

## **God will guide you in all you do. Just listen!**

I recently heard a story that went back to the era when the telegraph was the primary means of communication. A young man applied for a job as a Morse code operator. He went to the office address listed on the ad. Upon entering, he found himself in a large, busy office filled with noise and clatter, including the sound of a telegraph in the background. A sign on the receptionist's counter instructed the job applicants to fill out a form and wait until they were summoned to enter the inner office.

The young man filled out his form and sat down with seven other applicants. After a few minutes, the young man stood up, crossed the room, and entered the inner office. The others all assumed that the young man had entered without permission and would certainly not be hired.

Within a few minutes, however, the boss, accompanied by the young man, came out and told everyone that the job had just been filled and they could go home. They were upset and complained that they had never had a chance to interview for the job. "That's not fair!" they cried.

To that the employer replied, "I'm sorry, but all the time you've been sitting here, the telegraph you heard ticking in the background was sending a message by Morse code. If you had been listening or understood it, you would have known what this man knew. The message said to come right in. When he heard it, that's what he did and he got the job.

We live in a world filled with noise and distractions, just like that office. Friends, family members, TV personalities, radio commentators, self-help experts, and many others are all quick to give us advice on how to live our life. Movies, commercials, best sellers from the newsstands, tell us how to raise our kids, lose weight, find happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment, and success in life. Add to that the daily flood of activities that fill our lives - work, soccer practice, music lessons, social events, etc.

With all these things screaming for our attention, squeezing the time out of each day, zapping us of our

energy, it is easy to forget that God wants our attention as well. Like the young man who heard and listened to the Morse code message above the din of office noise, we need to listen to our Lord. No matter how busy our lives may be, no matter how many distractions we must deal with every day, we need to listen to what the Lord has to say.

Through regular reading of our Bibles, faithful attendance at church, God's Word will help you sift through the clutter and chaos of life. His Word will remind you of what is truly important for this life and the next. Through his Word, God will guide you in making your decisions, help you deal with your problems, and lead you to Jesus as your Savior. Listen to the Lord and you will find the key to the happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment, and success that the world offers but only God can give.

Pastor Kehren

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY POTLUCK**

January 18, 2009

FUN - FOOD - FELLOWSHIP

Immediately after 2nd Service

Come join us for a celebration of your Birthday  
Whatever month you were born in, we will be  
Celebrating together

\*\*\*EVERYONE IS INVITED\*\*\*

BRING YOUR FAVORITE FOOD YOU  
REQUEST FOR YOUR SPECIAL DAY AND  
SHARE IT WITH ALL OF US

Dessert will be provided

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ability to save you. It still may take a lot of courage to go ahead and jump, however. Believing in God is all about risk and trust. It tells you to turn away from what you're accustomed to relying on – your own strategies for making life work – and instead to trust God implicitly, even when what he's asking you to do may not make sense from a human perspective.

Think about what God asked of Moses at the Red Sea or of Daniel in the lions' den. Moses & Daniel were able to rely on God instead of on their own understanding because past experience had shown them he was wholly trustworthy. Every past experience was once a present choice. God challenges you to choose wisely today. You can lean on your own limited understanding and abilities or on a God of unlimited power & love. Only one choice can take you where you really want to go.

Put what you've learned into practice. List why you believe God is trustworthy, focusing on His promises & past faithfulness. Reread the list anytime you need the courage to lean on Him instead of on yourself.

As we enter a New Year - 2009 - let us all have faith and trust in our Lord and Savior. God's grace & peace be with you always.

**FAITH**

Faith sees the invisible – believes the unbelievable – and receives the impossible.

Next to Faith, this is the highest art – to be content with the calling in which God has placed you.

Expect great things from God – attempt great things for God.

I do not want merely to possess a faith – I want a faith that possesses me.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5

Leaning on the Lord – If you are going to lean on something, the first thing you want to do is to make certain it can hold you up. The greater the risk, the more certain you want to be. You may not test the strength of every chair you're considering sitting on, but it's fairly certain that you will test the integrity of a bungee cord before attaching it to your feet and leaping off a bridge. Your trust in the strength & reliability of the bungee cord allows you to lean on its

**WORSHIP IS FOR CHILDREN, TOO.**

During a time in Jesus' ministry, people brought little children to him so that he could touch them. Jesus' disciples thought that this was inappropriate. But Jesus thought differently. He knew that these little children were precious souls who needed to hear the word of the Lord. They needed to be blessed by Jesus. And so Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18:16).

To provide for a more intentional focus on the spiritual well-being of our young children, our ministry leaders are planning to introduce a couple of new programs. These were a couple of items that were also a part of our approved vision document.

The First program is to provide a Children's Sermon during worship. To start out, we will provide a children's sermon on non-communion Sundays starting February 8. Pastor will invite the young children to come forward and hear a short message from God's Word right after the Gospel lesson.

The Children's Sermon can accomplish the following goals:

- 1) It provides a Bible lesson directly to the children at their level with a simple vocabulary
- 2) It helps to establish a bond between the young children and their pastor, their spiritual shepherd.
- 3) It shows parents and visitors that worship is for children and not just adults, and that our congregation values their spiritual well-being.
- 4) It will help give parents a model for them to follow as they share God's Word with their children in their homes.

The second program is to provide "Children's Church's" program during a portion of the 8 AM service on communion Sundays. After the Gospel Lesson, kids ages 2 through Kindergarten will be excused to go to Miss Krug's classroom for an organized program (Bible lesson, Bible songs, prayers, Bible based activities) under the direction of a trained adult and helper. The parents can then pick up the children after the worship service. We plan to begin this at the 8 AM service on February 1.

The Children's Church program hopes to accomplish the following goals:

- 1) It will show parents and visitors that we value the spiritual well-being of the youngest children and we want to teach and train them how to worship at their level. Hopefully, this will lead them to understand how to worship as they become older children.
- 2) It will provide an age-appropriate Bible lesson for very young children with a limited attention span and limited vocabulary.
- 3) It will teach simple portions of the worship service so they can participate in regular worship when they reach elementary school age.
- 4) It will provide parents of small children a time to focus on the sermon and the communion portion of the service.

Keep these programs in your prayers as we work to "Let the little children come to Jesus."

Pastor Kehren

## CHILDREN'S CHURCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Beginning in February, Hope will be offering Children's Church during the 8:00 AM worship service on communion Sundays. Children's Church will be offered for children ages 2 years - kindergarten. This new program provides age-appropriate Bible lessons, prayers, and praise for Jesus' little lambs. Children who would like to participate will go to the K-2 classroom following the Gospel reading

## MARRIAGE RETREAT

Marriage Retreat January 23rd and 24<sup>th</sup>

Hope will host a marriage retreat at the Powers Mansion Inn Bed and Breakfast, in Auburn. Pastor Hilmer from The Springs in Reno will be the guest speaker and facilitator for this event. The theme for this year's retreat is "Strengthen the Friendship at the Heart of Your Marriage." The event costs ninety dollars per couple, which covers lunch and materials. Overnight stays are available for \$109 per room. An optional breakfast is available for \$25 per couple. Please reserve your room by calling Powers Mansion inn at 530-885-116. Their website is [poerwsmansioninn.com](http://poerwsmansioninn.com). There are a limited number of rooms available so reserve your room as soon as possible. Deadline to register is January 17th.

## VISION DOCUMENT PRAYER REQUESTS

We are now proceeding with the implementation phase of Parish Assistance. Please join in praying for the leaders and congregation as God leads us in accomplishing the works of service before us.

Pray that...

*(Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord)*

God will lead us

God will fill the need for an Outreach Ministry Leader and a Worship Ministry Leader

The members will have willing hearts to serve  
The Ministry Leaders and Coordinators serve diligently

The Vision Coordinator will have a memory for all the tasks and creativity for a display

Give Glory and thanks to God...  
*John 17:4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.*

The campus site maps have been completed and installed

The Bible Information Class was revised to a seminar \ workshop format for school families

## QUIPS

The trouble with doing something right the first time is that nobody really appreciates how difficult it was.

## HOPE SCHOOL NEWS

### Parents Night Out:

In an effort to expand our school prospect list and bring more people from the community onto our beautiful campus we will be hosting our second Parents Night Out on February 2, 2009, from 6:00-9:30 PM. Please bring your kids or invite a friend who could use a night out.

### Hope School Music Recital

On Sunday, January 25, there will be a music recital given by students of Hope School. This program will feature students who are currently taking instrumental or voice lessons. God has richly blessed many of our students with musical talents, so whether you enjoy the soft melodies of the flute, the blast of the trumpet, the twinkling of the piano, or just a sweet solo voice please come give your ears a treat. The recital will take place in the church at 2:00 P.M. A big thank you goes out to Miss Krug for coordinating this event. We hope to see you all there!

### Wish List

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

## THE CHRISTMAS TREE!

We see it in our homes and in our church. But where did the tradition of the Christmas tree come from, and what does it mean for us?

Some say the history of the modern Christmas tree dates back to Germany in the 1500's. Perhaps it was Martin Luther who set up the first fir tree inside his house at Christmas time. Small candles, glass balls, tinsel, and the "Star of Bethlehem" were often used to decorate the tree. Some feel the Christmas tree came from another tree called the Paradise Tree on which apples were hung. Regardless of its history, the Christmas tree still holds much symbolism for us today.

**The green** of the Christmas tree reminds us of the life Jesus gave to me.

**The shape** of the Christmas tree points my eyes to heaven, where I will one day be with Jesus.

**The tree** itself reminds me of the tree in the Garden of Eden, where sin began, and where God promised us Jesus.

**The lights** on the Christmas tree remind me that Jesus is the Light of the World.

**The tinsel** on the Christmas tree reflects the love of Jesus.

**The ornaments** on the Christmas tree remind me of the many blessings God has given to me.

**The gifts** under the Christmas tree remind me of the best gift God gave me in the Bethlehem stable.

**The wood** of the Christmas tree reminds me of the Calvary tree.

The Christmas tree gives us a place to gather at Christmas to hear the story of God's wonderful love.

## YOUNG AT HEART

The young At Heart event for January will be held on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 at 11:30am in the Fellowship Hall. This will be a general potluck, so bring something tasty and join us.

## NEWS FROM THE INDIA ORPHANAGE

November 26, 2008

Dear Friends,

It's Black Friday in the states but just another day at work here in India. Shopping is the farthest thing from our minds. Thanksgiving, too, is just another day here. We made a special point of talking to our children and enjoyed hearing about their celebrations. We have a lot to be thankful for this year: the closeness of our family, the health of our children, especially Peter, grandchildren, our own health, and the people we live and work with. I'm sure you've read about the problems in Mumbai. We have not been affected by the trauma there but feel for those innocent men, women and children who were involved. It is India's 9/11.

The fall/Christmas Caregiver's Workshop was completed yesterday. I spent many hours trying to think up a word to describe the spirit that was present during the three days we were together. We are always a friendly group but that friendliness was more evident at this gathering. We encourage one another but that was more apparent at this meeting. Perhaps the reason for the increased support for each other was all the "firsts" which we were celebrating.

We plan to open a new home in June in an area about 4 hours from Guntur. Seminary student, McCauley and his wife have agreed to take in 30 children. This was their first workshop. McCauley knew the men through the seminary but his wife did not. He said he and his wife enjoyed the workshop very much. He enjoyed the camaraderie and seeing everyone helping each other. He showed himself to be very handy with a scissors and both he and his wife enjoyed our art projects and took supplies home for their Sunday school.

The people who actually teach in the homes were encouraged to teach the lessons during the workshop and we were happy to see that two wives of seminary students and the daughter of another taught their assigned lesson. Each was giving a presentation for the very first time. The encouraging spirit of the attendees was very apparent during these presentations. People listened attentively, colored pictures, answered questions and sang action songs at the direction of the presenter. Each presenter received a round of applause at the end of her presentation. Their husbands watched with

pride on their faces as their wives spoke. It was wonderful to see. The father whose daughter was presenting got up and helped lead the singing as his voice was stronger. It was a joy to see father and daughter together teaching a children's song to a group of enthusiastic listeners. They were presenting at the end of a very long day and in spite of that, the group sang the song over and over until they had learned the melody. To show you how much India has changed, several men recorded the song on their cell phones to play back once they returned home! Each of the ladies told me how happy she was to have the opportunity to present a lesson as they left on the last day.

More cooperation was evident behind the scenes as people made final preparations for their lessons. Mrs. Madhavi, the wife of pastor Jai and I worked out music for a children's song about the 10 Lepers. Pastor Ashok was busy copying coloring pictures. Pastor Prabhudas was called into service as a conga player. When he could not be present to review the song he had taught, Mrs. Deevenamma, who knew the song, reviewed it for him. When we had trouble making the Telugu words fit the music to We Three Kings, Pastor Ashok transliterated it and then Pastor Prabhudas helped work out the timing. These types of activities occurred over and over during the three days we were together. Wishes for a Happy Christmas abounded as people left on the last day.

Oh, what is the word which describes this workshop? Inspiring, very inspiring in so many ways.

On behalf of the caregivers, the pastors and seminary students and the children they care for, I thank you for your prayers and support over the past year. We hope you had a blessed Thanksgiving and pray that you have a joy-filled Christmas season.

*Happy Christmas to you all!!*

### 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.

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

## QUIPS

Character is pretty much like window glass - when it is cracked, it is cracked both inside and out.

Bad habits are like a comfortable bed - easy to get into, but hard to get out of.

The only weapon that becomes sharper with constant use is the tongue.

Many an opportunity is lost because man is out looking for four-leaf clovers.

## TOGETHER



### News from the WELS

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

December 1, 2008

### Year of Jubilee celebration underway

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

During the months of November and December, congregations throughout the synod are participating in the Year of Jubilee celebration and offering. This effort, you'll remember, is the result of a resolution passed overwhelmingly at the last synod convention. The intent was that congregations and individuals would unite in an effort to eliminate or significantly reduce the synod's debt—resulting largely from capital expenses. The underlying motive was not simply to "get the synod out of debt." Rather, the offering was to be an opportunity for all of us to respond to God's grace with our gifts, and through the reduction of the debt to make additional resources available for expanding our mission efforts and maintaining our ministerial schools.

This effort was not something proposed by synodical leadership; rather, it came from the convention delegates themselves. The idea was to give every congregation the opportunity to share in this effort in its own way and in keeping with its own time schedule. For that reason, the plans were kept simple and congregations were given several different options for carrying out the offering. Some congregations immediately chose a congregational goal and made a commitment. Others chose to have

the amount of the offering determined by the amount of the gifts received. Some congregations chose a one-Sunday emphasis; others carried out the Jubilee theme over four or more weeks.

To keep costs to a minimum, the printed resources for the Year of Jubilee celebration were developed "in house" rather than by outside professionals. Congregations were provided with those materials and were invited to carry out the effort in whatever way that worked best for them.

The Jubilee DVD that was made available was developed by the synod's Communication Services with the help of the same production company that produces *WELS Connection*. The intent of the video was not to provide detailed financial information, explanations of the size and nature of the debt, or an outright appeal for gifts. Rather, the video shows the very personal story of one man and how the Holy Spirit, through the gospel ministry supported by our synod, brought him to know his Savior and changed his life. The message of the video is that our task of spreading the gospel is centered on people—people who need to know their Savior and whose life may also be changed by the gospel as we carry out our mission as a synod.

As the Jubilee offering continues, please ask God to use the gifts we bring for the good of his kingdom and for the spreading of his gospel to more and more people. And as you offer those prayers of request, remember to include prayers of thanks to God for the greatest blessing of all, the blessing of new life in his Son Jesus Christ.

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

December 15, 2008

### Christmas Blessings

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

*"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).*

Fellow worshipers of our newborn King,

Strip away all of the clutter that has been heaped on this wonderful day we call Christmas, and you are left

with what makes this day worth celebrating. In this little sentence, the inspired apostle John summarizes the height of God's love for us. He loved us enough to send his Son to become one of us, to live with us and for us, and to die the death we deserved and to set us eternally free. The eternally gracious Lord of all entered this world to make the ultimate sacrifice—all because of his searching love committed to bring wandering and rebellious creatures back to the Creator.

Not only do these words describe God's unfathomable love and the lengths to which he would go to accomplish his saving work, but they also point to the fact that he has given us the eyes of faith to see his birth, his life, his death, and his resurrection for what it is: the indescribable glory of the Son of God himself, a glory temporarily wrapped in strips of cloth and laid in a manger, the glory of a Savior who would not let us die in our sins.

It is with those God-given eyes of faith that we return to Bethlehem in his season, looking past all of the clutter and glitter and window dressing of the season, and there see our reason for joy and hope. The world around us may look at that manger with eyes that do not see a Savior there. For them, their Christmas celebration will be just another time for partying, shallow sentiments, and fleeting good cheer. But by God's grace, we see. We see through faith-filled eyes what God has really done for us. We see through faith-filled eyes a manger not only standing under the worshiping gaze of shepherds, but standing also under the looming shadow of a distant cross. There lies the joy of this season for all of us.

On behalf of all of us who serve you here in the Synod Administration Building, we extend to you our warmest Christmas greetings, preparing to join our hearts and voices with yours in praise of Jesus, our Savior, the Son of God, full of grace and truth.

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

For more information on these stories, please go to [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net)