

60th ANNIVERSARY

60th Anniversary Activities Begin

Three special activities are planned to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Florida-Georgia District: "Servants for the Future" Sunday, January 27; Anniversary Sunday, February 17; and Circuit Convocations on the weekends of the Easter season.

The theme of these events — "Following in Faith" — echoes that of the first devotion at the District's constituting convention when it met at Trinity-Orlando, on February 6, 1948.

The anniversary celebration begins with a forward

orientation, as Church Worker Recruitment will be highlighted January 27. The Gospel that day presents Jesus' call to the fishermen by the seashore, "Follow me."

The urgency of the emphasis is highlighted by the double

need: to replace retiring church workers and to provide workers for *Ablaze!*, the expanding missionary program of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. (See related article on page one of this issue of *Lutheran Life*.)

enables us to live for God and carry on the mission God has entrusted to us.

"As people in the wilderness who had been bitten by the poisonous snakes had to look in faith on the bronze serpent to be healed [Numbers 21:1-9], even so we people need to look in faith to the uplifted Jesus to have the life which is eternal. The anniversary services are designed to help us celebrate this new life in the District's past and to rededicate ourselves to continuing that life into the future."

Background material on the history's first six decades has been provided pastors for use in services, bulletins and newsletters by two veteran Florida-Georgia pastors — Rev. Edgar Trinklein, former District president, and Rev. Robert Besalski, who for many years chaired the District's Mission Advisory committee.

Completing the anniversary celebration will be the series of circuit convocations beginning Saturday, April 5, and concluding Sunday, May 4. The convocations are designed to bring information, education and inspiration to participants for the mission of the church. All members are invited to attend.

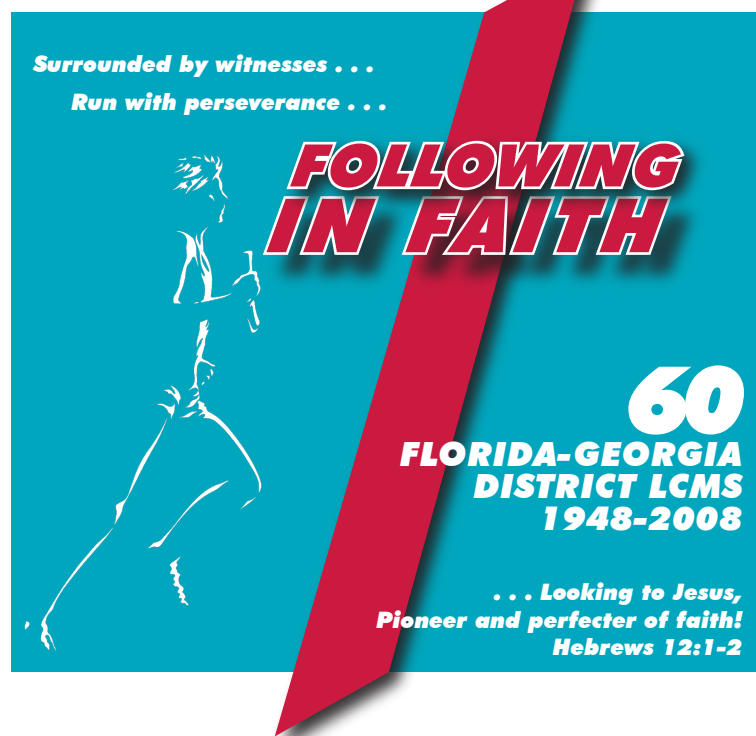
The convocations will carry the "Following in Faith," theme forward, as the worship and Bible studies focus on heroes of faith from Hebrews 11 and the challenge to run the race of faith, looking to Jesus. The convocations will remember "missionary heroes" from the District's past and focus on the unfolding mission in each of the circuits. Good food and fellowship will help make the convocations memorable.

In conjunction with the 60th anniversary celebration, a special offering is being received to raise money for the newly established "Servants for the Future Endowment Fund." The initial goal is to raise \$1,000,000 to provide support for student aid for church work students, the Concordia House of Studies and campus ministry.

"Through these activities," President Michael commented, "we desire to celebrate the heritage we enjoy in our District, create greater awareness of the mission we are privileged to carry out and the strength we experience when we work together as partners in the Gospel and not as isolated individuals and congregations.

"In this we intend to follow faithfully our Lord Jesus and the faithful disciples who have preceded us." □

**"The anniversary services are designed to help us celebrate this new life in the District's past and to rededicate ourselves to continuing that life into the future."
- Florida-Georgia President Gerhard Michael**



All District congregations are being asked to observe Anniversary Sunday, February 17, in their weekend services. The Gospel for that day, the third Sunday in Lent, is John 3:1-17, the foundation passage for the District's Core Values. A special service has been prepared by Rev. Timothy Hartner, pastor of St. Paul-Weston, FL, to aid congregations in giving thanks to God for past blessings and recommitting to the life of faith.

District President Gerhard Michael commented on this passage, "While John 3:16 is familiar to most people, the previous verses help us see that Jesus is the focus of our faith, if we would have the new life that

Consecrated Stewards for 2007 Share Dynamic Program Results

by Rev. Edgar Trinklein

Do you want your church to stop talking MONEY and to start talking MINISTRY? Do you want to raise Christian stewards in your congregation while experiencing a significant increase in annual giving?

"Consecrated Stewards" is an affordable stewardship ministry service for LCMS congregations developed by the Capital Funding Service of Lutheran Church Extension Fund. As District Coordinator of Consecrated Stewards, I would like to give you brief report of the use of this process by congregations in our District in 2007.

Congregations of the Florida-Georgia District who invested in Consecrated Stewards last year are:

- Faith-Eustis, FL
- Good Shepherd-Titusville, FL
- Grace-St. Petersburg, FL
- Living Faith-Cummings, GA
- Redeemer-Stuart, FL
- St. John-Ocala, FL
- Trinity-Delray Beach-FL

Grace-Jacksonville, FL, is scheduled to use the program early in 2008, while Prince of Peace-Orlando, Bethlehem-Jacksonville, and

Guardian-Jacksonville went through the process in Fall of 2006. I list them so that other congregations may contact them for information about the value of the process.

Here are some comments received from people who worked with the program in their congregations:

** Pastor David Albers at Redeemer-Stuart, whose congregation reports a 71.7% increase in annual offering commitments over the previous year, stated, "This is one of the best stewardship processes I have used — low key and Gospel-centered."

** Pastor Scott Gress of Trinity, Delray Beach, whose congregation reported a 43% increase in annual offering commitments and a 48% increase in offerings from the same group last year, wrote, "Our congregation rallied behind this and the leaders were enthusiastic. People genuinely wanted to participate in God's mission and the CS program assisted us . . . Having people share their journey and stories of faith was very powerful."

** Jim Webb, Discipleship Chairman at St. John-Ocala, reported that the number of households who completed and turned in Estimate of Giving Cards for '08

increased by 34% over last year and the amount of projected giving increased 64% over '07. He commented, "The results of this Discipleship-Stewardship ministry process enables us to sincerely recommend the Consecrated Stewards process to every congregation that would like to use God's Word to motivate his 'hand-picked' people to realize their True Love Response when they apply His Word to the Mission and Ministry objectives of His local church family."

** Pastor Tim Droeggemueller of Living Faith-Cummings, GA, whose congregation reported a 140% increase in estimates of giving over the previous year and a 206% anticipated increase in offerings for the coming year based on these estimates of giving, wrote, "Consecrated Stewards is such a wonderful process. The best part was having Pastor Bob Strickert (Guest Leader) here to preach and teach. It was the best stewardship sermon I ever heard. Because of his approach to the entire program, it was so full of the Gospel! It made each of us want to grow that much more in the grace of giving."

** Ken Bengston, Stewardship Chairman of Good Shepherd-Titusville, FL,

reported, "The results for this Stewardship program was very positive as 43% of the giving units pledged and 75% of those pledges increased their giving by an average of 15%. This is a very positive and blessed step up and forward for Good Shepherd."

** Stewardship Chairman Jack Maines of Faith-Eustis, FL, commented, "The Consecrated Stewards program was just what our committee was looking for this year. The best feature was that the program did not require members asking members for a financial commitment. CS provided the information and motivation to the members to complete their estimate of giving cards. We had a 36% increase in family units who returned cards this year. The weekly increase in offerings from those families with a specific amount indicated resulted in and increase of over 10%."

The Consecrated Stewards trained and certified Guest Leaders of our District are Reverends Ed Gross, Robert Jacobs, Gilbert Kuehn, David Parsch, Robert Strickert and Edgar Trinklein and Mr. Norman Thompson. Five of these leaders entered agreements with the congregations listed above to serve in leading

them through the eight-week process this year. Please contact any one of them if you are interested in entering an agreement with them in the CS process this coming year.

"Consecrated Stewards" is a stewardship education emphasis that:

Is founded on our Lutheran understanding of biblical stewardship principles; Helps awaken in Christians the Spirit-led desire to make a free and joyous response to the grace of God in Jesus Christ; Is easy to organize and implement; Can be used any time of the year; Uses trained "Guest Leader" to train, motivate, and assist congregation leaders in maximizing results; Typically results in a 15%-35% increase in annual offering commitments;

The Florida-Georgia District Stewardship Advisory Council will be offering Consecrated Stewards and other Stewardship Resources on a table display at the upcoming Circuit Convocations during the six weekends following Easter in 2008. For additional information or assistance, contact your area representative or DSAC Chairman Rev. Edgar Trinklein at 863-644-6140. □