

# The Star of Hope

FEBRUARY 2009

## Will You Be My Valentine?

That's the question everyone is asking each other this Valentine's Day. Tradition has turned this day into a day for sweethearts. It's an opportunity for a young shy boy to let some girl know that he has a crush on her. It's a day for those dating to express their fondness for each other. Husbands may find themselves in deep trouble if they forget to do something for their wife on this special day and vice versa.

It's nice to express our love for each other. Husbands and wives may go days, weeks, or even months on end without expressing their love for one another. Friends may simply take their friendship for granted. They never let their friend know how much their friendship really means.

Telling someone that we love them, that we value their friendship is something that should be a regular part of our life. How much better off we would be if we regularly told others how much we cared for them. Wouldn't marriages be much healthier if spouses expressed their love every day? If candy, flowers, or cards were not given simply on anniversaries, birthdays, or on Valentine's Day?

We need to have more love for one another. After all, isn't that one of the marks of a child of God? Read the epistles of John. Read the Lord's words in the gospels and over and over again you will find the call to show love to everyone, even our enemies. Take note that the love of romance or friendship is not the type of love God calls for in his followers. It is a special love, divine love, love that comes from God and dwells in the hearts of those who believe in him. "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whosoever believes in him shall have eternal life." (John 3:16) That's the kind of love God is talking about. That's the kind of love that God wants to see

among his people. That's the kind of love God wants to see among the members of Hope Lutheran Church. That's the kind of love God wants you to show to those around you – to your family, your spiritual family at Hope, your neighbors, and even to strangers.

Is that how you feel? Is that what you do? Look into your heart, deep inside, and explore your feelings. Think about the people around you. Do you love them or simply put up with them? Do you love all people, like Jesus asks, or are you selective? Do you find reasons or excuses for withholding your love from some?

Like his Father, Jesus showed us what our love is to be like. We see his love in the tears he shed for those who rejected him as he wept over the city of Jerusalem. We see his love as he reached out to Judas and sought to rescue him before it was too late. We see his love for the world as he laid down his life on the cross for us all.

Unconditional love - that's what Jesus showed us. It is love that has no strings attached. His love reaches out to you and me in spite of what we have done, thought, or said. He loves us even though we are sinners through and through. How can that be? I don't know. All I know is that he does. He loves because that is his nature. "God is love."

Let this Valentine's Day be a reminder of God's love for us and a reminder of God's call to love all people just as he loves each one of us.

*Pastor Kehren*

## **PROJECT LINUS**

Project Linus will meet on Tuesday, February 24th from 10:00 - 2:00. Please come and join us in this worthwhile effort.

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**BIBLE INFORMATION CLASS**

New Bible Information Class begins February 2nd. If you are new to Hope or new to the Christian faith, Bible Information Class is for you! The class is especially designed for those who would like to explore membership at Hope, but those eager to learn more about who God is, the good news He has for you, and how to grow in your relationship with Him should also plan to attend. Long time members who want to review the basics of our faith are also welcome to come. Class is held on Monday evenings from 7:00 - 8:15 PM in the fellowship hall beginning Monday, February 2nd . The course is 12 weeks long and covers topics such as: God's Plan of Salvation, The Bible - God's Word, God the Father-Our Creator and Provider, Jesus Our Savior, the Holy Spirit, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, The Christian Life, Worship and Prayer, the Christian Church and Eternal Life.

Child-care is available by request and is free of charge. Please call Pastor Kehren (652-4273) if you have any questions or would like to request child-care.

**FORGIVENESS**

You can give without loving, but you can not love without giving.

Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9.

FULLY FORGIVEN - Being a scapegoat is not a job most people would volunteer for. After all, it implies taking the blame for what others have done. But in the Old Testament, God offered forgiveness to his people in exactly this way. The priest would lay his hands on the head of a goat and symbolically transfer onto the scapegoat the blame for the sins the people had committed. The priest then sent the animal into the wilderness to take the people's offenses far away. Once the scapegoat removed the people's sins, God in his holiness could once again draw near to the people he loved.

In the New Testament, a different kind of scapegoat appeared - Jesus Christ. As God's Son, he willingly chose to bear the offenses of the whole world, to take the blame for everything the people had done against God since the dawn of time and until the end of it. Jesus was innocent of the sins and transgressions of the people, and yet, as the scapegoat, he took the punishment for them all so that his beloved people could be spared.

The great hope and promise of this verse is that it tells you exactly what you need to do to allow Jesus to be your scapegoat, which opens the door to God's forgiveness in your life. To confess simply means "to agree". Take a few moments each day to agree with God about how well your thoughts, words, and actions have lined up with what he desires for your life. Move forward with confidence, fully forgiven and free from guilt.

Once God forgives you, all traces of your past offenses are gone. His forgiveness wipes away any feelings of guilt or blame.

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

## YOUNG AT HEART

The Young at Heart group will meet and have a Valentine Party. Jerry and Arla Jean Petrie will host the party. Those who attend please bring a salad or dessert.

Please bring a Valentine card. Sign the card and we will put them in a basket to pass around. The date will be February 17th starting at 11:30 at Hope Lutheran fellowship hall.

If you have any questions please ask Arla Jean or Jerry.

## HIGH TEA

Ladies mark your calendar for Sunday, February 22, 2009 after second service. It's our Winter High Tea. (MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW)

The committee will meet after first service on February 1, 2009 to work out details. If you would like to serve on this committee, please sign up in the Fellowship Hall.

## 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 27, 2009, from 6:00-9:30 PM. Please bring your kids or invite a friend who could use a night out. There are sign-up sheets in the fellowship hall and the principal's office. We hope you enjoy your night out!

### Traveling Choir to Perform for Hope School

On Friday, March 6, the California Lutheran High School Exultation Choir will be touring Northern California. They would like to share their gift of song with the students and families here at Hope. They will be performing at 10:00 AM and all members are welcome to attend. Please come join us as they lead us in praising our loving Lord!

## Choral Fest

Mark your calendars for the Northern California Lutheran School Choral Fest! This tri-annual event will be on Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at Saint Mark's in Citrus Heights, CA. Each school will be performing several music pieces by themselves along with three mass numbers where all students will join together. Guest director Benjamin Benson from Shepherd of the Mountains in Reno, NV will be conducting the choirs. Please watch next month for the exact times and come join us for this wonderful way to sing God's praises.

## Wish List

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

## 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.

**FEBRUARY: Rice, Beans, Macaroni & Cheese**

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Birthday Potluck

Thank you to everyone who came to the Birthday Potluck. The food was delicious, and fellowship was fun. And a big thank you for the committee and everyone else, who helped to make it all possible.  
Jan



Thanks one and all,

We want to thank everyone for their prayers, thoughts, phone calls, for Ron during his recent head surgery. Thanks to our Heavenly Father for being there for us, doctors, nurses, and also our children, spouses. They were there with me till surgery was

over. Our Pastor was great – making visits to the hospital and home. Friends and family mean so much. Keep up the good work.

Ron & Sue C



A big thank you goes out to the Ross and Carol, Amanda, Amy and Lauren for coming on Saturday to take down the Christmas tree, wreaths, and outside nativity scene and putting everything away.

Judy C



Members of Hope Lutheran Church

Thank you for your recent donation of gifts for our Adopt-A-Family program.

Over the last year, we have experienced a significant increase in the number of children and families in crises. Your support will help parents increase their skills and protect their children from harm.

We are grateful for your compassion. Your generosity will keep more children in safe, healthy and nurturing homes.

Sincerely, DeAnne Thornton  
Executive Director – Child Abuse Prevention Council

## TOGETHER



### News from the WELS

January 2009  
Website: [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net)

January 19, 2009

## COP ADDRESSES IMPORTANT ISSUES

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

The Conference of Presidents (COP) held its quarterly face-to-face meeting last week. Here's a recap of the most important matters discussed.

### Doctrine and practice

One of the most important roles of the COP is to oversee doctrine (what we believe and teach) and practice (what we do in applying our beliefs). When it met, the COP had a lengthy discussion about the importance of retaining our unity in both areas. Some congregations, in a desire to reach as many people as possible with the gospel, have been considering some new and different approaches and methods, especially in the areas of worship and outreach. Cautions and concerns have been voiced about some of these trends. Expressing the commitment to maintain our synod's faithfulness to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, the COP concluded that "the underpinnings of 'non-traditional' type of worship cannot be ignored" and that we need to be careful to "walk the 'narrow Lutheran road' between legalism—and ignoring and failing to admonish where practices are contrary to or dangerous to the principles of gospel proclamation and the efficacy of the means of grace."

As a result of this concern, the COP resolved that "an ad hoc committee be convened in consultation with the [COP] doctrine committee that can address this issue and produce a study document that can be shared with circuits and also congregations for study and careful evaluation of practices in worship, sacraments, outreach, organization, music selection, etc."

### Convention essays

The theme of the 2009 synod convention will be "Christ's Love, Our Calling." The COP directed that two essays be presented to the convention expanding on this theme. The first essay dealing with Christ's love will focus on the efficacy of the means of grace, in which God conveys his grace to us through Word and sacrament. The second essay, dealing with our calling, will have an emphasis on the many aspects of the Christian's calling, including a focus on the call to faith, the call to proclaim the gospel, the call into the public ministry, and the Christian's vocation. These essays, in keeping with the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Commission, will form the basis for two years of synodwide Bible studies in circuits, conferences, and congregations.

### Budget planning for 2009-10

Last November, we received word that financial

support from two major sources would be drastically reduced. This required the areas of ministry to revisit their plans for the next two years and to identify areas in which reductions can be made. This also required a delay in the plans of the Synodical Council to adopt a budget at its February meeting. The budget will now be adopted at the April meeting of the Synodical Council. The proposed budget will be built around the priorities established by the 2007 synod convention, but the level of funding available will also mean program cuts in the priority areas of Missions and Ministerial Education. Every effort will be made to make reductions in ways that do not cause long-term harm to the mission and ministry of the synod. We will also be looking at available sources of one-time funding to provide a well-planned transition to the new level of funding.

The Conference of Presidents has the responsibility of funding the mission of the synod. They will continue to encourage congregations to support the work of the synod through Congregation Mission Offerings and by means of participation in an annual Walking Together Sunday. Materials for a 2009 Walking Together service will be mailed to all congregations in early February.

#### **Circuit pastor system**

The COP is anticipating the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Commission to find ways to improve and enhance the effectiveness of the circuit pastor system. The COP has already begun to discuss practical ways in which the system can be improved and will continue those discussions in future meetings.

#### **Early childhood education**

The COP recognizes the growing need for qualified early childhood education teachers and encouraged Martin Luther College to continue its efforts to increase the number of qualified early childhood education candidates.

Please continue to remember the members of the Conference of Presidents in your prayers. They are God-given leaders who have been entrusted with weighty responsibilities in helping our synod to carry out its mission and to remain faithful to God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions.

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

## **ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...**

### **2009 WELS youth rally**

Online registration is approaching for the 2009 WELS International Youth Rally, to be held July 8-11 at Iowa State University in Ames. Approximately 2,600 spots will be available on a first-come, first-served basis when registration opens Mar. 2. Dr. Joel Nelson, administrator of Youth Discipleship, is encouraging groups to plan ahead and register early. "Historically the rally has filled up," he says. "So if groups procrastinate, they run the risk of not getting in."

### **New milestone for Year of Jubilee**

Total gifts given toward the synod's Year of Jubilee debt-elimination offering today surpassed the \$2 million mark. The gifts given to date total \$2,028,757—about half was given by about 400 congregations and organizations; about half was given directly by about 2,250 individuals.

While the Year of Jubilee celebration was designed to be observed by congregations in November and December of 2008, many congregations have chosen to delay participation until after the first of the year. "May all of us go to God's throne with thankful hearts," says Rev. Dave Liggett, director of WELS' Ministry of Christian Giving.

Gifts will be collected through July and then presented to the 2009 synod convention in Saginaw, Mich. Individuals can still give online. The offering, authorized by the 2007 synod convention, is designed to eliminate or reduce the synod's \$22.4 million dollar debt and free up as much as \$2.7 million each year in debt payments for other ministry.

### **Quarterly financial report**

Financial numbers for the synod's operating budget are in for the second quarter of the 2008-09 fiscal year—from all indications it appears the synod's operating budget remains headed for a \$3.7 million deficit by the end of the fiscal year. That's \$300,000 more than the \$3.4 million buffer fund created by a surplus the prior year. Under spending will be used to make up the difference.

While support of \$10.7 million from October through December exceeded expenses of \$9.9 million by \$800,000, congregations tend to submit a higher percentage of their annual subscriptions in this quarter than any other. Compared to the second quarter of the prior year, support is \$700,000 less

due to lower Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO) and reduced gifts from individuals.

For the calendar year ending Dec. 31, 2008, CMO of \$21.6 million reflects an increase of \$260,000 (1.2 %) over the prior year; but if a one-time gift of \$200,000 is not included, the increase drops to 0.3%. At the beginning of 2008, congregations had committed to give 2.7% over the prior year.

The forecast deficit—due in large part to the downturn in global financial markets and its impact on key individual and foundation donors—may require ministry reductions of \$8 million next fiscal year. The Synodical Council will consider both the support forecast for the current year and the next biennium when it meets in February.

To read the entire financial summary prepared by WELS' chief financial officer for the Conference of Presidents and the Synodical Council, go to: [www.wels.net/jump/finance](http://www.wels.net/jump/finance). One other note: the 2008 Annual Report is now online. It provides a brief snapshot of the activities of all areas of ministry and a synopsis of the synod's finances as of June 30, 2008, the end of the last fiscal year.

#### **WELS in the news**

Beth Vertz, second-grade teacher at St. John, Baraboo, Wis., was featured in Baraboo's News Republic after receiving Wal-Mart's Teacher of the Year award.

### **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...

*Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.*

- God will lead us
- God will fill the need for an Outreach Ministry Leader and a Worship Ministry Leader
- All Coordinators are able to meet with their Ministry Leaders
- Ministry Team meetings are productive

- the Ministry Leaders and Coordinators serve faithfully
- February 8 planning meeting accomplishes its purpose

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.*

- ministry coordinator positions have been filled

### **TAHOE TUNES**

By Sean

To the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In"

It's time to go on our camping trip.  
It's time to go to Lake Tahoe.  
I hope we'll eat s'mores at the campground.  
And roast hot dogs over the fire.

It's time to go on our camping trip.  
It's time to go to Lake Tahoe.  
I'm glad we brought our hats and sweatshirts,  
Because it got so cold at night.

### **A TAHOE ALPHABET**

By: Jacob

Amazing, Awesome, Astonishing, Lake Tahoe  
Beguiling Beach Football  
Cool Creek on the Da Ow A Ga Trail  
Dead Donner Party  
Exciting, Extraordinary, Emerald Bay  
Fun Frisbee golf  
Great, Ginormous Lake Tahoe  
Happy, Hikers, Hiking  
Incredibly tall Donner Memorial  
Jacob Jut enjoying his trip  
Krackling fire  
Likeable Lake Tahoe  
My Marvelous s'Mores  
Nothing beats Tahoe  
Obtaining marshmallows  
Pleasant nights

Questioning Mrs. Sullivan on our branch weavings  
Rapidly Returning to the fire  
Submerging in the lake  
Thanking The Teachers for s'mores  
Understanding how to set Up the tent  
Very fine View  
Wishing for more s'mores  
X-citing trip  
Yes it was fun  
ZZZZZ, I'm sleepy!

**TAHOE TUNES**  
**NEVADA BEACH**  
By Lindsey

To the tune of "*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*"

Lake Tahoe you're so windy, it made the water very cold, but we still went in, we had so much fun so we stayed for 3 hours then we went back to camp.

Lake Tahoe you're so great we made s'mores and some chili, it was very, very good, then after that we sang songs, but we went to bed and it got very cold.