

## Empty Bowls Luncheon Helps Fight Hunger

Students in 40 schools on Florida's First Coast fashioned 2,500 one-of-a-kind bowls for the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Empty Bowls

Luncheon that benefits the Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida's Second Harvest Food Bank.



Guests attending Empty Bowls get to choose one of the bowls, made by area schoolchildren, to take home.

Among the almost 800 people attending the November 15 event — which annually raises about \$25,000 — were representatives from Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and other Lutheran congregations, not-for-profit agencies, corporations, businesses and individuals. Local celebrity servers gave guests a simple meal of soup, bread and fruit, a reminder to those attending that many families in the Northeast Florida community have even less than

that to eat and often go to bed hungry.

"This also gives people another way to support the



The Rev. Rick Engel, circuit counselor for the First Coast Circuit, Florida-Georgia District, LCMS, gave the luncheon invocation.

more than 1,000 families affected by Hurricane Katrina who have relocated here," said Wayne Rieley, Lutheran Social Services Executive Director. "The Food Bank has been providing additional amounts of food to our member agencies that are helping these families. By

supporting our event, people can help hurricane evacuees and make a donation that benefits our community at the same time."

Several local artists designed bowls for sale at the event, and celebrities such as Hootie and the Blowfish, Senator Bill Nelson, local artist Jim



Dave Weidner, executive director, Congregational Services, Florida-Georgia District, LCMS, visits with Wayne Rieley, LSS executive director, after the luncheon.

Draper, Houston televangelist Joel Osteen and rock 'n roll artist Billy Idol signed bowls for a silent auction at the event.

Student performing artists — including the First Coast High School Men's Chorale, LaVilla School of the Arts String Orchestra and Jacksonville Centre of the Arts dancer troupe — provided entertainment. Delores Barr Weaver, co-owner of the Jacksonville Jaguars, and Rieley offered inspirational reading.

Rev. Rick Engel, counselor for the Florida-Georgia District's First Coast Circuit, gave the luncheon invocation.

The Lutheran Social Services Second Harvest Food Bank is one of more than 200 food banks in the America's Second Harvest food network that work to end hunger in the United States. The LSS food bank recently received the 2005 Grocery Manufacturers of America Growth Recognition Award this year for its increase in food distribution. □

## Yard Sale Benefits US Troops

When the Women's Club of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church-St. Augustine, FL, learned that a small unit of local National Guard troops (2153<sup>rd</sup> Finance

Detachment) was about to be deployed to Iraq, they decided to "adopt" the unit.

Club members worked with a family readiness volunteer

coordinator — whose husband is one of the deployed soldiers — and learned that the unit included 21 soldiers whose families reside from Jacksonville to Orlando. After completing training at Fort McCoy, WI, the soldiers will be deployed to the Green Zone in the heart of Baghdad where they will provide financial support for pay, contracting and fund management for American units and Iraqis serving the American Troops.

Women Club members plan to correspond with the soldiers, including shipments of phone cards and care packages; remembrances of birthdays, anniversaries and special occasions. Prayers will be offered for the soldiers safe return. The women also hope to establish

fellowship with the soldiers' families in Florida.

Proceeds from a recent yard sale — including matching funds from Thrivent Financial — will help support this project.

"The ladies are looking forward to offering a helping hand to let the soldiers and their families know how much they are appreciated," summarized Christ Our Savior Parish Council member Pat Surratt. □



Shoppers browse items at the recent yard sale hosted by the Women's Club of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church-St. Augustine to raise funds for its soldier adoption project.

### REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

— Good Shepherd Lutheran Church-Gainesville, GA, supports the Gainesville/Hall County community through its social ministries program. As of early November, 62 local families had been given food and personal items to help meet their needs during calendar year 2005. In 2004, Good Shepherd assisted 97 families. The Social Ministries program sponsors 10 families each year for Thanksgiving and Christmas with overflowing food baskets. Gateway House and Enota Elementary School are assisted each August with a back-to-school drive to collect various supplies for children in need, and four local children are sponsored with gifts each Christmas. Shown here with some of the donations for families in need is Sondra Lightfoot, Good Shepherd Social Ministries chair. □



**CAMPOUT IN ROCKLEDGE** — The VPK-4-year-old classes at Trinity Lutheran Church and School-Rockledge, FL, culminated a unit about nocturnal animals with a campout in the classroom. The classroom was transformed into a campsite complete with tent, canoe, 'fake' campfire (the s'more, however, were real!) and a tape with Everglades night sounds. Students enjoyed paddling the canoe, fishing, campfire songs and stories and even brought sleeping bags for a short 'sleep.' They were able to spot "stuffed, statue and puppet" nocturnal animals with their flashlights. "It was great fun and many thanks to the hardworking teachers who show their love in so many ways — Mrs. Hartney, Mrs. Rosseau and Mrs. Hanson," said Lavonia Losada of Trinity. □

