



ELCA Publisher Ahead of Financial Forecast

Augsburg Fortress, the publishing ministry of the ELCA, is more than \$1 million ahead of its 2005 sales forecast through September, the board of trustees learned when it met Oct. 14-15.

The news is a significant departure from past financial reports. In recent years board members were often told of losses because the ELCA publisher was unable to achieve its financial goals.

Actual sales were \$28.9 million through September, compared to a forecast of \$27.8 million for 2005. Financial results for the first nine months of this year compared to the first nine months of last year show at least a \$2 million improvement, said John Rahja, Augsburg Fortress chief financial officer.

A key piece of Augsburg Fortress' sales success this year is the "Here We Stand" confirmation series, which includes a popular and successful seller, "The Lutheran Handbook."

Company managers reported to the board that a series of new products will be introduced in late 2005 and next year. For example, Augsburg Fortress has begun introducing a series of "brand extensions" related to "The Lutheran Handbook" and a new ecumenical volume, "The Christian Handbook."

In addition, Augsburg Fortress plans to introduce "The Lutheran Handbook for Pastors" and "The Lutheran Handbook on Marriage" in April 2006; later in the year it plans to introduce "The Lutheran Course on Marriage." It will also introduce "The Christian Handbook for Pastors" and "The Christian Handbook on Marriage" next April.

The company will introduce new web-based materials in its popular "New Proclamation" preaching resource series and a CD-ROM, "Hermeneia." The first five volumes of a new Spanish-language Biblical commentary series, "Conozca su Biblia," will also be launched in spring 2006.

A new 2006 Vacation Bible School resource, "Gospel Express," has been introduced.

In October 2006 new worship resources, including a new worship book, "Evangelical Lutheran Worship," will be introduced. The 2005 Churchwide Assembly endorsed the ELCA worship project when it met this past August in Orlando, Fla.

Information about Augsburg Fortress is available at www.augsburgfortress.org on the web.

ELCA News in Brief

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'Davey And Goliath's Snowboard Christmas' on DVD

The ELCA and Starlight Home Entertainment, Inc., Los Angeles, will release "Davey and Goliath's Snowboard Christmas" Nov. 15 on DVD. The one-hour, stop-motion animation special is the 2005 Aurora Award "Best of Show" winner and a 2005 Telly Award finalist.

"Through the magic of stop-motion animation, we follow Davey and Goliath on an exciting snowboarding adventure. During the adventure, Davey learns some dazzling snowboard maneuvers and some very important lessons about the real meaning of Christmas, and about understanding and respect for people who are different than he is," said Kristi S. Bangert, director for marketing and interpretation, ELCA Communication Services.

A property of the ELCA, Davey and Goliath is a classic television series aired on commercial television in the 1960s and 1970s. The ELCA's mission with Davey and Goliath is to bring "moral and religious faith-based values to a new generation of children in lively and engaging ways."

Lutheran Men in Mission Takes First Steps in Three-Year Plans

The first meeting of the Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) board after the 2005 LMM Assembly and Gathering was a time of orientation and planning. Many of the board's four officers and nine regional representatives were new to their three-year positions when they met Oct. 21-23. They began planning the men's ministry of the ELCA for the next three years around the organization's three emphases: resources, events and young men's ministry.

The regional representatives agreed to contact at least one representative in each of the ELCA's 65 synods, who will take responsibility for distributing almost 90 Bibles to men in 15 congregations in the first months of 2006. Each "Master Builders Bible for Men" includes Bible study helps and a "Men's Ministry Leaders Supplement" – step-by-step guidelines LMM developed for starting or reviving a men's ministry in a congregation.

"We are going to target congregations that do not currently have a men's ministry and give about five to six Bibles to men's leaders in those congregations to help them start small-group Bible study, which hopefully will lead into activation or re-activation of men's ministry in their congregations," Rast said.