

**Thursday, November 5, 2009—12:00 noon**

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

**The Rev. Ralph Wiechmann  
Associate Pastor, Our Savior's Way, Ashburn, VA**

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

On November 5, our Lutheran Lay Fellowship welcomes a long-time pastoral figure in the Washington, DC region. The Rev. Ralph Wiechmann will address us on the subject of, *“Forty-Seven Years Doing the Same Thing—Or Was It the Same Thing?”*

Born in Ellenburg, Washington, Pastor Wiechmann graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1962. That summer he began as developer for Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Springfield and served there 40 years. At that time 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.

We welcome this Washington veteran to our meeting and hope that you will join us for a stimulating talk and discussion.

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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 **VICKLPORTER@Longandfoster.com** or **301-229-9884** no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 3**. The cost of the luncheon is \$9.00, payable at the door.

#### **FUTURE SPEAKERS FOR LLF LUNCHEONS**

**December 3:** The Rev. Connie Miller, Saint Luke Lutheran Church, Silver Spring

**LUTHERAN LAY FELLOWSHIP  
LUNCHEON MEETING  
October 1, 2009**

Our meeting began with a devotion and prayer led by Rev. Bill Wegener.

**Announcements**

Bob Sargeant presented a check for \$1320 to Pastor Phil Hirsch for development of the Belmont Ridge congregation by Dax Jordan in Loudoun County. He presented two checks to Faye Codding, Fellowship Square Foundation: \$480 to Chaplain's Fund and \$355 to Good Samaritan Fund. Faye announced that Fellowship Square is looking for winter gifts for dental work, gift cards or winter gift boxes for residents.

Larry Schmidt requested support for the 1-2-3 fund for the chaplaincy (pray, contribute more, ask friends to participate) and will confirm by mail.

We celebrated October birthdays for Martin Bell, 1<sup>st</sup>; John Priebe, 11<sup>th</sup>; Summer Parrish, 21<sup>st</sup>; Tom Knoll, 25<sup>th</sup>.

First time visitors were Esther and Rev. John Mueller, Pastor Lawrence Nshombo, Amos Lwankomezu and Hermas Malingumu. The last three are in the Bukoba Choir from Tanzania, touring at Good Samaritan, Lanham.

Rev. Ray and Mary Hartzell have returned to the LLF after 25 years out of the area.

Bill Wegener announced that Georgetown Lutheran Church is celebrating its 240<sup>th</sup> anniversary this month.

Dan Bella reported that he will be needing ushers for the Reformation Service at the National Cathedral November 1st. Please call Dan at (301) 949-5317 if you can serve in this capacity.

**Speaker Notes**

**The Rev. Tom Knoll  
Pastor, First Trinity Lutheran Church, Washington, DC**

*“Can We Make Our Churches More Friendly to Visitors”*

Rev. Tom Knoll is a graduate of Concordia College, Milwaukee, and Concordia Senior College, Ft. Wayne IN. He received a BA in Psychology/Sociology and Theology in 1977. In 1981 he received a Masters in Divinity from Christ Seminary-Seminex, in St. Louis, MO, with a special emphasis on Urban Ministry. In 1982 he received a Masters in Social Work with a special emphasis on Community Development from St. Louis University.

Reverend Knoll is a licensed and board certified social worker and was the Executive Director of Community Life Services, a parish-based social service ministry, from 1982-2002. Currently he on the Pastoral staff of First Trinity Lutheran Church in Washington D.C. He has also served parishes in North St. Louis, and Bogota, New Jersey.

Currently Reverend Knoll is a Board Member of Capital Area Asset Building Corp.; Trinity Landholding Corporation; New Course Restaurant & Catering; and the Urban Alliance. He is a clergy member of the Washington Metropolitan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and a member of the Downtown Cluster of Churches in Washington, D.C. Rev. Knoll has served on the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness and is a frequent speaker on poverty and homelessness issues.

Our speaker asked several folks in the audience how they were first greeted at the church they are currently attending. Most could remember the detailed experience even more than 50 years later, illustrating the importance of that first experience to them and by extrapolation to others. He then provided several biblical references supporting his theological reflections on welcoming the visitor.

Gen 18:3 *He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. 4 Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5 Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way — now that you have come to your servant."*

Luke 9:51 *As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; 53 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. 54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" 55 But Jesus turned and rebuked them, 56 and they went to another village.*

Gen 19:1 *The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. 2 "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." 3 But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.*

Heb 13:1 *Keep on loving each other as brothers. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*

At his church, First Trinity, members greet anyone who is new in a special way since that person will always remember that first experience. Each one is greeted by a personal contact (care minister) who obtains contact information for a follow-up on a 4x5 prayer request card with plenty of room to write on a clipboard, prays for that visitor and follows up on Saturday. Everyone in the congregation is invited to stay after church for fellowship, even if it is just for 5 minutes, and it is during this time that the visitor can be introduced particularly to other people with common interests.

Rev. Knoll then played portions of a DVD by Richard Liedtke with the following key points: The power of remembering someone's name, the most valuable thing you can get from a person is that person's name, for name equals friend, which equals influence. Key characteristics of a greeter are: a passion for the lost; love for people; a pen and paper in hand to write the visitor's name; prays for the people; and is persistently on duty. The system works, if you work the system.

First Trinity now puts its advertising resources into its website (<http://firsttrinitydc.org/>) since no visitors or current members ever acknowledged coming because of the newspaper or yellow pages ads but did recognize the website. The congregation does local activities/projects and one international project a year to which the pastor goes in order that he can get to know the participants. As a result First Trinity has a younger congregation including leadership, e.g. their congregational president has only been a member two years. Members take visitors to a free lunch once a month inviting everyone who visited First Trinity during the previous month along with one or two members of the congregation. This even has become one of the most memorable events for new members and their assimilation. He recommended the following greeting as a way to avoid insulting someone who may already have been there before or even be a lapsed member: *"Hi, my name is .....and I haven't seen you before."*

Rev. Knoll stated that because we live in a culture where 50+% have never been to church, visitors often are not comfortable. He recommended we visit other churches that we are unfamiliar with in order to understand the feelings that a church visitor would have and he encouraged us to share that experience with our home congregation and pastor.

He concluded with the Great Commission: Matt 28:19: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Treating our visitors with dignity and hospitality is the easiest way we can fulfill the Great Commission.

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 schedule at Saint Luke.

### 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?