

District Continues to be Ablaze



Doug Kallesen
Director of Outreach

Ablaze is a movement — and Florida-Georgia is *Ablaze!*

In convention the Florida-Georgia District set in motion the following *Ablaze* goals — which were adopted unanimously adopted with the aim to create a culture of mission and outreach.

- Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with 2 million people by 2017.
- Starting 200 New Missions by 2017
- Strengthening Existing Congregations
- Sending Members into the Mission

Here is how this culture is beginning to unfold ...

The District Outreach Council met following the convention and plans to take these goals back to each of our circuits and congregations. A circuit blueprint will map out possible new mission

areas; which congregations will be strengthened through revitalization efforts; identify congregations and members who would be involved in mission trips and servant events; and how the circuit will be involved in sharing the Gospel message of Christ.

Several of our DOC chairman have scheduled training events such as Equipping to Share or Share Life. Others are talking about how they will count the number of times their members have witnessed their faith. Some have given an initial report of new mission starts. As a movement, *Ablaze* is about how the local member in the local church will respond with the Gospel to these goals.

Mission Planter's Cluster Meetings were held in Atlanta and Orlando to discuss the Florida-Georgia *Ablaze* goals. Several planters indicated a desire to daughter one or more new missions. Others talked of setting congregational goals of sharing their faith.

Again as you can see, *Ablaze* is a movement, it's about how you respond to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have added a coaching element to my contact and support for each of our mission planters in an effort to strengthen these congregations in their mission and ministry.

Florida-Georgia Board of Directors received and reviewed the *Ablaze* goals and offered to be advocates in their home congregations and circuits to accomplish these goals.

Groups Ablaze Train the Trainers was held at the District Office for eight congregational

leaders who will initiate Groups *Ablaze* small group ministry in their congregation and be available for training others in their circuit or region. Rev. Scott Burmeister of Messiah Lutheran-Tampa serves as the District contact. The focus of Groups *Ablaze* is to provide prayer, friendship and outreach to friends, relatives and co-workers who are not church.

Campus Ministry Con-fabulation & Institute events were held to further network with and support our campus ministry pastors. As a District we are committed to doubling the number of campus ministries by 2010. Rev. Greg Fairrow, LCMS Campus Ministry Igniter will be following up on eight new campus ministry sites in November.

Hispanic & Black Family Ministry Convocations have met nationally. Within our District we are seeing *Ablaze* goals that will double the size of our Florida-Georgia in each of these ministry areas. An Atlanta Urban Missionary will be called by October 2007 for the Riverdale and metro Atlanta area. Hispanic ministry is expanding in South Orlando, Tampa and Miami areas.

TEMP Partnership (Thailand Evangelical Mission Partners) with LCMS World Missions is renewed for another five years and will now include work in S.E. Asia. The TEMP committee has added Kara Eichinger as Director for Volunteer Missions in Florida-Georgia. Kara's initial goal is to identify and prepare to send a team of volunteers for work in S.E. Asia from our District. In the future she will help send volunteers to other mission fields from our District.

Our goal is to have a team of volunteers in S.E. Asia within the next 12 months.

I believe that people who go on mission trips come back changed! They experience, first hand, the gospel in a different context. When they return home they are *ABLAZE*, ready to return back to the mission field with other friends and family, they are also ready to share their faith here. I believe that the "Sending Members in to Mission" is one of the most critical goals in our *Ablaze* movement. It will spark the fires of faith so that a new culture of evangelism, outreach and missions will be created by God the Holy Spirit inside of our Florida-Georgia District.

What are you doing as a congregation, individual or circuit that helps create a culture of outreach and mission?

1. Are you prepared to "given an account of the hope that is within you?" (1 Peter 3:15b) How will your congregation help the membership share their faith?
2. Will you count the number of gospel sharings (critical events)? You can register by going to www.lcmsworldmission.org.
3. What areas or people groups are growing in your circuit that possibly could be considered for a mission plant?
4. How many missions will your congregation or circuit help start?
5. Could your congregation or another circuit congregation be blessed through becoming a part of revitalization efforts that concentrate on increasing worship attendance, baptisms, developing ministries that meet a specific community need?
6. Would you or your congregation like to be involved in

volunteer mission trips — going, supporting or praying for?

7. Would you or your congregation pray regularly for these *Ablaze* goals? Would you like to pray for our Florida-Georgia mission planters?

8. Would you or your congregation like to partner financially to develop one of our missions?

9. Would you or your congregation like to be or provide local missionaries to help a mission congregation in your area by providing help such as; S.S. teacher, musician or vocalist, choir or praise team, book keeper?

10. Be involved in any other ways that would help promote a culture of evangelism, outreach and mission in the Florida-Georgia District.

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions please contact your pastor, circuit outreach counselor or circuit counselor or me at dkallesen@flga-lcms.org or 407.857.5556 ext. 2. *Ablaze* is a movement and we need you to be a part of making it happen! □

Ablaze Correction

Last month's *Mission in Action* column mistakenly reported that "The Hispanic Conference pledged an *Ablaze* commitment to share the gospel with two million people." That number should read six million one hundred thirty five thousand people — 6,135,000.

Our thanks to Rev. Benito Perez-Lopez for the correction.



GOOD SHEPHERD-GAINESVILLE, GA, sent four youth and two counselors to Angola, NY, to participate in the "Sharing God's Love Servant Event," July 16-21. They stayed at Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center and worked for families in the Buffalo area. Each volunteer was assigned to a different work group and job site. The numerous work activities included painting, roofing, gardening, plumbing, siding, endless yard work, building a handicap ramp, replacing floors, installing windows, cleaning gutters and planting flowers. Devotions were held daily at the job sites, and each evening the youth group met for a Bible study. "This trip was such an amazing experience," said counselors Justin and Danielle Holland, "and we all learned so much about being servants for the Lord and about ourselves. We all realized how fortunate we are — and that it's not all about us!" Shown here are (front, l-r) Eugenie Davis, Michelle House, (back, l-r) John Aaron Jovaag, Danielle and Justin Holland and Branden Jovaag. □

Florida to Host Three Seniorfests in 2007

Theologian Dr. Marva Dawn and entertainers Barb and Dave Anderson will highlight three Florida SeniorFests planned for 2007.

"Now in its third year, the SeniorFest program has become a popular celebration event where Florida Lutheran seniors can come together to worship and sing, learn and enjoy the gift their added years provide for service and fellowship," said Rev. Karl Thiele, a member of the planning committee.

Next year's events are set for Thursday, February 8, at Day-Spring Conference Center near Ellenton; for Tuesday, February 13, at John Knox Village in Pompano Beach; and for Thursday, February 15, at the Life Enrichment Center near Leesburg.

The main program will be the same at all three locations. The breakout sessions and social opportunities will vary slightly at the different locations.

Theologian Dawn is a prolific writer whose "presentations thrill clergy and laypersons on a wide range of subjects," said Thiele. A graduate of Concordia-River Forest, Dawn's studies took her to the University of Idaho and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary before she earned her Ph.D. in Christian Ethics and Scripture from Notre Dame.

Dave and Barb Anderson lead concerts and worship services around the world. Their ministry presentations often include the story of their miraculous rescue off the coast of Alaska when their airplane crashed into the Behring Sea. Dave Anderson is the founder of Lutheran Youth Encounter and Fellowship Ministries.

Florida SeniorFest events are among events planned by the Association of Lutheran Adults

to provide opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship and fun in relaxed, inter-Lutheran settings. Co-sponsors for the three 2007 events are Lutheran Services Florida, Thrivent Financial Services for Lutherans, the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Additional information is available from Rev. Dick Hafer at 813-988-4025; Doris Hanson at 727-461-5135; Rev. Karl Thiele at 863-859-0516; or online at www.aloaserves.org. □



Dr. Marva Dawn



Barb and Dave Anderson (left and center) with accompanist Dale Pust