

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Time to Plan



LIFE LINES

Gerhard C. Michael, Jr.
District President

After the busyness of the school year, teachers, students and parents alike welcome the slower pace of summer. It's time to relax and be renewed.

What is good for them is probably good for all of us. To enjoy our work and be good at it requires time for the body to have some "down time" and the mind to be refreshed by a change in tempo.

The slower pace of the summer, however, can be utilized for an activity which can reduce stress during the rest of the year and even enable us to be more productive. It's the activity we call "planning."

An old adage runs like this: "Failing to plan is planning to fail." We know the wisdom of its words. Without pre- and post-planning, our school faculties would not teach as effectively. Lesson plans assist them in making sure they cover the designated material in the allotted time.

Jesus spoke about the importance of planning ahead if one is going to construct a

tower or wage a war. (See Luke 14:28-32.) Nehemiah illustrates how he planned the reconstruction of the wall around Jerusalem, leading the people to exclaim, "Let us start rebuilding." (Nehemiah 2:18) Because of the

now, we hope to build a growing commitment to the work the Lord has entrusted to us. At this point, the major components are in place. The District staff together with other leaders are currently working on the

has done with and through us the past six decades and recommit to carry on the missionary tradition for which we have come to be known.

Convocations for all 22 Circuits are planned for the 2008 Easter season.

These convocations will function as rallies for us to thank God for the missionary heroes who have led us in the past and now serve as inspiration for us today. Worship, Bible study, sharing of plans on both the district and circuit level,

Fan Into Flame

In January, 2009, the Florida-Georgia District will begin its participation in our Synod's Fan Into Flame capital campaign to raise \$100,000,000 to strengthen the mission in our congregations, in the District, nationally and internationally.

Since a percentage of the funds raised in our congregations remains in the congregations and District, we believe that this endeavor will enable us to continue the missionary focus of our *Forward Together-Servants in His Mission* endeavor, which we are seeking

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need and the plans to meet the need, "they committed themselves to the common good."

In the more relaxed pace of summertime, we have a great opportunity for leaders in our congregations to lay out plans for the coming program year. It's a time for thinking about emphases to be made in worship; in Christian education for adults, youth and children; in reaching out to the community with the Gospel; in considering how one's congregation might participate in serving the community's needs. Do buildings need to be refurbished? New buildings erected?

Such planning needs to be realistic. Trying to do more than a congregation has the resources for in terms of people, time and money can lead to discouragement and failure. Pursuing challenging yet realistic goals allows a congregation to stretch to do more than first thought possible but also to achieve success. Experiencing success can build a positive attitude which wants to keep on serving!



On the District level, we are in the midst of planning for the coming two years. By beginning

details, that these plans might take shape, enabling all of us to get involved and thus respond more fully to the challenges before us.

Let me share a broad outline of what is "in the works" that you may sense how we are planning for the future, as an encouragement to you in your congregation to do your planning and to join us in the common good we are striving to do through the Florida-Georgia District.

Completing our Congregational and Circuit Visits.

Three years ago your District staff began a program visiting each of the congregations of our District. We combine these visits with circuit leader meetings to foster an awareness that "we are in the mission together," and to explore how our congregations can partner

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in their circuits to strengthen one another for God's mission.

We intend to complete our visits by visiting the Southwest, St. Petersburg, Atlanta North, South Palm Beach, and the North Central Circuits this fall and early winter.

Celebrating the District's 60th Anniversary February 17, 2008.

The founding District convention began meeting February 6, 1948, at Trinity Lutheran Church-Orlando. Since February 6 is Ash Wednesday next year, we have chosen the Second Sunday in Lent when the foundational passage for the District's Value Statement serves as the Gospel reading: John 3:1-17.

Worship resources will be provided to all congregations for that Sunday so all of us can rejoice together in what God

be healthy, both physically and spiritually, that we might enjoy our life in Christ more fully; keep life, work and relations in proper perspective; and lead our congregations more effectively. The Church Worker Family Care Commission is helping us to plan these conferences.

The President's Convocation on Sept. 24-26, 2008, in Daytona Beach.

All professional church workers gather together every three years to build one another up and nurture our partnership in ministry. Building on the emphases of the past three Convocations, next year's will move our missionary focus forward by focusing on our witnessing, our vocations, and the church's role in social ministry under the theme, "Into the World" from John 17.

to complete by the District's 60th anniversary in 2008.

Ablaze! Outreach Summits

The summits are being planned for January and February, 2009, to provide instruction, inspiration, and encouragement to help us witness, develop congregational programs to reach out more effectively, and become acquainted with resources that can further God's mission in our congregations.

Rather than having three day events such as we had in 2006, we are planning for one day Saturday events in more locations that more people can participate.



As I share the above plans with you, I do so in the hope that you will plan your schedules and calendars accordingly, that you may participate in these events designed to strengthen our collective efforts for the Lord's mission. What we are attempting to do is not add more events to the calendar but utilize the activities which normally occur during the coming two years to strengthen us for our role in God's mission.

By sharing the above, I trust I have given you an example of how planning can be utilized to build momentum for the mission. If you will do something similar in your congregation — and if you incorporate in your plans what we are trying to do together — I believe we will be amazed at what can be accomplished.

In all things, though, let us remember the wisdom of Solomon, "Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established." (Proverbs 16:3)

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Every congregation is a church in mission, and every member is a missionary; with all of us working together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, empowered by His Gospel to share His love.

Lutheran LIFE is the official newspaper of the Florida-Georgia District/Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Lutheran LIFE is designed to inform LCMS church and school members of the activities, the personalities and resources offered by the Synod and the District. Lutheran LIFE may also provide a forum for Lutherans to express their views and ideas on a wide range of topics. We welcome and encourage editorials, emphasizing that the views and opinions expressed are not necessarily shared by the editors or District or Synod personnel. Lutheran LIFE is published monthly, with occasional combined bimonthly issues. Editorials, press releases and photos are encouraged and must be received at Lutheran LIFE publication offices no later than the 10th of the month prior to the publication date. While we make every attempt to use submitted information in the next issue of LIFE, space considerations prevent us from guaranteeing that stories will be used immediately. Advertising is welcome; information is available from our production office. Changes of address or new subscriber information should be directed to our production office as well.

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