



## **USF CHAPEL CENTER CELEBRATES MINISTRY AND FUTURE**

*Thanks is given for the ministry of the center and of Rev. Dr. Deborah Holton-Fisher*

***For Immediate Release***

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**TAMPA, FL** – A Celebration of Campus Ministry in honor of The Rev. Dr. Deborah Holton-Fischer will be held, Sunday, January 21, 2007, at the Chapel Center at USF. Pastor Holton-Fischer served for the last seven years as the second chaplain-director of the ecumenical campus ministry. The Celebration begins with a Service of Holy Communion as 6:00 pm, followed by a dinner at the center. The Rev. Susan Snedeker-Meier, Associate Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Tampa Bay, will deliver the sermon, and Pr Holton-Fischer will serve as celebrant.

During her tenure, Pr Holton-Fischer has developed an extensive peer ministry program among students at USF and served the campus community in many ways, including conducting numerous funerals, serving on the medical ethics review committee, and helping to coordinate the activities of religious organizations on the campus.

The Chapel Center has pioneered ecumenical partnership for campus ministry. Originally a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida, the Chapel Center became ecumenical in 1999 when the executives of the Florida-Bahamas Synod ELCA, the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Presbytery of Tampa Bay, and the Diocese signed a compact for joint ministry on the USF campus.

After several years of deficit budgets, the ecumenical partnership that charters the Chapel Center and its Board agreed to cease the current operation of the ministry while an in-depth study of how to support campus ministry is undertaken. The ecumenical partners secured non-recurring funds to help the center meet all of its obligations by the end of 2006.

As landlord of the Chapel Center facilities on the USF Campus, the Southwest Diocese has assumed responsibility for administrative and pastoral functions. A schedule will be implemented so that representation from the various denominations will rotate leadership for Sunday evening worship. The six student residents at the center will keep their lodging and help lead bible studies and prayer groups.

The representatives of the four denominations have all expressed a strong desire to continue in partnership at the Chapel Center. One of the primary objectives of the upcoming feasibility study will be to determine the degree to which local congregations may become more substantial resources for campus ministry.

To volunteer or learn more about the Chapel Center, please email the Rev. Katherine Tate at [ktate@dioceseswfla.org](mailto:ktate@dioceseswfla.org). Deacon Tate has been appointed the primary contact person by the Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida to oversee the transitional phase. Friends and supporters of the Chapel Center are invited to the celebration and dinner. Please RSVP to Rev. Tate by email.

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The Florida-Bahamas Synod is a collection of 212 churches and nearly 84,000 members and is a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). More information regarding the synod and the ELCA can be found at [www.fbsynod.org](http://www.fbsynod.org) and [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org).