

# Faith

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## Yearlong program will strengthen marriages

By Sharon Kant-Rauch  
DEMOCRAT FAITH EDITOR

People bring their own "fire" into a marriage.

If not properly tended, that fire can grow, get out of control and consume a marriage and family.

That's one reason Live the Life Ministries, which was founded 13 years ago to strengthen marriages and families, is offering a new Marriage Enrichment Forum, a yearlong faith-based program for couples starting on Monday. Two of the unique aspects of the forum are its length and the creation of a supportive community

of other couples.

"The idea is to figure out how to come alongside a couple when the fire is burning and pour out living water," said Richard Albertson, founder of the ministry. "We shower them



Albertson

with love and care and support during this season."

The hope is that people who go through the program will have new skills to help other couples who are struggling.

"When marriages hit a rough spot, other people don't know what to do, there's a hands-off

approach," Albertson said. "People don't want to take sides, so they stay away. We're saying that's not a good idea. Now is the time that they need love and support."

Nathan Bell, a Christian counselor from the new Live the Life Ministries in Lakeland, will lead the forum. For seven months, couples will meet on the second Monday of the month at Chez Pierre for dinner and teaching. A retreat is planned for April and a final celebration in November. Homework assignments and prayer and accountability groups may be initiated.

Bell said for years

### IF YOU GO

■ **What:** Live the Life Marriage Enrichment Forum

■ **Where:** Chez Pierre, 1215 Thomasville Road

■ **When:** 6 to 9 p.m. second Monday of the month (for seven months), starting Monday

■ **Cost:** \$800 per couple (includes dinners and retreat); scholarships available

■ **To register:** Call 668-3700 or e-mail [lisamay@livethelife.org](mailto:lisamay@livethelife.org)

he's helped couples to heal their marriages, especially after a crisis. Now he wants to take some of those same

principles and bring them to a larger audience.

"This forum is more educational, one for established marriages," Bell said. "The focus is on restoration."

He said couples also will have a chance to establish relationships with the other members of the group to form a community of support as they work on their individual marriages. Being a witness to one another's changes, holding each other accountable and sharing insights are just some of the group benefits.

"When you put it all together," Bell said, "there's a lot that will be offered."