

DISTRICT NEWS

Congregation shows its "Faith" in plan to rebuild after hurricane

Hurricane Rebuilding Continues in Punta Gorda

Despite Category 4 hurricane damage and insurance hassles to match, the members of Punta Gorda, FL, congregation are living up to their name.

"It has been very frustrating, but we know that the Lord put us here at this time for a reason," said Rev. Dr. Barr T. Chittick Jr., pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, which sustained more than \$500,000 in damages from Hurricane Charley in the summer of 2004.

Today, the once-flooded sanctuary has been repaired and topped with a new roof. But the heavily damaged fellowship hall sits in shambles. The congregation was forced to put rebuilding plans on hold as members await settlement on a disputed insurance claim for the sanctuary.

"Having no fellowship hall is a real hardship," Chittick said.

"Our Sunday morning Bible class meets in a temporary trailer. Meetings take place in the narthex. We have no youth activities.

"Just as so many individual families have had to rebuild, we must rebuild our church, too," he continued. "We are united in that and cannot wait to start on our new fellowship building."

To help make their vision a reality, members are partnering with Capital Funding Services, the capital fund-raising arm of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. CFS, which is a ministry of Lutheran Church Extension Fund, helps congregations and agencies raise funds for capital needs.

Faith-Punta Gorda has launched a Biblically based capital stewardship emphasis to raise funds to help build a new \$1.4-million fellowship facility.

"Faith's name certainly describes this pastor and the members," said Paul Arbesman, the CFS Regional Consultant who is working with the congregation.

"They have been through so much, dealing with hurricane damage to their church, their fellowship hall and many of their own homes while carrying on their ministry.

"As they continue to move forward and build to improve their ministry, they truly are Faith in action!" Arbesman said. A February 24 benefit concert attended by both congregation and community members raised awareness of the capital stewardship emphasis and more than \$4,500 for the new fellowship facility.

Faith has 305 baptized members. Worship attendance jumps as high as 450 with heavy "snowbird" participation in the winter months.

Since 1992, CFS has worked with nearly 600 LCMS congregations and agencies, helping their members commit more than \$227 million to help make ministry visions realities. Additional information is available by calling 800-843-5233 or on the web at www.lcef.org/cfs. □



Working on the Biblically based capital stewardship emphasis to raise funds for a new fellowship hall at Faith-Punta Gorda, FL, are, (seated) Rev. Dr. Barr Chittick Jr., Trustee Earl Cheever, (left to right, standing) Capital Funding Services' Paul Arbesman, Congregation President Ron Norsell and Building Committee Chairman Don Kilps.

Woodlands School to Add Second Grade

Effective with the 2006-2007 academic year, Woodlands Lutheran School-Montverde, FL, will expand its curriculum to include second grade.

"With a goal to grow and add a new grade every year, Woodlands Lutheran School is well on the way to being a complete elementary school," reported Dorothea Holcomb,

publicity coordinator for Woodlands Church & School.

The school began 12 years ago with a pre-Kindergarten program that "proved very successful," she continued. "As the surrounding community grew, a commitment was made to grow the school to meet the needs of the growing student population."

Holcomb emphasized that Woodlands School provides "a

well-rounded curriculum that includes Saxon math, open court language arts, Spanish, music and computers. Teachers encourage students to develop their creative side as well as their analytical side. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is shared with students every day in lessons and in the interaction they have with teachers and staff.

"The result is a more well-rounded, secure and successful

student, which is the hallmark of Woodlands' education program," she concluded.

Woodlands Lutheran School is currently enrolling students for pre-Kindergarten age 3 through second grade for the 2006-2007 school year. For more information or to obtain an enrollment packet, please call 407-469-3355 or visit the web site at www.woodlandslutheranschool.com. □



Woodlands Lutheran School will add 2nd grade to its curriculum in 2006-2007.



At Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, we're putting our faith into action. In fact, we've committed \$100 million to Habitat for Humanity through our Thrivent Builds program. Together, Habitat for Humanity and Thrivent Financial members will work with families in need to build decent, affordable housing in their own neighborhoods.

**Thrivent
Builds**



For additional information on how you can get involved, please call 1-877-682-0370.



MILITARY APPRECIATION — On February 26, Trinity Lutheran-Savannah, GA, held a special service and reception for U.S. military men and woman. Several Trinity members who served in the Armed Forces had just returned from Iraq and Afghanistan. Bill Edwards, Trinity's President and a popular radio personality in Savannah, served as Master of Ceremonies for the festive event. Military members and spouses were presented certificates of appreciation for "protecting our freedoms." Lunch was prepared by congregational families. Shown here at the appreciation event are (front, left to right) Neal Allen, Sonya Willis, Scott Lincoln, Michael Philhower, Chris DuBois, Montez Brown, (second row, left to right) Jon Collins, David Nguyen, Carl Hineman, Herbert Hunter, Lance Pinson, (back row, left to right) Eric Ward, Jeff Sacks, Edward Bohnemann, Todd Freemann, David Wenthe. □