

NOVEMBER 2024

AWAKENING
HEARTS

Quarterly Magazine
Issue I



ST. LUKE'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

“Imagine an entire **community** coming
ALIVE to the power of life in **CHRIST.**”



That’s what God is up to here in Central Florida and beyond. Inside this e-magazine, you will find several examples of incredible ministries that glorify our Savior and fulfill our mission of Awakening Hearts in every generation to the power of life in Christ. I pray that you find these stories encouraging as well as inspiring. As you read, please keep the names and ministries in your regular prayers, and consider how you might also get more involved!

This is a very exciting season at St. Luke’s! New doors are opening, and we have been entrusted with building upon our amazing heritage and traditions. God’s hand of favor has been on us for a long time, and he continues to provide new opportunities for our growth.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we grow in our discipleship whenever we engage in Worship Gatherings, Spiritual Formation, and Community Connections. This e-magazine is filled with amazing ways that our members are reaching out to our communities - both locally and globally. Jesus has a deep love for the community around us, and he longs to use you to engage them with his powerful gospel, in words and actions.

We believe that when we participate in Community Connections, the Holy Spirit deepens your love for your neighbors and uses you to share his love with them. Serve one person, or one family, or one community, and watch the ripples of God’s love spread. Eventually, the love of God will awaken each heart in our community - and our community will be forever changed as it comes alive to the power of life in Christ!

In the love of Christ,
Senior Pastor Tige Culbertson

MISSION Statement

Awakening
HEARTS *in every*
Generation
to the **POWER OF LIFE IN CHRIST.**

missions

Latvia Mission Trip

A Weather Report to Remember

- Michael Eatmon

"How was Latvia?" Since returning to the States in mid-July, I've been asked that question dozens of times. I've answered it in a single word—"aMAYzing!" is my go-to—and I've answered it in a few five-paragraph essays. Here, I'll take a different approach by telling you about ... the weather. Having lived in central Florida for more than 30 years, I'm almost a native. The Sunshine State is citrus, tourism, and the space industry. It's also home to six-month-long sweltering summers. Those summers come packed with heat, humidity, and heavy downpours.

Latvia was a fresh, clean, cooler, drier break from home. Almost every day, the weather there was sunny, warm, and welcoming. I say "almost" because a short, strange tropical-ish storm spun up one evening. I've considered having a T-shirt made that says "I survived the Latvian hurricane of '24." July's bright, cheery days were ideal for camp's outdoor classes, meals, and activities. I'm super thankful for that because mine was one of the classes that met outdoors. The weather was perfect for the LEC team's gatherings and excursions, too. For an open-air concert, trips to the beach and woods, and site-seeing in Riga, who could ask for a better forecast? Every day when we awoke and every day when we headed to bed, the sun was both shining and smiling.

What's most remarkable about the trip's weather report is that it describes more than sun, wind, and rain. It describes the landscape, cuisine, and culture I met, as well. Each blessed my experience of Latvia with a bright, inviting light. The countryside was thick, lush, and green, and the waterfronts were as cool as calm. Did I imply that the water was "cool"? I meant that it was 52°, frigid from this Florida guy's point of view. Except for all the ice cream I ate, meals seemed farm to table, prepared with equal parts simplicity and care.

This same care, and well-deserved pride, reflected in the Latvian spirit I felt all around me. The national flag flew everywhere, a continual reminder of a people's hard-won freedom. Latvians were as glad to laud their history and language as to praise their beers and spirits.

Are you gathering that my experience of Latvia was aMAYzing? It was, and these weather reports offer plenty of evidence. Still, none of them captures what I found most memorable. In that category were the Latvians I met and befriended. Translators and students, hosts and hostesses—all were warm, welcoming bursts of sunlight. From first hugs to last, the skies over these new friendships were clear, bright, and sincere. Each new friend was a beam of light I didn't want to bid farewell to at the end of my trip's days. Each was a life I was blessed to have part of mine, even if only for too short a time.

Speaking about the weather one day with a student, I asked how Latvians survive the long, cold winters. "We bundle up, try to keep dry, and pray for summer to come soon." As I reflect on the trip in the writing of these words, a similar longing crosses my own heart and mind. Between now and my next opportunity to join the LEC team, I'll aim to keep cool and dry. I'll also pray that next summer comes soon.



missions

Westfield House- Cambridge, England

- Beverly Delemos

On July 12, 2024 eleven of our St. Luke's members traveled to Cambridge, England for a servant event at Westfield House. We were welcomed by Dr. Cynthia Lumley, Principal, as well as friends from the neighborhood.

On the Saturday of our arrival, we were treated to a delicious "fish and chips" dinner hosted in the dining hall at Westfield House. After dinner, Dr. Lumley gave us a short history of Westfield House and we discussed our servant projects for the upcoming week.

SUNDAY

In the morning we attended Resurrection Lutheran Church. After lunch we were treated to a tour of Cambridge and the ever famous punting on the Cam River. Sunday evening there was a BBQ at Westfield and the neighbors of the area were invited to attend.

MONDAY

Assignments for the day were handed out. In the dorm area, the men painted several floors including the stairwells. They also did pressure washing, cleaning and oiling the outside furniture, painting the fence in front of Westfield, and Doug pulled out the old carpet to prepare the front building area for new carpeting.

The ladies helped with painting as well as clean-up. The kitchens and closets in both Westfield and Luther Hall had to be cleaned and organized. In the evening, Dr. Lumley hosted dinner for us in her home.

TUESDAY

We continued the work we began on Monday. Around 4pm we headed to an Italian restaurant and enjoyed a wonderful meal together.

WEDNESDAY

It was field trip day! We all boarded a bus and headed to Chartwell-Winston Churchill's home. Along the way, Dr. Lumley provided information about the history of the area and Chartwell. After, we headed to Hever Castle (the childhood home of Anne Boleyn). On our way back to Cambridge we stopped at Punters' Pub for dinner.

THURSDAY

Work continued and after enjoyed pizza and fellowship for dinner.



Mission Trip INVOLVEMENT

28 High School Youth

11 Westfield House

7 Latvia English Camp

TEACHER *feature*

FRIDAY

Devotions were held at the American Cemetery in Cambridge in the chapel with Pastor George. After, some stayed behind for a tour of the cemetery. Once back at Westfield House we finished up our last minute jobs and for dinner we went to Jesus College for a tour and a nice meal. On the way home, a few of us stopped into a pub and shared a beverage before heading back to sleep.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Departure days! To describe the week as a blessing would be an understatement. Many of us were blessed to travel to other areas in Europe before heading to our prospective homes.

We built relationships, shared the love of Jesus with each other, but more importantly with those we met along the way. It was a joy to serve at Westfield House as well as the members of their community.

Jesus described himself as a servant, saying, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). He set an example of servanthood throughout his life, death, and resurrection.

FUN FACT! Ms. Marquis has a talent of doing different puppet voices, which adds an extra element of excitement and engagement during her lessons.



With over 20 years in children's ministry, for the last two years at St. Luke's, Ms. Tina Marquis continues to bring joy and love to our 2 and 3 year old students. As a proud mother of four children, Tina has a natural gift for nurturing and caring for our little ones.

Her passion for teaching shows in her deep desire for her students to know how much Jesus loves them and that He will never leave them. Her favorite Bible verse, Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," reflects her faith and commitment to guiding her students with love and encouragement. This makes her classroom a place of warmth and love.

Outside the classroom, she enjoys spending time at the beach and visiting theme parks with her family. She loves creating fun and memorable moments, not just with her family but also with her students. We are truly blessed to have Ms. Tina Marquis as a part of our St. Luke's community.



SAMARITAN

RESOURCE CENTER

- Annette Shaffer

Since my first involvement at Samaritan Resource Center (SRC) in October 2020 I have seen tremendous growth in our outreach to the homeless community at SRC. I have been blessed to speak with many of the members at St. Luke's and to witness their response to a call to serve.

To begin with, St. Luke's Lutheran Church has donated much in time, talent, and treasures. The awareness of our homeless community, in general, and SRC, in specific, has grown greatly. A summary list of our involvement at the SRC is given below. It is not a complete, exhaustive list. Nonetheless, it gives an idea of the profound impact that St. Luke's has had upon the Center:

- Monetary donations from St. Luke's and individual members
- Coffee with the Pastor: monthly event hosted by our Pastors and Vicars
- LERT: pressure cleaning, organizing, constructing, and renovating (cubicles, closets, shelves, etc.)
- Volunteers with the Takeaway Food Table at SRC
- Hot food prepared/delivered for clients
- Take away food items for clients
- LWML: collected/donated needed items for clients: backpacks, clothing, food, etc.
- Lutheran Haven: donated items from the flea market
- VBS students collected, prepared, and provided items for clients

samaritanresourcecenter.org

Benevolence GIFTS GIVEN

\$ 58,000

Individuals Helped **40**

Catalyst Group involvement in:

- Provisioning the center with resources
- Preparing and serving meals
- Providing Saturday meals and events

It has been amazing to see God's awesome power at work within the homeless community. In a very short timeframe, St. Luke's has done wonderful things to benefit the Center and its clients. Still, there is much to do. The need seems to be endless.



It is difficult for many of us to even fathom the cause – let alone the crisis. Jesus calls us to great love and service in the great parable of the Good Samaritan. We pray that you will join your brothers and sisters in serving this wonderful community; it is guaranteed to Awaken Hearts to the Power of Life in Christ!

STUDENT *spotlight*

We are shining the spotlight on two of our students who share the same name but each bring their own unique energy and joy to our school.

RYLEE #1 Lively and energetic, Rylee joined St. Luke's in 6th grade, along with her twin brothers. Her favorite class is Religion, where she loves learning about faith. Her favorite memory is the Color Run, where she had a blast with friends.

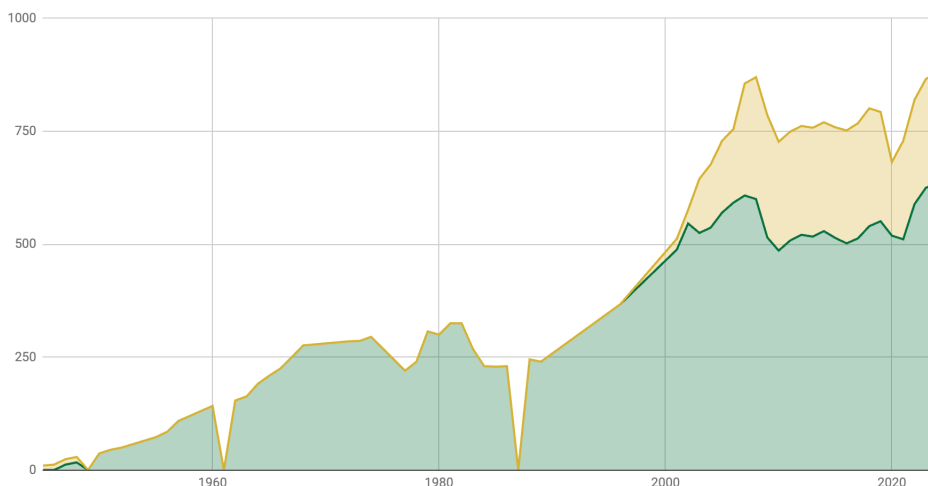
Her favorite Bible verse, Romans 8:18, reflects her positive outlook: "The pain you've been feeling can't compare to the joy that's coming." Rylee says, "I love the teachers, they really care about you and how you are doing in school. I feel like I've learned more here than in public school!" We're so glad to have her as part of our school family!

RYLEE #2 Rylee also started in 6th grade and is described by her friends as bubbly, compassionate, and silly. Her favorite class is Science, where the fun and interesting labs keep her engaged. One of her best memories is being on the Cheer Team, which helped her make a lot of friends. Rylee's favorite teacher, Mr. Glanzer, has been a great mentor in her faith, "filling in gaps in my faith walk."

Her favorite Bible verse, Jeremiah 29:11, reminds her that God has a plan for her. Rylee says what she loves most about St. Luke's is the "small, family-like environment." We are blessed to have her in our community!



Both Rylees are shining examples of what makes St. Luke's such a special place of learning, friendship, and faith.



Total School ENROLLMENT

- Preschool
- K-8

missions

Youth Mission Trip

- Pastor Sam Shick

Twenty-eight members of our church traveled to Charleston, South Carolina in June to participate with Group Mission Trips. The daily schedule included breakfast, a morning worship service, and projects at a work site. After a devotion and lunch, we normally worked until 3pm and returned home for some free time. A worship service and small group time took place during the evenings.

WORK DAYS

Several groups served at Habitat for Humanity helping with organizing two of the ReStores. One group had the opportunity to run the store and interact with the neighbors who were shopping while another group helped with laying gravel on the floor of the crawl space of a house Habitat was building. At a nursing home, one of the groups spent their time running the programs for the residents, serving lunch and building relationships with them.

Another group spent most of their days at St. Luke's UMC church trimming the bushes and painting some baseboards. St. Luke's UMC members were very grateful for the respect and kindness that our group showed to them and they thanked them for it repeatedly. This group also spent some time delivering cards to children in the hospital and local fire stations.

One of the biggest signs of growth we experienced on this mission trip was the way we grew together. Our group has diverse motivations for this trip, but we came together as one group with a sole aim of serving God and His people.



“... one main thing stuck out to me throughout the whole experience, and that was our unity in Christ. Through the toil and work at our different sites, the common meals, and the shared conversations with the other churches, we all felt and learned what it means to be one body in Christ. We prayed together, we sweated together, we had devotional time together, and we learned together. Every evening after a long day of fun and hard work we would come together in large group and small group time to talk about our identity in Jesus.
Rob (Mentor)

“ As I sat and listened to the band rehearse gospel music against the sound of the raindrops tapping the window next to me while I wrote care-cards, I truly felt at peace. Peace to an extent where I felt God's presence not radiating from all around me but from me. Our lack of cellular devices pushed us to truly see things with a different perspective.
Preena (Student)

LERT

- Steve Lehenbauer, CAO

Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT) are part of a nationwide system for disaster response sponsored by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). St. Luke's has been active in disaster response for many years. We have traveled to disaster locations throughout the southeast to bring supplies, manual labor, food, and monetary donations to those in need. LERT ministry satisfies both short term and long term needs following natural or man-made disasters.

With some gracious donations and an LCMS grant, our St. Luke's LERT team has purchased a John Deere tractor with bucket and grapple attachments. It rides in an enclosed trailer along with our chainsaws, helmets, chaps, shovels, rakes and all the other needed equipment to perform disaster relief. Our church has 81 individuals who have completed LERT certification. We have traveled to Louisiana, Alabama and several Florida locations to assist.

After a disaster of any sort, people need to know the mercy of their Savior. Those needs range from prayer, to clean up, to opening your home for someone to stay, to listening, to providing meals, and to anything else that the Lord opens your heart to help with. It is one of the ways that we have to share His love with our fellow believers and with unbelievers.

We thank the Lord for our members' willingness to work and donate to help others. Join our LERT team at the next opportunity!

slcs.org/lert

“

After Hurricane Ian in 2022, more than 60 of our members completed over 535 volunteer hours of assistance to those in need. These are only the ones that we knew about and tracked!

Our Members:

- Helped clean up our campus so school could begin as soon as possible.
- Picked up debris and cleaned out flooded homes of our neighbors.
- Completed more than 25 projects in the community at the request of Seminole County Emergency Management.
- Sent two different teams who each served a week in Fort Myers Florida assisting with the clean up there.
- Worked with FLGA District and SELC District churches to coordinate volunteers, assess damage, and request grants for many affected by the storm.

”



REDEEMING LIFE

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

- Julia Heinz, Director of Mission Advancement

Whether it is a jolt of an alarm rousing us from our sleep, or the subtle shift from dozing to consciousness as faint sounds or first light grows, awakening happens in different ways. So too in our own lives, when we might be awakened or made aware suddenly and dramatically or slowly by degrees. Once awake, the challenge is not to hit the snooze button in our minds and hearts, allowing ourselves to drift back to sleep, to unawareness. We must strive to stay awake and aware each moment.



Here at Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries, our residents hear the wake up call in so many impactful ways! From their initial interview with our Deaconess, where they share about their personal crisis and pregnancy, they hear the truth about this program. It is a wake-up call as they sign on for the structure, high expectations, and order, along with the required components of studying, saving, working and worshiping. Compared to their past lives, many of which include substance abuse, infidelity, and worse, this program stands in stark contrast. What a jolt to sign off on the old way of living for accepting a room in the maternity home and a program to learn and grow!

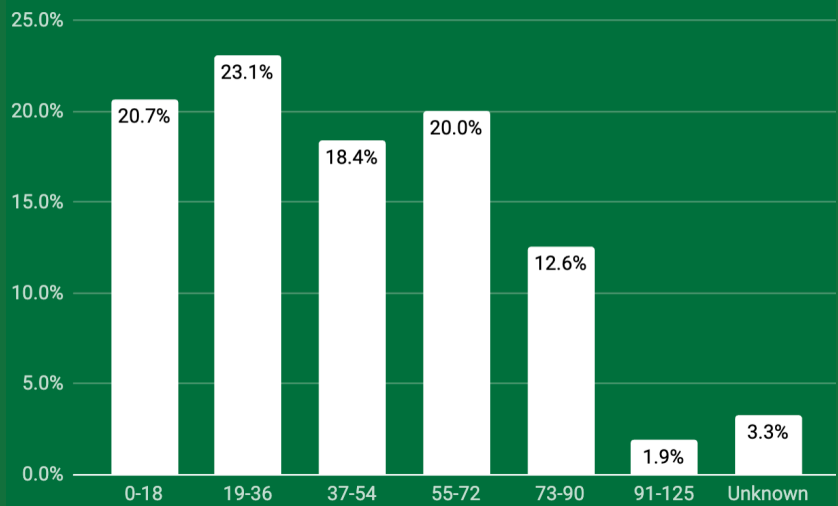
Once a pregnant woman enters our maternity home, the truth of living in this Christ-centered, family-style home begins to sink in with each part of the program, from waking up and readying self and room by 9am, to staying focused on either looking for work, pursuing education or training or working for 8 hours a day. Eating with the group each night at 6pm and preparing for and meeting for case management meetings with the Program Director require being present, on time and ready. For most this is a vastly different way to live than in their past, and while it is not always welcomed, it can help break patterns and build new ones.

Success stories at Redeeming Life range from big to small. Some of the smallest come wrapped in a blanket and are in the 6–9-pound range, as these precious babies are carried to term and delivered safely. Some moms utilize every opportunity of the program and move into our transition home to continue to save money and keep the support of our staff as they work. Yet others are quicker successes, like the women who reconcile with their families and are welcomed back home to have and raise their child, or the women who quickly get back on track and can find secure housing and childcare on their own. We trust that God brings women to this ministry and goes with them onward.

Beyond our work with women and their babies, we see success stories even as the world challenges the Church, complaining that prolife is only about saving babies and not about helping women, because to that, we say “We are that help for women!” Together, with all who are awake to this need, we share the life affirming Word of God and His redeeming love with women in crisis as we walk alongside them during pregnancy and after, resourcing them to become stable. Success stories come as Christians join in this work and joyfully share that they could not march on Washington or work on sidewalk counseling projects, but they CAN do this - support women through Redeeming Life.

Church STATISTICS

Age Ranges of Congregation



St. Luke's Staff Numbers

100

Full-Time

40

Part-Time

Foster Care Impact Report

14 Children Served | 4 Families Served
50 Volunteers | 4 Care Communities

\$32,626

Total Economic Impact (12 months)

rlom.org



WORSHIP SERVICES

8AM

Traditional, *Sanctuary*

9:30AM

Traditional, *Sanctuary*

Contemporary with Sunday School, *Founders' Hall*

Traditional, *Lutheran Haven*

11AM

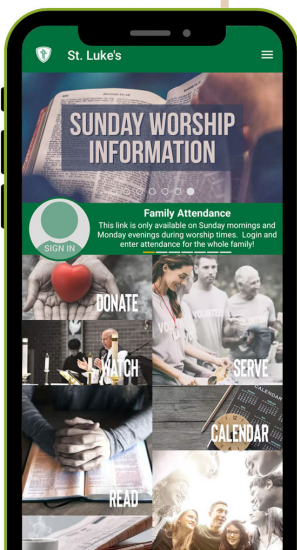
Traditional, *Sanctuary*

Contemporary, *Founders' Hall*

MONDAY 7PM

Traditional, *Chapel*

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