



IN MEMORIAM      REV. RON WILL 1932-2016

Some of you may not know that our dear friend and Global Mission Committee member, Pastor Ron Will, (who died suddenly and unexpectedly in November) had a collection of antique tractors! I think it's a fitting image to remember Ron and his quiet way of "cultivating the fields" in his work as a Chaplain for the VA and at Shand's. He prepared hearts to receive a comforting word of God's love and hope during a difficult time of illness, loss, or difficult decisions. Pr. Ron was also passionate about our work in Cuba and worked tirelessly to keep "La Finca" project going. We will miss you, Pastor Ron.

**Florida-Bahamas Synod delegates and Companion Church representatives meet in Lima, Peru**



From L to R – Keith Myra from Eastern Canadian Lutheran Church Synod (companion with Guyana with FB Synod); Bishop Ramon Benito from Cuba; Anita Unrath, Pr. Stephen Winemiller, and Pr. Jaime Dubon – all from FB Synod; Sandra Kurtzious from Guyana; Reza Karg from Suriname; and PJ May from FB Synod.

**The International Consultation of Lutheran Church leadership in the Americas for Renewed Relationships in Mission** was held November 10-13 in Lima, Peru. Attendees gathered in worship, large group plenary sessions, and small group meetings to lift up the Companion Synod-Church relationships, revisit methodologies for engaging in intercultural mission, and plan priorities for action for the next three years. Those present re-committed to:

- establishing regular communication through electronic audio/video media,
- periodic face-face meetings and written reports and updates,
- developing an understanding of the organizational structures of each entity (authority for decision making, lines of communication),
- working through companion synod-church relationship continuity & sustainability issues related to leadership changes.

Don't forget to pray for our YAGMs! (Young Adults in Global Mission)

**Becca Williams in England \* Ben Smith in Madagascar \* Kyle Marie Jacobson in Cambodia**

Check out their newsletters and blog addresses on the FB Synod website – YAGM tab.

Special thank you to St. Michael Lutheran Church, Wellington for sending pictures and letters to be included in Christmas Care Packages sent to the YAGMs by ELCA CWO.

## Recent Trip Reports

UTCWI - Jamaica	Guyana - Suriname	Cuba
<div data-bbox="110 331 615 779" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="110 814 615 1094">Late October, Pr. Bob Schmalzle (Holy Trinity, Kissimmee) and wife, Denise, made a trip to the United Theological College of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. They are pictured above with Rev. Dr. Eliseo Perez, newly appointed ELCA missionary (along with his wife, Regina) to UTCWI.</p> <p data-bbox="110 1100 615 1304">While there is no Lutheran Church in Jamaica, Dr. Perez’s presence at the seminary provides the Lutheran identity and doctrine teaching for those students from the Caribbean studying for Lutheran ministry.</p> <p data-bbox="110 1310 615 1976">Pr. Schmalzle presented the funds (\$718) from Christ Lutheran Church, Cape Coral to acting president Dr. Oral Thomas and the head librarian, Jillian Wilson for energy efficient library lighting. He also instructed the first year students on the 7 <i>Habits of Jesus</i> and presented 35 books. He learned more about the ELCA’s current and active role in financially supporting the improvements for the library. Funds are being raised for energy efficient solar air conditioning which will help with serious humidity problems that have been affecting the books and threaten to destroy the collection in the not too distant future. Another need is for an upgraded LAN/WLAN Network to assist in the development and implementation of a student management system.</p>	<p data-bbox="646 338 1057 793">Pr. Tom Unrath (Messiah, Cocoa Beach) led a small group from the FB Synod (Vicar Bridget Jones and Jack Parker from Trinity, Bradenton; Chris Klafs from St. Timothy, Tarpon Springs) to attend the ordinations of Danielle Dokman and Urwin Hollband to the Lutheran Church in Suriname. Danielle is a graduate of the UTCWI in Jamaica and Urwin graduated from the Moravian College in Suriname.</p> <p data-bbox="646 835 1057 1039">Dignitaries, ELCA church leaders, and other clergy, including Pr. Tom, participated in the ceremony that took place at Martin Luther Kerke in Paramaribo, Suriname on November 6<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p data-bbox="646 1081 1057 1577">Following the services, Pr. Tom and his group visited other Lutheran churches in Suriname and the Olga Clarke orphanage. They also met with the Board of the Evangelical Lutheran Kierke of Suriname (ELKS) to hear about new projects and ideas for the future. The group then traveled onto Guyana and visited several Lutheran churches there and met with the Executive Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Guyana (ELCG).</p> <p data-bbox="646 1619 1057 1934">Plans are being made for a group to return to <u><i>Guyana May 5-12, 2017 to attend their 274<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly.</i></u> Bishop Schaefer is also planning to attend. Interested individuals should contact Pr. Unrath by March 15<sup>th</sup>. (Contact information at the end of this newsletter.)</p>	<p data-bbox="1089 338 1511 619">Pr. Russell Meyer, Pr. Jaime Dubon, Pr. Larry Boudon and engineer Noah Trinklein (Calvary, Apollo Beach ) made a 5 day trip to Cuba and the Isle of Youth to see the progress on the “La Finca” project, discuss the potential for a Lay Leadership Program (in Spanish),</p> <div data-bbox="1089 661 1502 934" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="1089 968 1511 1108">and develop the scope of a potential project for renovating St. Matthew’s Church in Crocodrillo (pictured above.).</p> <p data-bbox="1089 1150 1511 1465">The Cuba Team has scheduled a meeting in Tampa in early January to discuss the engineer’s report and consider his recommendations. The Cuba Team will also review updated information regarding the progress of “La Finca”, and hear a report regarding conversations that took place in Peru.</p> <p data-bbox="1089 1507 1511 1927">Fortunately, Hurricane Matthew did not cause damage to any Lutheran church buildings or affect the town of Nueva Gerona, where Bishop Benito’s congregation is based. Bishop Benito was able to attend his first Latin American-Caribbean Consultation and was delighted to engage in conversation and workshops about the Companion Synod-church relationship and program.</p>

***WELCA SWO hosts annual Lake Yale Conference with “Glocal” Theme with music, workshops, and international guests from Companion Church of Suriname. Donations for Hurricane Matthew Relief top \$4000!***

Over 250 Lutheran women from all over Florida met at Lake Yale Baptist Convention Center, November 11-13, for their annual Fall Gathering. The theme of the Gathering was “To Love and Serve the Lord”, with a focus on global mission. The ELCA Glocal Team, headed by Sunitha Mortha, led the women in Bible study, worship and music, and workshops. The ELCA Glocal Team is a group of musicians and worship leaders from all over the world who share their gifts at conferences like this. These leaders embody what the word Glocal means—simultaneously global and local—so we can accompany one another across cultures, even in our own neighborhoods. We do this by loving the Lord and serving Him by serving our neighbor.

There was another exciting event at Fall Gathering. The Global Mission Committee of the Florida-Bahamas Synod and the Florida-Bahamas Synodical Women’s Organization worked together to bring two women, Sandra Dompig-Esser of Communion of Hope and Marleen Hellings - van Ommeren of Maarten Luther congregations in our companion church in Suriname, to the Gathering. Both women fully participated in all the activities of the Gathering and shared their stories of faith with the Gathering. It was a wonderful example of “walking in companionship with sisters from another country”. While they were there, Steve and Denise Beumer brought two sewing machines from their congregation in Winter Park for them to take back to Suriname for use in their women’s groups. The Saturday night activity at Fall Gathering continued the Glocal theme. The Florida-Bahamas Synod has companion churches in four countries, Guyana, Suriname, Haiti, and Cuba; and a seminary in Jamaica. The women divided up and made displays of each of these 5 countries. The displays featured information about the countries—history, facts, arts, pictures, and other info. There were also games, food, music, and dress that was as authentic as possible so the women could learn about our companion countries.

Another mission-oriented effort that happened was that the women took up a special offering for hurricane relief for Haiti and Cuba. The preliminary figures are \$3284 offering with \$500 matching funds from the Global Mission Committee and \$500 matching funds from the Synodical Women’s Organization for a total of \$4284. This offering highlighted the serving and giving spirit of the Synodical Women’s Organization and their willingness to share with God’s people in the rest of the world.



*Sandra Dompig-Esser and Marleen Hellings-van Ommeren, with Marcee Strickland (center), brought greetings from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Suriname (ELKS) to the SWO Fall Gathering.*

*Article and photo submitted by Marcee Strickland*

***AND THE WINNER IS..... HAITI VEHICLE FUND!***

After careful tabulation of the generous donations that were sent in from individuals, congregations, and conferences for Global Mission, the Haiti Vehicle Fund pulled ahead of “La Finca” to be the first project to reach \$5000. This means the fund will benefit from receiving the First Prize money of an additional \$500 (given by a generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous).

***THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO DONATED!***



## FLORIDA-BAHAMAS SYNOD RESPONDS TO HAITI'S REQUEST FOR AID AFTER HURRICANE MATTHEW

As reported in the last issue of this newsletter, the FB Synod Global Mission Committee responded quickly in October when Pr. Livenson, President of the Eglise Luthérienne d'Haiti (ELH), requested money to get a vehicle up and running with new tires and additional money to pay for gas. This enabled Haiti Task Force consultant Jim Noss to travel with Pr. Livenson to areas in Haiti that were severely affected by Hurricane Matthew and make assessments of the damage. The photos below show almost complete devastation of several church buildings.

The parsonage in Les Cayes



The school building in Les Cayes



More important, and more urgent, than rebuilding churches, parsonages, and schools however, is the need to help people who have no food or hygiene supplies for their families. Pr. Livenson sent another urgent request for help on December 21<sup>st</sup>. He had been in touch with the ELH leadership and the leaders of communities in Les Cayes and Jean Rabel and he was requesting \$12,000 to provide food and basic hygiene needs (soap, bleach, toothpaste) for 131 families for one month. *Because of the donations received by the FB Synod for Hurricane Matthew Relief, we were able to respond quickly and completely.* The full amount requested was wired the next day. When contacted by phone to tell him that the money was on its way – Pr. Livenson said “I am speechless”. After a moment, he was able to say “You have no idea what this means to these people, that they will be able to feed their children and protect them from illness”.

***THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO HURRICANE MATTHEW RELIEF EFFORT!***

### Contacts for Florida-Bahamas Synod Global Mission

Area	Name	Email
Presentations/General information	PJ May, Chair, GM Committee	pjnrusty@yahoo.com
Cuba - Coordinator	Rev. Dr. Russell Meyer	rmeyer@floridachurches.org
Cuba - Communicator	Tonya LaBarbera	Tonya.labarbera@gmail.com
Guyana/Suriname	Rev. Tom Unrath	tunrath@cfl.rr.net
Haiti	Rev. Stephen Winemiller	pastorsteve@faithsarasota.com
Bishop's staff liaison	Rev. Jaime Dubon	jaimed@fbsynod.org