, Director of the Music Ministry, together will present, *“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light,”* ADVENT IN WORD, ART AND SONG.

We thank Pastor Miller and the staff of Saint Luke for their imaginative approach to observing this penitential season of the year and pray that it will deepen our knowledge of Him in whom “the Word was made flesh.”

**MAKE A WINTER BOX FOR A RESIDENT OF FELLOWSHIP SQUARE**

Some of the 800 residents of our Fellowship Houses do not receive a gift during the holiday season. You can provide a gift by putting together a winter box! Just find a shoe box-type plastic container and fill it with the following items: a sheet of stamps and stationery; tea and soup mix; Dove body wash; magnetic notepad and pen; a new kitchen towel; sugar-free candy or cookies; a grocery gift card.

Wrap a colorful bow around the box and bring it to the December LLF meeting. For questions, please contact Faye Codding at 703-471-5370 or [fcodding@fellowshipsquare.org](mailto:fcodding@fellowshipsquare.org). Your gift, or a donation of \$20, will bring a smile to someone in need.

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We invite all Lutherans and their friends to join us for this luncheon meeting of **Lutheran Lay Fellowship**, scheduled for the first Thursday of each month from 12:00 noon till 2:00 p.m. at Saint Luke Lutheran Church, 9100 Colesville Road at Dale Drive in Silver Spring, one mile south of the Capitol Beltway at Exit 30. Ample off-street parking is available. Interested persons can make reservations for a delicious lunch by contacting **Vicki Porter at VICKI.PORTER@Long andfoster.com** or **301-229-9884** no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, December 1**. The cost of the luncheon is \$9.00, payable at the door.

**FUTURE SPEAKERS FOR LLF LUNCHEONS**

**January 7:** The Rev. Wolfgang Herz – Lane on, *“Being the Church in a Post-Christian World”*

**LUTHERAN LAY FELLOWSHIP  
LUNCHEON MEETING  
November 5, 2009**

Our meeting began with a prayer led by Pastor Ralph Wiechmann.

**Announcements**

Bob Sargeant thanked Dan Bella for leading the ushering at the Reformation Service, October 25, at the National Cathedral, attended by 658 worshipers. The Rev. Dr. Gemechus Desta Buba, Director for African National Ministries, ELCA preached and the choirs of Lenoir-Rhyne University and Oromo Evangelical Church of Washington provided special music. [Dan expresses his thanks to the following who served as ushers (an asterisk denotes an LLF member): Alice Benson\*, Mike Boerger, Charles Fortson, Chuck Herbert, Bill Huck, Judith Koucky\*, Dave Lambert\*, Robert Luoma, Mack Ott, Bob and Amy Pearsall, Bob and Nellie Plitt, John Priebe\*, Bob Sargeant\*, Jim Stevens, and Ellie Wegener\* with Dan Bella\* as usher coordinator.]

Larry Schmidt acknowledged receipt of over \$3000 so far in support for the 1-2-3 fund for the chaplaincy (pray, contribute more, ask friends to participate) and offered additional copies of the letter for those who might have lost theirs or didn't receive one and would like to contribute.

Bob led the November Birthdays celebration for Phyllis Fredericks, November 2<sup>nd</sup>; Ellen Medboe, November 9<sup>th</sup>; Martin Luther, November 10<sup>th</sup>; Gretchen Corbin, November 27<sup>th</sup>.

Bonnie Priebe mentioned that on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the Rev. Carol Howard Merritt, author of Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation will be speaking at King of Kings, Fairfax, VA and that Bonnie and John will be taking a tour of Turkey in April 2010 with info provided on each table for those who might be interested in joining it.

**Speaker Notes**

**The Rev. Ralph Wiechmann  
Associate Pastor, Our Savior's Way, Ashburn, VA  
[RevWiech@aol.com](mailto:RevWiech@aol.com)**

***“Forty-seven Years Doing the Same Thing—  
Or Was It the Same Thing?”***

Rev. Ralph Wiechmann is a long-time pastoral figure in the Washington, DC region. Born in Ellensburg, Washington, he grew up in Freistadt, Wisconsin, insulated from the real world and constantly working or studying. Pastor Wiechmann graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1962. That summer he began as mission church developer for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Springfield and served there 40 years. In 1997 he switched roles with the Associate Pastor. Since 2002, he has served as Associate Pastor at Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church in Ashburn. Over the years, Pastor Wiechmann has served on the Southeastern District, LCMS Board of Directors and Secretary of the District and on many other boards and committees. He has been a Circuit Counselor since 1994. Pastor Wiechmann lamented that he forgot to bring his props including beanie babies: Grace, Hope and Halo which he recommended everyone get to help illustrate their message to others. Another good symbol is giving out TIC TACs illustrating the saying: *Trust in Christ Through all Conflict (TICTAC)*.

Our speaker asked the group a rhetorical question: “what is our faith like today compared to 47 years ago?”. He started the then mission church, Prince of Peace in Springfield, VA, sponsored by St. John's Lutheran Church in Alexandria, VA. There were only 400 homes in that area initially with no growth for a couple of years but he hung in there and the church continued to grow until it is one of the largest in the

district. The critical things haven't changed in 47 years: the devil is still at work and thriving in a world with some saints and more sinners that need Jesus. One big surprise for him has been the constancy of change including how we communicate now with such things as Facebook and texting becoming important. He quoted Dr. Wayne Dyer of PBS: "When you change the way you look at a thing, the thing you look at changes". One change needed to avoid hurting the church is instead of the "majoring in minors" or making mountains out of molehills; to instead say "I may be wrong, let's talk or you may be right, let's talk". Another potential conflict is setting up worship for a new congregation (contemporary, traditional, etc.); where is the loyalty to the Gospel instead of voting with our feet.

Pastor Wiechmann asked everyone to fill out a questionnaire with four questions for discussion:

1. Something in your faith life that made you happy: he shared his most theological spiritual moment was the birth and baptisms of his children, and he recommended we ask to baptize our own children or grandchildren.;

2. Something in your faith life that made you sad. We are getting better and better at the "blame game" in which both words end with me. He cited Cassius from Julius Caesar "the fault is not in the stars, but in us"; and Pogo "we have met the enemy and they is us". WIIIFM (what is in it for me) society. It's sad when we play the blame game and thus water down or negate the Gospel.

3. A change in the church that was positive; understanding our society better, with naming and identifying the various "generations" of our time; then developing a strategy to meet the unique needs of each generation with the Gospel.

4. A change in the church that made you angry. His most angry moment was when his wife started teaching confirmation and five families left his mission church because they thought only pastors and men should teach confirmation. Most recently it is the lack of communication and fellowship between the various Lutheran denominations as well as the clergy being satisfied with the status quo.

Growing up in Wisconsin Pastor Wiechmann had never experienced racism so when he did in Virginia , he walked with Martin Luther King in his walk on Washington to oppose it. He has subsequently marched on other issues such as the March for Life and the Poor People's March showing that he was not satisfied with the status quo. Currently 20% of Lutheran Churches are growing. Those 20% have 50% of the Lutheran Church population and average at least 200 in church on a Sunday. The other 80% average 80 in attendance on a Sunday morning.

The hardest thing for him in 47 years of ministry has been to bury children. The only thing you have at a time like that is the Gospel: the Beatitudes in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount remind us that you are blessed even when you don't feel like it because you have the Gospel. His favorite chapter of the Bible is Romans 8. He recommended each Lutheran Laymen's Fellowship meeting begin and end with someone speaking about a faith sharing moment in the last month. What has not changed is the need to share the Gospel and he cited Rom 1:16 "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."

The joys of 47 years of ministry have been incredible and the greatest privilege has been to be a parish pastor. He provided a handout called the Cornerstone Factor Inventory for churches to consider in developing their mission statements.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rodney Smith

## LLF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

The Executive Committee of Lutheran Lay Fellowship announces the following schedule of meetings for its 2009 – 2010 year: December 3; March 4; May 6; and July 1. All meetings are scheduled at Saint Luke.

### INTERESTED IN LLF MEMBERSHIP?

Dues for annual memberships with Lutheran Lay Fellowship are \$25/year. If interested, please write to our Treasurer, Linda Everett at 104 Forbes Street, Suite 205, Annapolis, MD 21401.

### WHAT IS THE LUTHERAN LAY FELLOWSHIP?

*"As early as 1936, feeling there was a definite need for closer cooperation between Lutheran laity and clergy, a group of laymen in the Washington, DC. Metropolitan area, organized to hold meetings that would bring pastors and laity closer together. Due to jurisdictional differences as well as ministerial difficulties, very little success was achieved until the fall of 1941. Then the group met and decided to hold a luncheon once a month, invite their friends and bring visitors. The first luncheon was a success, and within three months every Lutheran judicatory was represented..."* [From a **Lutheran Directory of Metropolitan Washington, DC**, published in 1999.]

Today, more than 70 years later, the Lutheran Lay Fellowship of Metropolitan Washington takes pride in knowing that every night, 365 nights each year, more than 700 low income seniors and disabled persons live in safety and friendship in four high rises owned and managed by Fellowship Square Foundation, Inc. By means of annual scholarships and grants, LLF also supports various college and seminary students, as well as Lutheran congregations seeking to establish new services or projects. But most of all, LLF is known far and wide as a place to hear stimulating speakers on timely topics and to make friends from other Lutheran congregations---friendships that last for decades!

Won't you join us?