

Lutheran Services Florida Update

Last year Lutheran Services Florida cared for 895 children in our four youth shelters. These include children that are victims of abuse, neglect, and human trafficking. Our ministry gives these kids hot meals, a caring environment, and a safe place to sleep for as long as it is needed. These children usually arrive with only the clothes on their backs and it is only through the support of our Lutheran brothers and sisters that we are able to provide them with clothing, personal items, and school supplies. Please keep this ministry in your prayers during this coming year as the beds in our shelters continue to be full. If you would like to help please contact Steve Cecchetti at scecchetti@lsfnet.org or (407) 878-8397.

February Events

Feb 15: Valentine's Day/Shrove Tuesday lunch

Feb 18: Ash Wednesday, Imposition of Ashes, 7:00pm

Feb 25: Family Promise informational meeting, Coral Gables Congregational Church, 7:00pm



St. James Lutheran Church
Newsletter **Vol. 2, No. 6**
February 2015

St. James worships every Sunday at 10:30am, with a bilingual service mostly in English but with some Spanish. The entire liturgy is presented in both languages in the weekly bulletin, so that one may follow along in the language one prefers. Pastor Boudon preaches the sermon in English, followed by a brief summary in Spanish.

Sunday school. St. James offers a full Sunday school program for adults and children immediately after worship every Sunday morning. There is Bible study for adults and Christian education for children.

Monthly Healing. St. James offers a healing liturgy as a part of our normal worship service on the third Sunday of the month, replacing the Prayers of Intercession.

[From the Pastor](#)

Continuing with the theme I began last month, the primary task facing most Christian churches today – including our own – is how to reach out to the estimated 80% of the population that currently does not belong to or attend a church on a regular basis. In a recent sermon I mentioned that one way to do this is to make the church relevant to the world because, for most of that 80%, it has become largely irrelevant. It has become irrelevant because it no longer tackles the big issues facing our society: poverty, hunger, homelessness, violence, racism, and the environment, just to name a few. Most churches tend to stay away from these issues believing they are political and that there should be a complete separation of church and politics. This is a mistake since the church is a part of the world and cannot simply isolate itself from the world. Jesus, himself, did not shy away from the politics of his time, nor did his apostles.

Before you stop reading this and accuse me of imposing my political beliefs on you, let me just say that my politics are based upon the gospel and on the example that Jesus set for us, his followers. In his book *God's Politics*, Jim Wallis writes that any political stance taken by the church should be focused on the common good: “Prophetic religion always presses the question of the common good. Indeed, the question, ‘Whatever became of the common good?’ must be a constant religious refrain directed to political partisans whose relentless quest for power and wealth makes them forge the ‘commonwealth’ again and again. That common good should always be constructed from the deepest wells of our personal *and* social responsibility and the absolute insistence to never separate the two” (2005: 6).

In other words, we as the church are called to support those policies that benefit all people, rich and poor, male and female, citizen and immigrant, adult and child. The church must rise above partisan politics and urge *both* political parties to keep the common good at the core of their discourse. It is only when the church does this that it will become relevant again, seeking the common good just as Jesus and his apostles did. Instead of shying away from politics, we should be engaging it, using the good news of the gospel as our guide.

[ELCA News](#)

[ELCA response to Ebola outbreak totals \\$275,000](#)

CHICAGO (ELCA) – Since the outbreak of the Ebola virus in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has provided \$275,000 to support the work of Lutheran companion churches in both African countries.

The funds were disbursed through Lutheran Disaster Response International to ELCA companion churches and partners responding to the immediate needs of people impacted by the disease. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly 8,500 people have died due to Ebola in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea.