

THE GRAPEVINE

Winter 2009

Our Youth Ministry Theme: Changing the World

Events focus on justice, serving

The 2009-2010 theme for youth ministry in the South Carolina synod is “*Changing Our World*” and youth events are focusing on issues of justice, answering God’s call to Christ-like servanthood. Continuing the momentum begun at the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July, where 650 youth and adults from SC were among 37,000 who participated in *Jesus+Justice+Jazz*, our first two events saw youth and adults answering that call.

In November, nearly 50 participated in the Hand in Hand servant event, working with the United Methodist Relief Center to repair homes of rural poor in the lowcountry (below left).

The Jesus Justice Jazz Tour Event on Dec. 5 was a day of service, learning and rallying to raise funds and awareness of worldwide and local needs. Nearly 350 gathered at St. Stephen, Lexington to participate in the interactive service fair and concert by Agape (David Scherer), Rachel Kurtz and Lost and Found. See inside this issue for more on these and other upcoming events.



Agape invites the crowd to “Rejoice” during the J3 Tour event Dec. 5. This was part of a nationwide concert tour to raise funds for the World Hunger Appeal, following the ELCA youth gathering in New Orleans.



Left, Hand in Hand Servant Event; Above, Jesus+Justice+Jazz Concert crowd.

Hand in Hand Servant Event

CAUTION: GOD AT WORK

by Alyssa Gavalas

Recently I had the opportunity to go on the Hand in Hand Service Weekend at the Coastal Retreat Center at the Isle of Palms. It was truly an amazing thing to go and experience God at work in the youth and adult leaders that attended the weekend. Our large group of people split into three service teams: one group worked on the exterior of a house, painting it as well as painting the baseboards for the interior. Another group got the chance to demo a house completely to make room for the new house that the United Methodist Relief Center was supplying. The last group went to one site, but worked in three groups: one redoing half of the roof, another building a wheelchair ramp on the front of the house, and the last under the house removing old insulation and placing a tarp to protect the house from moisture damage.



While I was there I had the chance to do something that I never even considered doing, working on the roof of a house. I will be the first to tell you that I do not like heights at all, but for some reason I volunteered to go with the group that worked on the roof. Once I got up the ladder for the first time I immediately went to stand in the middle, making sure that I was nowhere near the edge. As the day went on I realized that being on the roof wasn't too bad after all. I got the chance to learn how to redo a roof and I got the chance to meet some amazing people. I also got to see God working through all of the people on my site. As the day pressed on and we all grew tired, it seemed that we all got a second wind that helped us keep going. That night when we all came together to share stories of our experiences on each of our worksites, I couldn't help but smile at how all of us could have so much fun working on houses with people that we may not have known very well.



We also talked about keeping the feeling of service alive that many of us experienced at the Youth Gathering this past summer. Service does not always come in a large package with a bow on top of it. Service is happening all around us every day, we just have to take the step out of our comfort zone and serve the best way that we can. We can serve the people around us in so many ways, whether it is working on a house or even just sending a friendly smile and asking how someone is doing. God is at work all around us, so open your eyes, open your hearts and enter the construction site that is our world.

Caution: God *is* at work!

***Operation New Creation* encourages groups to search for needs, fill them, and tell about it!**

The SC Synod Youth Ministry Cabinet has come up with a plan that could actually, as our theme says, Change Our World. This program, called "Operation New Creation", encourages congregational youth groups to look with the eyes of God for people or areas of need within their own communities. The next step in this program is to come up with a plan to fill that need, using whatever resources they can muster. Lastly, groups are asked to put together a creative way of telling the story of your experience of seeking and serving. These "stories" will be presented at each of the Spring Conference Youth Gatherings. In the process, the hope is that, not only will needs be discovered and met, but that relationships will be formed by those serving and being served. Also, we will be answering God's call to 24/7 discipleship, serving and caring for one another as a way of life.

So, let's get busy and seek the needs around us, figure out how we can best fill them, and then tell the story!! In the process, the spirit of God will be present and amazing things will happen! Who knows, maybe our world *will* change and a new creation will emerge!

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" — 2 Corinthians 5:16-17



2009-2010 SC LCY Officers: Your South Carolina Synod Lutheran Church Youth Officers for 2009-2010 are: (left to right) Kerri Busbee (Holy Trinity, North Augusta), Treasurer; Morgan Cooley (Our Saviour, Greenville), Secretary; Joel Antley (St. James, Graniteville), President; Hannah Rohrer (Our Saviour, Greenville), Vice President; and Jonathan Sanchez (Good Shepherd, Columbia),

Jesus+Justice+Jazz Tour Event: Making a difference by . . .



...filling plastic bottles with laundry detergent for Harvest Hope Food Bank to distribute...



...making God's Eyes and "warm fuzzies" to share with residents of Lutheran Homes...



...writing blessings on boards to be used to build a Habitat for Humanity home...



...filling gift bags for Hopewell Ministries in Williamsburg County...

THANKS!!

The following sponsors and donors made the J3 Tour Event possible...

Christus Victor, Columbia
 Cross and Crown, Florence
 Immanuel, Greenwood
 Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Greenville
 Redeemer, Columbia
 St. James, Graniteville
 St. Thomas, Chapin
 Transfiguration, Cayce
 Thrivent Financial for Lutherans
 Willingham and Sons Lumber, Newberry
 Midlands Reformation Party
 St. Stephen, Lexington: hosting and for serving the hot dog supper



...praying, by creating a prayer cloth to lift up those in need of God's comforting presence...



...writing letters of advocacy for therapeutic foster care. Foster Care is one of the programs of Lutheran Family Services. Nearly \$400 in change was also collected for the LFS Changing Children campaign.

Helping Ministries / Agencies Represented

The following helping ministries and agencies participated in the December 5 interactive service fair as part of the JJJ Tour Event at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Lexington:

Habitat for Humanity—Midlands

Harvest Hope Food Bank

Homeworks, Inc.

Hopewell Ministries of Williamsburg County

Lexington Interfaith Community Services

Lutheran Family Services of the Carolinas

ELCA World Hunger Appeal

\$3000 + collected for World Hunger Appeal

A total of just over \$3000 was collected for the World Hunger Appeal at the recent JJJ Tour Event. In addition, crafts were made for Lutheran Homes residents, plastic bags were collected and bottles of laundry detergent were filled for Harvest Hope Food Bank; socks, underwear and children's books were collected for Hopewell Ministries in Williamsburg County; nearly \$400 was collected for children served by Lutheran Family Services; blessings were written on boards to be used in the building of a home by Habitat for Humanity; letters were written to service men and women serving overseas; youth served at the Lexington Interfaith Community Services Thrift Shop; letters and cards were written advocating for hunger related issues; and prayer concerns were recorded on a prayer cloth, lifting up the needs of others into the care of God.

A special THANK YOU to St. Stephen, Lexington for hosting this event and for serving the hot dog supper!!

The Jesus—Justice—Jazz Tour Concert featured artists Agape (pictured on front page), Rachel Kurtz (below left) and Michael Bridges (below center) and George Baum (below right) of Lost and Found. The nationwide tour hopes to raise a total of \$50,000 for the World Hunger Appeal. This amount will be added to what has been and continues to be collected as a result of the ELCA Youth Gathering held in New Orleans in July.



How does Youth Ministry happen in the SC Synod?

Ministry by, with and for youth in the South Carolina Synod happens through a structure that is actually two-fold. The Youth Ministry Cabinet, made up of youth and adult representatives of six geographic conferences, is a committee of the synod, under the Ministry Team for Congregational Life and is funded by the synodical budget. The Lutheran Church Youth organization operates under its own constitution and budget, funded by pledges from congregational youth groups. Primarily, the Youth Ministry Cabinet (synodical budget) funds the synod youth ministry coordinator's position, three winter retreat events and an event for upper elementary youth, as well as subsidizing other youth-related events. The LCY budget (pledges from youth groups) funds the LCY Convention gathering and the three Love Project events: Hand in Hand service weekend, Bridge Building Camp and Camp HUGG, as well as expenses for sending delegates to the national Lutheran Youth Organization convention every three years.

This ministry is committed to helping youth to know and share God's love in Christ. Through the events and relationships formed, many of these youth will make connections that will last a lifetime. By participating in this ministry, it is hoped that youth will see themselves as a vital part of the Church of today, the Body of Christ in the world, bearing God's light to all in darkness... learning that together we can do so much more than we can individually. Together we can make a difference!

You can be a part of this ministry! As a youth: attend one or more of our youth events; use your leadership gifts on your conference steering committee or run for state-wide LCY office; let others know what participation in these events means to you. As an adult: pray for God's Spirit to work in and through the lives of young people and the adults who care about them; share your faith with a young person; offer yourself as a leader in the synod youth ministry program; encourage your congregation to financially support this and other synod programming.

Winter is the time to Retreat!

Winter Retreats are just around the corner, so you'll want to mark your calendars, fill out the registration form in this Grapevine and plan to attend one of these events! Ninth and tenth graders will be focusing on the theme "Unlock My Heart, Lord, and Throw Away the Key," looking at ways we can open our hearts to a new perspective and be forever changed into the people God created us to be, people who do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. "Be the Change" is the theme for the 11th and 12th grade retreat in February. Participants will learn how positive change can happen if we all respond to God's call to care for our neighbors. Juniors and seniors are getting ready to experience a time of taking more responsibility for the way they live their lives, independent of their families. Tools for making lifestyle choices that will affect their lives and others' lives will be offered. "Faith Factor" is the theme for the seventh and eighth grade retreat, dealing with ways to have faith be the prime factor in decision-making, especially looking at issues of sexuality from a Christian perspective.

Join with other Lutheran youth from across the synod for a weekend of learning, worship and fellowship!

SC Youth Ministry Calendar of Events

2010

2010

January 22-24	9th-10th Grade Winter Retreat – Camp Kinard
February 19-21	11th-12th Gr. Winter Ret. – Coastal Ret. Ctr., Isle of Palms
March 19-21	7th-8th Grade Winter Retreat – Camp Kinard
March 27	Club 456 — TBA
June 18-20	LCY Convention Gathering — Newberry College
July 18-23	Bridge Building Camp — Camp Kinard
July 25-30	Camp HUGG — Camp Kinard

Mark these dates on your calendar now and watch your mailbox or ask your pastor or youth leader for details on these and other up-coming Synod youth events!
OR Contact Youth Ministry Coordinator Stephanie Stoudemayer:
e-mail: stephanie@scsynod.com
We want *you* there!

A Word About Deadlines!

As we finalize plans for each of these events, there are preparations we must make based on the number of participants we expect. We set our deadlines to give us time to make sure we have what we need for everyone to have the best experience possible. SOOOO. . . We really need you to honor the deadlines for the events you plan to attend. That means, let your pastor or youth leader know that you will attend by the deadline they set for you so that they can get that in to us in time. THANKS!

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***Check out the web site: sclutheran.org, click on Lutheran Youth
and join the SCLCY Facebook group***