

WRESTLING WITH GOD

*Jacob wrestled with God until God blessed him
(Genesis 32:22-32).*

In the Old Testament, Jacob wrestled with God through the night until God blessed him. In a similar way, every believer wrestles with God in prayer. "Lord, what do you want me to do with my life?" "Lord, help me make decisions." "Lord, how do you want me to serve you?"

As believers, we are all called and blessed by God. God calls each of us to serve him in our daily lives. That call includes coming to worship and study God's word for ourselves. It also includes teaching God's word to our family and friends. And God calls us to share his word with our community and world as well.

In addition Hope congregation gives you unique opportunities to wrestle with God and his call to you. God has called you to this congregation at this specific time. He has given you unique gifts and abilities. And he's given you many opportunities to serve him and his people through this congregation.

Grapple with God's word, refusing to let go until God blesses you. Trust that God will not only bless you, but also many others through you. How might you fit in to the ministry of Hope congregation? How might you help Hope live out its vision for the future? What service can we offer our members and the community? How can we use our school to teach more youth about their Savior? How can we continue to connect the communion of saints? How can we better share God's saving word with our neighborhood? What unique experiences, thoughts and gifts can you offer to fulfill God's commission and our vision?

As you wrestle with these thoughts and others, please share your input with us. Regardless of your age or how long you've been at Hope, all of your thoughts are important.

On Sunday, May 31, we will have a special Bible class to focus on how each of us has a place and a purpose

in the church, the body of Christ. Each one of us has been given gifts, talents, and interests that can be used to serve God and others. Mike Rausch, our member ministry director will help show us all the different ways in which we can serve. Prayerfully consider how the Lord is calling you to serve. Wrestle with God in prayer. Then, put your gifts to use knowing that the Lord will bless you.

God presents a win-win situation to believers when he gives them multiple opportunities to serve him. There are no right or wrong answers. Just a chance to be blessed by God and to be a blessing to others. God bless you as you wrestle with his call to serve.

--- Pastor Kehren

LADIES SALAD SUPPER

This fun, annual event will take place on Saturday, May 2nd at 4:00 PM. All ladies and girls of the congregation are invited to attend. Secret Pals will be revealed and new pals will be chosen. Please bring your favorite salad to share; the committee will provide the rolls and desserts. Please sign up on the sheet on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board. Hope to see you there!!

A. C. T. S.

The ACTS group will be hosting a welcome get-together for all graduating 8th graders at the home of Ross and Carol on Memorial Day, Monday, May 25th. We will meet at their home around 11:30 and go until around 3-ish. Please bring meat to grill, and a picnic type side to share. All the families are welcome as well. The pool will be open, we will set up various lawn games, and we will have a short Bible study. Come and have fun with fellow Teens!! Contact Ross or Carol if you have any questions.

IN THIS ISSUE...

PASTOR'S MESSAGE.....1

LADIES SALAD SUPPER.....1

A. C. T. S.1

VISION DOCUMENT PRAYER2

CUPCAKES – CUPCAKES - CUPCAKES...2

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY.....3

HOPE SCHOOL NEWS.....3

SCHOOL PLAY DINNER-3

SCHOOL YEARBOOK.....3

YOUNG AT HEART.....3

THANK YOU, THANK YOU4

HOPE FOOD CLOSET4

LWMS SPRING RALLY4

LWMS NATIONAL CONVENTION.....4

TOGETHER5

VISION DOCUMENT PRAYER REQUESTS MAY

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 direct the Council in filling the need for an Outreach Ministry Leader and a Worship Ministry Leader

- Ministry Leaders submit reports timely for Parish Assistance
- the Outreach and Worship Ministry Coordinators are not discouraged without leaders but remain faithful in their service
- members receptive as the Member Ministry Director begins integration of Spiritual Gift Discovery
- effective policies made for optimal use of our facilities
- plan is completed to follow-up on events
- willing helpers to prepare for Vacation Bible School
- Vacation Bible School mailings and flyers reach unchurched families
- safety for students participating in the track meet May 4
- more unchurched families participate in Parents Night Out on May 8
- members invite friends and family to the School play May 15

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.

- for the five people who God led to become members of our congregation
- for the Ministry Leaders and Coordinators commitment of their time to serve
- for the members of the congregation who support the leaders and coordinators with their prayers, time and talent.
- for the 42 willing helpers and work accomplished preparing our property for Easter
- for the ACTS group handling the Easter Egg hunt

CUPCAKES – CUPCAKES - CUPCAKES

There will be a Cupcake Sale on the Patio May 3, & May 8 after both services for VBS. Join us for some delicious **HOMEMADE CUPCAKES**. Thrivent will match funds of \$279 for Children's Education Outreach.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Women's Bible Study has resumed at 7:00 p.m. All women of Hope are invited to attend! We will be studying 1,2 & 3 John, and Jude, pp. 291-296 in Book of Books. Hope to see you there!

HOPE SCHOOL NEWS

Play Performance on May 15

"Hi ho, hi ho! It's off to work we go!" This year the students of Hope Lutheran School will be performing The Tale of Snow White. See what happens when two siblings have different ideas of how this classic story goes. Enjoy a fun-filled Friday night and bring your family to see this hilarious remake of the old classic. There is a dinner beforehand so that you can really make a night of it. Find details about the dinner in this month's Star. Seating for the performance will begin at 6:30 with the play at 7:00.

Hope Tracksters to Compete at American River College

This year's Northern California WELS Track Meet will be held at American River College on May 4, from 9:00-12:30. Please come and cheer on the Grizzlies and see the athletic abilities that the Lord has blessed our students with. There will be concessions available for purchase at the track. Make sure to bring your sunscreen!

Graduation and Closing Service

It's hard to believe that it's almost here already. There will be a short closing service to our school year on May 22 at 11:30 AM. After that the kindergarten diplomas will be awarded and 50/100 mile club awards will be given out. At 7:00 PM that night there will be a graduation worship service for our three graduates followed by a reception in the fellowship hall afterwards. Please come and join us as we celebrate the dedication and hard work of these students.

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 another Parents Night Out on May 8, 2009, from 5:30-9:00 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!

Wish List

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

SCHOOL PLAY DINNER-

All members, school families, and friends are invited to come and enjoy an Italian dinner at 5:30pm on May 15th. The menu will include lasagna, green salad, and garlic bread with desserts following the performance. To cover the cost of the play (royalties, etc.) we are asking for a \$5.00/adult advance donation (by May 11th) or \$7.00 at the door. Tickets can be purchased in Mr. Leifer's office. Kids in 8th grade and younger eat free. Hope to see you all there for this fun annual event!

SCHOOL YEARBOOK

In an effort to help keep a lower cost for our school yearbooks, we are offering the opportunity for individuals or businesses to advertise in our school yearbook. If you would like to purchase a business card-sized advertisement in the school yearbook, the cost is \$25.00. Please give Mr. Leifer a business card, along with \$25.00 and your ad will be seen in this year's book. Thank you for your support.

YOUNG AT HEART

May 19th is the date for the next Young at Heart get together. We will share a meal of your choosing! Please bring a dish to share at the potluck.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU

The following letter was received by the Project Linus administrator. The quilts sent to UC Davis were made in the fellowship hall at Hope Lutheran! Tuesday, April 28th is the next Project Linus day from 10am to 2pm. Please come and help, bring your sewing machine and your sewing notions. Project Linus supplies the fabric etc. Also, since we work over the lunch hour, bring something to contribute to the potluck lunch.

Dear Project Linus volunteers,

On behalf of the Child Life program and the children and families we serve, I would like to warmly thank you for your generosity and donation of 56 beautiful blankets for our pediatric patients at UC Davis Children's Hospital. They are wonderful. Each year we always seem to get more than last year. You are bringing joy to many children by your kindness and for that we are truly grateful.

As you can imagine, being in the hospital can be frightening, especially for children. Our program attempts to decrease the trauma associated with all the new and often scary situations the children experience during their stay with us. Our young patients appreciate having beautiful blankets to cuddle up in and brighten their rooms with when they are in the hospital. It helps to take their mind off of their problems and allows them to go home with some good memories of their stay in the hospital, knowing that someone in the community cares about them.

Thank you once again for your thoughtfulness. We truly appreciate your continued support of our pediatric patients. May the joy you have given be returned to you.

Sincerely, Cindy R. Jones, M.A. CCLS
Child Life Support

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.

May: Canned meat \ pasta \ spaghetti sauce

LWMS Spring Rally

Hope had a nice representation at the Spring Rally held in Lodi. (8 ladies and Pastor)

Pastor Dallas Miller, Administrator of Jesus Cares Ministries, gave an inspiring and informative talk on serving those persons with developmental handicaps.

Pastor Kehren accompanied songs, "I Love to Tell the Story", "I Am Jesus Little Lamb", and "Jesus Loves Me" which are three of the songs that are sung at Special Ministries Worship services.

Avenues that can be used to begin a service to the handicapped were explained as well as many brochures that could be viewed. One of the Bible study sheets is on Hope's bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. I would encourage everyone to take a look at it!!!!

A special thanks to those ladies who furnished the transportation. It is always so great to have as many attend as we have and it is due largely to those ladies who are willing to drive.

Blessings to all. Mary Ann

LWMS NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 46th Annual LWMS National Convention will be held in Denver, CO June 25-28 the theme being, "He alone is my rock and salvation" MISSIONS WITH AN ALTITUDE.

A great mix of home and world missionaries will be speaking about their experiences in the mission field.

- Pastor John Lawrenz describes the partnership of LifeNet and Asia Lutheran Seminary in bringing the gospel to the Chinese speaking world.

- Pastor Dan Kroll will share some of the changes taking place in Zambia.
- Pastor Jim Fleming will tell how God has blessed Christ the Rock, Farmington, N.M. as they reach out to Native Americans.
- Pastor Paul Biedenbender will share the challenges and funny experiences he has seen serving in inner city Denver.
- At least two of the previous speakers at Redwood Circuit Rallies, Jacob (Muslims) and Becki Detro (Mormons) will be in attendance and sharing.

The three days will prove to be a "once in a lifetime" experience, both spiritual and motivational.

Hope needs to choose a delegate and an alternate. The delegate will need to check the delegate box on the registration form to be able to vote at the Friday morning business meeting. If the delegate is unable to attend the business meeting the alternate must re-register with the Credentials Committee as a delegate.

Business items are listed in the letter which is on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. For more detailed information on the changes to the Bylaws and business please see Mary Ann who can copy the information for you.

There are also three registration forms on the bulletin board. If you plan to attend please take one of them and return it to National prior to May 15.

The commission has been working on its report for 18 months. A preliminary report was submitted to the district conventions last summer. The commission considered feedback from the districts and made a number of changes to its final report.

Along with the adoption of the budget for the next two years, the report of the Ad Hoc Commission will be a major item of business at the convention. Sections of the report have been assigned to six convention floor committees for study and reaction.

The assignment of the commission was to review all areas of the synod's work and to bring recommendations to improve the way in which the synod carries out its mission. Its report begins with a lengthy preamble outlining the nature of the synod's mission and purpose.

The report is divided into nine sections, each addressing a different aspect of the synod's work. Each section contains endorsements of actions already taken in various areas, as well as recommendations for addressing specific issues.

The report contains approximately 80 separate recommendations. Some of the more significant recommendations or proposals are:

- The Synodical Council would be asked to develop a comprehensive policy governing the establishment, use, and number of special funds.
- In an effort to foster spiritual health, several new districts would be created from the five largest districts. The change would enable better spiritual care from district presidents by reducing the size of circuits to no more than eight congregations. Since this proposal would require a great deal of study, the commission recommends that a complete redistricting proposal be brought to the 2011 convention.
- The commission recommends placing the ministries now a part of Parish Services under the oversight of the Conference of Presidents so that they can be more fully utilized in serving congregations. Since these ministries would report to the Conference of Presidents, the report recommends that the Parish Services board and the position of Parish Services administrator be eliminated and the overall number of commissions be reduced.

TOGETHER



News from the WELS

April 2009
Website: www.wels.net

April 6, 2009

FINAL REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMISSION **From the office of President Mark Schroeder**

The Final Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Commission is now available online. The report will also be published in the *Book of Reports and Memorials* and will be presented to the synod convention in July.

- To encourage a commitment to excellence in our called workers, the commission recommends that a greater number of merit-based scholarships be offered at Martin Luther College; that study fellowships and directed study programs be instituted at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary; that a sabbatical program for seminary professors be reestablished; and that a comprehensive and flexible program for continuing education for called workers be developed over the next two years and presented to the 2011 convention.
- The commission recommends that a four-year cycle of doctrinal studies be carried out in districts, conferences, and circuits. Suggested topics for these studies include the efficacy of the means of grace, a proper understanding of Christian vocation, care of souls, and the sacramental life.
- The commission recommends a limited restructuring of the Synodical Council, replacing the chairmen of the four areas of ministry with four at-large members (three pastors and one teacher) elected by the synod convention. The purpose of this recommendation is to increase grass-roots representation and to avoid having members of the Synodical Council involved in decisions that govern the areas in which they serve.
- Recognizing the increasing costs of ministerial education, the commission is recommending increased efforts to provide scholarship assistance and/or reduced tuition rates for those preparing for the public ministry.

We encourage all members of the synod to become familiar with this important report.

Serving in Christ,
Mark Schroeder

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

Reno area mission holds first service

The Springs Lutheran Church, Spanish Springs, Nev., held its first Sunday worship service on April 5. Profiled in April's edition of WELS Connection, this home mission congregation was established as a partnership between Shepherd of the Mountains, an established WELS congregation in nearby Reno, and WELS Board for Home Missions (BHM). It is one of six new mission congregations authorized and funded by BHM in 2008.

Rev. Steve Hillmer, pastor of The Springs, has been on site canvassing neighborhoods and developing contacts since July 2008. He reports that 83 people attended Sunday's service—45 were visitors from the community.

"What a joy and excitement it was to see many of the people we've talked to during our canvassing and Easter for Kids event," says Hillmer. "There were also a good number of people who just came from the flyer in the mail. Our ushers were setting up more chairs for those who arrived at the last minute."

WELS members join fight against flooding

Members of Shepherd of the Valley in West Fargo, N.D., and Ascension, Moorhead, Minn., have joined other community volunteers and National Guard members to fill more than 3 million sandbags since Mar. 22, using them to build and fortify dikes in Fargo, Moorhead, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

"It's been really neat to see how people are getting together and helping each other," says Rev. David Bitter from Shepherd of the Valley. "I sandbagged at some members' houses but also just wherever I was sent. It doesn't matter who they are; you just want to help them."

New look coming

Informational packets are being mailed out this week to the 400 delegates who will be attending the synod convention July 27-31 in Saginaw, Mich. The packets are the first materials from the synod to bear the new WELS logo and tagline "Christ's Love, Our Calling."

The logo and tagline are elements of a new synodwide identity that will receive widespread visibility for the first time at convention. In the new logo, longtime WELS members will recognize the shape of the traditional WELS cross—updated with concentric circles to demonstrate our mission of spreading the gospel.

The tagline "Christ's Love, Our Calling" was chosen not just to set the theme for the convention, but to describe our motivation and mission as a church body well into the future. "If this theme helps our members to focus on what's important—what God has done for us and the task that he's given us to do for him—then it's going to be a wonderful reminder, a wonderful tool," says WELS President Mark Schroeder.

Use of the new logo and theme will be largely limited to convention-related materials until July. Widespread implementation across other synod resources will follow the convention. Congregations will be able to access electronic files of the logo and guidelines for its use in late summer.

Year of Jubilee: one blessing among challenges

Even as the synod wrestles with financial challenges brought on by the downturn in the global economy, the Ministry of Christian Giving is highlighting reasons for thanksgiving. Among them is that gifts toward the Year of Jubilee offering have now surpassed the \$3 million mark. In all, about \$3.1 million has been given by individuals and congregations toward the offering, authorized by the 2007 convention to reduce or eliminate the synod's \$22.4 million debt. Combined with regularly scheduled debt payments, the offering will help reduce principal by at least \$8.5 million by the end of the current fiscal year.

April 20, 2009

DIFFICULT DECISIONS, EYES OF FAITH

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

The Synodical Council will meet April 24 and 25 for its regular spring meeting. This meeting will not, however, be routine. The Synodical Council's main item of business is to adopt a budget that it will recommend to the 2009 synod convention.

By now members of the synod are aware of the difficult task facing the Synodical Council. We are confronted with the stark reality that approximately \$8 million will need to be cut from the current budget of \$38 million that supports the mission and ministry programs we carry out together as a synod. These reductions will require painful and difficult cuts in all areas of ministry. The Synodical Council has received input from all areas of ministry and will consider the impact of budget reductions on those ministries. At the end of the discussion, the council will carry out its constitutional responsibility to recommend a balanced budget for the next two years. That recommended budget will be presented to the convention this summer, where all final decisions will be made.

The Synodical Council will not be able to avoid recommending deep cuts in all areas. As it considers what to do, the council will attempt to make decisions that will enable the synod to carry out essential ministry at a level in keeping with the financial

support available. It will also work to establish a list of priorities for restoration if the financial situation improves substantially in the next two years.

When it comes to the priorities and possible reductions, there will be many different opinions and views. Those opinions will be reflected, no doubt, in the Synodical Council itself as it formulates a budget. That discussion will continue throughout the synod once the budget is published, and budget discussions will be one of the main items on the agenda of the synod convention. As we carry out brotherly discussion and debate, we will want to do so in Christian love and with brotherly patience. And we will want to begin and end our decision-making with the fervent prayer that God would lead and guide us in these challenging times to do all things for his glory and for the good of his kingdom.

These are difficult times as we contemplate significant changes in the scope and nature of our synod's work. With our limited human vision, we see only challenges and painful decisions. But we've also been blessed with the eyes of faith. Those eyes can see and trust that our gracious God will continue to bless his people and provide for his church even when all the evidence seems to say otherwise.

Look for a special issue of "Together" early next week that will report the decisions made at the Synodical Council meeting.

Serving in Christ,
Mark Schroeder

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

Anticipated budget shortfall widens

Results for the third quarter of the 2008-09 fiscal year indicate overall support for the synod's operating budget was \$6.0 million, or \$3.2 million less than expenses. Year-to-date support is \$25.1 million or \$3.1 million less than expenses. The year-to-date results point to a deficit of \$5.9 million—that's up from the \$3.7 million projected at the end of the second quarter.

Mr. Todd Poppe, WELS' chief financial officer, says the synod's financial situation is indicative of "the economic challenges facing our country and the world."

Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO)—given by congregations for the synod's collective ministry—were \$3.76 million for the quarter, down nearly 14 percent from the same quarter last year. Some of the

difference may be due to the timing of Easter, which occurred in March last year. Foundation grants and gifts from individuals are also down dramatically.

Despite the growing shortfall, Poppe anticipates the deficit will be met through the \$3.4 million surplus from last year's budget, a grant for Home Missions from WELS Church Extension Fund, unrestricted bequests, and other cost savings.

Poppe warns the deficit could continue to grow if congregations are unable to meet their CMO commitments, as has been the case for the first quarter of the calendar year.

WELS members evacuate

As flooding remains a threat in the upper Midwest, Rev. Newt Trimmer of St. Paul's, Valley City, N.D., reports 40 to 50 members, including his own family, have evacuated the community after officials urged residents to stay out of town as they wait for the Sheyenne River to retreat.

Trimmer reports that although the river has been over flood stage for three weeks, the most serious problem is the backed up sewer system, which was damaged by all the heavy machinery brought in to shore up the dikes in the area.

Officials say it may take as long as three to four weeks to repair the sewers; until then residents aren't allowed to flush toilets or run water into drains. Many are spending nights at home but using the plumbing at friends or relatives in the area.

For more on these stories, go to www.wels.net

TAHOE ALPHABET

By Michael Murphy

A is for Amazing and Awesome landscape

B is for Beach football on Beautiful Beaches

C is for Catching a Crawling Crawdad being Careful of its Claws

D is for Dedicated Dads playing Disc golf

E is for Everyone awaking Early to find us Energetic kids.

F is for Fabulous Food smells Fulfill- all our senses

G is for Groups Getting Going Gathering Great things for branch weavings

H is for Happy Hikers enjoying the Hillless Hike

I is for Interesting and Ingenious Ideas Including a little of everything

J is for mentally Jumping for Joy in Tahoe

K is for Kickoff being Keen to a Knowledgeable football game

L is for the Long and Lazy ride to Tahoe

M is for My Masterpiece weaving

N is for NO-Nonsense firebuilding

O is for the Obviously Outdated but Outstanding Vlikingholm

P is for Practicing and Playing a Practical-game of football

Q is for Quite the Questionable Quagmire when my shovel vanished

R is for Running to Retrieve the football

S is for Singing Songs around the campfire

T is for The Tremendously Tasty breakfast

U is for Uncovering the Underlying embers in the fire pit

V is for Visiting the Very interesting Donner Memorial

W is for the Wet and Wide hole we dug

X is for X-treme fun

Y is for the Yummy food

Z is for the ZZZZZs that I caught at home

TAHOE TUNES

Tahoe, Here We come
(To the tune of "Jingle Bells")

By Sean S

Tahoe, here we come,
In a really jam-packed car,
Driving all the way,
With a U-haul comin', too.

Tahoe here we come,
We got sodas on the way,
We stopped at Donner Lake and ate
Our lunches--they were great!

Tahahoe, Tahahoe, Tahoe here we come!
I can't wait, because we're gonna eat s'mores and
dogs!

Tahahoe, Tahahoe, Tahoe here we come!
We will dig and dig and dig and dig
Big trenches on the beach!