

## FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

### FROM THE PASTOR

Scars on our hands--many of us have them. Perhaps they're from some knife or wrench which slipped or some disease, which crippled us. Our hands have scars and there's usually a story behind them. Jesus' hands have scars, too, and behind them is also a story, the greatest story our world has ever heard.

The Gospels record the story behind Jesus' scared hands with the words, "They crucified him." Only a few simple words, but there was nothing simple about it. Splintery wood and sharp nails, torn flesh and screaming nerve endings, long hours and burning thirst, constant pain and slow death, such was involved in this process reserved for the worst criminals, the lowest slaves, and God's Son.

Far worse than the pain of being nailed to a cross were the tortures of hell. All the pangs of death and pains of hell, which were the wages for the world's sins, fell with crushing force on God's Son pierced on that cross. Only the devils and the damned in hell can begin to understand. We can only guess at what this involved for Jesus.

There's no guessing as to who pierced his hands and his feet. Rough and ready soldiers had a hand on that hammer. So did a spineless Pilate who condemned the innocent. So did a hate-blinded people who shouted in Pilate's court, "Crucify him!" So did religious leaders who defied God's plan by plotting against Jesus. So did Jesus disciples who failed to trust in him and fled from him and denied him. And so did we! This Lenten season is not going to be what it should until we change the "they" to "we pierced his hands and his feet." Better still, it needs to be "I pierced his hands and his feet." My many sins and I did it!

But I do not stop with the thought of my guilt. The gloom of guilt is dispelled by the glorious truth that Christ has paid for all my sins with his suffering and death. Clearly and plainly the Bible tells me, "By his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Sweetly and

strongly it states, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

So look at those nail-pierced hands! They have a story to tell. They speak of full payment for the world's sins. They speak, they shout, about my salvation! As the sound of the hammers stilled, Jesus spoke. He prayed for all who crucified him, for you and me. He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

These words of Jesus' invite us to trust in him. They comfort us with the news that he has died for us. We are forgiven. We have heard this news many times. We have heard them so much that we might lose the wonder of it all. We may listen with only half an ear and let the sound of his invitation to sinners be partially drowned out by the world's static.

Along the roads we travel we sometimes view little crosses set up here and there. Relatives placed these at spots where loved ones had lost their lives in car accidents. This Lenten season it's time to set up a cross again in our busy lives - the cross of Jesus to remind us of his love for us. This Lenten season it's time to be reminded again of what our Savior has done for us.

*Pastor Kehren*

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**LENT WORSHIP  
“FATHER FORGIVE THEM”**

Beginning on Ash Wednesday (February 25th) we will worship our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ with Midweek Lent Services on Wednesday nights at 7:00 pm. Once again this year, we join in a pulpit rotation with our neighboring WELS churches. This year we follow Jesus’ interactions with those who were directly involved in his crucifixion and see our Savior’s amazing compassion for his enemies. We will focus on six individuals and groups who needed Christ’s prayer of forgiveness from the cross—“Father forgiven them” (Luke 23:34). By considering their behaviors during Holy Week, we gain insights into our own shortcomings, receive warnings about the temptations that abound, and find strength in Jesus’ forgiving compassion as we strive to live lives of repentance.

Ash Wednesday, February 25  
“Forgive Our Fearful Lack of Trust!”

Wednesday, March 4  
“Forgive Our Desire to Defy Your Divine Authority!”

Wednesday, March 11  
“Forgive Us When We Abandon Your Truths!”

Wednesday, March 18  
“Forgive Us When We Despise Your Great Salvation!”

Wednesday, March 25  
“Forgive Our Misplaced Sorrow!”

Wednesday, April 1  
“Forgive Us for Despising Our Savior’s Claim!”

**FAITH TAKES GOD WITHOUT ANY IFS**

No one who trusts God like this -- heart and soul - will ever regret it. Romans 10:11

No Regrets.

If you're like most people, you want to live life with no regrets. When you reach the end of the line, you want to be able to look back and feel that you've experienced life fully, that you haven't missed out on anything. In the final analysis, you want to feel that you haven't made any big mistakes you could have avoided. You want to believe that you've made the best of your opportunities in life.

The Bible says that if you put your complete confidence in God, trusting him fully in every area of your life and taking him at his word for all your needs, you'll never be sorry. You won't spend your final hours on earth wishing you would've put a little more faith in other things, such as money. Just the opposite. You'll reflect on your life and realize it was rich in a way you never dreamed possible, and that believing in God's promises was the best decision you ever could have made.

No matter how much time you have left in this world, it's imperative to choose right now where to stake your future. You may have some regrets from misplacing your trust in the past, but it's not too late to shift your confidence to where it needs to be today.

If you pick wisely and through prayer, commit yourself totally into God's hands, you'll have every reason to celebrate your choice from now until the end of your life.

If you haven't trusted God before or have trusted him only a little, begin putting all your faith in him today. It's an entirely different way to live - yet there's no better way to go.

May God's Grace and Peace go with us always.

### **A. C. T. S.**

The A.C.T.S. (**A**ctive **C**hristian **T**een**S**) group has been meeting about every 6 weeks. We have had 3 faithful attendees. Our goal is to incorporate service projects, both at church and in the community, Bible study, fun, and fellowship into our meetings.

In December, we met to fill the Christmas bags for the kids and then we went bowling. Many laughs were shared as we all demonstrated our "bowling talent"! A short Bible study and snow outing are planned for February.

We are studying the book, Prepared to Answer, Telling the Greatest Story Ever Told. It is written by WELS pastor, Mark Paustian, and addresses how to respond to many common yet difficult questions we are asked as Christians.

All high school aged youth are invited to join us!! Watch the calendar, Star, and Sunday bulletin for upcoming events and dates. Contact Ross or Carol if you have any further questions.

### **YOUNG AT HEART**

The March get-together is on St. Patrick's Day, March 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 in the Fellowship Hall. Paula and Norm, Ritva and Kalevi, and Pastor and Shirley are hosting and will be supplying the corned beef and cabbage. Please bring an Irish side dish or dessert to share.

### **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 and bless us in carrying out the tasks in the Vision Document
- God will fill the need for an Outreach Ministry Leader and a Worship Ministry Leader
- God will bless the Children's Church and Children's Sermons and give leaders meaningful illustrations
- No obstacles to attend the Wednesday Lenten Service
- God guides the planning for contacting prospects
- God guides the planning to train lay-leaders
- Wisdom for leaders working on the budget

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.*

- Children Church started on communion Sunday's
- Children Sermons started on non-communion Sunday
- willing Leaders for the A.C.T.S. program for our teen members

## HOPE SCHOOL NEWS

## COMPUTERS IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL

A MYSTERY By: Linda T

### 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 event, held every three years, will be at 3:30 PM Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at St. 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. We hope you can all come and enjoy hearing our students declare God's praises!

### Kindergarten Round-Up

Kindergarten Round-Up for the 2009-2010 school year will be held on Wednesday, April 29, from 1:30-3:00 PM. If you know of any children who will be kindergarten age for next year, please pass their contact information along to Miss Krug so that we can send them a personal invite. This way we can help the children see what a day in the life of a Hope student is like, and help the parents see what a difference a Christian education here at Hope can make.

### Wish List

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

Fourteen of our 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are attending a computer class in the Fellowship Hall each week for an hour. Seven students for the first half hour and the remaining seven students in the second half hour. The lesson plans are simple; learning the fundamentals of MSWORD and EXCEL and if time permits PowerPoint and the Internet. Our last class session, before the holiday break, we were short a computer monitor and keyboard. Now, I ask you, why would anyone "borrow" a monitor and keyboard?

Let me share with you what we have done to get ready and what we have been doing each week.

We (Sunae H and I) have spent 3 weeks finding 7 complete computers that worked and were loaded with the appropriate software. The computers we have are donated computers from the congregation and/or school parents many years ago for the classrooms. As the classroom computers were replaced the "computer lab" evolved, bringing us to current day. Several computers were pieced together with parts from the non-working computers. The first week of class we had 4 working computers and 7 students. Between class weeks we replaced a power supply, a 5<sup>th</sup> computer was working. The 6<sup>th</sup> computer needed a power supply as well, but the power supply is obsolete and no longer available. Brett P came to our rescue and was able to repair the power supply and we installed it in the 6<sup>th</sup> computer. Our second week of class we had 6 working computers and the 7<sup>th</sup> computer needed the operating system upgraded; it gave us trouble but we prevailed. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> week we had the 7<sup>th</sup> computer upgraded, but its monitor and keyboard went AWOL, go figure?

So what is the big deal? Every week each computer is physically moved from the back of the Fellowship Hall to a table; the CPU, monitor, keyboard and mouse are connected, powered-up/booted. At the end of each class the process is reversed; each computer is disconnected and physically moved to the back of the Fellowship Hall and covered. Because the Fellowship Hall is hosting Wood Shop on Wednesday's the covers (old sheets) protect the computers from the saw dust.

The desktop computer is not designed to be moved, bounced and buffeted and the consequences cause internal parts to fail and cables to loosen. This last week of class we had 2 computers fail during class as well as a floppy drive failed. Mrs. Heyn loaned us her laptop, as a 7th computer, so each student in class had a computer to work on their lab assignment. (Our kids are so patient!!).

Our students, our children, need to be prepared for the next phase of their educational life; the skills and tools needed are not just reading, writing and arithmetic. They need to be computer skilled and know how to properly use the computer as a tool and not a toy.

There are two actions we can take to meet this need. In the near term, the acquisition of better, more current computers is in order. Laptop computers are designed to be mobile and can be locked up when not in use. The long term solution is a permanent "computer lab" where the computers will not be moved. Implementing phase 2 of the School expansion project will include a "general purpose" room (for the lack of a better description) that could house a computer lab and room for other school extra-curricular classes and activities.

Although the mystery of the missing monitor and keyboard lingers, Pat Belcher donated a monitor and I have a keyboard to loan, so our next class should have 7 working (?) computers for our students.

Your assignment, if you choose to accept it, will be to help the school acquire laptop computers and support the School Ministry Team's proposal to expand the school buildings.

## **CARD RACK**

### **YOUR CARD RACK IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL**

I want to thank our members for the involvement in Women's Ministries card rack located in the fellowship hall. You may have noticed that the suggested donation for cards has been increased from 50 cents to 75 cents. The purpose of our card rack is not only to make it easy for members to get cards to give to others, but it is also a service we do in the Lord's name to send cards to the ill and shut-in members and their families in the name of our congregation. These cards are sent out when they

are ill and at special times like Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Some time ago, I realized I was spending more on postage than the amount of those donations. For a long time, I simply considered the extra expense as a ministry of my own and did not ask for help. When I finally came to the realization it had become beyond my ability to send as many cards as I believed important to send, I asked for help. It was suggested I raise the donation amount to 75 cents. So in the future, when you put your donation in the Honor Box for the cards of your choice, remember you are helping to send cards to our shut-ins and their families at a time when a card with a message from Scripture will bring them comfort and a sense of being loved.

## **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.

### **March Canned vegetables and fruit**

If everyone in the congregation brought just one can, the Hope Food Closet would have over 100 additional cans a month. Ed.

### **BELATED THANKS FROM HOPE FOOD CLOSET**

The many weeks that I was able to take home the generous donations of food the members of Hope gave during the holidays was indeed a great blessing. The numbers served each week does not change much even when the names change. If I drop one family it is almost certain that the next week I add another. The situation at Senior Gleaners is just as dire as it was during the holidays as more charities want to be added to the list of charities to get food. Many charities are finding that the number of those in need is increasing, as has ours.

Each month there is a notation in the Star of Hope with suggested donations for the month. However, if you are able to give any type of shelf-life foods, please don't hesitate to give. Your supply of jams

and jellies, canned fruits, any over production in your gardens or orchards, is welcome at any time.

It seems the Lord always provides what is needed to continue with the Food Closet into its twentieth year. In spite of health problems with many of our workers, help has always been there. One of our faithful workers is a lady who was a Sunrise Pregnancy Counseling Center client 19 years ago. Her son is now old enough to come help her on school breaks. She has a broken foot and gall bladder surgery. After my heart bypass surgery, she recruited a friend who works at Wal-Mart and he comes to help her set up every Tuesday. They arrive again on Wednesday at 8 AM when we add the produce, bread, pastries, dairy and meat when available. Ed J has always been with me on this venture and his boys are always available during school breaks and during the summer. A disabled resident recruited a friend who has been a faithful helper for at least seven years who has recently had a heart pacer implant. My sons Donald and Gary help when available. Donald's wife, April, cleans the deck before and after each food distribution day. Since the week after Gary arrived from Colorado, he has supplied the van that is used to transport the food and boxes are stored inside from week to week.

I cannot forget the help that Judy B is to us to help me keep the records straight on any of the monetary donations received. She helps with the bank statements each month and gives me a summary for our records.

I think this history of Hope Food Closet has been news to many of you and may inspire some of you to give prayerful consideration to how you might be part of it in a small way.

Betty N

### THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Dear Friends,  
I want to thank you for being there for my family and me. It was incredible how generous you were in taking the time out of your busy life to feed my family. Rob and the kids have never eaten so well. Especially Rob, he was amazed at the outpouring of support. Having a hot meal every night and leftovers for lunch, has left him a little spoiled. I will have to try to keep it up (at least a few nights a week). All kidding aside, my Hope family came through for us. I

say Hope family because that is what it is A FAMILY. It is hard to explain the love that flows from you all. I have to say that the holidays made me feel a little overwhelmed with all the shopping, decorating the house, childcare for the kids, and working. You know LIFE! I noticed that come January I was skipping services and finding myself distant. All it took was a good whack to put things back into perspective. Hope is a place to go when you are overwhelmed (you know LIFE). Not the place to skip. My injury has brought nothing but positive events to my family! We have witnessed God's love through all of you. It's a pretty amazing feeling.

My leg is healing very well. But the progress I am most proud of is the changes I see in my family. My Mother (Marilyn Thomas) is overwhelmed with the love that you all show. She can't get over how much everyone is there for us. Rob is still in awe of all the selfless acts that he has been witnessing. Jessi and Josh have a great story to tell at school and are now giving me orders to get recipes for the meals that they enjoyed. I have to say that my time out has put us all in perspective. To let you know, my Mom, Robert and I will be attending Pastor's next Bible Information Class. They are eager to find out what it is you all know, and what keeps Hope such a tight Family. They will soon see it is our relationship with God.

I ask one last thing of you, please keep my family in your prayers as we all continue to seek and learn more about God our Father and the HOPE Family Faith.

We want to say "Thank You" from the bottom of our hearts. We have been blessed to have such wonderful friends.

Sincerely,  
Patti O and Family

### L W M S NEWS OF LWMS ACTIVITIES

LWMS Mission Offerings – There will be a basket in the Narthex for these offerings on 29 March which is the 5th Sunday of the month.

The LWMS Redwood Circuit will hold their Spring Rally in Lodi on 18 April, 9am - 3:30pm. The speaker will be Pastor Dallas Miller, Administrator of the

"Jesus Cares" – a ministry to people with developmental disabilities. A carpool will be organized for those who wish to share a ride. GET A LITTLE HEAD START ON THIS BY TELLING YOUR REPORTER, Mary Ann F, of your intentions.

Mission Offerings given at this time will be going to "Mission to the Children" which is the World Mission and the Home Mission is "Outreach to Muslims". These projects will be extended through the fall of 2009. The rationale for this was time element i.e. having the election and choosing of Mission projects at the same Rally.

Election of Officers is a must at this Rally. Those positions which are open are President, a two year term, Vice President, a one year term, One (1) Spiritual Growth Woman, a two year term and a Spiritual Growth Pastor for a two year term. ANY PERSONS REMOTELY INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE OFFICES PLEASE contact Mary Ann for a job description of the office. If you wish to nominate someone from your congregation permission must be granted by that person. If we have nominations prior to the convening of the Rally it makes the election process go much more smoothly.

At each Rally there are "excess funds", which are those funds not needed to cover the expenses of that Rally and what is kept in the working fund. The excess at the Fall Rally was \$470.00 which was given to Pastor Sonntag for the Hmong Mission.

The 46th Annual LWMS National Convention will be held in Denver June 25-28. Deadline for registration is May 15, 2009. No stipends can be given this year. Watch your future issues of the Star of Hope for more information!!

Submitted, Mary Ann F, Reporter

## TOGETHER



News from the WELS

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

February 2, 2009

## RECENT FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

As most of you know, last fall WELS learned that it could expect significantly less in financial support in 2009 from two major sources. As we work to plan our ministry for the next two years, we have been looking at ways to reduce our spending and make reductions in programs where necessary. The Synodical Council will hold initial discussions on the budget at its meeting Feb. 27-28, and a final budget proposal will be adopted in April.

Last week we received another piece of bad financial news. The WELS individual who had committed \$2.5 million per year for five years regrettably informed us that the gift for this year would not be possible. Until then, it had appeared that we would end the current fiscal year with a balanced budget (through the use of the surplus from last year and cost reductions this year). But now, halfway through the current fiscal year, we are facing a shortfall of \$2.5 million.

In order to avoid having to make sudden and unplanned cuts in ministry to achieve a balanced budget (required by the constitution), we will be looking at a variety of ways to end this year without a shortfall. Strategies include additional reductions in spending in all areas of ministry, as well as the use of various funds that may be able to be used in a situation like this.

In all of this, we thank God that the congregations of our synod have been very faithful in supporting the mission of the synod. Offerings last year, in spite of the economic challenges that began in the fall, increased over the previous year. We also approach this situation with the same confidence and trust in God's blessings as we had last year when the financial picture looked much more positive. God was blessing us then with abundance; he is blessing us no less today, just in a different way. We remain confident, as do you, that God uses all things to work together for the good of his people and his church.

## Defending our beliefs: court case makes national news

A year ago, California Lutheran High School, operated by an association of WELS and Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) congregations, won a court victory in a lawsuit challenging its decision to expel two female students for engaging in conduct characteristic of a lesbian relationship in violation of

**THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE BEFORE US**

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

"I will be with you, to the very end of the age." With those words, Jesus gave his sure and unchanging promise that he would be with his people as they carry out the mission he had just given them. Those words, as familiar as they are, need to fill our thoughts and hearts as our nation and the world struggle with growing economic problems, and as we address some of the most difficult financial challenges our synod has faced in many years.

This newsletter was begun 18 months ago as a way to provide information to you that is both current and accurate. As we've tried to share with you both the good news and the bad, the information has changed rapidly and repeatedly. In recent weeks, the latest information of one week became outdated by the next. Plans based on yesterday's information have had to be adjusted to fit today's new realities.

The new reality is, by any measure, very difficult. We are faced with the simple and painful fact that the level of funding available to support our synod's mission and ministry will be significantly less in the next two years than it is today. While support from congregations has been commendable and steady in these difficult times, expected support from other sources has dropped significantly. The blunt reality is that we will need to reduce our synod's budget by approximately \$8 million, from about \$38 million today to approximately \$30 million in the next fiscal year. When the Synodical Council presents a balanced budget to the convention in July, which it is required by the constitution to do, significant reductions will need to be made in all areas of our synod's work.

All areas of ministry have been asked to determine and describe how reductions will be made and the impact they will have. We will begin by sharply reducing the administrative costs across the synod, including significant staffing reductions. We are working to identify one-time expenditures that can be delayed, reduced, or eliminated. From there, areas of ministry will also need to plan for significant reductions in the size and scope of their ministries. There is no sugar-coating this situation. The reductions will be deep and they will be painful; all areas will be affected. The current situation will

the school's Christian Code of Conduct. The school maintained that it was right and proper to discipline students whose behavior was not in keeping with biblical principles and the beliefs of our church. Last week, an appellate court in the state of California upheld the lower court ruling, stating that the school is not a business and so not bound by the state's anti-discrimination laws.

Our prayers continue to be with California Lutheran High School as it defends our right to practice our faith and follow our beliefs. WELS has clearly stated that we hold to the biblical teaching that homosexual practices are wrong and not in keeping with God's Word. We have taken that position in love—both for God's Word and God's truth, as well as for those who have fallen into the sin of homosexuality. While some in our society would view this stand as bigoted and unloving, we maintain that our beliefs are drawn from the teachings of the Bible. We also maintain that our goal is not merely to condemn sinful behavior, but to reach out to all sinners with God's call to repentance and his assurance of forgiveness in Christ.

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

**Also in this Issue...****Operations of Home, World Missions combine**

In an effort to better serve WELS administrative committees, district mission boards, and home and world missionaries, the office operations of Home and World Missions have combined.

**Year of Jubilee update**

Total gifts received for the synod's Year of Jubilee offering as of Jan. 26 exceed \$2.6 million. The goal of the offering, authorized by the 2007 synod convention, is to reduce or eliminate the synod's \$22.4 million debt and free up as much as \$2.7 million each year for other ministry.

The gifts from both individuals and congregations, combined with budgeted payments on principal since July 1, 2007, have reduced the debt to \$16.2 million.

While the Year of Jubilee celebration was designed to be observed in congregations primarily in November and December 2008, congregations still have the opportunity to participate between now and the synod convention at the end of July.

require us to evaluate everything we do, determine our programs in keeping with expected funding and the synod's stated priorities, and focus on the essential programs that can be retained. We will need to do less than we are doing now; whatever we continue to do, we will need to do it better and more efficiently.

Our desire to proclaim the gospel to more and more people has led us to adopt ambitious plans across the synod. That is a noble goal, but we have often looked to support those plans on anticipated gifts from foundations, individuals, and other sources. We are now in a situation where some of those large gifts have been suddenly reduced. As commendable as our plans may have been, we simply do not have the financial means to continue at the same level as before.

Determining where those reductions in mission and ministry are to be made will be extremely difficult, since every current program is valuable and important. On the positive side of this, the cuts—while very difficult and painful—will require us to plan our mission and ministry at a level that is sustainable with the ongoing funding available to us. Faithful stewardship of God's resources demands that we plan in this way.

For that reason, the Synodical Council will not simply be wrestling with the short-term reduction in the budget. It will also be looking to the need for providing long-term stability to our finances. The Synodical Council will be considering at least one proposal to achieve this goal. This proposal for long-term stability will not enable us to avoid difficult cuts now, but it will seek to provide a new approach to budgeting and planning that will greatly reduce the likelihood of a similar situation occurring in the future. One main element of the proposal is a commitment to planning our ongoing ministry based primarily on our most stable source of funding (Congregation Mission Offerings) and using large donations from other sources for one-time or limited-time programs. All ideas to provide long-term financial stability will be explored.

Because the funding situation changed so suddenly, the Synodical Council will not be able to adopt a complete budget recommendation at its February meeting. Adoption of a final budget and the reductions it will require will need to wait until April, in order to give areas of ministry the time to adjust their

plans and programs. For that reason, the Conference of Presidents has agreed that the *Book of Reports and Memorials*, which contains the budget recommendation and all other business that will be considered at the synod convention in July, will be published somewhat later than normal. The plan is to have the information in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* available electronically in time for district conferences in June. The published book will be in the hands of convention delegates a few weeks later.

In all of these challenges, we remain confident that God is using these circumstances somehow to bless his believers and to benefit his church. We continue to place our trust in him, and we pray that God would use these difficult times to unite us more closely with him and with each other.

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

### **Also in this Issue...**

#### **WELS members, churches safe after severe weather**

WELS members in Oklahoma City, Okla., are safe following a series of tornadoes that tore through the region Feb. 10. Rev. Craig Born, pastor at Gethsemane, Oklahoma City, says no members sustained damage.

#### **Expanding outreach in Pakistan**

In an effort to reach more souls in Pakistan, WELS Multi-Language Publications has printed its first materials in Pashtu, a language spoken by an estimated 13 percent of the country's 160 million people.

#### **WELS CEF now offering IRAs**

WELS members now have a new way to support the synod's mission efforts financially. WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF), which provides financing for mission-minded projects directed by the Board for Home Missions, now offers Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). "Now you can help build churches while you are building your retirement savings by investing in a WELS CEF Retirement Certificate," says Tim Probst, vice president of marketing and development for CEF. All monies invested with CEF—whether in IRAs or traditional savings certificates—are used exclusively to provide financing to mission congregations.

CEF is working with a third party administrator to handle the IRAs on behalf of investors. They can transfer all, or part of an existing IRA through the administrator to open a WELS CEF Retirement Certificate. Investors can also open a new IRA through the administrator and direct it to purchase a WELS CEF Retirement Certificate. In either case, a \$5,000 minimum contribution is required. Once they open an IRA, individuals may add a minimum of \$100 once a month—up to the maximum allowed under IRS rules for each individual. To request an IRA Kit, call WELS CEF toll free at 866-511-7793 or visit the CEF Web site: [www.welscef.org](http://www.welscef.org)

### LAKE TAHOE

By: Nickey S

To the tune of: Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying

I really like Lake Tahoe it was really fun  
We all had lots of smores and lots of food  
It got really cold at night  
So bring very warm clothes  
Make sure to go to the beach  
But beware it is cold.

### LAKE TAHOE SONG

By: Henry B

To the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Tahoe Tahoe you're so fun in the sun you're so fun!  
Tahoe Tahoe in the water you're so fun!  
Tahoe Tahoe you're so fun in the cold!  
Tahoe Tahoe you're so fun on the trail!

### TAHOE ALPHABET

By: Madison Hr

**A** lot of animals all around.  
**B**usy bears looking for food.  
**C**ats can't come to Tahoe.  
**D**riving down to Tahoe, diving into the lake.  
**E**xtra cold and extremely no electricity.  
**F**ish fins are flinging in Lake Tahoe.  
**G**eorge gulped down his food.  
**H**iking to the castle is hard.  
**I**ce cream is not here, but it feels like ice here at Lake Tahoe.  
**J**elly in some sandwiches, and **J**ack Frost is here.  
**K**angaroos aren't kind and they aren't here.  
**L**ots of laughing here.  
**M**any animals here but one of my favorites is the chipmunk.  
**N**ickey got hurt next to the lake.  
**O**nly a couple of tents.  
**P**eople got peppy and tired.  
**Q**uilts would have been quite nice.  
**R**abbits are rarely seen.  
**S**ome people got slow on the trail.  
**T**rees are everywhere.  
**U**sed to think Lake Tahoe was really cold.  
**V**ideo games are not allowed.  
**W**ater is very cold and watery.  
**e**Xtra food and extra cold.  
**Y**ou have to come to Tahoe and bring a yo-yo.  
**Z**ero zebras in Tahoe.

## MY TAHOE ALPHABET

By: Amy H

**A**mbling ants ate our crumbs.  
**B**eautiful butterflies hang beside the big wall.  
**C**ackling crows kept us up.  
**D**ue to the devastatingly dreadful weather, the Donners died. Drat.  
**E**xcellent Emerald Bay is exquisite and exciting!  
**F**ew fearful people fall into the freezing water.  
**G**iving God the glory for giving us a great time.  
**H**aving hazardous holes on the hot beach.  
**I**rresponsible and irritating idiots drive on the interstate.  
**J**umping like jakalopes over the waves.  
**K**icking and killing bees.  
**L**eisurely letting the boys call me Zelda.  
**M**eekly making more projects.  
**N**ot doing anything was not possible.  
**O**ver the open fire we opinionated over our thoughts.  
**P**laying perpetual candlestick tag. Phew!  
**Q**uickly we came quivering and quaking out of the water.  
**R**ousing restlessly and repetitively in the tent.  
**S**inging over the stinkin' moose song.  
**T**aking things from the Daowaga trail.  
**U**nder sweatshirts and pillows the girls slept.  
**V**ery sad to pack up.  
**W**illingly walking in the wavy water.  
**X**-tremely x-cited to be here.  
**Y**et we are ready to go home.  
**"Zzzzzz"** goez Mrz.Zullivan.

## TAHOE TUNES By: Stephen L

To the tune of: A mighty Fortress Is Our God

I like our campsite, it's close to the casinos. I like all the trees. In camp, I really wnjoyed disc golfing. I was getting tired of throwing discs. My arm now is tired. Each of us went to the beach. The deep water was cold. The dread bear I was afraid of, on earth Lake Tahoe is cool.

## TAHOE ALPHABET

By: George H

**A** is for Eating apples, sandwiches, and ding dongs at the same time is hard.  
**B** is for Being below the lake's water.  
**C** is for Catching someone in candlestick tag.  
**D** is for Dancing like a ding dong when getting home  
**E** is for Elegantly eating large walking tacos.  
**F** is for Food that is fun to eat.  
**G** is for Getting a good long cut.  
**H** is for Hiding in underbrush gives hidden thorns.  
**I** is for I like digging holes in the sand.  
**J** is for Jimmy being sick.  
**K** is for Kicking the football at the campground.  
**L** is for Lacking sleep at Lake Tahoe.  
**M** is for Madison making me move.  
**N** is for No one around in my hiding spot.  
**O** is for Operating our giant hole with lots of effort.  
**P** is for Places to potty.  
**Q** is for Questioning the Queens often.  
**R** is for Running rambunctiously to the shore.  
**S** is for Super satisfying smores.  
**T** is for Taking pictures of tiny things.  
**U** is for people singing in Unison.  
**V** is for Vile visitors during the night.  
**W** is for Wanting to swim in the water.  
**X** is for X-tra X-cellent chile with x-treme results.  
**Y** is for Yellow jackets attacking our food.  
**Z** is for The zzzzzzs that never come.

## TAHOE TUNES By: Stephen L

To the tune of: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Tahoe Tahoe we like your campsite  
We also like the beach. We like to dig  
In the sand and play football. We like to  
Sleep in tents on air mattresses.  
Tahoe Tahoe we like your campsite.  
We also like the beach. We like to dig.