

## Strong Response to Consecrated Stewards During Lent

*NOTE: This update was provided by Rev. Edgar Trinklein, Florida-Georgia's Coordinator of the Consecrated Stewards program.*

The February issue of *Lutheran LIFE* reported on seven congregations of the Florida-Georgia District who had very excellent results in 2007 by using Consecrated Stewards, a

stewardship ministry service for Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod congregations developed by Lutheran Extension Fund.

Grace Lutheran-Jacksonville, FL, and Gloria Dei-Davie, FL, used the Lenten season in 2008 to carry out this stewardship emphasis in their congregations.

The report from Grace Lutheran stated that 123 giving units out of a total of 220 in the congregation completed Estimate of Giving Cards by Consecration Sunday, the climax of the effort. That compared to 48 giving units who submitted financial commitment forms the previous year, an increase of 256% over 2007.

Of those completing cards, 80% increased their financial commitments above last year's amount of giving. The report indicated a total of \$134,851 — 69% — over the offerings from this same group last year.

Pastor Darrel Stuehrenberg of Gloria Dei wrote the following glowing report of using Consecrated Stewards this past Lent.

"The most positive dynamic of *Consecrated Stewards* is the fact that most of the activity takes place during weekend worship and that it is very Gospel centered. This is not a stewardship program focusing

on guilt! During the five- to six-week congregation emphasis time, communication happens via the mail and primarily during weekend worship.

"The pastor preaches a series of messages that are focused on the *Lordship of Christ* and even more importantly, church members share testimonies about the *"Lordship of Christ"* in their lives," continued Stuehrenberg. "In our case, since we used the Lenten season to do our *Consecrated Stewards* emphasis, we also included testimonies being shared during the six mid-week worship services."

He went on, "It is crucial to work closely with a consultant. The consultant does two other things besides meet with your taskforce at the beginning of your program. The Sunday before your conclusion, on *Consecrated Stewards* Sunday, he meets with and updates your church's leaders. He is also your guest preacher

that Sunday. On that final weekend, you have one unified worship service, immediately followed by a catered lunch for all of the church community."

Gloria Dei's *Consecrated Stewards* Sunday "drew a worship attendance that was approximately 25% larger than the previous several months' average worship attendance," Stuehrenberg shared. "We enjoyed a wonderful catered lunch from a local restaurant — underwritten by our leadership families — known for its good food. Again, approximately 25% more folks than we had seen in average worship attendance during the previous months, attended the lunch."

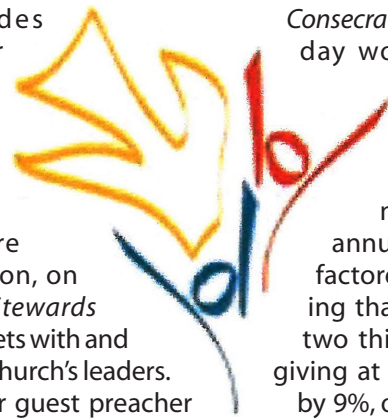
He concluded, "During the *Consecrated Stewards* Sunday worship, about a third of our giving units committed to increase our next year's total annual giving [when factored with estimating that the remaining two thirds would keep giving at their same rate] by 9%, or \$61,000. These

numbers were announced at the catered lunch. That was the only program feature of the lunch. Our lunch took place in less than one hour."

David Kuerschner, Vice President of Capital Funding Service of LCEF, said of Consecrated Stewards, "The program helps congregations cultivate grace-motivated stewards by building on the popular New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program from Herb Miller [Abingdon Press]. CFS asked Rev. Art Scherer, one of its regional consultants, to help develop the CS program — with the author's blessing. Scherer added solid Lutheran theology through Bible studies, sermon outlines, stewardship journeys and prayers.

"Consecrated Stewards is based on the need of the giver to give in joyful response to God, not the need of the church to receive," said Scherer, a 28-year veteran parish pastor and former LCMS Southeastern District president.

For additional information, please contact LCMS Coordinator Diane Heagney at 800-843-5233, or District Coordinator Rev. Edgar Trinklein at 863-644-6140 ([etrink@juno.com](mailto:etrink@juno.com)).



## Consecrated Stewards

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## Lutheran Haven Adds Gift Planning Counselor

Robin E. Paris has joined Lutheran Haven in Oviedo, FL, as Gift Planning Counselor.

In this capacity, she will be working with individuals and families to create plans that are tax-wise, show good stewardship, benefit generations to come and follow the hearts of the donors in "undergirding the mission,



Robin E. Paris

ministry and outreach of the Haven's future years," said Donald Kovac, Executive Director of Lutheran Haven in announcing Paris' appointment.

A native of Michigan, Paris is a graduate of Concordia-Ann Arbor and Concordia-Nebraska. She was called to Trinity Lutheran

School-Davenport, IA, in 1969 and served there in various capacities for 22 years.

Her first husband, David Brown, died in 1984, leaving Paris a widow with two children, Joshua and Sarah. At that time Paris was choir director and church secretary at Trinity.

"My music ministry did much to heal my grieving heart and help me cope with my new role as head of the household," Paris said,

In 1986 she married Richard Paris. They have a daughter, Katharina.

The family moved to Dayton, OH, in 1989, where Mrs. Paris joined The Lutheran School of Dayton as Development Assistant. During her tenure at what is now called The Lutheran School of the Miami Valley she raised more than \$6.4 million. Under her leadership, the school now has an Annual Fund, a quarterly newsletter, an effective Christmas appeal, an Annual Report and several fundraising events.

Paris served on the board for the Miami Valley Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Executives for eight years; held various offices in the Coalition of Ohio Lutheran Development Executives; and is now serving as the National Mentoring Chair for the Association of Lutheran Development Executives.

Paris and her husband, who are members of St. Luke's Lutheran-Oviedo, are living in Winter Springs. □

## Stewardship Emphasis

The thought of a stewardship emphasis any time other than fall may confuse some people who think that stewardship is just about money and budgets and so, naturally, a stewardship emphasis should take place around the time the congregational budget is being developed and approved. It is true that stewardship is about money, but it's about a whole lot more than money. Stewardship has to do with all of life and life's resources as we say in this definition: "Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes." (From the LCMS web site)

This issue of *Lutheran LIFE* focuses on Stewardship. President Michael reflects on that topic in his column on Page 2.

The annual District financial report is featured on pages 7-9. □

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