

LUTHERAN LAY FELLOWSHIP OF
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, INC.

Thursday, September 2, 2010—12:00 noon

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

***"Our Story and Yours:
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Our Members."***

**The Rev. Orval H. Cullen, Financial Associate
Mid-Atlantic Region, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans**

The Rev. Orval H. Cullen has over 35 years of serving the church, both as an ordained Lutheran pastor and for the past 20 years as a Financial Representative with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Orv's deep passion for the church and for helping members of the church live joyful, generous lives is what drives his work. Orv will lead a presentation entitled *"Our Story and Yours: Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Our Members."*

The presentation will focus on helping the attendees understand how as a faith-based, not-for-profit membership organization, Thrivent Financial continues to serve the needs of our members, the church and the community while also being one of the strongest financial services organizations in the country.

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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 sending your RSVP to luncheon@lutheranlayfellowship.org or by contacting **Vicki Porter at 301-229-9884** no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, August 31**. The cost of the meal is \$9.00, payable at the door.

Upcoming Speakers

October 7 Mr. Frank McGovern, Executive Director, National Lutheran Home

December 2 The Rev. Thomas O'Brien on his recent trip to Tanzania

LLF Luncheon Minutes Thursday, August 5, 2010

Our meeting began with a devotion and prayer led by Pastor David Berg using Valjean from Les Miserables as a example. The only element that is truly imperishable is the saving blood of Jesus.

Announcements

First time attendees recognized included David and Liesl Stach, Mamadou Sy, Adrien Ngodeankame, and Cleophas Tsokodayi. Birthdays and Anniversaries celebrated included: Liesl Stach, 30 Aug; Ray Hartzell, 16 Aug; Dan Bella, 8 Aug. Bernell and Lola Boehm, 55th Anniversary.

Bob Sargeant wished everyone a wonderful summer and asked everyone to let me know if there was any problem providing the newsletter electronically and, if not, he will declare it complete. He mentioned that he is available to talk about health care reform and the benefits now available on behalf of AARP.

Bob asked Rodney Smith to say a few words about the article in the Lutheran Laymen newspaper on the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Rodney described the effort of Lutheran Hour Ministries to get representatives to speak at CFC organization fairs following its acceptance as a sponsored organization. Rodney also mentioned the resources available at lhm.org and the results of the latest convention including a wonderful sermon by Pastor Ken Klaus on the effect of political correctness on Christianity,

Dan Bella presented the annual \$1500 scholarship award for 2010 to Liesl Stach. She expressed her appreciation and will use it to go to Roanoke College in Virginia to major in English and especially composition. Ultimately she hopes to write Christian books for youth.

Ellie Wegener asked for assistance in inviting those who haven't rejoined LLF to do so and reiterated the Capitol Hill Career Support Group is still available and needs job referrals. Leslie Bergmann also has a lovely efficiency apartment available by the harbor so let her know of any interest.

Welcoming the Stranger at the Gate: the Current Climate of Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.

Mamadou Sy, Director of Refugee and Immigrant Services (RIS) Lutheran Social Services, National Capital Area. Mamadou Sy is the Director of Refugee and Immigrant Services (RIS) for Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Region (LSS/NCA). He has also been appointed by Gov. Martin O'Malley to sit on the MD Board of African Affairs. Originally from Mauritania in West Africa, he escaped with his family to a refugee camp at the age of 14. He is currently finishing the PhD dissertation he started before being forced to leave Mauritania a second time.

Suppose you had two minutes to decide what you would pack in a bag before you had to flee your country? Or, have you ever thought of how many "refugees" are mentioned in the Bible? Every year, LSS is proud to welcome hundreds of refugees from around the world to the U.S. From the moment a new family arrives at the airport, its staff is at the gate waiting to provide guidance and encouragement. While each family's story is different, their collective dreams are the same: to rebuild their lives in America and regain a sense of security after years of strife. LSS supports its clients during this important transition by mobilizing community partners and offering a comprehensive range of services to newcomers.

Mr. Sy emphasized the history of the Lutheran Social Services coming together in support of refugees to the U.S. especially since WWII. The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program is for any person who is

outside any country the person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which a person last habitually resided. The person must be considered unable or unwilling to return to his or her country, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Individuals granted refugee status overseas by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security are brought here for resettlement by the U.S. Department of State. The DOS contracts with 11 nonprofit agencies to work on refugee resettlement.

Since the first wave of Vietnamese families arrived in the 1970s, LSS has been resettling federally approved refugees in partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. Families receive intensive case management and cultural orientation from a trained staff of diverse professionals. With the support of generous volunteers and local partners, LSS helps individuals regain their independence.

After refugees flee from persecution based on religion, politics, nationality or religion, they either wait in refugee camps; repatriate to their country (very few); granted refugee status in host country; or are resettled in a third country (less than 1%). At any moment, there are more than 15 million refugees around the world displaced because of war or civil unrest. Although people wait for the events to be resolved so they may return home, the reality is most families remain in refugee camps for years. Their survival relies as much on the resources provided from the international community, as it does on their individual determination to endure their most difficult journey in life. Fortunately, for a small percentage of families, the U.S. provides an alternative. In partnership with the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, the U.S. offers people the freedom to start a new life through the country's refugee resettlement program. Since 1975, the U.S. has resettled over 3 million refugees, with annual admissions figures ranging from a high of 207,116 in 1980 to a low of 27,119 in 2002. The average number admitted annually since 1980 is 98,000. 2008 Global Trends included: 42 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, including 15.2 million refugees, 827,000 asylum-seekers (pending cases), 26 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 88,800 of these were resettled to a third country.

Since the program was established in the late 1970s in alliance with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), LLS staff has helped thousands of families begin new lives in the greater Washington, DC area and Baltimore city. Similar to a compass, its staff and volunteers direct newcomers to appropriate community resources while empowering people to become active members of their new communities. In return, refugees enrich our neighborhoods with their skills, diversity and courage. He described the complex resettlement path within the U.S. which includes a weekly meeting to determine how many can come in that week. Prominent refugees have included Albert Einstein, Dr. Henry Kissinger and Madeleine Albright. Immigrants have a choice to return home but refugees do not in most cases. Refugee Protection Act of 2010 is being considered which would eliminate the one year asylum filing deadline, remove some barriers to prompt review and protect them from inappropriate exclusion by refining the definition of "terrorist activity". We can help by volunteering, mentoring, donating and advocating.

Adrien from the Congo mentioned he has members of his church who need help with assistance since even with pro bono lawyers there has been no progress. Mamadou responded that the Congo is a particularly hard problem since they can't seem to resolve their internal conflicts thus creating continuous movement of people.

During the Q&A, Mamadou described how he went to work for Lutheran Social Services after learning English when he was given asylum. There are lots of refugees from Kenya, Tanzania recently and most refugee camps are near borders of already poor countries so some people lose their ties to their native countries including languages. Children are particularly affected, which further hinders repatriation. He

recommended we let the refugees speak first about their experiences in getting to know them; some people prefer to talk about what happened to them and some people do not want to discuss it.

Respectfully submitted:
Rodney Smith

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; it also provides ushering services for major inter-Lutheran events. 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?