

## Lutheran Lay Fellowship of Metropolitan Washington DC



### LUNCHEON MEETING Thursday, September 5, 2013 – 12:00 noon

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

#### **Opening**

Lutheran Lay Fellowship President Bob “Sarge” Sargeant opened the meeting at 12:15pm.

#### **Devotions**

Dave Lambert asked those in attendance to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ as they prepare to have their 3-day weekends. Dave also offered grace before the meal. (*see attachment*)

#### **Announcements**

Sarge said LLF is beginning to recruit ushers for the Reformation Service at the National Cathedral.

What will LLF look like in the future? We are starting to collect ideas for presentation and discussion at our Luncheon Meeting in November. There is no anticipated change in the format and location of the first Thursday luncheons in Silver Spring; we will be talking about possible new activities. Many Northern Virginia members do not attend the luncheons due to time of day, distance and/or traffic conditions.

Lutheran Lay Fellowship Vice President Rev. David Berg said there is no speaker confirmed for the October meeting. As Sarge mentioned, there will be a group discussion about the future at the November meeting. There is 25-30K in the budget, most of which is reserved for scholarships.

David also announced that Pastor Eric Wester, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries for the ELCA, will be our guest speaker in December. Their mission is to support the chaplaincies of the church in federal agencies, institutions, and armed forces, and to provide for the pastoral care of those called to these ministries.

Ellie Wegener reminded us of the Employment Center group that meets at First Trinity, Washington, DC. The memoir writing group is on Wednesdays at Georgetown Lutheran Church. Her trip to England later this month is full.

Carolyn Sowinsky reminded us that there is going to be an organ concert at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Gaithersburg, MD on Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00pm to benefit Gifts of Hope. The Montgomery County Chapter of Thrivent for Lutherans will match donations 3:1, that is \$1.00 for every three raised. (*see attached flyer*)

## **Presentation**

### **Spiritual 3-Day Retreat Weekends**

Victoria Wagner and Dave Lambert

#### *Introduction*

Via de Cristo is the Lutheran expression of the Roman Catholic Cursillo® de Cristianidad (meaning short course in Christianity). The name Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) was adopted by the National Lutheran Secretariat in 1986. We are grateful to the Catholic community for sharing Cursillo® with us.

This spiritual 3-day retreat weekend is based on the fundamentals of Christianity, concentrating on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. The focus is not on Via de Cristo itself but on the local church. The objective of the movement is to inspire, challenge and equip local church members for Christian action in their homes, churches and communities.

Our scheduled speaker, Victoria Wagner, has car trouble today so, as her backup, I [Dave Lambert] am giving this talk on “Spiritual 3-Day Retreat Weekends”.

Victoria worships at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Great Falls, Virginia. In 2012, she attended the Rainbow Via de Cristo's Women's Weekend #63 and sat at the Table of Galilee. She is the president of A Splash of Elegance, specializing in etiquette classes for all ages, serves her church as a Stephen Ministry Leader, and is the Outreach Coordinator for Rainbow Via de Cristo. In the Spring of 2013, she served as a Table Leader for the Women's Rainbow Via de Cristo Weekend #65. Victoria lives in Reston, Virginia.

I worship at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bethesda and attended Southern Maryland Walk to Emmaus Men's Weekend #15 in 2005 and sat at the table of Peter. I volunteered my culinary arts skills to serve as a Kitchen Cha on Men's Rainbow Via de Cristo Weekend #61 in the Spring of 2013. I live in Potomac, Maryland with my wife, Deborah, who attended Southern Maryland Walk to Emmaus Women's Weekend #16 in 2005 and sat at the table of Anna.

An hour ago Victoria Wagner E-mailed her notes to the church office upstairs and they were kind enough to print them as well as making these tri-fold informational brochures you can pick up on your way out. (*see attachment below*)

## *History*

Cursillo dates back to the 1940's in Spain. The first Lutherans attended Catholic Cursillo here in the United States in 1972. I am here to talk about Via de Cristo, Spanish for the Way of Christ. The Lutheran version of this movement is called Via de Cristo. There are 44 Via de Cristo communities in the U.S. and more than 100,000 people have participated in Via de Cristo since 1983.

This lay led movement is committed to providing spiritual and leadership training opportunities for practicing Christians. Some of you may have heard of this movement before but by a different name. It's also called, Walk to Emmaus, Tres Dias, Cursillo, Pilgrimage or other names mentioned during the opening devotional.

Our local community, Rainbow Via de Cristo, was formed in 1978 and has been a source of renewal to hundreds of Pilgrims over the years.

The colors of the rainbow mean that we are in the colors, or living in God's grace. Cursillistas (people who have been through a weekend), greet each other by saying, "De Colores!"

## *Different Church Gatherings*

You are all sitting at round tables, similar to the way you might for a small group Bible study. In May of 2010, I wrote a blog entry called "Participate in Different Church Gatherings".

From my training at Wesley Theological Seminary and association with Alpha (Holy Trinity Brompton, London) and Saddleback Church, there are three "types" of gatherings, all of which are valid, not to the exclusion of the others.

- **Cell** – what might be called a house church, or a small group, an ongoing Bible study group or what John Wesley called a Class Meeting. Willow Creek intentionally formed neighborhood Table Groups. The group is small enough that people know each other and if somebody is missing, it is immediately noticed. People are comfortable and intimate so they are comfortable with disclosing "private" information not to be shared outside the group. In general, once formed and meeting for a while, a cell is not too open to new members. Usually 6-8, maybe a dozen people at most.
- **Congregation** – a set of people who worship or study or serve together where they are there for a common purpose but do not necessarily know each other well. If somebody is missing, that may or may not go unnoticed. This might be the people who attend one service at a traditional church. For example, the 9:15 service or the 11:00 service. One form of a congregation might be what Nicky Gumbel calls a "Pastorate" where several small groups get together from time-to-time for an activity. Wesley called this a Band. Somebody new would not feel

uncomfortable if brought by a regular member of the group. Usually a couple dozen, up to 50 or a hundred people.

- **Celebration** – a large gathering where multiple congregations come together. In proportion to the size of the group, most people do not know many others that are attending. Usually hundreds of people from multiple congregations be they from different services of the same church or members of different churches. Wesley called this a Society. Think of a picnic for all church members regardless of which service they attend, or on an even larger scale, a Billy Graham festival. Celebrations usually have hundreds, possibly thousands of people in attendance.

As I indicated above, all three are quite necessary because they serve different purposes.

A Via de Cristo Table Group stays together throughout the retreat weekend is a cell. A small Reunion Group after the weekend is also a small group cell. Worship in the chapel during a Via de Cristo 3-day retreat weekend could be considered a congregation.

When multiple reunion groups get together approximately every other month, that's a celebration. In the terminology of Cursillo, this event is called a Ultreya.

### *Agnostic over the Edge*

Let me tell you a short anecdote that I heard recently.

An agnostic was out hiking and fell over the edge of an abyss. As he began to slide down that very steep slope, he caught a vine that was growing out of a crack in the stone.

He cried out "Is anybody up there?"

A voice answered "yes."

He asked, "Who are you?"

The answer came back "God."

"Help me," the agnostic cried.

"Let go and I will catch you." (*pause*)

The agnostic called out "Is anyone else up there?"

How often are we afraid to let go, to allow ourselves to fall into the arms of our loving God? How often are we more willing to place our trust in people rather than God? How do we find the Way? How do we get to trust God?

### *St. Francis Lesson*

There is also the telling of a lesson taught by of St. Francis of Assisi.

It seems that one morning he said to a young monk, "let's go into the town and preach to the people there."

They went to the town and came upon a blind beggar at the city gate. St. Francis, knowing the man, asked him how he was, and sought to give him comfort. He also took some coins from his purse and put them into the man's cup.

They went through the gate and into the town. They stopped at the hut of a widow who was sweeping the front of her small living space. They asked how she was and she told them that she had very little to eat and didn't know how she would take care of her small children.

St. Francis prayed with her and gave her a few coins from the meager amount that he had.

Soon they came upon a group of children playing. Some sort of a game with a ball they had made, and the two monks joined into the game. Can you picture these two grown men, hiking up their cassock and running around in a field with the children?

Well, by now, it was getting dark and St Francis said, "Let's go back to the monastery."

The novice said, "But when are going to preach the Word?"

St. Francis told the young man, "We have comforted the sick, spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and shared in the joy of His creation. We have preached the Word."

### *Via de Cristo Weekend*

This is what Via de Cristo is all about. It is an opportunity to see what Christ's mission is for you, explore how you can apply His words to your life, and how to share His Word, His Grace and His love.

The Via de Cristo weekend consists of a series of 15 talks that are presented, 10 by lay people like yourselves and 5 by pastors. We discuss these talks and how they apply to our own lives and how we can take lessons from them. There is also a lot of singing, time spent in Chapel and some surprises, too. This is all designed to provide you an opportunity to examine your faith and share in the amazing grace of our Savior, Jesus.

All of this is spread over a 3-day period, beginning on a Thursday evening and ending on Sunday afternoon, roughly 72 hours.

The weekend is entirely paid for; we only ask for your willingness to participate. It is a program to aid and assist active Christian men and women.

### *Our 4<sup>th</sup> Day*

This segment comes from the Cursillo® website so the terminology is Catholic and some references are European. It first appeared in a mailing from the National Cursillo Center in February, 2012.

If our Cursillo Weekend is transformed into a perennial Cursillo (everlasting – for life), then we will continuously strive to actualize Christ in our life. Being a Christian and our Christian actions go hand in hand; the "action" is a consequence of the "being". [Here in the United States, the term "4<sup>th</sup> Day" is generally used for the rest of your life] St. Augustine said it very simply: "Love God and do what you please". It is similar to St. Paul on his way to Damascus – we allow ourselves to be taken down by our Lord and we ask Him, "what should I do Lord?" Because like in the Cursillo, everything we do in life is:

- **Through Christ** – yes, in our work, in our family, in our social life, in our neighborhood, in our parish community; in other words, in our moveable square meter at this exact moment. We must become conscious that in all that we do it is Christ who does it through us and all is done well. And it is done well because He does it.
- **With Christ** – because He Himself told us "that without him we cannot do anything" and He does not deceive us – "I am with you always, until the end of the world". With Him we can overcome everything and we will be transparent of Him.
- **In Christ** – "It is not me who lives but Christ who lives in me" said St. Paul. Living in His grace with total self-giving and a spirit of charity (living our Cursillo Weekend in our Postcursillo). It is He who lives in us and we who make Him transparent in all of our actions.

This is our apostolate – (apostolic action), this is all our life. This is how we take Christ into our small world (the environments) with all the inconvenience, frustration, setbacks, etc., but also with all the love, joy, freedom, conviction, surrender, etc., that we portray in our being. It is living in grace (Christ's presence within us) that God's plan becomes a reality and the actualization of the Gospel in our own existence.

This is what we share and partake in the Ultreya. The Ultreya is sharing and communicating our common faith. It is the life of the Christian in harmony with the life of grace, which enlivens all of our daily life. It is living the same normality that was lived at the Weekend, nothing more and nothing less.

## *Apple Schnitz*

You may have wondered about this apple. (*pick it up and turn it*)

Looks good, doesn't it. Have any of you ever tried an Apple Schnitz? If you are from the Pennsylvania Dutch area, you probably know what Apple Schnitz is.

Let me explain,

It was explained to me that in the fall, the apples not used right away, were pared, sliced and put on trays in the attic, where it got hot and to dry them over the cold months. Then, during the time between the growing seasons, when an apple pie was wanted, some of the dried apples were retrieved from the attic, soaked in water to reconstitute them and made into pie.

Our faith and life is a lot like apples. Sometimes it is crisp, succulent and tasty, other times it gets a little dried out.

Sometimes we need to be reconstituted. Our faith needs to be watered, to have something added to bring back the flavor, the joy and excitement. Sometimes we want to find the delight we see in others. Sometimes we want to share a bite of the apple with others, finding ways to share our delight in our faith.

## *Testimony*

My wife agreed to give her testimony regarding her 3-day retreat weekend. Deborah attended Southern Maryland Walk to Emmaus Women's Weekend #16 in 2005 and sat at the table of Anna.

At the time, she was burned-out after serving as Worship Chair at church and really needed a break from having so much responsibility and being in the limelight. She felt surrounded by God's love throughout the weekend and was led to become a Stephen Minister.

## *Final Words*

My parting thought for you today is from Mathew 28:19-20. Our Lord said:

“Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”

Come and join us in Via de Cristo and take a bite of the apple our Father has given to us. It is not the forbidden fruit, but the joy of knowing and serving Jesus Christ.

My wife and I are here today representing the Rainbow Via de Cristo community. We will be available after the program to answer any questions you have. We would also like to personally invite you to attend our upcoming weekends which this fall, will be held at the 4H Retreat Center in Bowie, MD. The date for the men's weekend is October 3-6 and the women's weekend is the following weekend, October 10-13.

Thank you for your time, and may the Lord bless each of you on your spiritual journey.

## **BENEDICTION**

David Berg gave the benediction and Sarge closed the meeting at 1:45pm.

### *Resources*

ELCA Federal Chaplains

<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Chaplaincy/Federal-Chaplains/About-Federal-Chaplains.aspx>

Temple Talk Anecdotes

Private E-mail to Dave Lambert from Victoria Wagner, September 5, 2013

2013 Rainbow Via de Cristo Brochure

Private E-mail to Dave Lambert from Victoria Wagner, September 5, 2013

Participate in Different Church Gatherings

<http://lambertdrl.wordpress.com/2010/05/27/participate-in-different-church-gatherings/>

Rainbow Via de Cristo

<http://www.rainbow-vdc.com>

National Lutheran Secretariat Via de Cristo

<http://www.viadecristo.org>

National Cursillo® Center

Leadership Development Articles

<http://www.cursillo.org/resources/>

Today we will be learning about 3-day retreat weekends sponsored by Via de Cristo. This is the Lutheran expression of a movement that started in Spain in the 1940's. Since then it has spread around the world and to many denominations. One of our Via de Cristo leaders helps coordinate our support for others. This is a summary of the September list that was sent to me. There are hundreds, maybe a thousand, other such weekends worldwide being held this Fall.

Please help me lift up our Brothers and Sisters in Christ with prayer as they prepare to have their 3-day weekends:

Response: **We lift you up in prayer**



CURSILLO



Program	Weekends
ANGLICAN CURSILLO	3
CATHOLIC CURSILLO	10
CHRISTIAN CURSILLO	2
EPISCOPAL CURSILLO	2
GREAT BANQUET	4
JOURNEY TO DAMASCUS	1
KOINONIA	1
TRES DIAS	9
VIA DE CRISTO	5
WALK TO EMMAUS	32
CHRYSALIS	2

Prison Ministries	Weekends
CHAYAH	1
KAIROS INSIDE	19
KAIROS OUTSIDE	5
KERYX	3



Let us pray,

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolation, through Christ our Lord.**

*(Adapted from the Sentence for the Day of Pentecost (BAS) and Psalm 104:30, combined with the Collect for Whitsunday, Book of Common Prayer, page 207)*

Lord, thank you for this day, and for this gathering of your faithful people here in Silver Spring each month. We pray for the upcoming 3-day retreat weekends here in the DC region and around the world. Bless the hands who have prepared the food and those who are serving it today. Bless this food and us to thy service through Christ our Lord.

And all God's people said  
**Amen.**



# 2013 Pilgrim Weekends

## SPRING

April 11 – 13 Men's Weekend #61  
April 18 – 21 Women's Weekend #65

## FALL

Oct. 3 – 6 Men's Weekend #62  
Oct. 10 – 13 Women's Weekend #66

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### 2013 Ultreya Dates

January 12  
March 9  
May 11  
July 13  
September 14  
November 9

Rainbow Via de Cristo  
P. O. Box 223435  
Chantilly, VA 20153-3435

# Rainbow Via de Cristo



Serving  
Maryland  
Virginia  
Washington, DC

[www.rainbow-vdc.com](http://www.rainbow-vdc.com)





**Rainbow** Via de Cristo was formed in 1978 and has been a source of renewal to hundreds of Pilgrims over the years. The colors of the rainbow mean that we are in the colors, or living in God’s grace. Cursillistas (people who have been through a weekend), greet each other by saying, “De Colores!”

What is the purpose of Via de Cristo? The ministry exists so that each of us may be more fully equipped with the power of God’s grace to be an effective servant in the body of Christ.

As an instrument of renewal, Via de Cristo is one of several methods available to the church today to help renew the faith that is already a gift to believers. Via de Cristo provides a particular method for living out our renewed faith, for spreading the Good News, and for being active servants in the work of God’s kingdom.

Lay persons are encouraged to strengthen their partnerships with their pastors, to be “extensions,” building up the body of Christ. The focus of Via de Cristo, therefore, is on the local church – to supplement what we learn in our own congregations, equipping us to help strengthen and renew the faith of other Christians, and through them, their families, congregations and the environments in which they live, work and play. Through this method we are encouraged to persevere and grow in our faith to become an effective channel of God’s love to others and to strengthen a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

## Be Inspired!

The weekend begins Thursday evening. People get acquainted with each other, and participate in a service of Confession and Forgiveness. The next three days include talks followed by discussion, worship and fellowship. The weekend concludes on Sunday evening.

## Be Challenged!

The main part of the weekend centers around nine talks given by laypersons and five by pastors. In Thursday’s worship, two meditations are given: Know Yourself, an introspective look at our lives, what motivates us, and how we stand in relation to our God; the second is on the prodigal son parable in Luke, and how the Father sees his relationship to us, always happy to welcome us. Other talks challenge us to examine our priorities in life, God’s free gift of grace, how the local church is nurturing and how we can work together to “go and tell,” how to shower God’s grace in action, and piety, “directing our entire life to God” as we worship, study, grow and serve.

## Be Equipped!

To begin the 4<sup>th</sup> Day, we go back to our churches and let our lights shine as renewed servants! After a weekend, we return to our congregations equipped to help strengthen and renew the faith of other Christians, and through them, their families, and congregations. We join reunion groups to help us stay focused as faithful servants of God.

**It is a *new* day in Christ!**



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**GLY & SDI**

# Organ Concert

Free  
Admission



Free Will Offering  
supports  
Gifts of Hope

## Faith, Hope, and Love

With International Organist  
Martin Kueckes

The Music of Bach, Widor, & Frescobaldi

Thursday, September 19, 2013 7:00 pm

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
16420 S. Westland Drive,  
Gaithersburg, MD  
Directions: [www.goserve.net](http://www.goserve.net)



[www.giftsofhopemetrodcc.org](http://www.giftsofhopemetrodcc.org)