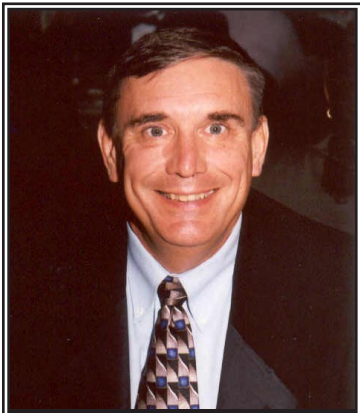


CHS Prepares Students for Life of Christian Service



HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

Wayne Wilke
Concordia House
of Studies

There is a commercial running on television in Orlando as I am writing this article. A mother is skipping down the aisles of the local department store, gleefully picking out "back to school" items. At the same time she is singing the song, "It's the most wonderful time of the year!" I am sure that there are many parents who would agree. While summer is a great time for rest and recreational activities, there comes a day when parents sense that summer fun time is over. Yes, summer is coming to an end and it is Back-To-School Time!



Bill Patrick is the new Lay minister at Faith, Marietta, GA

It is the Back-to-School time that prompts this issue of *Lutheran Life* to focus on a Christian Education theme. Thousands of students across Florida and Georgia are heading back to Lutheran schools ranging from Early Childhood centers through Elementary and Secondary Schools. There they will be mentored by Christian faculty members dedicated to bringing Christ into all aspects of the students' education.

But Christian Education is more than just offering classes, whether in the congregation, at the high school or college level, or even for seminary education. Christian education is the means by which sons and daughters of God are instructed and nurtured in the faith to which they have been called. It is a life-long endeavor by which we continue to grow more and more into the ways of our Lord.

The Concordia House of Studies (CHS) is one tool among many employed in the Florida-

Georgia District to prepare God's people of all ages for a life of Christian service. CHS provides college level religion courses to students seeking church work certification, and/or admission to seminary study, or enrichment to people seeking to learn more about the Bible, Christian doctrine or church history.

CHS is an educational ministry equipping people



(l-r) Vicar Burt Matlock, Pastor Ed Gross, Dr. Wayne Wilke, Vicar Tony Durante and Vicar Kevin Ogle pose after class

for teaching and leadership roles in congregations of the church. The role of the pastor, the teacher, and the Director of Christian education is to equip the saints for building up the body of Christ. It is a ministry of preparing and enabling all believers to grow and serve.



In the past several months, several CHS graduates have begun serving in congregations. While the list is not exhaustive of all our graduates, it does illustrate the wide variety of ministries impacted by CHS.

Two CHS graduates have finished their seminary education and have been placed into their first congregations. On June 14, Rev. Eric Estes was ordained in his home congregation of Prince of Peace-Orlando; one week later he was installed as pastor of Redeemer-Columbus, GA.

Redeemer's ministry seeks to reach out to a community heavily influenced by nearby military facilities. Eric, his wife, Jen, and their two children are rapidly assimilating into this new environment and have been well received by the congregation.

On June 1, Brent Hartwig, a member of Woodlands Lutheran-Montverde, FL, was installed as a deferred vicar at Our Redeemer-

lowa City, IA. Brent has already completed his seminary studies and his vicarage will convert into his first call after one year. His supervisor and mentor is Pastor Tim Zimmermann.

Brent reports that Our Redeemer averages 400 for worship every weekend, and has

a thriving children's and youth ministry. After two months in his vicarage/placement, he writes, "So far in vicarage, I have met lots of people, taught Bible studies, led devotions, conducted home visits and hospital visits, assisted with liturgy, preached the Law and the Gospel, and loved the Children of God. I also have learned. If this one-sixth of my vicarage is an indicator for

the rest of my internship, then I am blessed. If this time is an indicator for my life as a pastor, then I am blessed."

In South Florida, three CHS graduates are serving as vicars in the Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO) program. Tony Durante serves his vicarage at Trinity-Delray Beach, focusing on his role as minister of discipleship and assimilation. Tony is primarily responsible for the "Connections" contemporary service which is intentionally designed for new members of the church.

Bert Matlock has been the DELTO vicar at Hope-Pompano Beach for the past year. In the new year his role will expand as Hope and Shepherd of the Coast-Fort Lauderdale enter into a new, shared ministry to the community.

Kevin Ogle has served as a DELTO vicar at Miramar Lutheran-Miramar. In addition to his full-time employment, Kevin serves as pastor to the Miramar



Donna (l) and Christie Wilkens pose with Dr. Wilke as they receive their CHS diplomas

congregation under the supervision of area pastors.

In Georgia, Clarence Riley is in the process of applying for the new Specific Ministry Pastor Program (SMP). When the application process is completed, Clarence will serve as an SMP vicar under

the supervision of Rev. David Brighton at Mount Calvary Lutheran-Warner Robins, GA. Clarence will serve in the area of outreach and will work with a number of congregations in the East Central Georgia circuit.

This spring, Bill Patrick was installed as a Lay Minister at Faith Lutheran Church and School-Marietta, GA. Bill is the first CHS graduate to complete the Lay Ministry certification program as part of our partnership with Concordia University - Wisconsin. A Lay Minister serves as an assistant to the pastor in areas including lay leadership development and education, youth ministry, evangelism, assimilation, visitation, worship or administration.

Several CHS graduates have achieved status as a commissioned minister - teacher in the Lutheran Church. Kim Tenney was installed into her position as fifth grade teacher at St. Luke's Lutheran School-Oviedo. Kim was on the faculty prior to completing her CHS work, but now has earned her Lutheran Teacher Certificate.

Trinity Lutheran School-Orlando welcomed the mother/daughter team of Donna and Christie Wilkens to the faculty this fall. Donna will be teaching fifth grade and Christie will be the seventh grade

homeroom teacher and Middle School Language Arts teacher. Both are recent graduates of the University of Central Florida who obtained their Lutheran Teaching Certificate from CHS at the same time.

This ministry of education continues as CHS has a full menu of educational options for



Pictured above is Vicar Brent Hartwig, his wife, Kara and their children (left to right): Grace (9), Noah (5), Emma (7), Claire (1)

the Fall Term. On page 4 of this issue is information on classes and how to register. If you have any questions about how CHS can assist you in any aspect of your plans for Christian education, please feel free to contact Dr. Wilke. You can contact him in Orlando locally at 407-857-5556, ext 5, toll free at 877-457-5556, ext. 5, or via e-mail at wwilke@flga-lcms.org. □

Service Retreat Set for October 3-5

NOTE: This article was written by Emily Goff, a student at University of Georgia Athens and Faith-Marietta, GA, member

Students from college campuses in Florida and Georgia will be preparing early this semester for another fall service retreat. Among the participants are students from campus ministries at The University of Georgia, Florida State University and The University of Florida.

The retreat will be held October 3-5 at Messiah Lutheran-Valdosta, near the Valdosta State University campus. As in past years, the students will participate in a service project; this year they will work on a Habitat for Humanity project.

In recent years, the students have done work on Habitat projects, houses for the elderly in Jacksonville, FL, and roofing projects on houses in Aiken, SC. Any student or campus ministry leader who has attended a retreat will tell you what a wonderful opportunity it is to gather in community and share God's love for His people through service.

Though the projects last for only one work day, the students see the impact their service has on the lives of the people they are helping. The students also reflect on how to replicate such servant-hood back on their college campuses.

One goal of the retreat is certainly to build community, as students from different campuses grow and work together. But the main goal is to demonstrate God's love through the gift of His Son — and the resulting joy we have — through service to the people we meet.

The retreat in October is open to college students, whether they are connected with a campus ministry or not. The cost will be around \$20, and the contact person is Pastor Jay Winters at FSU (850-224-6059; pastor@universitylutheran-church.org).

We invite you to attend the retreat. We also ask you to lift up the retreat in prayer, that God would work through us, and that the people we meet would desire to be in relationship with the One who loves them and is able to give them fullness of life.

In addition to attending the retreat, students are encouraged to visit the collegiate-level organization of Lutheran students — Lutheran Student Fellowship — at www.lutheranstudentfellowship.org. There they can find information about campus ministry locations, upcoming events, ministry resources, LSF leadership and scholarship opportunities. Updates are being made, so check the website often. □