



LUTHERAN LIFE

Ablaze
Igniting the World with Christ's Love

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President Michael returned to office by acclamation

Convention Endorses, Continues District Focus on Outreach, Mission

Delegates to the recent 29th Regular Florida-Georgia Convention affirmed the District's focus on mission and outreach during a three-day gathering centered around the

theme, "Ablaze in the Light of the Lord."

Agenda items for the June 9-11 Convention in Lake Mary, FL, included election of District, regional and circuit leaders; consideration of resolutions on missions and their support as well as issues relating to the national Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; Bible studies; devotions; and worship.

Returned to the office of President to lead the District for another three years was Rev. Dr. Gerhard Michael, Jr., who was unopposed and elected by acclamation. This was Michael's third consecutive election to that office by acclamation.

Rev. Gregory Walton, pastor of Faith-Marietta, GA, was also unopposed and returned to office as District Vice President for Georgia by acclamation. Rev. Dr. Dennis Glick, senior pastor of St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL, was elected District Vice President for Florida on the second ballot. In a subsequent ballot, Glick was selected

as First Vice President and Walton as Second Vice President.

Rev. Pat F.A. O'Brien was re-elected District Secretary. This will be his third term in that office.

Michael introduced his wife and "partner in ministry," Joan — who received a standing ovation from the Convention — and thanked the District for the "love and support" shown to the couple.

Challenges facing Florida-Georgia

Michael cited five challenges facing the Florida-Georgia District:

- Helping existing congregations to grow. "We have Jesus Christ," he said. "We know our future is secure. Our congregations don't need to be hemmed in by fear; there is no need for a survival mentality. As partners in Christ we are going to grow because of what we have in Jesus."

- Planting new congregations. "As we plant churches, we are a blessing to the community" as we serve people who "want to go to church in their own neighborhood," Michael said.

- Raising up new leaders. The need is there to replace retiring and dying leaders and to help maintain active leaders so they can continue their work.

- Growing in Biblical stewardship. "We need to combat that innate tendency of 'me first,'" Michael stressed. "We need to reverse that thinking... remember that everything is the Lord's... and teach Biblical stewardship to honor Him."

- Strengthening our partnerships. Michael described the District as "a company of people whom God has recruited. We are not volunteers — God has drafted us. We are partnered with Jesus Christ, the ultimate partner. Through this partnership we can do all things. He is the light that cannot be extinguished. Because He shares His light with us, we can be ablaze for the Lord." □

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- Florida-Georgia District Gerhard Michael, Jr.

Presidential comments

In his opening remarks, Michael welcomed Convention delegates, guests and observers as "partners in Christ. Through our baptisms in Christ, we are partners in His mission. Because of that partnership, this Convention will bring a blessing to all of us... and will accomplish much for the Church."

Noting that there had been challenges during the past three years — including two years of devastating hurricane activity and the issue of Woodlands Lutheran Camp — Michael extended his thanks for this partnership. He introduced members of the District support staff and thanked them for their support and service.

The President noted that "the Convention theme Ablaze helps us identify our mission. Jesus is the great light who drive out darkness. He calls people to Himself and tells them, 'Now you are the light.'

"We are ablaze because the Lord has called us... and because of what we have received from Jesus it's our privilege to be ablaze."

Quoting statistics showing that both Florida and Georgia are growing in population, Michael noted, "There is no lack of opportunity for us to reach out with the Gospel... Yet the reality is that the District did not grow numerically" during the past decade.

He quickly added, "This is not to say that the work of our congregations is not impressive. It is. Our congregational programs reflect strong outreach."

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NEWLY ELECTED as District Vice Presidents were Rev. Gregory Walton (left) of Georgia and Rev. Dennis Glick of Florida. Walton was elected to his second and Glick his first term of office in the vice presidential position.



DISTRICT PRESIDENT Gerhard Michael, Jr., introduced his wife Joan to the Convention. She was greeted with a standing ovation.

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