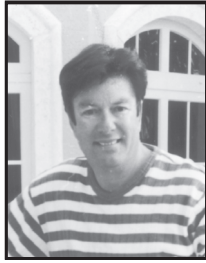


CALENDAR

Board Approves Work Program, Emphasis on Outreach for New Year



FROM THE BOARD ROOM

by John List
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Florida Georgia District

The Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors met January 28-29 at the District's Orlando offices, with an agenda that included adoption of the work program for the upcoming fiscal year.

The \$4,276,400 balanced budget — about \$85,000 higher than the 2004 budget — was presented by Don Lauher, District Executive for Finance and Administration and District treasurer Jim Ingersoll. Some “75% of the budget is allocated toward outreach and building people up,” noted District President Gerhard Michael Jr. Equipping workers for the field is a “fast-growing focus,” he noted.

Ministry goals and emphases for the next year were another Board focus. Rev. Doug Kallesen, executive for outreach, and President Michael talked about the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod *Ablaze* movement and its correlation to the District. A full report is included on page 1.

The Board unanimously approved a resolution authorizing District staff to enter into an agreement to purchase property in Jacksonville, FL, in the area targeted by the First Coast Outreach Council for its next mission start. The property would provide “high visibility with facilities already in place,” including a 300-seat sanctuary, a fellowship hall, fully-equipped kitchen, offices and classrooms.

“We are using every means out there to pull together new missions and funding them through all means we can to do outreach as effectively as possible,” said President Michael. “We are not tied to one model for mission.”

Other business and reports included:

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

The Concordia House of Studies celebrated its first graduation in December of 2004 as four students received diplomas recognizing the completion of the entire CHS curriculum, reported Rev. Dr. Wayne Wilke, CHS Executive Director.

Rev. Dr. Douglas Groll, director of the Hispanic Institute of Theology, and Rev. Benito Perez-Lopez of Hospital del Alma-Leisure City, FL, met with six candidates for the seminary training in Theological Education by Extension.

One of the candidates, Adolfo Borges, was recommended for colliquization — which has been granted. North American Missions has awarded an \$18,000 grant for him to work in Hispanic ministry in the District in 2005.

Members of the Youth and Family Ministry Association gathered at Woodlands Lutheran Camp for a January 23-25 retreat. Approximately 20 pastors gathered at Woodlands January 25-27 for additional training to serve as interim pastors in the District. On February 4-5 Woodlands was the site of a training event for volunteers in youth ministry who assist in facilitating youth ministry activities in the District's circuits.

“These events are excellent examples of how we are equipping our leaders for better service,” emphasized President Michael.

Circuit Convocations are planned for 2005 to “educate, inform, celebrate, build fellowship, explore mission expansion and the like in the local area.” Dates and locations of the Circuit events will be reported on the District web page (www.flga-lcms.org).

An LCMS theological convocation is set for August 23-25 in Arizona. Districts are encouraged to send five or six representatives (its president, a commissioned minister, two laity and one or two clergy), who would become the planning committee for District theological convocations. Plans are under way to combine the District theological convocations with Great Commission Convocations in strategic locations around Florida-Georgia.

“The theological convocations would help us work together effectively in our congregations, making us more hospitable places,” noted President Michael, “and the Great Commission Convocation component would help us gain skills for reaching out to those still outside the fellowship.”

Board members reviewed very comprehensive compensation guidelines for professional workers presented by Mark Brink, executive for schools. When complete, these guidelines will be published on the District web site.

Funding the Mission: Congregations practice Gospel-motivated stewardship,

which enables fully funding the mission of the District.

Don Lauher presented the Board with a three-year plan showing that “we do have funding to carry us through 2007 and to put desired programs into place. We can go forward and accomplish what we want to in our ministries.”

A small group of District leaders gathered at the Lutheran Ministries Center in January for a strategy session to help plan for strengthening District stewardship and increasing revenue. Key goals resulting from that session included increasing unrestricted gifts for District work; completing the *Forward Together-Servants in His Mission* capital campaign; and communicating the message of the District vision, mission and work together.

The District Outreach Council last October met to recommend mission grants for 2005. Grant recommendations totaled just over \$1 million, approximately the same as 2004.

Richard Neubauer, executive for LCEF and finance, reported loan activity since the November board meeting: \$800,000 and \$195,000 to Immanuel-Brandon, FL; \$230,000 to Shepherd's Creek-Bradenton, FL; \$2,434,000 to Bethel-Clearwater, FL; \$15,300 to Good Shepherd-Chiefland, FL.

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

Mark Brink, executive for schools, announced that the District is still pursuing a \$200,000 grant in conjunction with Lutheran Special Education Ministries to support a Special Education Director for Lutheran schools in Florida and Georgia. A secondary plan is being developed should the grant not be approved.

District schools continue to seek National Lutheran School Accreditation and Florida-Georgia District Accreditation at a pace “that provides a real challenge for our School Ministries office and for the District Accreditation Commission.” Five new consultant/team captains were trained in January bringing the total to 14.

Students from many Lutheran schools in Florida and Georgia will gather at St. Paul-Lakeland, FL, for the

March 11 Lutheran School Music Festival. Choral and instrument groups will participate in the day-long event. *Human Care: Congregations and social service agencies of the Florida-Georgia District engage in ministries to meet basic human needs including services to traditional and non-traditional families and singles within the parish and community.*

Senior Ministry Inventory Workshops are planned for seven locations around the District during January and February. Participants will review the inventory and discuss how to use it in their congregations and communities. David Weidner, District Executive for Congregational Services, is coordinating the workshops.

Hurricane relief efforts continue. Some grants have been made and others are in the process. Lutheran Disaster Response has provided a grant to Lutheran Counseling Services to enable three respite retreats for professional church workers and their spouses at no cost to the workers. Dr. Rick Armstrong is the retreat facilitator with other LCS staff participating.

This year's Hearts for Jesus project is providing funding to construct and equip an early childhood center at an orphanage in Cambodia. To date more than 10,000 students from 50+ schools are participating. Expectations are that the \$25,000 goal will be “surpassed significantly.” Denise Gosch, a teacher at St. Paul-Lakeland, FL, who has adopted a child from Cambodia, is coordinating the project.

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

Among ministry has arrived in Central Florida. Rev. Zong Yang has begun his ministry in the Winter Haven, Tampa and Orlando circuits. That work will be bolstered by the mission grant included in the approved 2005 budget.

North American Missions representatives met with District personnel to develop a partnership for calling an Urban Missionary to Atlanta. Synod will supply up to \$100,000 annually, and the District will provide the Holy Cross-Riverdale site as a ministry base. It is hoped that a call will be issued as early as June or July of this year.

Florida-Georgia is one of 10 LCMS districts exploring a partnership with Lutheran Church Extension Fund, North American Missions and Church Development Partners in a pilot project on advance mission sites. The goal is to secure enough acreage on a site to develop income potential for the mission, which could reduce or eliminate the cost of land. □

Forward Together-Servants in His Mission

Activity toward \$10,000,000 goal as of December 31, 2004

Donor	Pledged	Remitted
Congregations	\$ 5,917,741	\$ 2,333,684
Major donors	2,653,063	1,324,753
Others	173,159	151,856
Totals	\$ 8,743,963	\$ 3,810,293