

LUTHERAN LAY FELLOWSHIP OF  
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, INC.

**Thursday, December 2, 2010—12:00 noon**

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

***“Why We Went to Tanzania”***

**The Rev. Thomas O’Brien  
Pastor, Good Samaritan Lutheran Church  
Lanham, Maryland**

December’s speaker comes to us with a varied and most interesting background.

Born the oldest of eight children in an Irish Catholic family in Willingboro, NJ, the Rev. Thomas M. O’Brien, Jr. graduated from a Roman Catholic school and, two years later, received an Associate’s degree in Electronics Technology. He then served four years in the US Navy aboard the USS Independence aircraft carrier as an Electronics Technician. Afterwards, he received degrees in business administration and business management from Mercer County Community College and Trenton State College.

From 1972 to 2003, Tom O’Brien worked for Public Service Electric and Gas Company in a management position and retired from that position in order to fulfill his lifelong dream of becoming an ordained pastor. Tom, his wife Dolores and sons Mark and Thomas had become Lutherans in 1986 and became very active in the ministries at St. Luke Lutheran Church in Willingboro.

After much discernment, he entered the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and graduated with his Masters in Divinity in 2005. After serving a church in Haddonfield, NJ, he was called to Good Samaritan Lutheran in Lanham, MD, where he has been since February 2006.

An active member of GILA (Greenbelt Interfaith Leadership Association), he also serves on the Metro DC Synod Council and has served as the secretary of the Maryland Conference.

Tom and his wife Dolores have traveled extensively and have made two trips to Africa as well as hosting several pastors from Namibia and Tanzania. He is affiliated with several non-profit organizations including the Marianne Foundation for the Poor, which services people in Haiti and the Shina Inc. organization that does ministry in Tanzania, Zanzibar and Pemba.

Tom and Dolores are planning to celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary next year on the island of Malta where they met in 1970. They have two sons, 35 and 31, and a grandson, Tommy, 2½.

## LUTHERAN LAY FELLOWSHIP MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 4, 2010-12:00 noon



*(left-to right)* Guest speaker  
The Reverend. Elizabeth A. Platz  
with LLF President Bob "Sarge" Sargeant

**The Rev. Elizabeth A. Platz**  
*Chaplain, Lutheran Campus Ministry  
University of Maryland at College Park*

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Platz is the first Lutheran woman to be ordained in the Western hemisphere. After graduating from Chatham College and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, this Pittsburgh native was ordained on November 22, 1970 by the Rev. Dr. Paul M. Orso of the Maryland Synod, Lutheran Church in America at a special service at the Chapel at the University of Maryland.

Our meeting began with a devotion and prayer led by Pastor Platz. The devotion was based on one of her favorite passages:

Luke 1:39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be 1 a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

The elder and younger woman turned over their lives to God, visited together and helped bring the Good News to us.

## **Announcements**

First time attendees recognized included Edith Fezie.

Birthday celebrated was Vicki Porter, 8 Nov. and anniversary celebrated was Scott Mills on 10 Nov.

Sarge asked everyone to renew their membership on line if possible but will have forms at the next meeting.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1133 Reston Ave, Herndon, VA 20170 is hosting the Fellowship Square 50th Anniversary celebration banquet on November 14th. Invitations were offered to all attendees.

Summer Parish, Lutheran Social Services/National Capital Region (LSS/NCA), mentioned their Winter Clothing Drive for the hundreds of refugees they are helping who arrive in the US with scarce resources and little experience with cold winters. Their goal is to collect enough new or gently used blankets, clothes and coats for 200 refugees. Someone from LSS/NCA will come to the next meeting to collect items.

Dan Bella covered LLF usher support to the National Cathedral Reformation service and noted that the LLF scholarship awardee, Liesl Stach, sang in the choir. For details, see Reformation Service article later in this newsletter.

## **Presentation**

"Generation to Generation"  
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Platz, Chaplain  
Lutheran Campus Ministry  
University of Maryland at College Park  
lutheran@umd.edu :

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Platz was the first Lutheran woman to be ordained in the Western hemisphere. After graduating from Chatham College and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, this Pittsburgh native was ordained on November 22, 1970 by the Rev. Dr. Paul M. Orso of the Maryland Synod, Lutheran Church in America at a special service at the Chapel at the University of Maryland. Forty years later, Pastor Platz continues to serve as campus pastor and has made her mark in a large variety of ways on the University's campus, in the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod and especially in the areas of worship and higher education in the church at large. Pastor Platz has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors. In 1984, she was honored by her Lutheran Campus Ministry colleagues with the NLCM Distinguished Service Award. In 1990 she was the first recipient of the Samuel Simon Schmucker Award, given by the Board of Directors to a member of the clergy for distinguished service to church and community. In 1995 she was named Distinguished Alumna of the Seminary. She was honored as the UMCP Outstanding Woman of the Year for 1995 for her work with the CARing Project, the Center for Young Children and

the Emergency Loan Fund. In 1998, she was made an honorary Brother of Alpha Phi Omega. Epsilon Mu Chapter for her work with the CARing Project. She was elected to ODK in 2000. In 2005 she received the Hess-Pearson Award from Campus Ministry for her service to the Lutheran Student Movement.

We were pleased that on the 40th anniversary month of her ordination, Rev. Platz joined us and presented the following: She has been the Lutheran chaplain at the University of Maryland since 1965 and is working with her ninth president of the university. She went to a women's college where she developed an interest in theology and was encouraged to enroll at a seminary. She was accepted at Gettysburg Seminary but they thought she was there for Christian Education rather than ministry but it was resolved. She completed her studies but did not want to be ordained. No pastor would accept her for internship so she went to a university. She served at the University of Maryland for five years as a lay chaplain. No church would call her so she stayed at Maryland. It became clear to her that she needed to be ordained to fulfill her call by God. The Lutheran Church of America voted in 1970 to allow the ordination of women and she was ordained. She noticed an immediate change in how people treated her since she was now a pastor and the respect for the pastoral office. There have been many ups and downs with women in the ministry, hers was relatively easy since her bishop supported her and she was not upsetting a congregation. She did receive some hate mail. There have been some differences in the emphasis of women clergy over the years, whether a WOMEN pastor or a women PASTOR. Those women who came immediately after her were particularly challenged. She was told to remember that it was the church who ordained her not herself. Pantsuits were revolutionary and women wearing pants were seen by some men as women trying to take control. She has had ten students go to the seminary and only one was a women, even though the student population is about equal. Her students now do not really understand that there were times when there weren't women pastors. Most Lutheran woman students are now in the hard sciences rather than education.

The biggest joy for her is when she comes to the altar for the liturgy and the Grace of God takes over and the next is the students. The student body has evolved from a university for everyone to those who are excellent students interested in the hard sciences who live in 15 minute periods (high energy and high stress). To help relieve the stress and pressure for the students UMD has just dedicated a \$500,000 garden for meditation which is also called a sacred place, interesting for a state school. Lutheran Campus Ministry has an after school program for elementary students two days a week utilizing 50 volunteers. They also have a back pack program, warm coat program and a monthly service project for the University students to participate in. They have used Thrivent funds in the past but not since the system changed. She has done some interim pastor work but felt she was not suited to be a parish pastor because of the difficulty in getting decisions made in a timely manner. She believes there needs to be appropriate mutual respect between pastor and parishioners and openness to understanding. In closing she invited everyone to contact her next year when their garden is completed to experience it.

One of the women pastors who she mentored, Wendy Moen, expressed her appreciation for Reverend Platz leading the way for pastors who are female.

### **The 2010 Lutheran Reformation Service**

A Reformation Sunday Worship Service was held 4:00pm Sunday, October 31, at the Washington National Cathedral by the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod, ELCA.

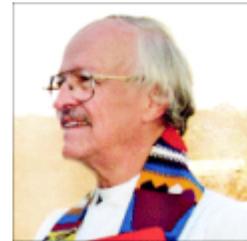
The sermon, "Fit for Freedom", was preached by The Rev. Michael Cooper-White, President of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Special music was provided by the Roanoke College Choir which included our scholarship awardee, Liesl Stach. The offering from the 345 worshipers has been designated for the Lutheran theological education in the United States.

LLF provided the ushering service (acknowledged in the service bulletin) as it has traditionally done for the past several years. Many THANKS to the following 16 who volunteered toward this effort: Mike Boerger; Christine Dennis; Charles Fortson; Bill Huck; Judith Koucky\*; Dave Lambert\*; Norm Larsen\*; Robert Luoma; Bob & Nellie Plitt; Bonnie\* & John\* Priebe; Bob Sargeant\*; Sue Schmidt\*; and Katherine Telleen with Dan Bella\* as usher coordinator. *(Asterisk [\*] indicates LLF member.)*

### **Death of Bill Wegener**

On Monday, October 18, 2010, William Ernest Wegener of McLean, VA. Survived by wife Ellie of 52 years; daughters, Diane and Katie; sons-in-law, Ron Paras and Rob Cavallaro; and grandchildren, Anna and Will. A Memorial Service was held on Saturday, October 30, 2010, 11 a.m. at Georgetown Lutheran Church, 1556 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, DC (202-337-9070). In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in his name to Georgetown Lutheran Church, The Wegener Chaplaincy, and The Georgetown Ministry Center for the Homeless.

Condolences may be made at: [www.rappfuneral.com](http://www.rappfuneral.com)



The Reverend  
William E.  
Wegener

Reverend Larry Schmidt reviewed Bill Wegener's memorial service and his impact on the Lutheran Laymen's Fellowship and read a poem from the service bulletin.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rodney Smith

# UNEMPLOYED?

IT HAPPENS TO ALL OF US

## **The Capitol Hill Career Support Group**

Offers Helpful, Compassionate &  
Practical Sharing



Every Monday Evening 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
First Trinity Lutheran Church  
309 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

At front of church, door on left, ring bell on left.  
Come up two flights to library to join group.

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1556 Wisconsin Ave. NW  
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## Lutheran Social Services Winter Clothing Drive

Each year, Lutheran Social Services helps welcome and resettle hundreds of refugees, many of whom arrive in the US with scarce resources and little experience with cold winters! This year, you can help keep them warm and cared for by contributing to or volunteering in our winter clothing drive.

Our goal is to provide warm clothes, coats and blankets for 200 refugees of all ages. Items will be collected in both Maryland and Virginia until the end of November. We will gratefully accept new or clean, gently used coats, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks and blankets.



### Drop-off Northern VA

Mon.-Fri. 9:30 am-5 pm  
7401 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22043

### Drop-off Maryland

Tues OR Thurs. ONLY 9:30 am-5pm  
8700 Georgia Ave., NW, Ste. 500  
Silver Spring, MD 20190

For more information, contact Sarah Rossing: [RossingS@lssnca.org](mailto:RossingS@lssnca.org) or 703.698.5026x113

*Photo from: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/22824323@N04/4157208632/>*