

YEAR OF JUBILEE OFFERING

Our synod has launched its Year of Jubilee celebration in response to the 2007 Synod Convention authorization of a special offering to reduce synodical debt. The Year of Jubilee started this past summer and will conclude at the Synod Convention in July, 2009.

This special offering is based on the Old Testament Year of Jubilee. The Year of Jubilee was instituted by God through Moses on Mt. Sinai. (Read about it in Leviticus 25.) The preeminent theme of the Jubilee was the forgiveness of all debts. The Year of Jubilee was intended to foreshadow the completed work of Jesus whose perfect life and innocent death paid our debt of sin and won our forgiveness. How fitting that Christ's full payment of our debt of sin moves our hearts to give thank offerings to eliminate financial debt within our synod so that we can better serve our Savior.

The offering is being collected with the goal of gathering \$22.4 million from WELS congregations and individuals from around the country to eliminate the synod's debt. Reducing or eliminating this debt would free up to \$2.7 million a year to then "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"—the gospel—(Luke 4:18,19) to so many who are prisoners of darkness because they don't know God's grace.

It may seem like an impossible mission, doesn't it? You wonder what the children of Israel thought about forgiving all debts as God had commanded. What do we think about the WELS' Year of Jubilee goal of gathering \$22.4 million to completely eliminate the synod's debt by the 2009 Synod Convention? Let's remember Gabriel's words to Mary as well as Jesus' answer to his baffled disciples: "What is impossible with men is possible with God." (Luke 1:37; 18:27)

"Jubilee" probably comes from the Hebrew word "yobel" which means "ram's horn." This horn was used by the Israelites to proclaim the beginning of the Year of Jubilee on the Day of Atonement. "Jubilee" has become a term used for rejoicing or festivity. Thanks to Jesus every moment of our lives is a moment of

Jubilee. We sinners are freed through Jesus' blood. The greatest debt of all, the debt of sin, has been forgiven. It is definitely reason to celebrate! From mid-November to mid-December we will observe a special month of Jubilee where you we will have a special opportunity to celebrate and give.

Pastor Kehren

You can contribute toward our Year of Jubilee offering to eliminate the synod's debt by placing your gift in the offering plate at worship, making checks payable to the congregation. Or give online at www.wels.net/donate.

ELECTION DAY

God has made us citizens both of his kingdom of grace and the earthly nation in which we live. He has placed us under a government that gives us the privilege and responsibility of choosing the leaders who will govern us and a voice in determining what kind of laws and policies we set up in our nation, state, and local communities. As this election approaches, appreciate and make use of this privilege and responsibility. Become informed about the candidates and issues. Talk with friends and neighbors and then, vote on Tuesday, November 4th! This election gives us the special opportunity to choose a new president and vote directly on the moral issue of marriage. May God bless our nation, state and communities through the election of honest and responsible leaders and laws that reflect God's will and protect and benefit all.

Pastor Kehren

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STOP - LOOK - LISTEN & TRUST.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear; even though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ... Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46: 1-2.

The psalms are a tapestry of human emotions. The poetry of prayer weaves together anger, fear, joy, longing, despair, praise and passion. These verses sum up God's response to those prayers. Their truth is the thread of peace and comfort that runs through the entire book of Psalms, as well as the rest of the Bible -- and the life of every individual who walks with God. God's answer to those who are emotionally troubled is brief and straightforward: stop and remember who is on your side.

Psalm 46 talks about earthquakes felling mountains, cities being destroyed, nations being in an uproar, kingdoms crumbling. It talks about the final destruction of the world itself. The overall tone of the psalm is anything but quiet and still. One sentence, however, says to "BE STILL" and the focal point of emotion changes from outside chaos to internal rest. That's why this psalm was written as a song. It proclaimed a message everyone needed to hear.

Let the truth of these verses find a home in your heart today. When life gets busy or chaotic, its easy to get distracted. You wind up focusing on problems instead of the ONE who holds the answer to your problems in his hands. When that happens, stop. Focus on who God is and how much he loves you. Share your own heartfelt psalm of prayer with the God of power and compassion. Be still and know God is near.

The words in Psalm 46 hold incredible power when it comes to knowing God is near in any and every situation. Memorize them. Meditate on them. Keep them close at heart for when you need them most.

May God's grace and peace be with you always.

MEMBER MINISTRY

What is the Member Ministry area, you say, and what does it mean to Hope and to me?

The Member Ministry (MM) area was one of several areas proposed by the Parish Assistance effort, confirmed by the Organizational Realignment Task Force (ORTF) and voted into existence this past June. At the October Church Council meeting, the 2008/2009 plan for the MM was reviewed and approved.

The Mission of the Member Ministry Area is *"Matching God's Gifted People at Hope with Opportunities to Serve the Lord at Hope"*. The MM Vision (what the future could look like after success) is:

1. Every Hope member understands what God's Word says about applying his/her gifts to Kingdom Work.
2. Every Hope member is able to identify his/her God-given gifts.
3. Every Hope member knows how he/she can apply those gifts to Ministry at Hope.

In order to work toward this mission and vision, the MM area will rely heavily upon the framework of the WELS program called "Who Will Come and Serve Today?" which stresses a few important concepts and tools:

1. Matching people and opportunities, not just filling jobs with names

2. Freedom to try new things and move around, not 'lifetime appointments'
3. Letting God's Word provide motivation for service (vs begging or shaming people into service)
4. Follow up with every member is critical to put gifts to Kingdom work.

Over the next year, the MM team will be calling on as many members as possible to start the process of discovery and matching (and also learning how to do that process effectively!). With more than 100 contacts to make, this will be a busy area and will take all of the year to make progress.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Mike R, the Member Ministry Director.

YOUNG AT HEART

Our next get-together is on Tuesday, November 18th at 11:30am and will be a general potluck. In addition, please bring a donation for the Food Closet as many people in Sacramento and Placer Counties are in need.

Our December Christmas party will be at the home of Ted and Myra H on Tuesday, December 9th at 12 noon. Our hosts are preparing lunch and need to have your sandwich choice and payment of \$10.00 by November 18th. Lunch choices are as follows:

- Almond Chicken Salad Sandwich on a croissant roll
- OR**
- Ham & Cheese Sandwich on a Poor Boy soft roll

- Included:
- Salad Bar
- Cold Potato Salad
- Hot German Potato Salad
- Fruit Salad

Drinks: wine, apple cider, water, tea, coffee

Desserts

HOPE SCHOOL NEWS

Hooray for Harvest Festival

Friday, October 10, 2008, was a windy day, but Hope School families didn't get blown to the magical land of OZ. We had a party! Between the book safari, the fun games, the costume contest, the prize drawings, and the delicious snacks there was something for everyone to enjoy. It was encouraging to see several new non-member families who were invited at the Loomis Eggplant Festival or as a personal guest of a Hope family. In addition, because of your purchases, the school received over \$400 worth of free books that are now part of the school library. It truly was a blessed day!

Day Before Thanksgiving Parade

As in past years, we are planning to again be walking in the Loomis day before Thanksgiving parade. Since the float was such a success last year we are hoping to have one again. If you are willing to help plan or decorate the float, please contact Mr. Leifer right away. We hope you all have a blessed Thanksgiving!

AZ-CA District Teacher's Conference

Two faculty members will be attending this year's teacher's conference in Anaheim on November 6-7. More to follow next month.

Stay Up To Date on School Happenings

If you would like to receive an email copy of the school newsletter, please email principalleifer@sbcglobal.net. Then each week you'll get the update on what is new at Hope Lutheran School.

Wish List

- Projector Mounts for Ceiling
- Portable Projector Screen
- Document Cameras
- SMART Board Interactive Whiteboard
- Newer Computers for Classrooms
- New Desks

**ADVENT BY CANDLE LIGHT
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2008
AT 7:00 PM**

All the women and girls of the congregation are invited to Advent by Candle Light. Bring your favorite Christmas dessert or cookies and invite your friends

A special program is being planned this year to focus on the meaning of Advent and to enjoy fellowship. A sign-up form will be placed on the counter in the Narthex. This event will be replacing the Women's Christmas party. Please join us for a time of reflection on the Advent season, fellowship, and delicious desserts. Be sure to invite your friends too.

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.

November: Thanksgiving Dinner-canned yams \ cranberry sauce \ stuffing mix

An Update on Hope Lutheran Food Closet

I have worked with Senior Gleaners for almost 26 years but I have never seen the need for our Hope Food Closet workers to reach out wherever we can for donations of food to distribute to families with children and to disabled elderly. In the past the Senior Gleaner members were able to glean from many grocery stores, bakeries and restaurants to make food available to over 100 different charities each week. It is obvious that their sources have declined, for whatever reason. It occurred to me that if more people knew how Senior Gleaners operates, which has been the only source of food for Hope Lutheran Food Closet that perhaps more of Hope Members would contribute whatever they can so that we can continue to supply boxes for the 35 families that we have deemed eligible for a box each week. We have in the past given as many as 45 boxes each week and with the economy being what it is, we may have more families asking for help

Our food closet has been in existence since 1985, first under the 501 (3) for Sunrise Pregnancy Counseling Center. When that closed down Hope

Lutheran became our sponsor, since Ed Johnson and I had become members at Hope and Hope approved the sponsorship.

Betty N

THANK YOU, THANK YOU

The Western Bar B Q was a lot of fun. Thanks to the committee for a wonderful meal and Glaphry for the music.

Trophies were given to Jacob B for most colorful [Green Bay Packer] Cowboy Hat and to Matthew M for the most original Western Hat.

The winners of the Cowpie Cake Walk ate their prizes on the spot. 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place ribbons were awarded for the hat games. Everyone sang Happy Birthday to Pastor. Then Pastor tried on everyone's hat, (Would you believe all at one time?). Thanks Pastor for being a good sport.

WOMEN OF HOPE

WOMEN OF HOPE CHRISTMAS PROJECT

We will once again be collecting presents for the children served by the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Placer County. Look for the festive, holiday wrapped box in the Fellowship Hall and add your new, unwrapped gift(s) and sign the Christmas Project list, indicating if you are a Thrivent Member and how many hours you spent shopping for or making presents. We have received a grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for \$999.00 this year to also support this effort.

Suggested items for children ages newborn to 15 are clothing, toys, jackets, diapers, or blankets. All gifts need to be brought to the Fellowship Hall by Sunday, December 7th. Please direct questions to Vicki J or Judy C.

TOGETHER

News from the WELS



October 2008
Website: www.wels.net

October 6, 2008

PLANNING FOR THE MISSION

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

In every even year such as this, September and October are the months when all areas of ministry in the synod are busy planning for the future. Some would call this "budget" work. I would call it planning for the mission that our synod will carry out in the next two years.

In this process, every area of ministry has been asked to lay out its plans for the coming biennium, which begins in July 2009. All areas have been asked to remember several important guiding principles as they plan:

- Keep in mind the overall direction and priorities established by the last synod convention: expand our efforts to proclaim the gospel and to provide well-trained workers for God's harvest field.
- Remember to look beyond your own area of ministry and remember the broad picture of the work of the synod.
- Describe clearly and carefully the work that you propose to do and how it ties into the synod's overall mission.
- Be aggressive in your planning, but keep in mind the financial realities.
- Estimate the financial resources that will be required for you to carry out your plans.
- Discuss contingencies: What would we be ready to do if additional funding is available? Where would we need to scale back in the event that resources are not available?

All areas of ministry are already looking at ways in which they can best carry out the mission of the synod. They are looking both at the opportunities before us, as well as the options they have if difficult choices need to be made.

As the areas of ministry are planning their program of work, the fiscal office will be preparing what is called the "support forecast" for the next biennium. This

forecast uses all available information to estimate how many dollars will be available—from all sources—to carry out the synod's work.

Once each area of ministry submits its plans and the support forecast is completed, it's my role to put together a comprehensive budget proposal. This proposal will be based on the plans of the areas of ministry and will take into consideration the financial resources that will be available. In other words, in keeping with our constitution, it will need to be a balanced budget. The proposal will be submitted to the Synodical Council in November. After making any amendments, council members will vote to adopt it in February. The entire plan will then be forwarded to the next synod convention.

Keep all of these boards and committees in your prayers. The planning that they do on your behalf will require a good measure of wisdom and faith.

Serving in Christ,
Mark Schroeder

Also in this Issue...

Enrollment increases at MLC

For the first time in six years, Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., started the school year with more students than the year before. A total of 723 on-campus students are enrolled— 536 are studying for the educational ministry and 181 for the pastoral ministry. Six are unclassified. Although enrollment is only up three from last year's 720, Prof. Philip Leyrer, MLC's vice president for enrollment management, says this is good news for the college, where enrollment has been declining steadily since the 2002-03 school year.

Congregations embrace Year of Jubilee

Congregations synodwide are in their own ways embracing the special Year of Jubilee offering— authorized by the 2007 synod convention to eliminate the synod's \$22.4 million debt and free up funds.

Funeral services for former district president

Funeral services were held Sept. 24 in Fort Atkinson, Wis., for Rev. Donald Bitter, former president of the Western Wisconsin District. Bitter, 79, died Sept. 21 in a Fort Atkinson nursing home.

October 20, 2008

YEAR OF JUBILEE OFFERING Q&A

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

Last week, the Conference of Presidents held its regular fall meetings in Milwaukee. Among the items on the agenda was the Year of Jubilee thank offering. The presidents are encouraging all congregations within their districts to participate during November and December, the months designated for the celebration. Many people, including some congregational leaders, still have questions about the offering. Here are answers to some of those common questions:

What is the Year of Jubilee offering?

The offering was authorized by the 2007 synod convention as a way to address our synod's \$22.4 million debt. Every congregation and individual is being encouraged to participate in this offering.

How did the debt come about?

Most of the \$22.4 million debt is capital debt that has been incurred as a result of various building and improvement projects over the last 12 years:

- building projects at synod schools during the amalgamation of Dr. Martin Luther College and Northwestern College in 1995;
- heating plant at Martin Luther College;
- science wing at Michigan Lutheran Seminary;
- dormitory addition at Luther Prep.

About one-third of the debt is the result of expenses exceeding support in the 2001-03 biennium.

Most of the \$22.4 million was borrowed internally (from various synodical funds) and was being repaid in a variety of ways and at different interest rates. In the fall of 2007, the debts were all combined into a single synodical debt. This debt has a single interest rate and is to be fully repaid in ten years. The combining of all these into a single debt enables us to present a clear picture of the debt, and it also enables us to reduce the annual payments required.

Why is it important for us to reduce or eliminate this debt? How will this help?

There is nothing inherently wrong with borrowing or with debt. But the fact is that each year \$2.7 million is budgeted for the repayment of this debt. The convention believed that this money would be better used if it were spent on opening missions and operating our ministerial education schools. If we can eliminate or significantly reduce the debt, dollars will be available to carry out ministry rather than making debt payments.

What is the timeline on the offering?

The offering will take place during November and December of this year, but congregations will have the ability to be flexible in how they carry it out. Some congregations are conducting the offering over four Sundays; others are having a single special celebration. Other congregations will start the offering this fall and continue to encourage and gather gifts over the next six months. The offering itself will end at the time of the synod convention in July 2009.

How will the gifts be gathered?

Congregations have been furnished with offering envelopes for every member. These can be gathered by the congregation and submitted to the synod. Individuals may also send their offerings directly to the synod or [give a gift online](#). To access Year of Jubilee resources online, go to: www.wels.net/jubileeworship

How will this offering benefit our shared mission as a synod?

We pray that the elimination or reduction of this debt will enable those dollars now being used for debt service to be used to expand our efforts to proclaim the saving good news of Jesus Christ to the world. For every \$100,000 saved, a new home mission can be established. Additional funds would enable our world missions efforts to be maintained and expanded. Additional funds would help to stabilize the funding of our ministerial education schools and to keep tuition costs from rising. In short, the less we have to dedicate to repaying our debt, the more we will have available to carry out our shared mission.

Why should I participate in this offering?

Our purpose and motivation in this offering is not simply to be free of debt. Our purpose is to unite in the faith and joy that God has given us in Christ, walking and working together to proclaim the gospel to more and more people. We gather this offering as a means of expressing our thanks to a God who has given sinners like us every reason to be joyful. We trust that God will bless these efforts conducted in his name and for his glory.

Serving in Christ,
Mark Schroeder

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

New BME administrator called

On Oct. 10, the Board for Ministerial Education (BME) called Rev. Paul Prange, president of Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, to be the new BME administrator.

Seminary enrollment declines

Official enrollment for the 2008-09 school year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, is 165 men—down 10 from last year's 175 students.

New Parish Assistance consultant

For the first time since August 2006, WELS Parish Assistance—which offers fee-based consulting services to help congregations analyze and improve their ministries—has three full-time consultants.

Financial course for today's economy

For the first time, a comprehensive personal financial course combining a spiritual focus with practical application is available for WELS members. Rev. Dave Kehl, co-author of the Heart in Focus course, says it is especially relevant given the country's current economic crisis. "The recent stock market activity has made the urgency for this even greater," says Kehl, administrator of Adult Discipleship. "Individuals are saying, 'We need to know real, practical ways that we can deal with our finances.'"

First quarter budget figures in

Budget numbers from the first quarter of the synod's 2008-09 fiscal year are in—they show support of \$8.4 million, which is \$700,000 less than expenses of \$9.1 million.

Results through September continue to point to a significant deficit for the fiscal year. The deficit was created when the convention added \$2 million for Ministerial Education and \$600,000 for World Missions to the budget proposed by the Synodical Council. While the buffer fund created by the fiscal year 2007-08 surplus should be more than adequate to fund the shortfall, Mr. Todd Poppe, WELS chief financial officer, points out that the ministries it is funding are ongoing and the buffer fund is one-time funding.

Spotlight on Streams: parenting podcasts

Parents Crosslink, a parenting publication aimed at strengthening and encouraging Christian parents for the challenges of raising children in a secular world, now has podcasts available for download.

For more on these stories, please go to:

www.wels.net

MY OATH TO YOU...

When you are sad....I will dry your tears.
When you are scared.....I will comfort your fears.
When you are worried.....I will give you hope.
When you are confused.....I will help you cope.
And when you are lost....And can't see the light, I shall be your beacon.....Shining ever so bright.
This is my oath.....I pledge till the end.
Why you may ask?.....Because you're my friend.
Signed: GOD