

Connecting National & Local Secretariats

CONEXIONES

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Saturday
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Friday's Morning Inspiring Worship

As the second day of our National Gathering began, we were greeted with generous hearts and warm hugs from the host team who lined our walk from breakfast to our morning worship.

Upon entering the chapel, the beautiful sound put forth from the incredibly talented worship team, led by Janet Cunningham, enveloped our spirit.

The service was opened with the prayer, *Come Holy Spirit*, followed by prayers of confession and absolution, and blessed once again by the music team leading us to praise Him in song acknowledging that His breath is in our lungs. You could feel the heavens open up as we poured out our praise to Him.

Tom Kirk introduced Pastor Jim Brissey who led the service. Sean Weigerber read the scripture lessons from Song of Songs 2:1-4 and John 3:1-16.

Pr. Jim began his moving message asking us to close our eyes and picture Jesus; then he began singing *Surely the Presence*. As others joined, he asked everyone to sing along. Then he said, "now only the Christians", which garnered chuckles followed by more boisterous singing.

This is when Pr. Jim began to unfold his message... Banqueting Hall of God's Grace. Based on our weekend's verse, he guided us to open ourselves to God's grace. To do so, he said we need three keys to unlock and to enter into the banquet of God's grace.

The first is to **yield** to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Pr. Jim told us about a homeless man who came to his church to ask for \$5 to buy a McDonald's hamburger. Pr. Jim said he explained he couldn't give him money, but he could offer him a home cooked meal and a shower. The man insisted he just wanted money without appearing to hear what he was being offered and left. After much prayer to help him understand what he could've done differently, Pr. Jim heard God tell him that this is like the church; people coming for a quick fix instead of noticing the banquet prepared for them.



Worship. To drive this point home, he shared a compelling story about a man in a wheelchair due to muscular dystrophy. This man was difficult to understand when he spoke, and had very bad hygiene. But as Pr. Jim got to know Ron while serving on team together, he discovered the man within that crippled body. Those noises this man was making while trying to get himself out of bed into his wheelchair weren't grunts and groans, instead Ron was worshipping the Lord with song through his pain and struggles.

The pity for a cripple man soon turned into admiration for a warrior as he realized Ron was in fact singing Martin Luther's song of worship, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*. We need to worship through our "slobber and spit" as well when encountering our challenges and hardships.

The third key to entering into God's grace is **don't quit**. You've got to run your race and finish well. Pr. Jim shared a story about when his daughter, who was a very accomplished cross country runner, had her best race. It was one where she'd sprained her ankle and came in seventh place. It was her best race because she never gave up. She didn't quit. She finished her race. We were given the challenge not to quit which will open us to receive God's grace.

As we were closing our time of worship, we were invited to come to the altar as Jesus was calling us to bear our cross as we wait for a crown. Our worship closed with the uplifting singing of *My Savior Lives*.

Today's worship music was also richly blessed by David Lind, a member of Sonbeam VdC and pastor to people who are deaf and hard of hearing, for providing his skills of interpretive sign language.

Could there be any better way to start a day?



Business Meeting #2

President Wendy Showalter call the business meeting back into order reminding us that we were under the canopy of the Holy Spirit. This action was followed by the opening prayer by Pastor Dave Rankin and the singing of *Come Holy Spirit*.

Next President Showalter introduced and thanked former resigning appointed board member John Bradford for his years of service as Distribution Coordinator. John came forward to except the appreciation for his service.

President Showalter then called nominations from the floor for the following positions- Treasure, Vice President of Administration (VPA) and Spiritual Director (SD). She asked for three times for nominations from the floor for each position. Hearing none, a motion was made, seconded and passed to close nominations.

Next on the agenda was Brenda Accola with the treasures report. Brenda directed us and section 3 in our binders then went over the statement of activity in detail. She shared the details of what the host committee received by hosting a national gathering encouraging secretariats to do so. Brenda went into great detail to help us understand the income and expense statement.

Brenda shared that the outreach fund is designated to the regional coordinators so they may be available to travel to any secretariat that would like their help and assistance in anyway. She also encouraged us to remember that resource was available to all the secretariats. She also explained, in great detail, that we have a resource available to all of us who shop with Amazon that we can shop through smile Amazon.com that when we do that the designated charity receives a half a percent of the purchase. Again in great detail, Brenda also explained that we have a resource available to all of us who shop with Amazon that we can shop through smile Amazon.com that when we do that the designated charity receives a half a percent of the purchase. All that we need to do is designate national Lutheran secretary it as the designated charity and they will receive a half percent of the total of the purchase. If enough of us do that that will add up and benefit the movement. Brenda then asked for any questions concerning all that she discussed there were none and she concluded her time.

President Wendy Showalter invited each board member to come up and share a little bit about themselves and what they do.

- Deborah Klatt: currently serving as the secretary and is seeking the nomination for the VPA. Debbie shared that the Lord has prompted her heart concerning her decision to change leadership positions.
- Pastor Mark Marxhausen: Spiritual Director, spoke at great length about his decision to not re-up for another term because he now has taken non a full time spiritual role doing mission work, but he wants everyone to know how great it has been to be in service to this community. He went on to share his passion with Papa New Guinea and what Lord has been doing there concerning the via de Cristo movement , He will be doing training for Spiritual Directors and asked for volunteers to go with him and help provide VdC 101 & 102 class. He also mentioned there might be an opportunity and July 2019 to come serve in Papa New Guinea on a men's and women's weekend that will be held on the same weekend. Please see Pastor Mark for details. He once again reiterated that VdC is now international!
- Warren "Butch" Seeley: as VPA, Butch thanked Magdala and Watson Ray along, the Florida secretariats as well as the two secretariats from North Carolina for all the work they have done hosting this and last year's Annual Gatherings.
- Ellick Morey: Speaking as the Vice President of Outreach, he invited the 7 Regional Coordinators stand up to remind us of what a great resource they are GREAT resource for every secretariats.
- Pastor Percy: through miracle of Skype, we were introduced to Pr. Percy, who not be with us in person, but since he was running for the Spiritual Director's position want to address the group and share a few things about himself.
- Dave Lampert: serves as our database coordinator and shared with us that if we are not receiving emails from the NLS that means we either have an outdated email address or no email address updates or changes to update@viadecristo.org.
- Rick Haney: VdC's national Webmaster shared that NLS's proposed five-year plan is now on the front page of the website and also on the Facebook page.
- John Bradford: as outgoing Distribution Coordinator, John sends his goodbye's sharing Tom Krauss is taking over.

Next, President Showalter invited Magdala Ray up to share a few announcements.

- ◆ Magdala reminded us about breakout sessions that everyone is welcomed to attend.
- ◆ She is looking into getting handouts for all the workshops so if someone might've missed getting one they intend to have them on the website in the next couple weeks.
- ◆ Finally she encouraged us once again visit the Palanca Poster signing area that each secretariat will take home to this weekend as well as the Palanca Chapel if needed.

Pastor Mark closed us in prayer.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to recess the meeting



Who Do Others See in Your Mirror?

By Pastor Doug Pretorius

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Belleville, Ohio

Pastor Doug added to our weekend verse, 2 Corinthians 3:17 – 18. He focused on the work of the Spirit. One of the dangers in asking others “what do you see in our mirror”, is that we see ourselves. We look at our image, but not where we were first invited to look. The face of our mother... her reaction is how we learn. We are reading peoples faces all the time. People read our faces and can see what we are saying without words.

When all you know are the rules and what is expected of us, we are wearing a veil. But when we see the Spirit that veil is removed. When we look at ourselves in a mirror we are looking at our likes and dislikes. What others are thinking of us. Checking and reading faces and body language and what they say about us.

We are looking for change on a VdC weekend, but....we don't know whether the seed has landed among the rocks or if it is going to be fertile ground. But we want to know.

We are all mirrors. What we see when you look at me is your own reflection.

The image that we are to see in others is Jesus.. The tool for this is the Reunion Group.

Asking – Where did you see Jesus this week? When you begin to ask this, you begin to see Jesus. But then you see Him in the harder places – Forgiveness, Fasting, Repentance.... Everywhere. Because there is no where that Jesus is not.

We are totally safe with Jesus. He never...mocks, shames or ignores us. He always celebrates us. He cherishes us and chooses us every time.

We practice this in reunion. Jesus is never surprised. It's not a surprise because it is forgiven. In a fully functional reunion group, we know each other's experiences of Jesus, the challenges each are facing and each member sins and sinfulness. Patterns of sinfulness and the ways we live in opposition to God.

Pastor Doug challenged us to think of these things for yourself and then of one of your reunion group members.

- What is a significant experience of Jesus that you had?
- What is a challenge that you are facing right now?
- What is the sinfulness with which you are most struggling right now?

We should be able to do this unconsciously. This is all about the part of being in reunion. Be authentic, real and vulnerable. Your reunion group should listen to you with the face of Jesus. Make your reunion group be spiritual direction groups that allow us to see the face of Jesus and feel safe. The reunion group should “lift the veil” and show you, Jesus in you.

Some of the things that Pastor Doug encouraged us to do is go on a retreat – There is a spiritual principle here. You cannot be in authority unless you are under authority.



| Time | Event | Map | Location |
|----------|---|-----|---|
| 7:15 am | Breakfast | #30 | Lassiter Student Dining Hall |
| 8:15 am | Worship (an offering will be taken) | #3 | DeSantis Family Chapel |
| 9:30 am | Business Meeting Continued | #24 | MacArthur Hall, Rms 1291/1292 |
| 10:30 am | Break | | |
| 10:45 am | Presentation #2 - "You Look Like Jesus" by Paul & Bettilynn Lunetta | #30 | Weyenberg Room 2nd Floor of Lassiter Student Center |
| 12:15 pm | Lunch | #30 | Lassiter Student Dining Hall |
| 1:30 pm | Development Workshops: Many Great Choices (see binder = details & room) | #24 | Rinker Hall & MacArthur Hall Classrooms |
| 2:45 pm | Break | | |
| 3:00 pm | Regional Meetings #2 | #24 | Rinker & MacArthur Hall |
| 5:00 pm | Agape Dinner | #30 | Lassiter Student Dining Hall |
| 7:00 pm | NLS Board & 2019 Host Committee | #22 | Rinker Hall #1310 |
| 8:00 pm | Evening Vespers | #3 | DeSantis Family Chapel |
| 8:45 pm | Fellowship & Hospitality | #30 | Lassiter Student Center's 1st Floor |
| 8:45 pm | NLS Executive Board Meeting | | 2nd Floor Riley Sims Conf. Center |

- Your dorm rooms need to be vacated and cleared out Sunday by 9:00 am!
- Please check all closets and drawers for belongings.
- Please Leave the air condition in your room turned **ON** when you leave!
- The lanyard and swipe card is yours to keep!!
- The security charge for a lost dormitory key is \$100.00...per key!!!
- Palanca Posters can be signed : Lassiter Student Center on 2nd floor
- Prayer Chapel: Lassiter Student Center on 2nd floor
- Host Co-Chairs: Watson Ray: 561-312-3324 & Magdala Ray: 561-602-1639
- Transportation Changes need to be reported ASAP to...

...Carol Ann Beers: 954-415-7036 or Jamey Beers: 954-415-2618



⇒ Palm Beach Atlantic Campus Safety: 561-803-2500

⇒ West Palm Beach Police Dept: 561-822-1900

** City ordinance has quiet hours from 9:00 pm to 9:00 am.

** Also, please do ***NOT*** walk alone at night.