

Atlantic District Outreach Awards Granted

On July 29, 2008, 60 pastors and leaders from 17 Lutheran congregations and ministries gathered at Concordia, Bronxville's Sommer Center for a liturgy of celebration during which President David H. Benke presented awards totaling \$300,000 in the inaugural Atlantic District Ablaze Grant program. The District, one of thirty-five in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, comprises over one hundred churches and fifty schools, plus support agencies in the Eastern half of New York State. The LCMS has enthusiastically embraced the Ablaze! initiative to bring the Gospel in word and deed to one hundred million people worldwide. Atlantic District Ablaze Grants are designed to promote the goals of Gospel outreach in local congregations and schools, ministries and agencies. Authorized by the District's Board of Directors and designed by its staff, the Ablaze Grant program is supported financially by a portion of proceeds from bequests and property sales held in the District's mission fund.

Awards are for a one year period, ranging in amount from \$10000 to \$25000. Final reports of progress on the grant proposals will be made at the District's Triennial Convention on June 5-7, 2009. This is the list of recipients of the Atlantic District Ablaze Grants:

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Church for All Nations
Emanuel Lutheran Church
Family of Faith Lutheran Church
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Grace Lutheran Church – Mastic Beach
Grace Lutheran Church – Queens Village
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
Lutheran School of Flushing and Bayside
Lutheran Schools Association
Mt. Zion Lutheran Church
Queens Tri-Parish Association
SonRise Lutheran Church
St. John Lutheran Church – Staten Island
United Bengali Lutheran Church
Village Lutheran Church and Chapel School

The July 29, 2008 service was marked by high excitement and joy as each of the seventeen recipient parishes, schools or ministry agencies came forward to receive the Ablaze Grant and share with the gathered group the dynamics of the accepted proposal.

Dr. David Benke, as he prepared to distribute the awards, said, "Looking out at you this morning, I see the grace of God times sixteen in ways that we've only begun to express. We are so proud of you, and thankful for the opportunity to share God's resources in order to bring His love to the world." John Mesloh, Treasurer of the Atlantic District, stated, "As we have been blessed by bringing our District budget to a balanced position, we decided that we can't 'sit on our assets,' but need to bring more power to the parishes and ministries who are joined in partnership. The Ablaze Grant program is one way to spread the Good News!"