



CONNECTING NATIONAL & LOCAL SECRETARIATS

CONEXIONES

Official Publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, VdC



Great News...Via de Cristo's Now in Canada!

Join me in praising our Lord for His presence within Calgary Via de Cristo in Canada where our sisters and brothers in Christ held there very first weekend.

Ginny Buck, Region #2 Coordinator, and I were blessed to be asked to serve on team. Welcomed as strangers, we departed with many precious new friends.

Back on May 3-6, 2018, 14 pilgrims and 26 team members gathered at beautiful Sylvan Lake Bible Camp. All who attended embraced four days of Rollos, posters, worship, music, food and laughter. It was obvious that the Holy Spirit danced among us as we celebrated and grew in our faith walk.

The Spiritual Director and Rector for that weekend represented their fledgling Canadian secretariat at our July 2017 Annual Gathering in North Carolina. And as miraculous as it sounds, in less than a year, these two were able to pull together enough team and sponsors to host weekend! And now, an ambitious governing board is gearing up to hold their next weekend this fall.

What an honor it was to be have been your Vice President of Outreach at the birth of this secretariat! But the greater honor was being able to participate in their first weekend and assist in spreading our Lord's ministry was a true blessing from above. Let's see what happens next!?!?

Wendy Showalter, President
National Lutheran Secretariat



Hey guess what! INKY (A.K.A Indian/Kentucky Via de Cristo) is hosting our 2019 Annual Gathering of all Lutheran Via de Cristo Secretariats!

Are you thinking, "Okay, what is that?" Well, it's an inspirational gathering of our VdC 4th Day community. Traditionally held the last third of July, this event will draw anywhere from 175 to 250 people from secretariat's from across the US and Canada.

Highlights are celebrating daily worship through music, communion and the Word, receive powerful messages from inspirational speakers, and enjoy great food. There is even a Saturday night Agape diner and serenade! Is this beginning to sound a bit familiar?

What differs from your familiar four day weekend is the number of forums and breakout sessions chosen from topics brought forward within our VdC communities as well as conducting a Business Meeting. Like other non-profit organizations, business meetings are constitutionally required to give affiliated Secretariats an opportunity to vote on the annual budget and other matters at hand. Business meetings also provide Secretariats a time to share news, information or concerns from their local community.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good" - Psalm 34:8

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SAVE THESE DATES:

July 25—28, 2019
NLS/VdC Annual Gathering
University of Indianapolis
1400 East Hanna Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46227
www.undiy.edu

Passing the NLS Banner Florida to Indiana



New Faces & Experience on the NLS Executive Board

NLS Board Treasurer, Jim Ryan, attended Indiana Via de Cristo's Men's Weekend # 39 in 2002 where he sat at the Table of Matthew.



Professionally, Jim is in the process of retiring from a career where he provided audit and litigation support services through a financial consulting firm representing the Insurance Regulatory community. He often jokes that working with numbers is easy, but that he humbly accepted his role as being able to serve God as well as an appreciation of the fiduciary mantle he shoulders. With Christ's help, he pledges to be a faithful steward of the NLS treasury.

Jim feels that his more significant life accomplishments have little to do with accounting, finance or business. Instead they involve seeking ways and means to give back for the many blessings that have punctuated his life: his loving wife Lynn and their five children; having enough freedom to seek out ministries which allow him to serve and grow; a loving and caring church community (Joining Hands Mission) and a Pastor who asks weekly, "Who is the Church?" as he sends us out with the charge, "Now get out there and git'er done". His tally sheet also includes serving with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ the in the greater Tampa Bay Sonbeam VdC community.

NLS Archivist / Historian: Skip & Lori Gooch live in South Dakota and are eager to contribute to the future of this organization.



NLS Spiritual Director
Pastor Robert (Bob) Allmann
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National Distribution Center
Tom Krause
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NLS Executive Director, Warren "Butch" Seeley, attended Ohio Via de Cristo's Men's Weekend #28 in the spring of 1993 where he sat at the Table of Matthew.



He and his wife, Wendy, are married 29+ years and they have two daughters and two grandchildren. He has worked several weekends in various positions. He currently serves the Lord in his second term as Lay Director for the State of Ohio, and also serves as the Director of Prayer ministry at All Shepherd's Lutheran Church.

He has attended four National Gatherings.

Warren is president and CEO of The Seeley Group, a Financial Planning/ Confident Retirement practice in Columbus, Ohio. He has 38+ years of experience in the field. He has several designations and a multitude of industry awards. He also holds a U.S. patent and a U.S. Copy right.

He spends his extra time: with family, reading, exercising, doing Kun Tao, motorcycle riding, wood working, hunting and fishing. He and his wife worship at All Shepherd's Lutheran Church in Lewis Center, Ohio.

Vice President of Administration, Debbie Klatt, attended Texas Lutheran Via de Cristo's Weekend #42 in the fall of 2001 where she sat at the table of St. Rachel. Most recently, Debbie served the NLS as Secretary and before that, Region #3 Coordinator.



Debbie has been active in her local Via de Cristo and worked many weekends in a variety of positions. She feels blessed to serve on her secretariat's Executive Board and to have served on a few Kiaros weekends also serves on her secretariat's Executive Board. She reports both as to be indescribably rewarding.

Recently retired from owning a successful Event Management & Planning Company, Debbie and her husband of 38 years, Gary, worship at Concordia Lutheran Church in San Antonio and have a blessed with a wonderful daughter and grandson.

In her free time, Debbie enjoys family, hiking, traveling and browsing antique and junk shops to redesigning and recreate furniture.

NLS Non-Profit / Tax Advisor, Rhonda Balsley, attended Texas Via de Cristo's #35 in 1999 where she sat at the table of St. Mary.



Rhonda and Jack, her husband of 34 years, worship at Grace Lutheran Church in Bandera, TX where she's served on Church Council, been youth coordinator, organized fundraisers, and sings in the choir as well as a small church ensemble. Once a month she and Jack worship at the Torres Prison in Hondo, TX where she is active in Kairos Prison Ministry weekends.

After 33 years, Rhonda retired last June from the United Services Automobile Association (USAA) where she provided customer service, underwriting, legal/regulatory research, procedures writing, process improvement initiatives in the property and casualty insurance field management.

In Rhonda's spare time she enjoys reading and crafting, and together, she and Jack enjoy hiking, gardening, dancing and traveling—especially to visit their son in CA.

NLS Board Secretary, Jeanne Gaston, attended Ohio Via de Cristo Women's Weekend #64 in the fall of 2008, where she sat the table of Priscilla.



Jeanne has been actively involved in Central Ohio VdC weekends; and since her husband, Karl, is the Spiritual Director for Ohio Via de Cristo, she has worked a couple Clergy Experiences as well. The Gaston's split their worship time between Peace Lutheran Church in Gahanna, OH and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Port Charlotte, FL.

Before retiring in 2017, Jeanne most recent employment was as a Product Manager for the Treasury Management division of a regional bank.

She and Karl enjoy three children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. In Jeanne's spare time she enjoy crafting, woodworking, playing pickleball, swimming, hiking and visiting a daughter and granddaughter in Hawaii

National Lutheran Secretariat Board of Directors

ELECTED POSITIONS



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APPOINTED POSITIONS



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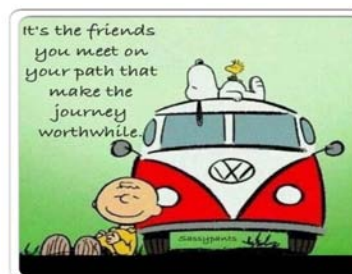
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Historian/Archivist
~ Skip & Lori Gooch ~



This is what it's like to attend a VdC/NLS Annual Gathering;
But it'd just something you've got to experience for yourself!!!



The **CONEXIONES** is an official publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat (NLS), which is a national organization of affiliated Via de Cristo (VdC) secretariats across the United States. VdC, or Way of Christ, is the Lutheran expression of the Cursillo® renewal movement developed within the Roman Catholic Church in the late 1940's. The Lutheran VdC ministry began in Florida and Iowa in 1972.

The **CONEXIONES** is a quarterly publication to inform affiliated secretariats and their members, Lutheran Bishops, along with District Presidents about VdC / NLS events and activities.

CONEXIONES subscriptions are free to affiliated secretariats. If you know of an affiliated secretariat not receiving this publication, please call a member of the Executive Committee at the numbers listed to the left on this page. Subscriptions to the public are \$6.00 annually and can be purchased by contacting NLS Treasurer, Jim Ryan at treasurer@viadecristo.org

To submit content for the **CONEXIONES** (news, photos, articles, or inspirational bits) email the **CONEXIONES** Editor at the address newsletter@viadecristo.org.

Newsletter Deadlines:

Winter Edition: January 15th

Spring Edition: April 15th

Summer Edition: July 15th

Fall Edition: October 15th

JESUS LOVES* YOU

*Conditions do not apply



The Theme & Verse from 2018's NLS / VdC Annual Gathering

¹⁸ But we Christians have no veil over our faces; we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him.
2 Corinthians 3:17-18 Living Bible (TLB)

"Behind the Curtain"

The audience was blessed to experience a powerful keynote address from Rev. Dr. Carl Billings from Discovery Church in Brooklyn Center, MN.

Pr. Billings truly embraced the theme of this year's Annual Gathering in this keynote address. He began by showing us a clip of his favorite movie, *"The Wizard of Oz."* The scene ending with Dorothy's dog, Toto, pulling back the curtain to expose the real identity of the great and powerful Wizard of Oz.

With this clip he offered that many of us are hiding behind a curtain, or a mask, because we fear what people might think of us. We too hide behind a curtain, or mask, because we are afraid for people to know the real us. Do we think we can hide from God as well?

Pr. Billings cautioned the audience that the problem with trying to hide from God actually makes us a hypocrite. One of the original definitions of hypocrite is a mask worn by an

actor when portraying a character role. We wear a mask to pretend to be something we are not. Pr. Billings encouraged us to drop the masks, take off the veil and pull back the curtain we are hiding behind. After all...it's "not just about you, it's about God's love for you!"

The audience was challenged to take pause when we say the famous VdC line, "God loves you and so do I." He asked us to say God loves you... then STOP! Stop and think about God loving you. God who created everything... is the same all powerful God who deeply loves you! This God will see behind whatever mask, curtain or veil we try to hide behind. God sees everything! And... He still deeply and passionately loves you!!

The message of the cross and that He died for us is about Jesus's love transforming us! Transforming us to be more Christ like at all times. Pr. Billings said that just because we go to church, confess our sins, make sure our children and grandchildren are baptized that we won't go to hell. Going to church is not like taking out a fire insurance policy. You know the

type that gets filed away and forgotten about until we need it. We need to continually and faithfully worship our God all day in every day of our lives.



God's desire to transform us was further evidenced when Pr. Billings brilliantly weaved his message into the weekend's verse, 2 Corinthians 3:18, by highlighting how we are continually being transformed into the image of Christ with each and every increasing glory shared. Just because a caterpillar turns into a butterfly, it'll always be part caterpillar.

He illuminated to us in many ways how our God's love for us is transforming and that we are to take that love home with us and touch all those around us with that powerful love. That it's about the Holy Spirit using us to love others!

The message absolutely left us encouraged and hungry for more of what the Lord is going to do this weekend in all our hearts and lives.



“You Look Like Jesus”

In this presentation, Paul & Bettilyn Lunetta focused on what it means to look like Jesus. But digging deeper, how can we imitate Him and follow His examples and show others how to portray the same manner.

Have you ever considered what it would be like to die for someone else? Jesus did, and this shows what a selfless act of love looks like. Jesus is love. He continues to show this to us daily and as we embark on our lives, it is important to smile and say hello to people and show them compassion and love. So often we isolate ourselves and don't reach out to others who are not like us, Jesus gives us opportunities daily to shine for Him.

Jesus is also forgiving. He proved this when He died on the cross for our sins. It is important to let go and let God do the rest. Following God's will and really committing ourselves makes the difference and shows trust as well as a gentle heart.

Jesus had a gentleness about him. Being gentle doesn't convey weakness. Instead it shows calmness and a tender loving side. A few other traits Jesus shows us is patience, commitment and being humble.

Then we were asked, “How do you look like Jesus?” The

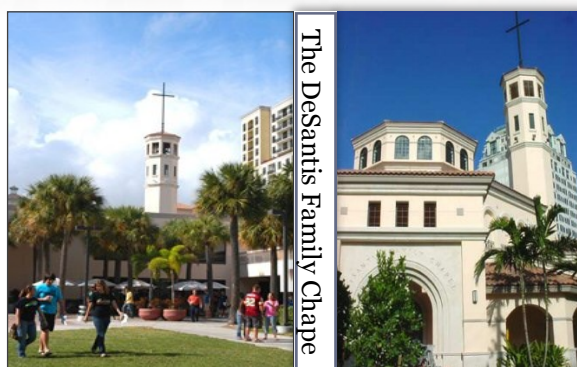
simple response to that question would be to project Christ in all that we do to help fill others with the Holy Spirit. The changes that we make in ourselves ultimately impact those around us.

Another thought to ponder is, “How are we responding to God's call?” By giving to oneself, we are showing the measure of Christ's likeness. Remember there is something out there for everyone. “If you don't have anything, you can't give anything.” Our attitude should always reflect Christ and exude positive thinking.

We may think that our gifts and talents are worthless; however, God gave them to us for a reason, to fulfill a purpose in our lives. They may seem small to you but if God can take a tiny rock and make a giant fall, what can He do with you? Whatever you do, keep growing and searching.

As you reflect on this, consider the following questions:

- What have you done to “project” or “inject” your love of Christ?
- Which of Jesus' traits challenges you the most?
- What if Jesus came to imitate you? What would others see?



A collage of 15 photographs capturing various moments from the 2019 Senior Center Summer Picnic. The images show participants in golf carts, a "Photo Bomb" by a young man, a band performing on stage, a large group photo in front of a building, and people socializing at tables. The photos are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some overlapping. The overall theme is a fun, social gathering for seniors.

National Lutheran Secretariat Regions

1. Colorado VdC; Light in the Desert VdC; Oregon VdC; Southern Arizona Lutheran VdC; VdC of Southern CA and Central Valley; Lutheran VdC of the Rockies; Utah VdC; VdC of Western Washington; Yellowstone VdC
2. Iowa VdC; South Dakota Lutheran VdC; Nebraska Lutheran VdC; Northern Light VdC; Lutheran VdC of Minnesota; Wisconsin SonRise VdC; Calgary VdC; Great Plains VdC
3. A-OK Lutheran Secretariat; Heart of America VdC; Lutheran VdC of North Texas; Texas Lutheran VdC; Texas Gulf Coast VdC
4. Heart of Illinois VdC; INKY VdC; Living Water VdC; Prairie Sonshine VdC; River's Edge VdC
5. Damascus Road VdC of Central New York; Good News VdC; Journey in Faith VdC; Lutheran VdC of Central Michigan; Rainbow VdC; VdC of Ohio; Vineyard VdC
6. Atlanta Lutheran VdC; Eastern North Carolina VdC; Note of Grace VdC of Middle Tennessee; South Carolina Lutheran VdC; Tennessee Lutheran of VdC; Western North Carolina VdC; Lake Gaston VdC
7. Gold Coast VdC; Indian River VdC; Lighthouse VdC; Sonbeam VdC; Sonshine North VdC; Sonshine VdC of South Florida

The National Lutheran Secretariat for Via de Cristo®

REGIONS & REGIONAL COODINATORS

Region 1 – Kim Brownlown

Region 3 – Cindy Perkins

Region 5 – Rose Briggs

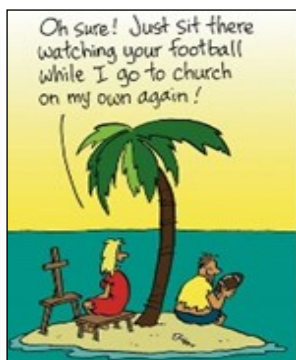
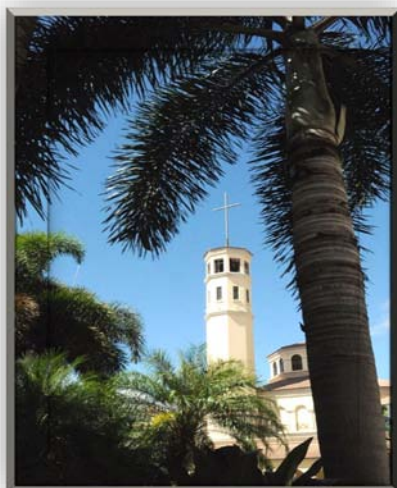
Region 7 – Tom & Cindy Kirk

Region 2 – Ginny Buck

Region 4 – Pam Gross

Region 6 – Chris Rasmussen

Some years back, affiliated secretariats were divided into regions. Volunteers from within each region are recruited not only to provide secretariats encouragement and support, they are also charged with facilitating the flow of news and information throughout the organization.



DATE	TYPE #	STATE	SECRETARIAT	PALANCA CHAIR	ADDRESS	CITY / STATE
09/27	M 97	FL	Gold Coast VdC	Maureen McNulty	mmcnole@comcast.net	
10/04	C 2	WI	Wisconsin Sunrise VdC	Nancy Wanless	2525 Coolidge St	Madison, WI 53704
10/11	M 31	IL	Heart of Illinois VdC	Heart of IL Palanca Coordinator	PO Box 5482	Peoria, IL 61601
10/11	M 63	MI/OH	Good News VdC	Patti Blashill	22419 Ardmore Park Dr	St. Clair Shores, MI 48081-2012
10/11	C 29	NV	Light in the Desert VdC	Jeanine Johnson	119 Montesol Dr	Henderson, NV 89012
10/11	M 68	VA/DC/MD	Rainbow VdC	Marya Dennis	Maryapalanca@gmail.com	
10/18	W 97	FL	Gold Coast VdC	Maureen McNulty	mmcnole@comcast.net	
10/18	W 63	MI/OH	Good News VdC	Patti Blashill	22419 Ardmore Park Drive	St. Clair Shores, MI 48081-2012
10/18	C 98	TX	Texas Lutheran VDC	Debbie Klatt	13811 Little Leaf Rd	San Antonio, TX 78247
10/18	W 73	VA/DC/MD	Rainbow VdC	Marya Dennis	Maryapalanca@gmail.com	
10/25	M 90	MI	Lutheran VdC of Central MI	Sue Browning	SueBrowning22@gmail.com	
11/01	M 45	WI/MI	Northern Light VdC-WI/Upper MI	Greg Peotter	N9415 County Road J	Iola, WI 54945
11/01	W 46	WI/MI	Northern Light VdC-WI/Upper MI	Greg Peotter	N9415 County Road J	Iola, WI 54945
11/08	W 90	MI	Lutheran VdC of Central MI	Sue Browning	SueBrowning22@gmail.com	
11/08	C 2	TX	Texas Gulf Coast VDC	Tracy Baker	1165 Oak Crest Drive	

Warren Seeley, Executive Director
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PLEASE
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