

Lutheran Lay Fellowship

As early as 1936, believing there was a need for closer cooperation between Lutheran laity and clergy, a group of laymen in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area decided to organize get-togethers. In 1941, the group established monthly luncheons, inviting friends and bringing visitors. The first luncheon was a success, and within three months, every Lutheran jurisdiction was represented.

Thousands of Lutherans were traveling through our Nation's Capital during World War II, some in the uniform of our country and others to work for the Federal Government. It was then that this group decided to call itself the **Lutheran Laymen's Fellowship of Metropolitan Washington (LLF)**.

One of the first objectives for the LLF was to develop a Lutheran publicity contact as the Lutheran Church in the Washington area did not have a coordinated public relations program. The second objective was to establish a Lutheran service center to care for the many servicemen in the Washington area. Because LLF was instrumental in promoting the idea and in securing cooperation to establish such a center, LLF had great impact upon future Lutheran cooperation in the area.

The monthly luncheons of the LLF throughout the years have provided a common meeting ground for laity and clergy. The I metropolitan area of the District of Columbia has been one of the pioneer areas for inter-Lutheran cooperation with continuance of LLF, the National Lutheran Chorus during the years of its existence, Lutheran Social Services, the annual Reformation service, and shared action when need arises in a specific area.

In 1975, during the Presidency of Dr. Henry Endress, women were included in the membership of LLF and since that time have become a significant part of the organization. That year the board of LLF elected Mrs. Louise Anderson the first woman board member. In 1991, the LLF adopted the name **Lutheran Lay Fellowship** underlining that membership is open to all Lutherans.

A concern for low-income elderly in need of adequate housing caused LLF members to sponsor creation in 1960 of a non-profit corporation, **Fellowship Square Foundation, Inc. (FSF)**. See more about FSF in the next section of this History.

Responding to requests of Washington-area Lutherans, the LLF established a Multi-Purpose Lutheran Center committee in 1978. Members included a pastor and two lay persons from each of the three major Lutheran jurisdictions. The committee found Lutheran organizations were not ready to share a common address, but also learned: (a) there is a deep-seated desire among Lutherans for a well-situated activity center serving all Metro-Area Lutherans, without competing with congregational services, and (b) future Church leaders need to know the interface between Church and government so that Church mission can effectively use available support when mission calls for it.

Addressing this second need, the committee interested Muhlenberg College in accrediting students who spend a semester in Washington studying the operations of Government through internships in the District of Columbia and seminars led by resident theologians or professors. The committee incorporated as **The Luther Institute, Inc.**, on November 10, 1983, the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth date. The first class of students arrived in January 1986. In 1993 the first summer session was held, and the school year 1993-94 was the first the institute provided opportunity for participation for two semesters as well as a summer session. Seven Lutheran colleges found it desirable to establish a presence in Washington, DC. They established the Washington Consortium and selected the Luther Institute to provide services and management for their 12-month J academic program. By October 1993, the Consortium membership had grown to 10 colleges: Gettysburg, Lenoir-Rhyne, Luther, Muhlenberg, Roanoke, Susquehanna, Theil, Augustana (Sioux Falls), Wittenberg, and Valparaiso.

Lutheran Lay Fellowship

The Luther Institute initiated the Wittenberg Awards in 1990 to celebrate achievements of Lutheran international lay-women, laymen and clergy. The Institute invited LLF in 1992 to cosponsor the Luther Awards, recognizing outstanding service by Washington-area Lutheran clergy and lay persons.

The 60th anniversary of the founding of LLF was celebrated in 1996 at the Bolling Air Force Base Officers' Club. The featured speaker was Dr. Paul L. Maier, Professor of Ancient History and Campus Chaplain to Lutheran students at Western Michigan University. Dr. Maier was named one of America's 25 finest educators by the Council of Advancement and Support of Education. Dr. Maier was also a recipient of the Luther Institute's Wittenberg award in 2001.

For many years, LLF has provided the ushers to the joint Lutheran Reformation service at the Washington Cathedral.

In 1963, an ad hoc group of lay Lutherans from congregations in the DC area began the **Lay School of Theology (LST)** in an effort to further adult Christian education among Lutherans in the Washington metropolitan area. The LLF, in 1996, took over the sponsorship of LST. Under the logo of Theology for Today, the LST Committee offers a Spring session and a Fall session with topics ranging from the study of the books or heroes and characters found in the Bible to current issues and concerns facing Lutherans. The seminars are at local churches, and speakers are selected from Seminary faculty or well-known individuals and authorities in various fields of study.

The following five benevolence programs are among on-going LLF activities:

(1) The **McGrory Fund**, named in honor of the first Secretary of LLF, provides grants to support Lutheran congregations or community groups who establish new services or support projects.

(2) The **Scherzer Scholarship Fund**, named in honor of the Rev. John A. Scherzer, D.S.Th., providing scholarship grants each year to students attending Lutheran colleges.

(3) The **Bly Scholarship Fund**, inaugurated by former LLF President, Dr. Chauncy G. Bly, to provide assistance to students from abroad who seek their college or seminary education in the United States and then return to their homeland to serve their people.

(4) The **Fellowship Square Foundation Fund**, was established by LLF to enable FSF to provide assistance to residents in the Fellowship houses to enjoy more fully the space provided.

(5) In 1996, the **Wegener Chaplaincy Fund** was established by Fellowship Square Foundation to have a Chaplain to serve the residents of the Fellowship Houses.

LLF members are given an opportunity to make donations to each of these funds each year. Scholarships and grants are made from these donations and earnings of the fund balances.

Fellowship Square Foundation

As mentioned in the LLF section of this History, a concern for the low and moderate income elderly in need of adequate housing moved LLF members to sponsor, in 1960, creation of Fellowship Square Foundation, Inc. (FSF), a not-for-profit corporation to implement Federal housing legislation designated to relieve this need. FSF currently has five buildings on four campuses as detailed below.

Funding for the first project, the 140-unit Lake Anne Fellowship House, Reston, Virginia, was obtained in 1969 through diligent efforts of LLF members. Construction began in February 1970, and the first tenants moved in on May 2, 1971. The Rev. Dr. John A. Scherzer provided imaginative, capable leadership, and the Lake Anne project has been recognized as an exemplary implementation of the Housing Act by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. A wing of 100 apartments, plus facilities for congregate food service and a meeting room to seat 225 persons, was opened for occupancy on October 15, 1976.

The FSF, jointly with the Virginia Housing Development Authority began construction of Hunters Woods Fellowship House in Reston in May 1970. This facility has 224 apartments plus a crafts room, classroom for continuing education, food service space, and general meeting room. The first residents moved in on March 5, 1979. By June 30, all apartments were occupied with a long waiting list. The project is a part of the central core of Hunters Woods Village, including shops, public library, and the Community Center.

Lake Ridge Fellowship House, located south of Woodbridge, Virginia, opened on July 10, 1983, with 100 apartments for low-income elderly and physically challenged. By September it was fully occupied, with a waiting list.

The Largo Landing Fellowship House opened with 106 units in June 1984. Located in southern Prince George's County, Maryland, this project was a cooperative effort with the Riverdale Baptist Church. These new apartments were quickly occupied, with a waiting list.

Also in 1984, the FSF tested a new phase of service, managing Lewisville Senior Center for Fairfax County's housing authority. This apartment facility was located on the second floor of a former public school; the first floor had been converted to a senior center. A decision by the county to do its own staffing in 1988 brought this test to an end.

Recognizing the need of many older persons for additional support services beyond those independent living facilities, the FSF started construction of Tall Oaks Fellowship House in Reston in 1987. After various construction delays, the first three floors of the facility were opened and staffed. After completing the structure and finding marketing to achieve full occupancy difficult, the facility was sold in 1991 to an owner who could achieve full use of services.

The FSF created a network of corporations during 1988 to facilitate record keeping necessary for the many different financial arrangements required under the laws governing federal, state, and local housing authorities.

The Rev. Dr. John A. Scherzer resigned in late 1988 from the presidency of the FSF. Dr. C. David Hartmann was elected to succeed Dr. Scherzer. Dr. Hartmann was succeeded in 1993 by Floyd E. Anderson. In 1990 Executive Director Leo C. Berger resigned. The Rev. David I. Heeter was elected as Executive Director in 1990. Dr. Heeter resigned his employment with Fellowship Square Foundation in 2000. He was succeeded in late 2000 by Mr. James Garrett. In 2004 Mr. Floyd E. Anderson was succeeded as president by Dr. C. David Hartmann.