

## DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Board Revisits, Reaffirms Woodlands Decision


**FROM THE BOARD ROOM**

 by John List  
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**M**eeting at St. Paul Lutheran Church & School-Lakeland, FL, November 11-12, the Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors dedicated most of its opening session to the issue of closing Woodlands Lutheran Camp.

After an opening devotion led by District President Rev. Gerhard Michael, the Board heard two presentations regarding Woodlands. Welcomed first were Patricia Fulton, equine director, and Nancy Adams, head instructor, of the HeRD — Horses for Riders with Disabilities — program.

HeRD provides several different programs “dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through interaction with horses.” Ms. Fulton and Ms. Adams emphasized their “commitment to continuing the ministry” of the program and shared with the Board members different scenarios under consideration. The one most likely to be pursued is a merger with Freedom Ride, an established therapeutic riding program in Orange County. The proposal to Freedom Ride includes a satellite program that would serve HeRD program riders in Lake County.

“We feel this would be the most prudent option for HeRD at this time,” the program representatives said in their Board presentation. “It would allow us to become a part of an established organization, it would require much less of a financial risk to the program and it would allow us time to work on developing a permanent site in Lake County.”

Rev. Brian Kneser, pastor of Woodlands Lutheran Church-Montverde, followed with a presentation on behalf of the retirement community at Woodlands Camp. Four topics were considered: the unique ministry value of the retiree community, the

financial viability of the retiree community, the upgrading of Woodlands facilities and the accumulated debt.

During a lengthy, often sorrowful, session following the two presentation, Board members discussed the two presentations and reviewed options to closing Woodlands Camp. They studied updated financial information on Woodlands Lutheran Camp which confirmed that the negative situation is accelerating.

Board members reaffirmed their original decision to close Woodlands Lutheran Camp. The HeRD program directors and the retirement community were thanked for their presentations and assured that “the utmost care will be taken to handle every situation. Compassion will be part of the task force approach” to working out the details of closing the Woodlands.

President Michael will contact the residents of the Woodlands to assure them that “utmost care will be taken to help them relocate.”

Turning to other business, the Board approved acceptance of revised constitutions from Faith-Sebring, FL; First-Gainesville, FL; Good Shepherd, Fort Myers, FL; and St. Paul-Jacksonville, FL.

**Church Leaders: Congregations have available competent, visionary lay and professional leaders to confidently and joyfully lead the church in ministry.**

Diana Geiger of Trinity-Delray Beach, FL, was elected to fill a vacancy in Region IV for a lay representative. She replaces Jean Gillis of St. Paul-Weston, FL, who has been reinstated to the Commission Minister roster of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and has shifted to assume the Commissioned Minister board position left vacant with the resignation of Sarah Perez-Arche.

Rev. Dr. Wayne Wilde was unanimously reappointed to a

five-year term as Executive Director of the Concordia House of Studies, beginning July 1, 2006 when his first term is completed. The Concordia House of Studies Board of Directors had recommended the reappointment in a resolution that noted “the Concordia House of Studies has a bright future under Dr. Wilde’s leadership, as it seeks to expand its programs, strengthen its connection with congregations and campus ministries, utilize the resources of the larger church and enlist greater number of participants in these expanding programs.”

In another unanimously passed resolution, members of the CHS Board of Directors were reappointed to new three-year terms.

Trinity Lutheran-Crawfordville, FL, in a letter requested that their District membership be transferred from Florida-Georgia to the SELC. The Florida-Georgia Board approved their request. Trinity will remain part of the Florida-Georgia District until the SELC District Board accepts their request.

**Funding the Mission: Congregations practice Gospel motivated stewardship, which enables fully funding the mission of the District.**

District Treasurer Jim Ingersoll presented current financial statements for the Board’s review, noting that our “position is strong.”

The Board approved a recommendation to engage the LCMS Internal Audit Department to perform the District’s audit for fiscal year ending January 31, 2006. This audit will include Woodlands.

The District *Forward Together-Servants in His Mission* consultant, retired Pastor Bob Besalski, has been doing followup work with pastors and congregations to encourage their involvement in the Florida-Georgia capital campaign. The goal is to have the solicitation phase of the campaign concluded by the 2006 District convention, with gifts coming in through 2010. As of September 30, 2005, campaign pledges totaled \$8,754,134.

A Lutheran Church Extension Fund loan request for \$636,430 (\$100,000 new) from Trinity Lutheran-Cape Coral, FL, has been approved.

**Lutheran Schools: Congregations’ school ministries serve as integrated components of their mission strategy.**

The District Lutheran Administrators Association winter

conference will be held February 7-9, 2006, in Orlando under the theme “Overwhelming Grace.” Presenters are Robert Rogalski, Director of the Lutheran Schools Development Center; Julie Lane-Nebeh, Resource Program Director for Special Needs Students at the Lutheran High School of Orange, CA; and Suzanne Bogdan, chair of the Education Practice Group for Fischer and Phillips, Attorneys at Law.

Presenters for the 2006 Nurturing the Faith workshop series include Debra Stroh, Lori Aadsen and Terry Schmidt. The workshops will be offered in the Tampa/St. Petersburg area, Fort Myers, North Miami, Palm Beach area and Orlando area February 20-24. Between 400 and 500 workers are expected to attend.

Florida-Georgia administrators will host the Principals of Large Schools Conference from January 12-14 in Orlando under the theme “Blessed to be a Blessing.” A desired outcome of the event is that the administrators will identify ways that they can share their resources with others so that many may benefit from their blessings.

The 2006 Hearts for Jesus project, which has been developing slowly, will benefit students in the Southern District whose parents no longer have the financial resources to pay Lutheran school tuition. It is estimated that the need in District schools is as high as \$500,000. The Florida-Georgia goal is \$50,000 to be raised through children’s chapel offerings. Thrivent Financial for Lutheran has pledged to match up to \$10,000 as a partner in this project.

**Human Care: Congregations of the Florida-Georgia District and its social service agencies engage in ministries to meet basic human needs within the parish and community.**

The Florida-Georgia District was assigned three congregations in the Southern District to assist in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, then one parish in Texas following Hurricane Rita. Only one of the Southern District congregations needed help in assisting the pastor with roof repairs in Daphne, AL. A member from the congregation requested assistance in getting her local business restarted. First Lutheran-Gainesville is sending a team to assess the member’s needs and will develop an assistance plan. The Texas congregation had requested help for three member families; after Hurricane Wilma struck Florida, that congregation was assigned to another LCMS district.

A report on Hurricane Wilma is on page one of this issue.

**Multi-Cultural Outreach: Congregations reflect the cultural diversity of their communities through intentional outreach and multi-cultural leadership, celebrating our unity in the Gospel.**

“Ablaze! Partnering in Christ” is the theme for the February 2006 Outreach Summits to be held in Ocala, FL; Boca Raton, FL; and Marietta, GA. Stephen Ministries will be offering a “Level 5 Leadership” workshop, and Lutheran Hour Ministries will be providing their four-session “Equipping to Serve” workshop. Scott Snow, the new evangelism executive for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, will provide an update on Ablaze! resources for outreach. Additional information is available on the front page of this issue.

The Hmong Mission Society is forming for Central Florida Hmong ministry. The program is now located at St. Paul-Lakeland but will be expanding as opportunity and resources become available.

A donation of \$3,500 has been given for the Merritt, Haiti, mission to fund a new lay pastor beginning November 2005.

**Spiritual Maturity: Congregations are spiritually mature, firmly grounded in God’s word, equipped and empowered for Christ-like service and witness.**

The 2005 President’s Convocation was a “most positive” event, reported District President Michael. “My confidence is that workers sensed how nurture is critical to carrying out the mission God has entrusted to us — and hopefully they were led to recommit to discipling themselves to ongoing education, as well as making their ministry an effective vehicle for Christian nurture.”

The Middle School Youth Gathering — November 4-6 at Lake Yale Baptist Camp — brought together almost 1,000 youth and adults under the theme “Extreme Makeover: Faith Edition.” The group contributed funds to the Lake County Chapter of Habitat for Humanity to assist in the construction of a local home. Thrivent Financial contributed to the effort. A more complete report on the Gathering will be featured in the next issue of *Lutheran LIFE*. □

**Wenthe Reappointed as Sem President**

Dr. Dean O. Wenthe has been unanimously reappointed to another five-year term as President of Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne.

The reappointment was made by the Seminary’s Board of Regents during their December meeting at Salem Lutheran Church-Tomball, TX.

Responding to the news, Dr. Wenthe, who has served

as President since 1996, said, “I am honored and humbled by the Board of Regents’ reappointment.

“The entire Board of Regents has exhibited extraordinary dedication and brought great wisdom and churchmanship to the calling of forming missionary and compassionate pastors and deaconesses.” □