

OUTREACH

Ablaze Mission: Living Faith Reflects the Spirit



Doug Kallesen
Director of Outreach

It is a wonderful thing to see the Spirit of God at work in the life of His Church! This was my experience as I worshiped with Living Faith Lutheran-Cumming, GA, which prides itself as one of the fastest growing counties in our nation. The congregation, under the leadership of Pastor Tim Droege Mueller since November 2006, has really taken off. I interviewed Pastor Tim and here is some of what God is doing.

I worshiped with Living Faith, April 1, Palm Sunday, and they were celebrating the dedication of their new

4700-square-foot rented building. Their new home is in a prominent part of Cumming and will seat 200 "really packed in." It also has plenty of room for Sunday School, meeting and office space and of course a Lutheran kitchen!

At the dedication service I met a young couple who had just moved from Texas — a good Lutheran family I found out. During my interview with Pastor Droege Mueller I asked if this family had returned. He said, "Yes, in fact they're in our new adult information class called the Voyager Series."

In fact most of Living Faith's visitors stay once they show up. Living Faith has just taken in four new members from this adult information course and has started a second class with 12 more new people.

I asked Pastor to retell the story of how they found this building. He said the building was previously used by another church that had come in and gutted it, setting all things up for church then problems a rose and the congregation dissolved. The owner of the building was later approached by Living Faith about the possibilities of renting. The owner was a bit nervous about the prospects of renting to another church telling Pastor

Tim, "Here's why I don't want to rent to another church."

Pastor Tim reported, "We took the approach of the persistent widow from Jesus' parable always believing that this was the right place for Living Faith. I told the owner, 'We stand on the Word of God, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ's resurrection is the only hope for the world.' The owner, about two minutes later, said, 'Like I said, I really don't have a problem renting to a church.'"

Praise God for changed hearts and minds! It appears as though changes such as these are quite common around Cumming in a congregation that a year ago was worshipping around two dozen people. Living Faith is now worshipping regularly in the 80s and seeing a lot of new faces.

People are also stepping up to serve and give. The congregation held a miniature capital campaign to get into their new facility; it was really going to stretch them to move from \$400 a month in rent to around \$3000. God

provided (as He always does) in the form of two individuals who offered up challenge grants of \$10,000 each. The congregation had ten weeks to come up with \$10,000 to match dollar for dollar this gift. Weeks one through nine totaled \$9,200 but week ten came in with a whopping \$10,000 offering for the facility. The Lord had provided \$40,000 in ten weeks to this tiny mission that believes with God all things are possible!

When I asked Pastor Droege Mueller what he attributes all these changes to, he said, "We have clearly defined goals of

why we are here — to reach the lost sheep! We have a desire to plant new churches. Our focus is on honestly submitting our lives to the Word of God, being unashamed of who we are as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and we do all that we can to engage our community with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Living Faith is one of the 50 plus missions of the Florida-Georgia District. The *Ablaze* plans call for the starting of 200 missions by 2017. Through 2006 we have begun 35 and thus far in 2007 we have started work in an additional six. □



Rev. Tim Droege Mueller wields the scissors at the ribbon cutting ceremony for Living Faith's new worship facility.

Xtend Extends St. Paul's ministry to FAU

Students, Pastors and Parents please make sure that you have registered at our Congregation-Campus Connection. This link is on the far right hand side of our home page click, www.flga-lcms.org.

Some Things Never Change



Ever since those days in their Michigan backyard, John List and Debra Watson have stood together as a team. Today this partnership excels in real estate success for sellers and buyers from Fort Lauderdale to the Palm Beaches. They do it all: family homes, oceanfront estates, waterfront condominiums, retirement residences, investment properties — and they'll do it for you!

Known for personalized service, dedication to excellence and award-winning marketing programs, this brother/sister team has a proven successful track record with satisfied clients including many members of both St. Paul church and schools.

We invite you to learn how John and Debra will make your real estate purchase or sale something to smile about!

PLATINUM
ESTATE PROPERTIES

Royal Palm Place • 75 SE Third Street
Boca Raton, Florida 33432 • (561) 620-9393
www.PlatinumEstateProperties.com

NOTE: The Florida-Georgia District plans to initiate ten or more campus ministries by 2017. The following article was published in "Lutheran Campus Ministry Association," by Rev. Greg Fairow, LCMS Igniter for Campus Ministry. Pastor Fairow highlights what St. Paul-Boca Raton, FL, is doing to reach college age adults.

Xtend Lutheran Campus Ministry — with the Christian "Chi Rho" symbol used for the "X" — is the unique name of the new campus ministry at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Boca Raton, Fla. that has started to serve Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and other local colleges.

Xtend will seek existing Lutheran students on campus, but it will also intentionally "extend" out to bring more people into St. Paul's community.

"The idea behind Xtend is that this ministry will leave

behind the 99 and extend to that one lost college student," said Pastor Ben Haupt, associate pastor at St. Paul. "Of course, there are many more than just one that need to be reached."

Haupt is working with a team that includes college students, congregational lay leaders and other St. Paul staff. One of the lay leaders is a professor at FAU.

Haupt and his team are working to establish a registered student organization at FAU, conduct a campus survey to learn more about the university and its unmet needs, and host several events geared for college students and other twentysomething persons.

One such event is a monthly worship service held on Sunday evenings that incorporates multimedia and transitions into a Bible study.

Xtend also offers a monthly event called Hot Topic Night that is held at local restaurants. Participants discuss various topics. Previous topics have included soul mates, ghost stories, dream jobs, and hypothetical questions like "What if you had a million dollars ... how would you spend it?"

Recent and proposed fellowship events include a Super Bowl party, flag football, paintball, go cart racing, and hosting a Christian comedian.

Small group ministry is also included in Xtend's short-term campus mission plan. Haupt is also encouraged by a "great meeting" he recently had with FAU's dean of students.

"He really loves the students and is glad that I came to ask how we could partner with FAU to help its students," said Haupt. "It only takes one open door to start a partnership with the university." □

LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK — Students of Abiding Savior-Gainesville, FL, Preschool joined their peers across the country in celebrating National Lutheran Schools Week in March. Abiding Savior's students explored different aspects of the theme "From the Ground Up" each day — progressing from drawing up the blueprints and firm foundations to framing our faith and raise the roof to the final celebrate and decorate. "An exciting work in a progress ... but not just with bricks or wood or stone," said Preschool Director Jan Banks. "The real kingdom work is taking place in the lives of the 108 children we serve at this Lutheran school for this congregation." □

