

ELS Florida Women's Mission Rally ♦ Spring, 2017
Special Dates and Events of the Florida Churches of the ELS

ELS Florida Church "Birthdays"

GVB ✕ Grace Lutheran Vero Beach 1917 (joined ELS 1976)
OSN ✕ Our Savior Lutheran Naples 1972 (joined ELS 1975)
TLS ✕ Trinity Lutheran Sebastian 1983 (joined ELS 1984)
OSL ✕ Our Savior Lutheran Lakeland 1985 (joined ELS 1985)
PSL ✕ Christ Lutheran Port St Lucie 1986 (joined ELS 1987)
NLS ✕ New Life Lutheran Sebring 1990 (formally organized 1992)
PLK ✕ Peace Lutheran Kissimmee 1992 (formally organized 1992)
PLL ✕ Peace Lutheran Lakeland 1992 (joined ELS 1993)
RWH ✕ Resurrection Lutheran Winter Haven 1994 (joined ELS 1995)

Schools, Pre-schools, VPKs

Christ Lutheran Port St Lucie (Preschool/VPK, then Grade School 2014)
Grace Lutheran Vero Beach (Gracie's Preschool)
Our Savior Lutheran Naples (Preschool, VPK until 2015)
Peace Lutheran Kissimmee (Preschool/VPK, then Grade School 2004)

Church Anniversaries (Recent & Coming)

Our Savior Lutheran Lakeland 30 years January 2015
New Life Lutheran Sebring 25 years December 2015
Christ Lutheran Port St Lucie 30 years 2016
Peace Lutheran Lakeland 25 years January 2017
Grace Lutheran Vero Beach 100 years! February 2017

♦ **ELS Florida Women's Mission Society !30 years! March 11, 2017** ♦

Peace Lutheran Kissimmee 25 years April 2, 2017

New "Homes" (Church & School buildings built and dates)

Christ Lutheran Port St Lucie (Church 1989, School building 2015)
Grace Lutheran Vero Beach (Church buildings 1919, 1950 [1960], 1989)
Our Savior Lutheran Lakeland (Church 1989, Addition 1992)
Our Savior Lutheran Naples (Church 1973['77], 1993, ActivityCenter 1998)
New Life Lutheran Sebring (Church 1993)
Peace Lutheran Kissimmee (Church 1994, School building/s 2007, 2014)
Peace Lutheran Lakeland (Church 1997)
Resurrection Lutheran Winter Haven (Church 1996)
Trinity Lutheran Sebastian (Church 1983)

Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL  ELS
ELS Florida Women's Mission Rally ♦ Spring, 2017
30th Anniversary 🕊 March 11th, 2017 🕒 10:00 am



ELS Florida Women's Mission Society logo superimposed on ELH logo.

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ELS Florida Women's Mission Rally ♦ Spring, 2017
Saturday Morning Opening Devotion

WELCOME All, to this 30th Anniversary Rally of the Florida ELS
Women's Mission Society



Thanksgiving Responsory Devotion

(for Congregations of the ELS in Florida)

All: **Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise.** (Psalm 145:3a)

L: For the gift of the congregations that You have established in Florida.
(List of ELS Florida congregations on back page)

All: **We celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.** (Psalm 145:7)

Hymn: *Awake, Thou Spirit, Who Didst Fire* (ELH 395, vv.1&5)

1. Awake, Thou Spir-it, Who- didst fire - The watchmen of the Chur-ch's youth,
Who faced the Foe's envenomed ire, Who witnessed day and night Thy Truth,
Whose voices loud are ringing still - And bringing hosts to know Thy Will.
5. The Church's des-ert path- restore - Let stumbling blocks- that in them lie,
Hinder Thy Word- henceforth- no more, - Error destroy-, and her-e-sy,
And let Thy Church, from hirelings free – Bloom as a garden fair to Thee!

(for VPKs, Preschools, Schools started in Florida)

All: **Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise.** (Psalm 145:3a)

L: For Christian education, for the blessing of training our children in the
way they should go with the establishment of schools, preschools and
VPKs in Florida, we thank You Lord, *(schools,.... noted on back page)*

All: **We celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.** (Psalm 145:7)

Hymn: *Let Children Hear the Mighty Deeds* (ELH 180, vv.1-2)

1. Let children hear the mighty deeds - Which God performed of old,
Which in our younger years we saw, - And which our fathers told.
2. Make unto them His glories known, - His works of pow'r and grace,
And we'll convey His wonders down - Through ev'ry rising race.

(for Life: Families, Children, Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals in churches)

All: **Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise.**

L: For the blessing of all the Christian families that have been served in
all the stages of our earthly lives by our churches, and for the peace
you bring to the home through Jesus,

All: **We celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.**

Hymn: *Hear Us Now, Our God and Father* (ELH 188, v.2)

2. Give us joy to lighten sorrow; - Give us hope to brighten life.
Go with us to face the morrow; - Stay with us in ev'ry strife.
As Your Word has promised ever, Fill us with your strength and grace
So that we may serve each other - Till we see you face to face.

(Anniversaries of Congregations and of the Women's Mission Society)

All: **Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise.**

L: For the years of grace You have granted to each church and school,
and especially we thank You for the establishment and for thirty
years of grace You have showered on the *Florida Women's Mission
Society*, *(Recent & Coming Anniversaries on back page →)*

All: **We celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.**

Hymn: *The Lord Hath Helped Me Hitherto* (ELH 71, vv.1&3)

1. The Lord hath helped me hitherto - By His surpassing favor;
His mercies every morn were new, - His kindness did not waver.
God hitherto hath been my Guide, Hath pleasures hitherto supplied,
And hitherto hath helped me.
3. Help me henceforth, O God of grace, - Help me on each occasion,
Help me in each and every place, - Help me through Jesus' Passion;
Help me in life and death, O God, Help me through Jesus' dying Blood;
HELP ME AS THOU HAST HELPED ME!

Luther's Morning Prayer (All pray together)

🌐 *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.* 🕊

I thank You, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear
Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger;
and I pray You to protect me this day also from sin and every evil,
that all my doings and life may please You. Into Your Hands I
commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy
angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me.
Amen.



Doxology Hymn: Praise God, from Whom All (ELH 592, updated lyrics)

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, the Father here below;
Praise Jesus Christ in Heav'n above;
Praise Holy Spirit, God of love. A-men.

CLOSING DEVOTION Our text for this afternoon is **Joshua 1:6-9**.

TEXT Joshua 1:6-9 6 Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. 7 "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

INTRODUCTION These words were given to the **prophet Joshua** on an **important "anniversary."** The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 long years. They had grown accustomed to their life in the wilderness. You can imagine the people gathering the manna and the quail every morning. We all grow accustomed to daily routines; I know that I do. But now Moses had died and Joshua had leadership thrust upon him. Can you imagine how frightening it must've been for him? Yet in our reading, God tells him three times, Be strong and courageous. The "40th anniversary of walking in the wilderness" was about to mark the **beginning of something new for these Israelites**, a break in their routine. They were about to enter the Promised Land, but even better yet they, had the assurance that *"the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*

The theme for today's women's mission rally is **500 Years of Grace**. We are remembering another anniversary that wasn't really different than the anniversary that the Israelites celebrated in our reading. Just as Joshua embarked on something new without throwing away the Book of the Law, **in 1517 Martin Luther** reminded the world of the importance of **"Sola Scriptura"** as he started the church down a new path. With a few swings of the hammer, Martin Luther became a leader of the Reformation. You can bet that he too found comfort in God's words to Joshua, *"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* He needed that courage throughout his life as he battled Popes, Kings, and demons all trying to convince him that God wasn't really with him.

God has been with his people throughout time. You can see God and His providence at work through all of history. Martin Luther with one swing his hammer caused a tsunami worldwide. Henry VI the Pope, and even the Holy Roman Emperor himself sprang to their feet upon reading the words of Luther, but his words always pointed back to Jesus. I'm sure there were times that Luther questioned whether he was strong enough. We all have worries like this, don't we? Am I strong enough to talk to my family about Jesus? Should I bring up my faith around my grandchildren or will it make their parents angry? Yet, the words of Scripture ring as true to you as they did to Joshua and Martin Luther. **"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."**

Today we celebrate another anniversary, the **30th anniversary of the founding of the (ELS Florida) Women's Mission Society/Rally**, and that can be an intimidating thing too. We might wonder as we see all the marvelous things the mission rally has done throughout history supporting missions across the world and continuing to support Christian education and Cross stitch. You might even wonder after 30 years how can we give more than our predecessors. It's times like these that we must remember the words given to Joshua, to be **bold**, to be **courageous**, and most importantly that the Lord your **God will be with you wherever you go**. This is dynamite stuff. Just imagine all that can be done with God's help! There is really no limit! Jesus emphasized this Himself when He said in **Matthew 19:26**, *"Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."*

At **Grace Lutheran in Vero Beach** we recently celebrated our **100th anniversary**. During our anniversary celebration, one of our members shared all the quirky little things that have helped Grace Lutheran serve our Lord. One of my favorite stories told by **Stan Tippen** was how the church council decided to be cheap by pulling in homemade pews. The story goes that the men built these pews but used the cheapest lacquer they could find. The only problem was that the Florida heat caused the lacquer to stick to people's clothes. The ladies sprang to action. They made the finest white slipcovers for the pews. Normally that would have been the end of the story, but as tends to happen, the slipcovers got dirty. Now when they tried to remove them... let's just say God provided the church with brand new pews. I share the story with you to give you encouragement. **God will continue to work through the church, even when there are bumps in the road.** Joshua and Luther both had bumps and setbacks, but God continues, as He promised Joshua, to be with us.

This promise is why we can be so certain that great things will come. The Lord has always supplied his church with the assurance that his Word will never return empty. We should never worry about whether or not we will be successful, for we are assured that our sharing the Gospel will be successful, whether our church has been around 100 years or is celebrating 25 years like Peace in Kissimmee. The Israelites were promised that they were going to go into the Promised Land. Like Luther, we too are assured that our Promised Land is coming. Our Promised Land is given to us by **our Savior Who died on the Cross for you and for me. This is the Savior who promises that He will be with us all the time.** This is the reason why we gather today; this is the reason that we join together in mission work; this is the reason that Joshua carried on, the reason Luther continued to write in the face of adversity, the reason that our church fathers shared the love of Jesus with the world! **What a joy it is to know that we are assured of our Salvation and that we can be strong and courageous in Jesus** just like Joshua and Luther. We do not need to fear as we stand on the cusp of another five hundred years as our Lord is with us. May we truly always find comfort in the God's words to Joshua, **"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."** *IJ'N, Amen. SDG*