

## **"It's a free country, isn't it?"**

### **FROM THE PASTOR**

In the United States, we can still get good, solid mileage of the tattered old cliché, "It's a free country, isn't it?" We can and do use it to justify a lot of words and actions that people of some other countries would never dare attempt. On the Fourth of July we celebrate our freedoms - freedom of speech, the pursuit of happiness, freedom from oppression, freedom to worship, and freedom from tyrannical foreign powers, and much more. We appreciate these freedoms all the more when we consider how people in many foreign countries live without the many freedoms we have.

We also want to consider that freedom is not free. The cost of freedom is high. Countless people have given their lives in the service of our country to preserve the precious freedoms that we have. We cannot adequately express our gratitude to those, past and present, who have risked and lost their lives so we might be free. God bless them all!

But here is a shocker for you. In the United States of America, right now, today, there is as much absolute slavery as there ever has been at any time, any place on earth! There is a slavery that many don't even know exists. Now, I am not talking about social injustice, ethnic oppression, or economic inequities. I am talking about a cruel, heartless slavery perpetrated by a force totally devoid of love and compassion and dedicated to the destruction of mankind. It is a kind of slavery so subtle and deceptive that people are often unaware of the power and hold it has on them. It is the slavery of sin at work in human hearts.

The country in which we live may be free, but what about you? Are you free from the weight and consequences of sin? Be honest! You know that God is not going to say, "You're basically a pretty good person, so I don't hold your sins against you." Are you free from the nagging doubts that come along with the "I can get to heaven on my own" approach to salvation? Or do you find yourself asking, "Maybe I

won't be good enough to escape the punishment of hell"?

Are you free to live a life of real joy because you know and wholeheartedly believe that Jesus died - and rose again - to provide the forgiveness that unchains you from your sins?

Are you also free from the soul-crushing slavery of a life in which the accumulation of "things" that squeezes out the acquisition of God's eternal treasure and blessings? Are you free from the ambition for personal gain that puts God in second or third place and denies the joy of a close relationship with him? It is only through Jesus Christ that we are really made free and there can be no real freedom apart from him.

If you are one who really has a firm grip on this freedom that only God can provide, REJOICE!... and continually thank Him for it because "If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed!" (John 8:36) If you are struggling to find this freedom, know that Jesus broke the chains of sin, death, and hell for you when he died and rose again for you.

Sure, we live in a free country, but the paradox is that not every one in it is free. You should be... and can be. The key is found in Gospel. The Gospel or Good News is found in the Bible, God's Word. Its message is that Christ has set us free from our sins, their guilt and punishment. We are free to live for Christ our Lord and enjoy all the blessings that he has to give us for this life and the next. Proclaim it to all so that all might be free!

*Pastor Kehren*

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and approve matters pertinent to the Congregation as a whole.

Thanks again to all for your help and time. Until next time - May God's Almighty Grace and Peace be with you.

Always in Christ,  
Bill B

**COURTYARD LATTICE**

Have you noticed how wonderful the courtyard lattice looks? We are very grateful to Kalevi M, Hilmar (Tiny) K, Ron W and Tim W for all their hard, professional work.

Thanks also to Jan D, Ritva M and Patti S for coordinating the fund raiser activities, to everyone who made cupcakes and to Thrivent Financial for the matching funds. And of course thank you to all of those who contributed to the expense. It looks so much better and is much safer.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Brothers & Sisters in Christ - Fellow Christians

A very special thank you to all who helped and participated in this year's VBS. You are the ones who give of your time and talents and always make it a great success. It is always most gratifying to see so many of our young people helping and participating.

Well, what can I say - we are slowly, but surely progressing on the reorganization structure of our church realignment program as recommended by the Parish Assistance program. The Bylaws as revised by the ORTF was approved by the voters at the meeting on 6-17-08.

It was recommended that we have two voters meetings each year (one in June & one in December); however, the Church Council can (and I'm sure that they will) call and/or ask for a Voters Meeting anytime that they feel it is needed to discuss

**HOPE SCHOOL NEWS**

**Wish List**

- Laminating Machine
- SMART Board interactive whiteboard
- More Computers in Classrooms
- Digital Projector
- 8# Shot Put
- Relay Batons
- Tape Measures

Michael M and Tyler C, both 7th graders at Hope School placed first and second respectively in the Fleet Reserve Americanism essay contest, "Why I am Proud to Be an American", and were honored by the Mother Lode Branch & Unit of the Fleet Reserve Association. They and their families were guests of the Fleet Reserve at a lasagna dinner. The Americanism Co-chair Hayden Wisdom presented the awards.

The essays of local first place winners go to Regional for evaluation. The Regional winners are then evaluated at the National level. Top prize is \$15,000.

Congratulations Michael and Tyler!!!!

The following is the 1<sup>st</sup> place essay written by Michael M:

### **WHY I AM PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN**

Woodrow Wilson, our 28th President, once said, "America lives in the heart of every man everywhere who wishes to find a region where he will be free to work out his destiny as he chooses." I have the freedom to live where I want, live as I want, and live with the pride that I live in a safe country.

First of all, I am proud to be an American because I can live where I want and I'm not assigned a certain piece of land. For example, I can live in a penthouse in the big city of New York, a small home in the suburbs of Madison, or a ranch style home in the countryside of Montana.

Secondly, I can choose how I want to live; I'm not forced to take a certain career path just because my father is in it. If I want to I can be a teacher, or mechanic, as opposed to places like China where choice is not an option. I have endless educational options through trade schools, colleges, and on the job training courses to assist me in conquering my life long career goals.

Lastly, I have the pride of being in a country where we can protect ourselves and have the right to bear arms (2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution). We have the strongest defensive system in the world with the ongoing protection of our military forces. This is obtained through constant practicing of military drills, knowledge of new technology, constant research of opposing countries' weaknesses and strengths and excellent leadership. Because of this, we have the privilege of saying that our country has never been overtaken by any other country.

In conclusion, I am proud to be an American because, all in all, we have so much more than most other countries, like Russia, Canada, and Mexico. The freedom of choice is greatest possession and for that reason alone, we are very blessed.

The following is the 2<sup>nd</sup> place essay written by Tyler C:

### **WHY I AM PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN**

Do you know that about half of our young people join the army about the age of twenty? I am only a boy

and I know the importance of military for its protection, our economy for food, paper, and other items we use for daily life, and for our Government that takes care of our needs.

First of all, I am proud of our Government because we can elect all of our officials and what they can do. We can also live with the knowledge that they are taking care of us and command our army to protect us from other countries. It also shows me how many others are proud enough to be Americans to help run and protect it.

Secondly, I am proud to be an American for our military, for they have given their lives to protect us. For example, they gave their lives in defense of Pearl Harbor in 1941 in World War II. We ended the war by the detonation of two atom bombs on Japan.

And last of all, I am proud to be an American because of our economy. I am proud because I hear and see other nations with so little and then I think of what we have and I am amazed.

I will conclude with my summary. I am proud of our military for protection, our government for security and our economy for food and other items for daily life. And now you know why I am Proud to Be an American.

## **WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

The Women's Bible Study will not be meeting at all in July and the August dates are August 13 and 27.

## **IT HAPPENED IN JULY ...**

1978 - The Hope mission received recognition from the Wisconsin Synod as an official mission congregation. Prior to that recognition, the group had been a mission outreach from the St. Marks congregation in Citrus Heights. While the ties to St. Marks had been removed, the mission congregation was far from independent. Support was received from Synod. The search was begun for a suitable building site, and the search for a Pastor was undertaken. Synod authorized and provided funds to buy the current Hope property. Mr. Rick Curia, a candidate from the Seminary graduating class of

1978, was assigned to be the first Pastor of the Hope mission congregation. Things were coming together.

16 July 1978 - Pastor Rick Curia was ordained and installed as the first Pastor of the Hope congregation.

15 July 2006 - Mr. Paul Leifer was installed as Principal/Teacher of Hope Lutheran School.

## YOUNG AT HEART

July 15, the Young at Heart will meet in the Fellowship Hall at 11:30am for a pot luck luncheon. If you have not ever attended or you have not attended recently please plan to join us. Bring your favorite dish and be prepared to visit and have fun.

## HOPE FOOD CLOSET

All food donations are given to Betty N's Hope Food Closet. Please help by purchasing the designated items for the month.

Leave your purchases on the counter on the East side of the kitchen. Thank you for your outreach to the community.

**July: Peanut Butter, Jelly and Crackers**

## ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Join us after late service on Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup> for a sandwich luncheon and an Ice Cream Social in the Fellowship Hall. This event is a fund raiser for the purchase of blinds for the sanctuary. Matching funds will be provided by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Watch the bulletin for more information.

## PROJECT LINUS

Project Linus will not be meeting in July or August. We will resume our meetings in September on the 4th Tuesday of the month, September 23rd and continue to meet the fourth Tuesday of each month September 2008 thru May 2009. We will take a break for the summer. You may call Vicki Johnson at (916) 663-2655 with any questions.

The following notes were received by Project Linus at Hope:

Dear Hope Lutheran Church, 5/1/08

Thank you so much for the 32 quilts you made for Project Linus! They are just beautiful! I know they will be much appreciated!

These will go to the Sheriff's Department Criminal Investigations Division this month.

Many thanks again!  
Cheerfully, Claire

This note was received from a mother who received one of the Linus quilts.

"To the wonderful person / people who made the beautiful blanket for my daughter,

THANK you so much for all the love and caring you put into this wonderful gift. My daughter Alexandra lost her little 18 month old brother Daniel in January of this year. We put him down to sleep and he never woke up. It's been very hard on all of us.

Now that Alexandra has her special "love" blanket she can wrap herself up in it whenever she gets lonely or sad. She sleeps with it every night since it helps her feel more safe.

We are so touched by your kindness. Thank you.

Warmly,  
Mother of Alexandra and Daniel

***GOD IS LIKE.***

## HALLMARK CARDS

He cared enough to send His very best.

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Dear Christian Sisters and Brothers,

Hope is so blessed to have as members such generous persons. It has been truly a surprise and a

blessing to receive so much to be sent to Iraq. Seth D, Glaphry D's grandson has kept in contact with us through emails. The coffee from Starbucks (thanks to Kathy B and her manager) has been enjoyed so much.

Even though boxes have been sent there is so much more and will be packed by the Young at Heart at the July meeting.

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO ONE AND ALL!!!!

Mary Ann F, Project Coordinator



This Thank You note was received from Seth D, Glaphry's grandson in Iraq.

Hey Grandma,

We received all three of the packages within this last week. It was all very nice. The beef jerky and peanuts are really great for those long missions when we might not make it back in time for chow. All the hygiene gear is helpful out here, too.

If you wouldn't mind letting everyone know that we all say "thank you" I would greatly appreciate it. We are very lucky that people such as you are nice enough to be willing to do that sort of stuff for us.

Seth



A big THANKS to everyone who helped make our "Bible Discovery Museum" VBS week a success. We also would like to say thanks for the money and snack food that was donated. It was nice to see so many of our current and previous students helping in the classrooms. On our first day we had 50 children. I would also like to thank those of you who took the time to fill out the form asking for ways to improve next year's VBS. There were several good suggestions and we're always looking for ways to improve.

Diane H, VBS Coordinator



Thanks to all my beloved friends in Christ for your prayers, visits, and cards. As I read them and even now as I re-read them, tears of joy encompass me. All those comforting messages from Scripture and from your hearts makes me very humble and it seems that words are inadequate to show my appreciation.

Betty N

## TOGETHER



News from the WELS

June 2008  
 Website: [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net)

## CELC MEETS IN UKRAINE

### From the office of President Mark Schroeder

This week will mark the 15th anniversary of the formation of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC). The anniversary will be celebrated when representatives of confessional Lutheran church bodies from around the world meet in Kiev, Ukraine. I will be part of the WELS delegation attending.

The 20 Lutheran church bodies of the CELC enjoy a special bond of fellowship, united in their doctrine and in their commitment to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. The meeting of the CELC, which takes place every three years, is intended to strengthen those bonds of Christian fellowship and to provide mutual encouragement to member churches. The churches of the CELC have different histories and origins. In the United States, WELS and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) have enjoyed the blessing of fellowship for decades. More recently, other confessional Lutheran church bodies have emerged around the world. Some, such as those in Sweden, Norway, and Finland, were formed as confessional Lutherans departed from liberal state churches. The churches in Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Latvia, came into being as confessional Lutherans struggled to hold on to their faith during decades of Communist oppression. Still other church bodies, such as those in Africa, Asia, South America, Central America, and the Caribbean,

were formed as WELS and ELS missions became mature and independent church bodies.

These 20 church bodies may be relatively unknown; they seldom receive media attention or make headlines. For the most part, they are all relatively small in size, and many struggle in the face of local opposition and a scarcity of resources. But they are vitally important because, regardless of their size or influence, they are reminders that we are part of a worldwide community of people who are faithful to the Scriptures. They are beautiful examples of how the gospel works in people around the world, bringing them to faith in Jesus Christ and keeping them in the faith through the means of grace.

Please keep these faithful brothers and sisters in your prayers. Ask God to give them strength, courage, and wisdom. And thank God that he has united you with believers around the world who share a common faith with you and who are united with you in a common mission.

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

*Mr. Joel Hochmuth, WELS communications director, will also be attending the CELC convention June 3-5. Read about his convention experience on the World Mission blog: <http://missions.wels.net>*

### **Seminary graduates head to assignments**

Now that Call Day is over, graduates of the class of 2008 of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, are making the transition from student to full-time called worker. Forty-one of 42 graduates were assigned.

### **DISTRICT CONVENTIONS: ABOUT OUR FATHER'S BUSINESS**

#### **From the office of President Mark Schroeder**

Last week, all twelve districts of the synod held their biennial district conventions. These meetings took place in Seattle in the Pacific Northwest District, in Tampa in the South Atlantic—and in all districts between.

District conventions serve several important purposes. The delegates from congregations throughout the synod meet to hear reports on progress that has been made since the last meeting of the synod convention in July 2007. Included in those reports are updates on finances, descriptions of new ministry efforts, and reports on the efforts made to carry out the directives of the last

convention. In addition, district conventions typically provide a setting to look ahead to the opportunities and challenges before us in the coming months. They are also a time for the grass-roots members of our synod to provide early advice and input for decisions that will come before the next convention in 2009.

Several topics occupied the attention of delegates in all district conventions. The preliminary report of the Ad Hoc Commission was discussed in a variety of ways. All district conventions were asked to provide reaction and advice for the commission as it works to prepare its final recommendation to the synod convention next summer. Each district approached the discussion in its own way, and the reaction provided to the commission will also come in a variety of formats. One thing was consistent, however. Discussion and debate in all districts was varied, lively, and brotherly. The Ad Hoc Commission looks forward to analyzing the reactions and incorporating district feedback in its final report.

The Year of Jubilee debt retirement offering was also discussed at all district conventions. The support for this effort to retire the synod's capital debt seems to be widespread and enthusiastic. Delegates across the country joined in prayer that God would bless this effort to eliminate the synod's long-term capital debt—not for the purpose of simply being "debt free," but to enable us to utilize our precious resources in the best possible way.

These conventions are more than just meetings. They are evidence of how God works to build his kingdom through weak and fallible human beings, how he graciously gives us the opportunity to serve, and how he uses the time and talents of his people to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

### **New district presidents elected**

Two new district presidents were elected at WELS district conventions last week to replace outgoing presidents who were not seeking reelection. Rev. Charles Degner of St. Peter, Minn., was elected president of the Minnesota District to replace Rev. Larry Cross who is retiring after serving 16 years as district president. Degner has served his entire ministry in the district—beginning at Martin Luther Academy in New Ulm, Minn., from 1975-76 and then

later at congregations in Red Wing and Prior Lake, Minn. He has been serving at St. Peter in St. Peter, Minn., since 1986.

In Mesa, Ariz., delegates to the Arizona-California district convention elected Rev. Jon Buchholz as the district's new president to replace Rev. Paul Janke who asked not to be nominated for reelection after serving in the position for 10 years.

Buchholz, who currently serves at Emmanuel in Tempe, Ariz., is a relative newcomer to the district. Before accepting his current call in 2005, he served congregations in Des Moines, Wash., and Waukesha, Wis. He served as a vicar in Puerto Rico from 1988-89.

In addition to their district duties, the 12 presidents also serve their calling congregation and serve on the Conference of Presidents—charged with supervising and maintaining the synod's doctrinal unity.

"The task seems very daunting; I'm feeling overwhelmed," says Buchholz. "I'm going back to the Lord, hearing his voice in the Scriptures and the sacraments—that's where I turn for strength."

#### **New mission counselor called**

WELS Board for Home Missions called Rev. Peter Kruschel—currently administrator for WELS Board for Ministerial Education—on May 30 to be the mission counselor for the Pacific Northwest.

### ***GOD IS LIKE.***

#### ***ALLSTATE***

***You're in good hands with Him.***

### **YOSEMITE MUSINGS**

By: George H

I am Mist Trail  
I feel hiker's sweat dripping from their faces onto me.  
I hear exhausted hikers groan on my steps.  
I see the astonished faces of hikers when they see all my steps.  
I am a difficult trail.

### **YOSEMITE ALPHABET**

By: Amy H

A is for an Actually Awesome drive  
B is for Big Beautiful Boulders  
C is for Clearly is Colorful  
D is for Daring Dads hiked Half Dome  
E is for Everyone made the first falls  
F is for Four - hour seems- like – forever drive  
G is for Goodness Gracious, we had a Good hike  
H is for Honkenly Huge Hot dogs  
I is for It was very Interesting  
J is for Jam and peanut butter - a sandwich choice  
K is for Keeping souvenirs from the store  
L is for Loving the Luxurious view  
M is for Mostly playing Mofia  
N is for No bears ate us  
O is for Outrageously Open schedule  
P is for People Preparing to camp  
Q is for Quickly the Queens make an artificial Josh  
R is for Rapidly Rushing water Roars down the waterfall  
S is for Sadly Separating at the first falls  
T is for The Treacherous Trail To Nevada Falls  
U is for Using lots of food  
V is for Very scary Vultures Venture closer  
W is for When the hike Was over We rejoiced  
X is for X-tremely X-hausted, we ate X-tremely delicious hot dogs  
Y is for Yosemite, You are cool  
Z is for Zero imperfections