

LUTHERAN LAY FELLOWSHIP OF  
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

**Thursday, July 1, 2010—12:00 noon**

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

***“Evangelism Is Not a Four-Letter Word”***

**Deaconess Sally J. Hiller  
Executive Director for Congregation Outreach and District Operations  
Southeastern District, Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod**

On July 1, Lutheran Lay Fellowship welcomes Deaconess Sally J. Hiller, Executive Director for Congregational Outreach and District Operations for the Southeastern District, LCMS. In her position, she provides support services in the area of school ministry, communication, congregational services, staffing. Summer leadership conferences, Training Leaders for Outreach, and other workshops are a part of the resources of this office.

Mrs. Hiller's theme for her July 1<sup>st</sup> presentation is, *“Evangelism Is Not a Four-Letter Word.” We would love to have you join us!*

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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 their RSVP to [luncheon@lutheranlayfellowship.org](mailto:luncheon@lutheranlayfellowship.org) or by contacting **Vicki Porter at 301-229-9884** no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, June 29**. The cost of the luncheon is \$9.00, payable at the door.

**Upcoming Speakers**

August 5      Ms. Naaz Kahn of Lutheran Social Services on, *“The Refugee Journey”*  
October 7:    Mr. Frank McGovern, Executive Director, National Lutheran Home

**LLF Luncheon Minutes**  
**Thursday, May 6, 2010—12:00 noon**

Our meeting began with a devotional by Rev. Larry Schmidt. He talked about the Holy Spirit because of the closeness of Pentecost. He spoke about his experience as a boy in a German Lutheran church in Michigan and the chant the congregation spoke after the pastor said Amen. The Holy Spirit will be with you and declare to you the things that are to come and will help you to bear it when the challenges come. He is always our advocate.

**Announcements**

President Robert Sargeant provided the **results of the Thrivent voting** to determine where the \$1 million funding would go. It was as follows:

- LCMS World Relief and Human Care - \$192,122
- Lutheran Disaster Response - \$147,242
- ELCA World Hunger - \$145,345
- Habitat for Humanity International - \$114,212
- LCMS World Mission - \$112,315
- Feed My Starving Children - \$ 99,465
- American Heart Association - \$ 67,854
- WELS Committee on Relief - \$ 57,281
- WELS Humanitarian Aid Committee - \$ 32,987
- Lutheran Malaria Initiative - \$ 31,176

Dave Lambert asked for assistance on **updating the website** so they can reach everyone by email. Volunteers are needed to call lapsed members and update their information.

Ellie Wegener encouraged everyone to invite new people and also spread the word on the Employment Group.

The following **slate of officers** was unanimously elected: President, Robert Sargeant; VP for Programs, Rev. David G. Berg; VP for Public Relations & Membership, Ellie Wegener; VP for Special Arrangements, Betty Fredericks; Chaplain, Rev. Larry Schmidt; Treasurer, John Priebe; Assistant Treasurer-Linda Everett and Vicki Porter; Secretaries: Sue Schmidt for board meetings, Assistant Secretary for Board Meetings, Bonnie Priebe; Assistant Secretary for Lectures, Rodney Smith; At-Large Board Members: Dan Bella, Leslie Bergman, Rev. Tom O'Brien & Delores, Rev. Faye Coddling, Dave Lambert.

**New attendees** included Angie Evans, Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Greenbelt, MD. We celebrated birthdays for Sarge, 7 June; Sue Schmidt, 12 June; and Angie Evans, 25 June and wedding anniversaries for Larry and Sue Schmidt (51) on 7 June and John and Bonnie Priebe (33), 18 June and Pastor Berg's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his ordination is on 7 June.

**Speaker Notes**

**“Religious Diversity, Christian Uniqueness and the Question of Salvation”**

The Rev. Dr. Terrence Reynolds, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Theology, Georgetown University; [reynoldt@georgetown.edu](mailto:reynoldt@georgetown.edu)

The Rev. Dr. Terrence Reynolds was born in New York City. He received degrees from Queens College (B.A.), Concordia Theological Seminary (M.Div.), Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M.), and Brown University (Ph.D.). Before coming to Georgetown in 1991, he taught at Brown, Connecticut College, and

the United States Coast Guard Academy. His research interests focus on the meaning, truth, and justification of theological and moral claims, as well as the ways in which faith-based convictions can play a role in the public square.

Dr. Reynolds discussed the question of religious diversity, and posed the question whether non-Christians have access to God and salvation. While there are many nuances in the discussion, there are three general models of response to these issues: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism.

Exclusivists support the classical Christian understanding that our sin separates from God since He can't be in the presence of impurity. God sends Christ to pay our debt and all who believe in Him are saved, while others remain in their sin and are damned. This model seems to be the closest to the sense of the New Testament scriptures and gives the church a purpose. It affirms the uniqueness of the Christian faith and sets it faith apart from all others. Criticisms include: about ¾ of the population appears to be condemned eternally; it seems contrary to our experience with many of those excluded who lead exemplary moral and spiritual lives; and it condemns many have not had the opportunity to hear the Word or are not prone to change.

The inclusivist model is articulated well by Karl Rahner, finest Catholic thinker of the 20th century. Since Paul tells us that God wills all to be saved, Rahner suggests that God may have made another avenue to salvation available beyond a conscious acceptance of the Gospel. Since God knows all of history before it unfolds, He has made provision for human sinfulness through what Rahner calls the supernatural existential. This is a gracious endowment given by God to all persons, before and after the work of Christ, that enables humans to choose the meaning or purpose to which they will give our lives. This "fundamental option" is the urging of God Himself, empowering us to seek the Good, the True, the Real, and directs us from the core of our being to seek Christ, who is the ultimate source of all meaning. As Rahner explains, whether we realize it or not, all humans are in a "Christ-determined situation" by the grace of God. Unfortunately, an affirmative response to the fundamental option and a desire to live in Truth does not always lead one to the genuine Truth. Self-described Christians, or explicit Christians, have found the true meaning of life in Christ but many others, for a variety of reasons, mistakenly place their trust in erroneous forms of theism or even in atheism. Despite their mistaken explicit commitments, all are responding to Christ and may be saved since they desire the truth or want their will to conform to God's. Those who implicitly desire Christ and choose erroneous categories of meaning are referred to by Rahner as "anonymous" or "implicit" Christians because, at the core of their being, they seek Christ. Only those who reject all forms of meaning and transcendence at the implicit level ("implicit atheists") have truly rejected Christ and can be damned. This inclusive model is positive in that it opens up the gates of salvation to virtually everyone and appears to expand the impact of the redemptive work of Christ to all humanity. Negatives are that it might be disrespectful to the other religions by claiming that they are really unknowing Christians and it may also open salvation to figures such as Hitler who believed in a higher cause than themselves and did terrible things as a result.

Pluralistic model: John Hick and others have proposed that all religions are coequally distant from the Eternal One and all believers understand only parts of God and have equal access to salvation. This opens salvation to everyone and generates respect for all religious traditions, but it appears to diminish the unique person and work of Christ.

*"Man's Search for Meaning"* by Viktor E. Frankl was recommended reading.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rodney Smith

## Views on Salvation

**Pope Boniface VIII (1302)** - "We are required by faith to believe and hold that there is one holy, Catholic and apostolic Church; we firmly believe it and unreservedly profess it; outside it there is neither salvation nor remission of sins. Further, we declare, say, define and proclaim that to submit to the Roman Pontiff is, for every human creature, an utter necessity of salvation."

**Council of Florence (1438-1445)** - "No one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not just pagans, but also Jews or heretics or schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before the end of time they are joined to the Church."

**Congress on World Mission (1960)** - "In the years since the war, more than one billion souls have passed into eternity and more than half of these went to the torment of hell fire without even hearing of Jesus Christ, who he was, or why he died on the cross of Calvary."

**Letter from Holy Office in Rome to Boston (1949)** - "To gain eternal salvation it is not always required that a person be incorporated in fact as a member of the Church, but it is required that he belong to it at least in desire and longing. It is not always necessary that this desire be explicit. ... When a man is invincibly ignorant, God also accepts an implicit desire ... by which a man wants his will to be conformed to God's will."

**Vatican II (1962-1965)** - Atheism may not be a sin and an atheist may be justified if he follows his conscience.

**John Hick (1973)** - "Now the possibility, indeed the probability, that we have seriously to consider is that many different accounts of the divine reality may be true, though all expressed in imperfect human analogies, but that none is 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.'"

**Luther** - "It is not for me to judge Turks and Tartars and the godless. But I believe the general statement of Scripture, which says: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved' (Mark 16:16). This Scripture passage certainly damns them. But if our Lord God wants to make some other arrangement, I am not concerned about that. I do not judge Him. We should believe the order which God has established. God may make an exception if He so desires."

## 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?