

BOARD REPORT

District Board Reaches Out with Hurricane Support


FROM THE BOARD ROOM

 by John List
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Members of the Florida-Georgia District Board of Directors gathered at the Woodlands-Montverde, FL, for a two-day meeting that opened with lunch with the Circuit Counselors on Friday, September 9.

Joining the Board for her first meeting was Maxine Hanchard-Foote. She is completing the term of Region IV layperson (and her sister) Sandra Thiele, who had to resign when she and her family relocated to the Lakeland area. Ms. Hanchard-Foote is a member of Holy Cross-North Miami, FL.

Meeting less than two weeks after Hurricane Katrina's devastating visit to the Gulf Coast, the Board discussed the critical need to assistance for storm victims. A resolution was unanimously passed authorizing immediate help in the form of a \$25,000 check for "our brothers and sisters in Christ of the Southern District [who] have experienced catastrophic damage to their churches, homes and community."

Florida-Georgia congregations reported no major damage from Katrina.

Prior to the meeting, the District's Constitution and Bylaws Committee reviews constitution revisions from Faith-New Port Richey, FL; Peace-Dunnellon, FL; Redeemer-Bartow, FL; and St. Paul-Lakeland, FL. The Board approved acceptance of these revisions.

Church Leaders:

Congregations have available competent, visionary lay and professional leaders to confidently and joyfully lead the church in its ministry.

District President Gerhard Michael Jr. reported that staff evaluations were recently completed. "I'm happy to say that relations among staff are positive and a healthy work environment exists," he said.

Board members unanimously approved a resolution extending Richard Neubauer's appointment as Executive Director of Finance and Administration and Lutheran Church Extension Fund Vice President for another four years beginning in January 2006.

Plans are under way for the June 9-11, 2006, District convention at the Lake Mary Marriott Hotel north of Orlando. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod President, plans to bring the national church report to the convention

and serve as the preacher for the Convention's communion worship service. The convention theme taken from Ephesians 5:8 — "Ablaze in the Light of the Lord" — includes emphases on witnessing, stewardship and worship.

The annual New Workers Retreat for the District was held October 17-19 at Woodlands Lutheran Fellowship Village. Funded in part by a grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the retreat provided orientation for pastors, administrators and commissioned ministers new to Florida-Georgia.

Jon Wareham, principal at Trinity Lutheran School-Rockledge, FL, has assumed the office of President for the District Lutheran Administrators Association. He replaces Bill Kuck, former Trinity-Orlando principal, who left his position this summer.

Ten Florida-Georgia students are attending the initial Hispanic Institute of Theology seminary-level Theological Education by Extension (TEE) course on Lutheran liturgy being offered at St. Paul-Miami. Pastor Benito Perez-Lopez is the area coordinator for the Hispanic Institute of Theology and oversees the District's TEE program.

The Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) program also has ten students enrolled from Florida-Georgia. EIIT uses a distance learning model with course work taught via the internet with seminary professors and a local pastoral mentor who meets with students weekly. Rev. Dr. Wayne Wilke, Executive Director of the Concordia House of Studies, has met with 13 Haitian men in the Miami area who are taking pre-EIIT courses and are "eager to complete their coursework and serve in the LCMS." Presidente Michael reported that "we are providing training for leaders who will be able to perform multi-cultural outreach to the HISPANIC and Haitian communities within our District."

Funding the Mission: Congregations practice Gospel motivated stewardship, which enables fully funding the mission of the District.

Under the direction of Milan Weerts, the District's Stewardship Advisory Council is preparing the 2006 commitment program under the theme of "Partnering in Christ." This is also the theme of next February's regional Outreach Summits. Explained President Michael, "By utilizing the same theme, we are hoping to reinforce our work together and build momentum for our increasing growth in ministry."

Pastor Bob Besalski continues making pastoral visits in support of *Forward*

Together-Servants in His Mission, the District's capital campaign. Total contributions are nearing the \$5,000,000 mark. Pledges of \$8,738,323 had been received as of July 31, 2005.

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-District President Gerhard Michael on the capital campaign Forward Together

and training of workers as well as our social service agencies," said President Michael.

A resolution was passed at the 2003 District convention to follow the *Forward Together-Servants in His Mission* capital campaign by raising \$15,000,000 in deferred gifts for ministries in the District by the next convention.

That effort is being coordinated by District Gift Planning Counselor Steve Cecchetti. To support his efforts, the Board passed a resolution to "approve and encourage the Gift Planning Counselor to submit an application to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for up to \$100,000 to support the ongoing efforts to secure deferred gifts and reach the \$15,000,000 goal."

The following Lutheran Church Extension Fund loans have been approved:

- Holy Trinity-Tampa: \$910,225
- Hope-Orlando: \$467,511
- District-site purchase: \$550,000
- St. John-Ocala: \$1,706,946
- Abiding Savior-Gainesville: \$2,160,000
- Good Shepherd-Fort Lauderdale: \$67,355
- Arms of Grace-Winder: \$306,609
- Redeemer-Englewood: \$458,322
- Immanuel-Brandon: \$749,849
- Faith-Merritt Island: \$50,300
- Peace-Decatur: \$25,300
- Zion-Newnan: \$60,600

Lutheran Schools: Congregations' school ministries serve as integrated components of their mission strategy.

Seven Florida-Georgia schools in August were granted National Lutheran School and Florida-Georgia District accreditation. Reaccredited were Immanuel-Brandon; First-Clearwater; Faith-Marietta; Grace and Our Savior-St. Petersburg; and Redeemer-Stuart. Earning initial accreditation were Guardian-Jacksonville and Bethel Preschool-Hobe Sound.

According to Mark Brink, Florida-Georgia Executive for School Ministries, 21% of free-standing early childhood centers, 82% of elementary schools and 100% of high schools within the District are accredited. A number of congregations, or groups of congregations, have requested consultations related to the feasibility of starting new schools.

sharing their faith daily," said President Michael.

Butch Almstedt is the new chairman of TEMP — Thailand Evangelical Mission Partnership. He is currently the chair of the Board for Mission Services.

Rev. Darrell Stuehrenberg, pastor of Gloria Dei-Davie, and Jay Brinkmeyer, project manager, traveled to Haiti with President Michael from August 31-September 1. They met with the leaders of the congregations in the Archaie District, where Pastor Joseph Romulus has served.

Plans to double the number of campus ministries by 2010 to 16 sites is under way. Phase I training events for those beginning a new campus ministry were held in Orlando and Miami, led by Rev. Kallesen and Pastor Jason Boetcher of Grace-Merritt Island. Grace-Jacksonville, Messiah-Tampa, Gloria Dei-Davie, Shepherd of the Coast-Fort Lauderdale and St. Paul-Boca Raton have expressed an interest in developing intentional outreach to the campuses near their facilities. Phase II courses will be held for those already serving in a campus ministry.

Spiritual Maturity: Congregations are spiritually mature, firmly grounded in God's word, equipped and empowered for Christ-like service and witness.

Presenters for the 2006 Nurturing the Faith workshops will include Terry Schmidt, Associate Director of Schools for the LCMS, and Lori Aadsen, Associate Director for Children's Ministries for the LCMS. He will be focusing on the LCMS' Ablaze! initiative. She will be introducing "Windows," a program to pastors and others in congregations who are interested in reaching out to families with very young children. This ministry resource designed to prepare selected members of a congregation to serve as coaches to new parents in the congregation. The workshops will be offered at five locations in Florida next February.

Representing the Florida-Georgia District Board at the August 23-25 Theological Convocation in Phoenix, AZ, were Lynn Andersen, Rev. Dennis Glick and Rev. Greg Walton. Others attending from the District were Joyce Heffernan, Marco Lutheran-Marco Island, FL; and Jim Webb, St. John-Ocala. The convocation was planned as "an aid to promoting greater peace and harmony in our congregations, that we might be a more hospitable place and more effective in our outreach." District representatives to the Convocation are all heavily involved in planning the three Outreach Summits set for February of 2006.

The Board will meet again in November in Lakeland, FL. □

Human Care:

Congregations and social service agencies of the Florida-Georgia District engage in ministries to meet basic human needs including services to traditional and non-traditional families and singles within the parish and community.

The 2006 Hearts for Jesus project is focusing on providing for the special needs of an injured veteran from the war in Iraq. Peter Herrick, a member of Redeemer-Lake City, was paralyzed from the neck down by shrapnel from a land mine while serving as a Sea Bee in Iraq. He and his wife, Diana, worked with Mark Brink to identify a veteran for Florida-Georgia school children to help through their chapel offerings.

Multi-Cultural Outreach:

Congregations reflect the cultural diversity of their communities through intentional outreach and multi-cultural leadership, celebrating our unity in the Gospel.

President Michael and Rev. Douglas Kallesen, Florida-Georgia Executive Director for Outreach, have met to discuss how the Circuit Outreach Councils can focus on individual witnessing, congregational witness and church planting. Rev. Kallesen will be working with Outreach Council Chairpersons to develop training for individual witnessing and assist congregations in developing their own outreach strategy.

The Circuit Outreach Councils will also help identify and participate in church planting within their area. "It is my hope that we can have more than 150 new missions begun [2000-2017], double the number of our campus ministries and have many within our District actively