

Global Justice:

Working side by side with global companions
to seek justice

Domestic Justice:

Ecumenical partnership to end poverty
in our country

Local Justice:

Community action by congregations
to support their neighbor



The Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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Justice News

October, 2010

An occasional newsletter of the TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod Justice Network

Monthly Emphasis

October

CAR

November

World Hunger

December

Local Justice

Let's make October our Central African Republic Month, November World Hunger Month and December the month to support a local ministry in your own community. If we can align our desire to give with real need through our partners, we can make a difference.

Dates to Note:

October 24 ~ Global Mission Event at Living Word Lutheran Church, Katy, Texas, featuring Brian McLaren

November 16-18 ~ Region IV Global Mission Consultation at Lutherhill, LaGrange, Texas

Also in this issue

- Low-Income Energy Assistance
- Global Mission Consultation
- Building an Inclusive Church
- Thrivent Builds - El Salvador
- Out of the Waters
- Youth Immersion Trip to Peru
- "TLGC Synod Rocks"

This newsletter is designed to help you stay informed about Justice issues and events.



Soul Food

Here's a bold statement, which I mean with all my heart:

People who step outside of their comfort zone to care for strangers experience God in ways that cannot be reached in any other way.

More on page 8.



We Can End Malaria by 2015

Join the global fight against malaria. Just \$10 covers the purchase and distribution of a long-lasting insecticide-treated bed net plus educating communities on its use. You can

save a family. Your church can save a village. Together, we can cover Africa with life-saving bed nets.

See page 2.



Do you know someone who is expecting a baby? They are probably excited and maybe a bit nervous. But nothing prepares you for the feelings after a child is born...the overwhelming desire to protect them and keep them healthy and safe. Check out this important message from ONE.org.

See page 5.



Kan You Kover 100K?

- YES!

St. John Lutheran Church in Cat Spring, TX organized a Walk-a-thon to benefit Central African Republic, our Companion Synod. The walkers endured blisters, sore muscles, and swelling to complete the journey;

however, all agreed that it was worth it to help the people of the CAR.

Read More on page 6.

End Malaria by 2015

The Central African Republic (CAR) is one of the poorest countries in the world. Marred by frequent flooding and instability, the entire country is ravaged by malaria. In fact, malaria is the number one cause of death for children under 5.

Last month Nothing But Nets, in partnership with UNICEF and CAR's Ministry of Health and others began distribution of thousands of life-saving bed nets across the country. By the end of the year, their goal is to get nets to every family across the country. This is an important step toward reaching the global goal to end malaria deaths by 2015.



Danielle Garrahan of Nothing But Nets writes, *"Upon landing in the Central African Republic, there are a few things that struck me right away. One is the ubiquitous red clay roads. Another is the consistent and deep potholes that cover those red clay roads and fill with water during the current rainy season. And lastly -- the warm and friendly people who welcome you into their homes and lives. I am excited to be a part of the tremendous partnership... to deliver over 800,000 long-lasting insecticide treated bed nets to cover every household in the country."*

Yesterday, we had the opportunity to meet with some of the families who will be receiving the nets.... Community health workers have gone house to house and surveyed the individual families for their bed net need and each family has received a voucher to redeem for the net... I met one mother who has already lost 2 of her 10 children to malaria, so the importance of these nets is already well understood. She will eagerly wait in line at her local clinic to receive the life-saving net in order to protect her remaining children."

A \$10 donation to Nothing But Nets (www.nothingbutnets.net) provides a bed net, along with essential education, to a family in an affected area. We are proud to be able to work hand in hand with these partners to bringing an end to malaria deaths.

Book List

The Great Emergence
How Christianity is Changing and Why
by Phyllis Tickle

Deep Justice in a Broken World
Helping your Kids Serve Others and Right the Wrongs Around Them
by Chap Clark & Kara Powell

Our Day to End Poverty
24 Ways You Can Make a Difference
by Shannon Daley-Harris and Jeffrey Keenan

Global Mission Festival - Sunday, October 24 with Guest Speaker Brian McLaren

Living Word Lutheran Church in Katy will hold its seventh annual Global Mission Festival on

Sunday, October 24
from 1:30-6:30 p.m.



The event is free and parking is free.

The Festival offers an arts and crafts sale featuring fair trade items from around the world, musical entertainment, ethnic foods, and children's games.



Featured guest speaker is Brian McLaren, an author, speaker, pastor, and networker among innovative Christian leaders, thinkers, and activists who was named one of America's top twenty-five evangelicals by Time magazine in 2005.

Mr. McLaren will speak at 2 p.m. during a multi-cultural worship service. There will be special children's programming including global art, music and games provided during worship for ages 3 - 7.

Beginning at 3:30pm, there will be exciting Festival activities for all ages.

The Global Market Place will feature hundreds of beautiful fair trade handcrafts.

Fair trade purchases help to improve the lives of artisans around the world. Credit cards will be accepted.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Bayou City Pipes and Drums, Steel Vibrations playing Caribbean-style music and Mariachi MECA.

Local restaurants including El Jarrito, Cedars Mediterranean Grill, Mantra Indian Restaurant, Hong Kong's Café and Marini's Empanada House will sell a wide variety of international foods.

A Mission Ministries fair will showcase the work of worldwide mission organizations and include unique hands-on activities for all ages.

Children will also enjoy a petting zoo, free snow cones and games.

Living Word Pastor Emmanuel Jackson, himself a refugee from Liberia, says "The Global Mission Festival provides a unique opportunity for ministry beyond ourselves. It is a clarion call to the great commission of Jesus Christ, and a chance to celebrate our diversity."

For more information, visit www.livingwordkaty.org or call the church office at 281-392-2300. Living Word is located at 3700 S. Mason Rd, in Katy

Region IV Consultation for Global Mission November 16-18, 2010 at Camp Lutherhill in La Grange, Texas

This Gathering will provide an opportunity for synod leaders to network, to learn what's new in other synod and churchwide global ministries, and to receive training and tools to support and multiply efforts within each synod.



We are really looking forward to this time to learn from each other and strengthen our network.

We are finalizing the agenda now. Please take advantage of this excellent opportunity to expand our capacity in global mission, world hunger and companion synod relationships.

As TLGCS hosting this Consultation, volunteers are needed to help with transportation. If you are able to volunteer, a discount registration fee will be available. Please contact Peggy at peggy@gulfcosatsynod.org to volunteer by October 20.

A special worship is being planned at 7 PM at St Paul in La Grange, TX - all are welcome. Register on-line through October 31. Scroll down to the Region IV Consultation.

Cost for the three days is \$85 per person including meals and housing. Housing will be at Camp Lutherhill. You can take a look at their website to learn more. A list of things to bring will be provided after you have registered.

Krause Children's Center List of Needs

The Krause Children's Treatment Center in our synod has some in-kind needs - you may be able to help. This is an amazing place that cares for young people who have experienced abuse and other trauma in their lives, who often live in this treatment center for over a year.

If you can provide any of these supplies or would like to volunteer please contact Tawana Goodwin at tawana.goodwin@lss.org

TOOTHPASTE
Calendars or Watches*
CONDITIONER*, Shampoo
LOTION* Dove Products
BODY SPRAY* BODY WASH,
SHOWER GEL (URGENT
NEED) Dove Products
DEODORANT Dove Products
WAVE CAP/NO STRINGS
PILLOWS (throw) & (standard
pillows...urgent need)
BATH MATS/RUGS
SOCKS
UNDERWEAR
LAUNDRY BAG
PICTURE FRAMES-PLASTIC
THROW BLANKETS
PILLOW CASES
TANK TOPS
ENVELOPES (SMALL ONES),
stationary w/ STAMPS



CHECKERS- SMALL PLASTIC BOARD
SPIRAL NOTEBOOKS - SPIRAL LOOKS
PLASTIC & Journals
BIBLES; CHRISTIAN CD'S, CHRISTIAN
MOVIES (URGENT NEED)
Sketch pads & FOLDERS -
ED HARDY'S
TY BABIES
BOOKS - TWILIGHT ETC...
current best sellers
CD'S
PLAYING CARDS
MIRRORS - SMALL W/MAGNETS
Hot Chips - cheetos etc.... & CANDY-NO
STICK(SKITTLES, MMS STARBURST)
FLIP FLOPS (with fabric ties) all sizes
DRINKS- PLASTIC BOTTLES;
GATORADE 6-80Z (all flavors)
SHIRTS- PLAIN T SHIRTS & Regular shirts
and T-shirts with designs
Walmart, Target, Visa Gift Cards

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) introduces:



Written by Pastor David Vásquez, this six-session study is the first offering from the Faith on the Move Bible Studies series.

Explore issues of migration through the lens of Scripture. Experience the Exodus by bringing the roles of Moses, Miriam, Pharaoh and others vividly to life.

Express the connection between the biblical narrative and your own stories. Expand your perception of migrants and refugees in your community and in our culture.

"Out of the Waters" will engage participants in the biblical story as it relates to issues of migration. The leader's guide allows for thoughtful preparation through reviewing and reflecting on background information for each session.

Preview the study by downloading the free series introduction, sample session guide and Scripture handout. Then purchase the full six-session leader's guide (\$19.39) to help you prepare to facilitate the study. Each lesson stands on its own as well as building a progressive understanding throughout the series.

- Session 1: A Pharaoh Who Did Not Know Joseph (Exodus 1:1-14)
- Session 2: They Are Not Like Us (Exodus 1:15-21)
- Session 3: Moses, The First Mojado (Exodus 1:22-2:10)
- Session 4: Hyphenated Egyptian (Exodus 2:11-3:10)
- Session 5: What Is that in Your Hand? (Exodus 3:9-4:17)
- Session 6: Now You Shall See What I Will Do (Exodus 5:1-6:7, selected)

Out of the Waters Sample Session
Out of the Waters Scripture Handout

LIRS will reinvest the proceeds in advocating for the migrants and refugees we have welcomed since 1939. See www.lirs.org.

Low-Income Energy Assistance Information



Read more about energy assistance programs at <http://txipl.org/low-income%20energy%20assistance>

Book List

***They Are Us
Lutherans and Immigration***
By Stephen Bouman and Ralston Deffenbaugh

***The Promise of Despair
The Way of the Cross as the Way of the Church***
By Andrew Root

***A Failure of Nerve
Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix***
By Edwin H. Friedman

Youth Trip to Our Companion Synod: Peru

"If you just people watch, you have missed the whole thing."
Pastor Heath Able, St. Paul, Columbus, TX

Thirty-two (32) people from our synod joined the Lutheran Church in Peru (ILEP) for a 10-day experience that has changed our lives. We are still reflecting-trying to hold on to the memories and at the same time, trying to integrate our new thoughts and feelings into our daily lives.



This was a "Cultural Immersion Youth Trip." Two distinctions shaped this experience. First, the journey was primarily about building relationships with and understanding our friends in Peru, through the lens of our shared faith. Second, the needs of our youth (TLGC & ILEP) were held up as a high value.

A few great quotes from reflections include:

"It was the people."

"Peruvian Lutherans are different than other people I know who live in poverty-they have hope."

"This was not like a vacation or mission trip. It was deeper, more important, hard to put-into-words."

"We were not tourists."

"It is hard to explain."

"It broke my heart and filled my heart."

"I expected a trip but experienced a pilgrimage."

"Sacred space."

God is using the relationship our synods share (ILEP & TLGC) to renew us both and this trip was living proof that people across the globe need each other. I am convinced that it is through international experiences like this that our church will be renewed.

This trip included intentional time in-community visiting ILEP congregations. Advent /Houston, Living Word/Katy and Christ the King/Houston had three days of intense time with their Companion Congregation-a relationship these congregations take very seriously. The others, people from St Paul's/ Columbus, Christ,/Brenham and Faith/Bellaire, that don't have a Companion Congregation

yet, had a chance to experience life in several congregations in Lima. In the end, 14 congregations were visited-all except Fiel es Dios, in Iquitos (the jungle). Time was spent visiting historical sites, including archeological excavations and the catacombs in Lima! A side trip to Cusco gave the group a chance to explore Machu Picchu, the ancient city of the Incas, and



Thrivent Builds & Habitat for Humanity El Salvador

by Sue Moehring



A team from the United States went to El Salvador September 10-21, as Thrivent Builds Worldwide members with Habitat for Humanity. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has been partnering the past 2-1/2 years in building the communities of Charlotte and Villa Esperanza near Santa Ana, El Salvador. The project is nearing to completion in October, as one more team from the United States will come to assist.

Working gives us an opportunity to take a step in the direction of building relationships with our neighbors who need a house. As we carry water, soft sand, mix mortar or paint with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we can begin to relate, not us doing it for them, but with them.

Each morning at the site started with devotions led by either employees of Habitat for Humanity or the Masons (local trained workers). In the evenings the leader of our team gathered us for a reflection session where each person had the opportunity to share feelings and discuss issues or concerns. We had a journal that had questions and a theme for each day.

It reminded us that this trip is not just about the construction job, but how important it is to learn from them, hear their stories and share ours - people are important. I hope to be able to go back next year when a new community will be started near the area of Ahuachapan; about 1-1/2 hours from San Salvador. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will again be partnering with Habitat for Humanity on that project.



Building an Inclusive Church Training November 12-14 at Grace Lutheran Church, Houston

Building an Inclusive Church (BIC) Training is an ecumenical program (ELCA Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and United Church of Christ) which works for the full inclusion of all people in our churches, including people of differing sexual orientations and gender identities.

The weekend training session, sponsored by Lutherans Concerned of North America is intended to fully prepare participants to go back to their congregations, area church bodies, and local welcoming organizations and work toward this goal in intentional and effective ways.

Registration fee is \$85 per person until October 29. Contact rossm@lcn.org

For any questions, or a bulletin insert to help you promote this training in your congregation call Event Coordinator, Laura Bourdo at 832/314-2821.

Doing Justice is Soul Food

by Peggy Hahn

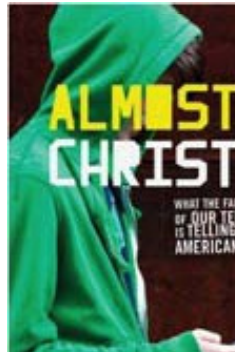
Here's a bold statement, which I mean with all my heart:

People who step outside of their comfort zone to care for strangers experience God in ways that cannot be reached in any other way.

Finding the guts to let go of your own fears and needs long enough to enter into someone else's pain, suffering or even joy, will feed your soul more than a life-time of Sunday School. Sorry, Sunday School teachers - it is just true.

In her book "Almost Christian" Kenda Dean talks about consequential faith. That is, faith that matters. Drawing on solid research, she describes the current faith of our youth (as well as their parents and grandparents) and offers hope. Kenda describes this God experience well:

"Encounters with others de-center us, precipitating a momentary suspension of self in which we dangle precariously outside our comfort zones, uncommitted. We feel vulnerable and unattached. We frequently experience the Holy Other intensely in such spaces. Social scientists parse such holy encounters in terms of their emotional, cognitive, sensate, and neurological effects, but this experience can never be adequately understood by taking them apart. We do not analyze such transformative moments as much as we allow them to engulf us; we do not grasp them as such as they grasp us" (Page 162)



Be clear that I am not talking about superficial service projects that are programmed to help our kids or even ourselves have that warm fuzzy experience of doing good. Sadly, that is actually counterproductive because it is, by its very nature, a production - and at the core, everyone knows it and the de-centering does not occur. I'm talking about something that usually happens by: Experiencing a Cross Cultural Immersion that has traction after the trip. So this is more than a "come and see the poor people" gig - it is a real opportunity to be in relationship with human beings who live differently, have something to teach us and, frankly, demands more than a week.

Local investment in people who are outside of your circle of friends that, again, make demands on your life requiring stretching, like on-going disaster recovery work or deep investment in feeding the hungry, caring for abused children or elderly, spending time with those who are dying (maybe of aids) or other human need that messes up our routines.

Commitment to advocacy for human rights, like for Immigration Reform or against Human Trafficking or some other atrocity happening in our world where we actually have the power to change the systems that are keeping people oppressed.

Why is this Soul Food?

Because every pore of our consciousness is affected to the extent that we are thrown into a tailspin and fall to our knees asking life-defining questions about what matters. We experience God as invading us in almost a sacramental way. We are literally on Holy Ground.



visit what was one of the shared highlights - Talitha Cum Congregation. Please join this group, and the others that have traveled to Peru in the past 11 years from our synod, in partnering in some concrete ways. Our commitment to this relationship includes assisting with the funding for pastors, Companion Congregation relationships and a new ministry called Sembrando de Futuro (Sowing Seeds for the Future) supporting families living in extreme poverty. For more information please visit www.gulfcoastsynod.org/JusticePeruOurCommitment.html or contact Peggy Hahn at peggy@gulfcoastsynod.org.

A trip is being organized for next summer. Contact Peggy Hahn for details.

Clean Drinking Water for Yongmondere, CAR

This latest update on water development highlights a village along the main road into Central African Republic (CAR) from Cameroon.



Recently a spring box was built in the village of Yongmondere, C.A.R turning a trickle of water into stream of water where a 5 gallon bucket can be filled in less than a minute.

With no moving parts the spring box will require no repairs perhaps for decades, helping to improve the lives and the health of villagers for years to come.

The work went faster than expected partly because the women of the village helped by carrying the sand and rocks to the the spring on their heads. For only \$5 per person, this village has a sustainable supply of potable water for the foreseeable future.

Read more on Joe and Deborah Troester's African Water Blog at <http://africanwaterlog.blogspot.com>

An Important Message from ONE.org

It's heartbreaking to know that every day over 1,000 babies are born with HIV. It doesn't need to be that way. We have the medicine and treatment to make sure that by 2015 no child will be born with HIV. But world leaders, including President Obama, are the key to meeting this goal.



Will you watch the video at <http://one.org/us/act-now/globalfund2010/> and add your name to our petition?

Our petition to President Obama reads: Please commit \$6 billion to the Global Fund over the next 3 years.

We can make sure that no child is born with HIV by 2015 - but your help is critical. Thanks for lending your voice to such an important cause!

Kan you Kover 100 K? - YES!



On September 30, October 1 and 2, several Lutheran laced up their walking shoes and took to the roads of Austin and Washington Counties to raise money to purchase motorcycles for the Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic (CAR). When the walk was completed, walkers had sponsors who had pledged over \$30,000.

"It was, quite frankly, amazing," said Pastor Kevin Haug whose congregation, St. John Lutheran Church of Cat Spring, TX, organized the event. "Not only the total raised, but also in how so many organizations and individuals came together to make this event possible," Haug said.

Twelve individuals started the 100K walk, and 10 completed it. Many of them endured blisters, sore muscles, and swelling

to complete the journey; however, all agreed that it was worth it to help the people of the CAR. The Central African Republic is among the world's poorest countries. They have very little in the way of infrastructure and health care. In fact, there is roughly one doctor per every 68,000 people.

Many of these facts were brought forth in a presentation to pastors of the Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod in January. President of the Lutheran Church of the CAR, Andre Golike, spoke of how motorcycles are an asset to help the pastors and people of the country. "They have become the quickest way to get people to the hospital," he said.

Golike's story of how things worked in the CAR particularly touched Haug, "I think nothing about getting in my truck and driving to Brenham and back to visit one of my members. I cover roughly 100 kilometers on such a trip, and I can do it in comfort in less than an afternoon. I get reimbursed for my mileage as well. The pastors in the CAR walk that distance all the time, and they generally make what I get to drive to Brenham twice. After hearing these things, I wondered if we could help."

Haug spoke to his congregation, and they planned a walk-a-thon. "If pastors in Africa can walk that much, so could we," Haug said. The walk began in Cat Spring and traveled to Bellville. It then headed north to Brenham and then to Industry, New Ulm, and back to Cat Spring. Several churches assisted the walkers by offering rest stops, dinners, and even housing.



Among those congregations were: St. John Lutheran Church of Bellville, St. Paul Lutheran Church of Phillipsburg, St. James Lutheran Church of New Wehedem, Salem Lutheran Church of Welcome, Salem Lutheran Church of Brenham, Industry United Methodist Church, St. John Lutheran Church of New Ulm, and St. Paul Lutheran Church of Columbus. St. John Lutheran of Cat Spring provided a picnic

dinner for all walkers and their families upon completion of the walk where the total amount raised was announced.

"We have exceeded our goal three times over!" Haug said. "In fact, we had donors asking if they could give to the Gallo Medical Clinic in the CAR as well. Of course, we had no objections."



St. John also sponsored a 10K and 1K walk for those who did not feel up to 100 kilometers.

Those who participated in the 100K were: Tammy Savidge-Moore, Holly Black, Bonnie Bates, Danielle Gibson, Amy Dhodapkar, Jessica Noonan, and Nancy Gibbs from Living Word Lutheran Church in Katy; Pastor Mike Button from Christ Lutheran Church in Brenham; Peggy Hahn who works in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod Office; and Dennis Marek, Rebecca Marek, and Haug from St. John Lutheran Church of Cat Spring.

"TLGC SYNOD ROCKS!"

Quote from Jim Gonia, Program Director for West Africa, in September, upon learning of our latest Global Gift for the Central African Republic to ELCA Global Mission Office.

Ministry	Funds Sent as of 9/30/10	TLGC 2010 Goal
Women's Center	\$1000	\$5000
Young Women's Scholarships	\$1200	\$3000
Village Education	\$3000	\$8000
Emmanuel Health Center, Gallo	\$3485	\$5000
Motorcycles/pastors' transportation	\$5262	\$15,000
Totals	\$13,947	\$36000

Additional funds have been pledged and raised since then for motorcycles and the Health Center, but we still have a ways to go to meet our goals. Let's keep up the good work!

VOTE - Absentee or by Mail

WHO QUALIFIES to vote absentee?

In Harris County, you must be registered to vote and be:

- 65 years of age or older; or
- disabled or ill; or
- Confined in Jail (no felony conviction); or
- Expecting to be absent from Harris County during Early Voting (Oct 18-29) and Election Day (Nov. 2)

HOW CAN I VOTE BY MAIL?

To have a Ballot by Mail mailed to your home, simply complete the Application for Ballot by Mail and return by regular U.S. mail. The request MUST actually arrive at the County Clerk's Office no later than Tues., Oct. 26, 2010.

For more information, please call the Election Information Hotline at (713) 755-6965 or visit www.harrisvotes.com or the Elections office in your county of residence.