



The Way of Christ
John 14:6
NLS 2011 Annual Meeting
July 28 – 31, 2011
Hosted by Western North Carolina
Via de Cristo



ANNIVERSARY FORUM

At the Anniversary Forum we heard from several speakers who were instrumental in helping to form the National Via de Cristo movement. They related poignant stories from Via de Cristo past as well as how their experiences affected their ministries.

Pastor Ed Simonson reminisced about the moral climate in this country and the world in the 1960's and 70's and how the church was drawn into the upheaval. He was introduced to the Catholic Cursillo by a parishioner. As he listened to the piety talk he knew it was "a message especially for me." He went to Cursillo as a curious clergy observer, but soon became an eager participant.

Pastor Gene Hermeier was passionate about civil rights and socio-economic equality. He participated in many demonstrations and was even arrested in Chicago during one of his protests. Cursillo showed him that there could be equality in worship and he embraced the movement and began work to help form the National Lutheran Via de Cristo.

Pastor Ron Qualley talked about the Via de Cristo community, mentioning many "wonderful moments with the people of God." Surrounded by so many other denominations during a weekend he knew for sure that "this is the way the kingdom of God should be." Pastor Ron also helped to start the Kairos Prison Ministry in Florida.

Rachel Kahl related her experiences with making her

weekend, Western North Carolina Cursillo #15. She said that her husband was not interested in going so she couldn't go when she wanted to. He finally relented, but went only to analyze and find fault with the movement. But he had his moment with Jesus while he was there and nothing was the same. Pastor Kahl spent many years joyfully serving the WNC Via de Cristo.

Pastor Peter Setzer was elected in 1994 to serve as the Spiritual Director for National Via de Cristo. He was instrumental in putting together what we now know as our "green card" for reunion groups. Pastor Setzer also told us why the cards are green. They are symbolic of the green cards that the government issues to resident aliens in this country. They are "permission to live in a new kingdom." One experience that he shared with us was while renewing with some of his male parishioners. He said that at first their altar visits were a little awkward, but after a few weeks the men began praying the most beautiful prayers. Pastor Setzer commented, "Anything that makes Lutheran men pray like this has my strong support!"

Special guests Pastor Carroll and Judy Lang offered their greetings by video since they were unable to be with us. Carroll is a past Spiritual Director for the national secretariat and Judy was secretary.

ORIENTATION

Over fifty first-timers to NLSAM, as well as several “old-timers” were treated to an entertaining and informative orientation by Carolyn Hawkins, NLS VP of Administration, who encouraged everyone to bring a spirit of *idealism, cooperation* and *charity* to the annual meeting. A special forum celebrating thirty years as an organization and twenty-five years as “Via de Cristo” will be held Thursday night with an informal reflection and reminiscing of years past. Thirty states, forty-four secretariats and over one hundred thousand Cursillistas make up the movement.



Acronyms were explained: NLS is National Lutheran Secretariat, EB is the Executive Board. AM is Annual Meeting and HC is Host Committee. A map of the campus was reviewed and participants were reminded that all meetings will be held in either the Sykes or Dana buildings.

Most importantly, attendees were instructed to locate their small group assignment and then complete their schedule in order to expedite transitions. Small group assignments and the schedule are located behind the clear tab in the notebooks.

When going to the dining hall for meals, it is recommended to leave your bags outside the dining hall to allow for better flow of traffic. Attendees were advised to get their seats first for the Saturday dinner and then be served their meal instead of going through the buffet line first.

Carolyn notes prior to each worship service, there will be fifteen minutes gathering music. Only one offering will be taken on Saturday, and checks can be made out to the NLS. Please leave the Worship Booklet after each service.

First-time participant's photo will be taken on Thursday evening. We would also like to do a large group photo and have asked everyone attending to be present. Additional photos will be taken in recognition of those who were involved in the movement in 1981 and 1986, and all past/present board members.

Room 228 of Sykes will serve as Chapel. Palanca Team members can be identified with blue stoles.

As is done with all our national meetings, everyone was encouraged to sign the posters in Room 202. You will find office support for supplies, copies and computer access is available in Room 28.

Please note that the maximum seating for the seminars is forty-six. Therefore, everyone was encouraged to attend the seminar to which they are assigned.

Some vendors selling Via de Cristo products will be located in the lobby of Sykes, and Symbols, Inc. are on third floor.



MORNING WORSHIP

The Holy Spirit was certainly present when the Promise - Praise & Worship Team from Messiah Lutheran Church kicked off the Opening Worship with lively song and music. Pastor Reggie Hansome of Living Waters Lutheran Church in Charlotte managed to elevate the enthusiasm when he took the pulpit. Excitement ran so high that the Sharing of the Peace had to be called. Using John 14:1-6 as the Gospel lesson, Pastor Hansome prayed for everyone in attendance at the NLSAM to end the meeting a changed person by having a closer image of Christ. He further prayed for everyone to be more blessed when they leave than when they came.



The audience was reminded that of all the disciples, Thomas was the only one brave enough to admit that he did not know where Jesus was going nor how the disciples were to follow. None of us today have the answers either based on our years of study and experience. Everything depends on our focusing on Jesus. Our best deeds and ideas come from Him and not ourselves. Attendees were challenged to direct our attention by “Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize”, and the prize is Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Pastor Hansome asked all disciples to receive two things: “A Blessin’ & A Lesson”. The “Blessin’” is that we are precious children of God, and the “Lesson” is that, even though we are loved and forgiven, God wants us to live more like Jesus. Worship ended with the Eucharist and closing song and prayers.



2011 Keynote Address

Bishop Leonard Bolick delivered the Keynote address to the delegation today. He made Western North Carolina Mixed #2 in 1993, where he sat at the table of St. Marks. In his introduction by Pastor John Propst, we learned that he has been the Bishop of the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA for the past 15 years. He is a great friend to the Via de Cristo movement, working weekends in both Eastern and Western North Carolina. It was noted that his commitment to the movement not only includes working weekends but he attends the team meetings too!



Bishop Bolick shared some wonderful experiences of his growing up in a Christian environment. He spoke of his father and his commitment to our Lord and his father's favorite passage from the Bible, John 3:16. He said that his father always kept the family Bible open to that particular passage and when he could no longer make it to church physically, he had an altar set up at home. It had Holy, Holy, Holy on it, and was complete with a cross, parament, candles, and the family Bible open to John 3:16.

On his final day in his earthly life, he slumped over in front of that altar, and joined the saints triumphant. Bishop Bolick said his family spent that night at the funeral home with a certain peace knowing where his Dad was.

He told us that the book of John contained more information about Jesus than either Matthew, Mark, or Luke. He said Martin Luther considered it the most important book. He shared many examples of The Way, The Truth, & The Life. We were all blessed by his presence as well as his message.

Thursday Night Worship Service of the Way

Our Thursday evening ended with an inspiring worship service. We were called to worship by the music of "Promise," the Praise and Worship Team from Messiah Lutheran in Charlotte, led by Brian Vanderhill. They kept the musical inspiration coming throughout the service. Pastor Tim Baldinger led us in liturgy and The Rev. Dr. Bishop Herman Yoos, Bishop of the South Carolina Synod of the ELCA brought us the message.

Bishop Yoos spoke to us about the passionate love Jesus has for each of us and how Jesus is fully committed to his relationship with us. As the Bible so often does, the Bishop compared this love to the love a bridegroom has for his bride. He encouraged us to verbally tell Jesus how much we love him. And then, right after the sermon we sang our love to our Savior with these words written by Brian Vanderhill: "You offer hope that the world cannot give. You fill me with joy I can laugh, love and live. Nothing compares to You; I'm in Your grip. Living life here at your feet You're all that I need."



BUSINESS MEETING #1

Tracy Schmidlin, NLS President, opened our first business meeting of the 2011 NLS with introductions of the current elected board and appointed positions. Dr. Pamela Davies the president of Queens University shared a warm welcome to the delegates and visitors. She talked about the history of the college and a new "green" initiative that will position Queens as a model for environmental stewardship. An expansion of its footprint along the Queens Corridor will enable the school to become an even more strategic contributor to the Charlotte region.

Glenn Deal, a representative from Thrivent Financial also welcomed the group. He is a Cursillista and chairman of publicity for the weekend. The seating of the 86 delegates was done and Katie emphasized how important it is for each secretariat to let her know when they have changes to their board. She will pass that information onto others, such as the data base coordinator. Board reports were discussed and questions answered.

Tracy said at this annual meeting we are sitting in the midst of people from the pages of our history and asked them to stand. They were there when the idea was discussed to start a national movement and signed that charter. Then others stood who were on the board when our name was changed to Via de Cristo, nine years ago. We have a rich history that will continue next year when we celebrate 40 years since our first Lutheran weekend. It was noted that up through 2010 we have had 99,960 people who have made a weekend. By now in 2011, we are over 100,000 people in our movement.

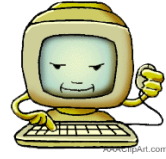
The community was encouraged to take what they learn on this weekend back to our secretariats and share it. This material can help your community to examine where you are and where you are going. Other business presented was the nomination process and that we currently have three positions with three applicants; Ed Broestl is running for president, Steve Gielda for a second term as VP of Outreach and Magdala Ray is nominated for secretary. If others are interested in running, the form can be obtained from Carolyn Hawkins or in the NLS office.

Tracy then briefly shared the history of our National Coordinator/ Executive Director position and where we are at this time. She encouraged people to pray about making a decision this weekend, to review the job description and to consider the board's recommendations to move forward. Discussion will occur at another business meeting. Larry Conway, Web Page Coordinator also noted that information in his report will be discussed later as well. The last business item to occur was presented by Steve Barnett, Treasurer, asking the community to consider making changes to the current dues/fee schedule.



REMINDERS.....

- **VERY IMPORTANT:** Dorm access card and room key: There is a **\$65.00** (lost key) and **\$25.00** (lost security pass) replacement charge. Please return your key in the little brown envelope.
- Computer usage and internet access: Queens University WIFI network key is **quroyals**: User ID: **Camps2011** & Password: **Camps2011**
- Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices and no flash photos during worship services.
- Palanca Posters are available to sign in Sykes, Room 202.
- Palanca Chapel is located in Sykes, Room 228. The host committee can be found wearing blue stoles and are willing to pray
- An offering will be received at the Saturday Evening Worship Service for Outreach. Checks can be written out to the NLS.
- Host committee members have red lanyards, we are here to serve you—just ask!
- If your transportation plans change, please let the host committee know.
- Golf Carts are here to assist you in transportation between buildings.



Don't forget to visit the NLS website:
www.viadecristo.org



This weekend we are and lifted up in prayer as evidenced by the prayer warrior names surrounding the Sykes Auditorium.

Friday
5:00 – 5:30 PM
Frank & Delynn Torrey
Kannapolis, NC

First time visitors to the South are advised about breakfast down here. In restaurants, no matter what you order, you will likely receive a serving of a white and grainy mixture. These are grits. Not to worry. You don't have to order them; you don't have to pay for them. You don't even have to eat them if you don't want to. Just like "Grace", grits happen! Enjoy and accept both.



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

The emergency phone number to give to your family and friends at home is Larry Bowman's cell: **828-244-7813**. If there is a medical emergency issue, please call 911. If you have a medical concern you can call Lois Witham: cell: **704-517-5882**.

Schedule for Friday, July 29, 2011

Time	Event	Building	Location
6:45 a.m.	Breakfast	Y D H	Dining Hall
8:30 a.m.	Opening Worship	Dana	Auditorium
9:45 a.m.	Forum	Dana	Auditorium
To follow	Small Groups (see clear section)		
11:00 a.m.	Business Meeting #2	Sykes	Auditorium
12:30 p.m.	Lunch	Y D H	Dining Hall
1:30 p.m.	Seminar #1 (see clear section)		
2:30 p.m.	Regional Meeting (see clear section)		
3:45 p.m.	Dialogue/Committees (see clear section)		
5:30 p.m.	Dinner	Y D H	Dining Hall
6:30 p.m.	Small Groups (see clear section)		
7:30 p.m.	Worship	Dana	Auditorium
	Hospitality to follow worship ~	Y D H	Dining Hall

Y D H – Young Dining Hall, Dana – Dana Auditorium, Sykes – Sykes Auditorium



Vol. 19.2 Friday July 29, 2011

CONEXIONES is the official publication of the National Lutheran Secretariat, a national association of the Via de Cristo (Way of Christ) movement, representing over 99,960 who have participated in 44 movements across the U.S. The purpose of this publication is to inform the delegates about the activities of the Annual Meeting.

Conexiones Editor:
Judy Laabs-Foss
4495 Margaret Street
St. Paul, MN 55110
651/429-6762
jer2911@comcast.net