

DISTRICT NEWS

Prayers, Compassion Woven Into New Ministry

The new prayer shawl ministry at St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL, was launched by two members who discovered the outreach opportunity via different routes.

Searching for an outreach avenue to share her talents and care with others, Janie Lester learned of a new, fast growing ministry where needle workers around the world were knitting and crocheting prayer shawls to help those who were suffering or to celebrate joyous events.

Barbara North was inspired during a session of the 2006 Florida-Georgia District Outreach Summit hosted by St. Paul. Speaker Joyce Heffernan of Marco Island Lutheran-Marco Island, FL, "was wrapped in a prayer shawl during her presentation and referred to it while she spoke," said North.

"I asked her about it afterwards — and the idea grew from there."

Lester and North did some research and learned that Vicky Galo and Janet

Bristow started Prayer Shawl Ministries in Hartford, CT, where they were attending Hartford Seminary. Moved by their experiences, they turned to their knitting needles to make shawls for fellow participants — and the shawl revolution began.

Lester, who is proficient at knitting, heads a group of St. Paul women who meet weekly to craft prayer shawls. Group member Loretta Wortmann is the teacher for crocheting.

The shawls are done in various colors and textures "with the one common thread that is K3P3 representing the Holy Trinity," emphasized Lester.

"All of our prayer shawls are filled with our love and prayers," she continued. The completed shawls are "given to those who are sick, who are lonely, bereaved, in need, new babies and so on."

"Part of our journey of prayer and faith is to recognize that we may never know how our love and care will touch or change another person's life through our prayer shawls."

Several of those in the St. Paul Ministry did not know how to knit or crochet

when they joined the group. According to Lester that wasn't a problem; she and Wortmann work with those who are new to knitting or crocheting to help them learn the skill. Lester has assembled kits including yarns, needles, accessories and instructions to facilitate the process.

St. Paul Senior Pastor Dennis Glick dedicated the prayer shawl ministry during a May brunch at Lester's home.

Since that time — and following a display in the St. Paul narthex that featured photos and samples of the prayer shawls — 24 new members have joined the ministry. □

Academy Offers Insight into Pastoral Role

Daniel Hull, a member of Timothy Lutheran Church, Woodstock, GA, was among the students attending Christ Academy High School, a special two-week program sponsored by Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne from June 18-July 1.

The on-campus program is designed for young men to explore the possibility of one day becoming a pastor in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

The curriculum included classes taught by the Seminary faculty, worship in Kramer Chapel, opportunities to participate in choir and evenings filled with sports activities and special outings. One day was set aside for a trip to Cedar Point Amusement Park.

"The two weeks of the summer spent at Christ Academy are a great opportunity to grow in what you believe alongside other young men with similar beliefs and goals," says Seminarian Brandon Froiland, Director of Christ Academy's H.S. for 2006. □



Daniel Hull



Shown with their prayer shawls at the dedication of the ministry are St. Paul members (from left to right) Jane Anderson, Cindy Slinker, Judy Kessler, Janie Lester (Chairman), Julie Teasel, Barbara North, Loretta Wortmann, (back, left to right) Pastor Dennis Glick, Phyllis Seitz, Valerie Biegler, Debbie Smith, Cora Small.

Congregation Honors Dunkers On Retirement

Nearly 270 people gathered in the Fellowship Hall of Our Redeemer- Augusta, GA, on Sunday, June 25, to honor and bid farewell to Rev. Karl and LaVon Dunker. Dunker retired after serving more than 28 years as Our Redeemer's pastor and 40+ years in the ministry.

Cellist Jacob Garn and baritone Isaac Washington Holmes provided the entertainment during the meal. Both were accompanied by Ruthie Brannen, the Fine Arts Director at Our Redeemer.

Several pastors praised Dunker for his efforts while serving as East Central Georgia Circuit Counselor and as a mentor. Dunker's younger brother, John, lightened the mood by recalling some anecdotes from the past.

The Dunkers received gifts from the congregation and a number of groups within the church.

After spending time visiting family and friends and traveling along the East Coast, the Dunkers left for New Zealand where he is scheduled to serve as an interim pastor to two churches for approximately four months. They will return to the Augusta area afterwards.

Our Redeemer members will welcome Rev. Bill Reinhardt as Intentional Interim Minister in July. While an active minister, Reinhardt served congregations in Savannah, New Orleans, Chicago and Cleveland. Since his retirement in 1997, he has served as an interim pastor in Orlando and Burr Ridge, IL.

The Intentional Interim Minister program is an LCMS program to assist congregations while they work through the call process. Reinhardt will serve Our Redeemer until a call for a permanent pastor is accepted. □

Georgia Students Receive Flag Flown Over Iraq

May 17 was a significant day for Karen Arndt's first-grade students at Faith Lutheran School-Marietta, GA. Peggy Wagner, president of Faith Ladies Guild, presented the students with a flag that had flown over Iraq.

The flag was given to Faith Lutheran in appreciation for the letters the students had sent to Iraq. Each of them had written a message to American troops to be included in packages sent from Faith.

The flag was in the first-grade classroom until the end of the school year. On May 26, it was presented to Faith Principal Jack Hibbs at the final chapel. It will be mounted in a permanent display in the school for all to enjoy.

Since January 12 of this year, members of Faith Ladies Guild have been cutting, sewing and stuffing neck coolers to be sent to American service personnel.

"This is the second year we have done this project," said Wagner. "To date we have shipped 38 boxes to 14 members of the U.S. Armed Forces."

The boxes include the neck coolers with instructions for use, individually wrapped cookies, Dum-Dums, Slim Jims, tuna packs, personal care items and reading/devotional material as well as small toys donated by Faith Lutheran School families and letters written by the first graders.

One of the 2005-2006 first grade students, Isabella Heitz,

is the daughter of Chief Warrant Officer Scott Heitz, who is serving in Iraq. He sent the American flag flown over Balad, Iraq, on April 20, 2006, to the members of Faith Ladies Guild along with a certificate stating that this flag was "flown in appreciation for all the hard work that was put into making the wonderful care packages and for your thoughts and prayers." □



Connecting People to Jesus — Faith Lutheran members Peggy Wagner, President of Faith Ladies Guild; Karen Arndt, first-grade teacher; and Judith Heitz, wife of CW4 Heitz and mother of student Isabella Heitz