

Trinity-Fort Lauderdale Choir Travels to Luther Sites

Editor's note: The Trinity-Fort Lauderdale, FL, choir in 2004 was invited to participate in a choral tour of Germany to commemorate the Reformation. Trinity's Pastor Louis Abel Jr., shares this report of that trip.

As we left for the airport, we didn't have any idea how this trip was going to change our lives. Planned for a year, our choir and director were going to travel to the Luther sites at the invitation of the Cultural Affairs department of Bavaria.

As had been explained to us, many of these sites were in the former East Zone, and as they were rebuilding and improving their cities, the realization came to them that they not only had the history of Martin Luther on their side, but Johann Sebastian Bach, Mendelssohn, and many other musicians and church men. And they wanted to

capitalize on this relationship and spread the news around.

Our first concert was at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Leipzig, where Luther spent much time. The congregation members thanked us for coming, because Coburg is so often the "forgotten" Luther site. At

that church, four families had scheduled baptisms for that morning because they found out that an American choir was singing in the service.

In our normal repertoire, with some songs sung before the service and others during the worship service, we always

managed to end after the benediction with the Doxology, which we first sang in German — that we had meticulously learned — then in English.

We visited Erfurt, where Luther lived as a monk; Berlin; the concentration camp at Buchenwald; and then Leipzig, where Luther preached at St. Thomas Church and J.S. Bach was organist. The majesty of the music in that building was incredible.

Seeing Luther's birthplace in Eisenach, seeing the place where he was born and where he died, the church in which he was baptized, was an incredible experience.

On Reformation Day, October 31, our senses were running high. The night before, we had sung at St. Marys, the Town Church where Luther had preached most of his ministry. Now we were readying for the

experience of a lifetime as we walked into the Castle Church to sing.

The small town of Wittenberg, with only 700 residents, swells with more than 150,000 visitors on Reformation weekend every year. The church was packed, pews and standing room, as we made our way to the front. Singing our normal group of songs, looking out at an eager congregation, glancing down at Luther's tomb which is directly under the mammoth pulpit in the chancel and singing to smiling faces made our day complete. We received a standing ovation as we left that wonderful house of worship, steeped in so much history.

The next morning we were returning back to the United States . . . always being able to think and reflect on this experience of seeing the roots of our faith. □



Rev. Louis Abel (rear, far left) with members of the Trinity-Fort Lauderdale choir in the Castle Church at Wittenberg.



FAMILY GATHERINGS — The first of a series of Family Gatherings was held at Redeemer Lutheran-Englewood, FL, this summer. Some 60 congregational members and guests spent an evening at "The Roaring Twenties — Pizza & Pipes." The group — including the women shown here — listened to a large Wurlitzer organ, enjoyed dinner, danced, sang, marched and in general "had a roaring good time." □

Orlando Lutheran Opens New Year

The Orlando Lutheran Academy began the 2005-2006 school year with an opening service of re-dedication and installation at St. Luke's Lutheran Church-Oviedo, FL.

Officiating pastors for the August 2 service were St. Luke's Senior Pastor W.M. Arp, Pastor Brian Roberts and Pastor Gary Schuschke.

During the service Dr. Wayne Jensen was installed as Orlando Lutheran Academy's executive director and principal. Jensen and his family relocated from Milwaukee, WI, where he had served at Milwaukee Lutheran High School.

Also installed on August 2 was Ben Cooper, who joined the OLA faculty the second semester of last year. Stacie Mauricio and Ted Dickelman were dedicated as new faculty members.

The school's theme for this year is Philippians 3:14 — "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

"As we move forward toward excellence, we have started a full calendar of events including volleyball, soccer, cross country, swimming and service activities," said Jensen.

"With a powerful academic program that includes advanced placement in Spanish and

English, The Orlando Lutheran Academy has started another memorable year."

The Orlando Lutheran Academy serves students in grades 6-12. Additional information is available online at www.orlandolutheranacademy.org. □



Pictured at the 2005-2006 Opening Service for Orlando Lutheran Academy (front, left to right) Dr. Wayne E. Jensen, R. Lynne Taylor, Ben Cooper, Beth Christensen, Stacie Mauricio, Mary Lee Shaw, Todd Bortz, Cindy Henderson, Marsha Reynolds, (middle row, left to right) Jamie Jones, Kathie Zastrow, Jeff Knutson, Eddie Steiger, Carol Kallina, Janet Boye, Randy Zook, Ted Dickelman, (back, left to right) Rev. Brian Roberts, Rev. W.M. Arp



2ND ANNUAL LUTHERAN DAY THE MARLINS — As a part of the pre-game activities for the September 18 Philadelphia Phillies versus the Florida Marlins baseball game in South Florida, the choir from St. Paul Lutheran Church-Weston, FL, sang the national anthem. Supported by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans' "Care in Regions" program, this special event fundraiser benefitted Lutheran Services Florida. □



BETTER TOGETHER — Pastor Peter Kolb, Lois Hayden, Cyndy Kurtchfield, Caroline Kromphardt and Howard Jones (left to right) comprise the steering committee for the 40 Days of Purpose Better Together program at Faith Lutheran-Dunedin, FL. The required operational committees have been recruited and organized. The kickoff dinner was on September 24, when the overall program was presented and the small groups were assembled and organized for continuation of readings, study and discussion meetings. Celebration Sunday — a dinner to denote the completion of the series — is scheduled for November 6. □