

# The Star of Hope

JULY 2009

## PEACE

### FROM THE PASTOR

*(John 14:27) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

I didn't think summer would ever arrive, but now that it has, I'm looking forward to a little peace!

You've probably had similar thoughts, right? When things get a little hectic, we look forward to that time when life slows down a bit. But who are we fooling? Summer has a busyness all of its own. There are weddings to attend and picnics and the Fourth of July get-together. Oh, and don't forget that some-where in the next three months we have to cram in a few weeks of vacation. How we'll we do it all?

When you look at the summer that way, it won't be long till you're thinking, "I can't wait for September to get here so we can settle back into a routine." Of course, in no time at all that routine gives way to the busy holiday season and a longing for some peace and quiet after the Christmas rush, which is soon followed by....What's the point? It's the one Jesus makes in John 14:27. We're always looking for peace and the world is always offering it in one form or another. But the peace this world can give us is only temporary and always incomplete. Only Jesus has and offers real, lasting peace.

Christ spoke the words of John 14:27 just hours before he sacrificed himself to secure our peace with God. It is the Savior's death on the cross that gives us the peace of knowing that God's wrath has been turned away from us, that all our sins have been completely forgiven, that our relationship with God is now that of a dearly loved child, and that eternal life in heaven is waiting for us when we leave this world. The peace that Jesus gives is not a peace that will fade away with time; it will last for all eternity. The peace that Jesus gives isn't the kind that offers only some of what we need and want. No, it has the power to take away all our fears and calm our troubled hearts for good!

The summer offers us some wonderful opportunities for rest and relaxation. Enjoy them, but don't confuse them with peace, or worse, don't pursue them at the cost of peace. In other words, don't let summer activities take you away from Jesus. Don't let regular worship and Bible study be part of the routine you're hoping to escape for a few months, something you'll get back to in September or October. The fears and troubles of life don't take a summer vacation. They are always with us; but then again, so is Jesus who looks forward to seeing us at his house each week where, through Word and Sacrament, he quiets our fears, takes away our doubts, and gives that peace that only he can give!

*Pastor Kehren*

### B-B-Q HELP NEEDED

There will be a congregational BBQ on Sunday, August 23, 2009 after Second Service.

Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall, if you can help.

### CARD RACK INFORMATION

With recent card purchases, I was able to add about 50 new designs, including blanks, thank you cards, get well cards, etc., for your selection. As stated in the last card rack report, your **\$ .75 donation per card** will HOPEFULLY (depending on volume) cover the cost of the cards and increased postage for Holiday cards sent to shut-ins, "Get Well", "Praying for You" and "Encouragement" cards to our sisters and brothers in Christ.

When you use the Honor System and leave an IOU in the box, please remember to remove it when you pay for the cards at a later date.

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**COMPONENTS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH**

Components for helping a healthy church in its growth and mission as we spread the Word of God, through the Gospel of Christ to all people here and around the world.

The four components needed to aid and assist a healthy church in its growth and mission:

- Spirituality - a commitment to deep spiritual transformation that brings about the live-changing work of God in people.
- Chemistry - that which creates an inviting relational atmosphere within the church.
- Strategy – a process of sequential actions that will produce fruitful ministry in line with God-directed goals.

Leadership - that which rests and depends on the three above components and ensures that they are all internalized within the church and lived out in the surrounding community by the church's leaders and members.

Spirituality - the four elements that comprise the core of Christian spirituality are:

"What is the Gospel" - this question is vital at all times for the existence of a church for its health and growth. The content of the gospel is the same now - in the past and as it will be for all eternity. The Holy Bible - God's Word is to be taken as the Holy Gospel and never altered or changed in any form whatever ever.

"Necessity of Transformation" - one result of the message and mission of Jesus is to deconstruct the damaging worldview formed within each person and reconstruct a new, life-giving worldview. The most effective way to do this is to allow the powerful words and actions of Jesus reshape our lives. Anything less than this tends to produce "cultural Christianity", that which gives lip service to change, but does not produce deep transformation.

"Spiritual Formation (or Discipleship) - what Jesus called "turning hearts of stone into hearts of flesh". Spiritual formation builds on transformation to create the type of heart that Jesus seeks to produce. Evangelism becomes counterproductive to God's purpose for the church when it is not partnered with discipleship. Evangelism and discipleship should be an inseparable pair!

"Reliance on the Holy Spirit" - fruitful ministry is a remarkable combination of God-directed human effort converging with the work of the Holy Spirit to manifest the touch of God himself. In their own power, Christians can never produce spiritual transformation in themselves or in other people. Transformation is solely the work of the Holy Spirit.

Chemistry - basically, the church's personality as it lives out the fruits of the Spirit relationally.

"A healthy family system" - when the pastor - those in leadership positions and all of the membership of the church are set free to be whom God created each of us to be - the church lives an authentic, joy-filled life together - living in an atmosphere of truth and love - without the excessive of abusive power.

"An attractive group personality" - when people visit our church, they usually decide in most cases within the first 10 minutes whether they will return. Visitor's sense the group's personality (the membership) and intuitively know whether they wish to connect with us. While some may believe that a church should be filled with dour Christians, true followers of Jesus should be marked by JOY. The book of Psalms describes a group of joyful, attractive believers: "Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy -- -- Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them' " (Psalm 126:2).

Strategy - creates a process of sequential actions that produce fruitful ministry in harmony with God-directed goals. Five components of strategy -

"Vision" - the conceptualization of God's future for the church - what should this church look like - what specific niche that God wants our church to fill and how our church can expand the Kingdom of God. Clarity of vision is critical for future growth.

"Division of ministry" - each church needs to determine how to and to delegate ministry areas of responsibilities. This is established and set forth in the church's structure and organization and spelled out in the constitution - by-laws and duties of all leadership positions within the church.

"Ministry Development" - set God-directed, attainable goals - develop a strategy to reach those goals, etc - implement that strategy (that is, work out all details) - regularly evaluate the progress.

"Connection with new people" - health is a prerequisite to growth - growth being the more difficult of the two to produce. The lack of growth in a church usually stems from the inability to make personal connections with new people. Conversion growth happens

when a person experiences the love of God in Christ combined with the love of Christians and responds with repentance and faith to wholeheartedly follow Jesus. All of the membership of the church should be committed to being "human carriers of the Faith".

"Patience" - our goal should be to build strong ministries, which produce fruit that will last - fruit that is ever increasing. Build a strong foundation as that will determine the future ministry scope of the church. Prayer and leadership development are of the utmost importance and requirements.

Leadership - Leadership is the seat that provides the stability and strength for all of the above. In other words the seat of a three legged stool. The purpose of leadership for growth is to focus the energy of the whole church on spirituality, chemistry and strategy. Churches do not grow without Godly and gifted pastoral and ministry leaders at all levels. Ministry leaders are usually capable of leadership in one particular area of ministerial level. When spirituality and chemistry are in place, then add a strategy - then the three will produce fruitful growth. All should work as a team and lead accordingly.

May God's grace and peace be with you all - forever.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of Hope,

As we continue to work within our new organization we have seen a lot of changes and activity in our Ministry Teams. We are implementing new procedures, starting new programs and continue to strive to improve our existing programs. There has been a lot of change in our congregation, and with that there are opportunities for all of us to serve the Lord using our various gifts and talents. Related to this, please be sure to complete your talent survey if you haven't already done so. We hope to ask people to serve in the way(s) that suit them best.

Related to the organizational changes we have made; I am sure that you are aware that we no longer have monthly Voters' meetings but instead we have monthly Council meetings with Voters' meetings twice a year. I want to make clear that the Council

meetings are open to all members. The Council is the leader body of our congregation but we very much value the input of all of our members. In fact; we need your input. If you would like to attend a Council Meeting you can just show up, there is no invitation needed. If you would like to put something on the Council agenda for discussion you can submit the item to me prior to the meeting and I will add it to the agenda. You can also ask to have an item added to the agenda at the time of the meeting and you will be given time to speak. You do not need to have an agenda item to participate, you are welcome to attend as an observer and we will be happy to have you. I want to be sure that all of our members understand this in order to avoid any confusion.

One last item for this month is; we are still in need of Ministry Team Leaders for the Outreach and Worship Ministry areas. For you men, please consider your gifts and the possibility of serving in one of these roles. If you have any questions about either of these roles you can contact me or any member of Council.

That's all I have for this month.

In Christ,  
Steve F

## OUTREACH MINISTRY TEAM

We count our success in Outreach in small ways, like how many people we talk to about Jesus, and how many flyers we distribute, while relying on God to move people's hearts and bring them to our doors.

VBS was one such event. The overwhelming outreach spirit was with us this year as we presented the gospel to 15 new families. These are families that had not previously attended VBS or one of our events. Some heard of our VBS from friends, from the flyer we mailed and from the sign at the corner.

Regardless of how they heard the fact is that God moved them to bring or send their children to hear His word.

We have a few Outreach events coming up this year and as usual we need your help.

**September 18-20** – Hope will be hosting the *School of Outreach* for our regional churches. This is a 3 day series of classes, brainstorming and planning

sessions with resources from the Synod. Watch for more information on this event in the Star and bulletin.

**October 3** - Our major community Outreach effort is at the Loomis Eggplant Festival. This year we plan a free craft for the children and also to give away sacks of popcorn. We are going to need lots of people, this includes children, to help with the craft, to fill and distribute the popcorn sacks, and most importantly to talk to the people that stop by our booth about our wonderful church and school.

**November 25** – Loomis Day Before Thanksgiving Parade. Have you ever wanted to design and build a float? Now is your chance to put your efforts forth for God's Glory. Our school children participate annually and hand out Christmas for Kids flyers and other items.

If you feel timid about talking to people face to face, the Outreach Ministry Team is the place for you. We begin with small behind the scenes steps and pretty soon you find that God has built a confidence in you that allows you to speak to others about the Hope we have.

We are still in need of a Ministry Team leader. I pray God will bring his person forward.

Judy C – Prospect Discovery Coordinator

## HOPE SCHOOL NEWS

### Free Kindergarten Tuition for 2009-2010

Yes, you read it correctly. Private Christian education free for kindergarteners! We know that it is a difficult economic time for many families, and we want to help those parents keep their children connected with their Savior. In an effort to show love to these families and form a larger Kindergarten class for our school, Hope Lutheran School will be offering free kindergarten tuition for the upcoming school year.

Kindergarten hours will be M-F from 8:15-12:00, with optional extended care up until 5:30 PM for an additional fee. We pray that, after a year of

being in the Word and enjoying this loving Christian environment, these families will continue their education here at Hope knowing that the value of this Christian education is far greater than any amount of tuition dollars.

If you know any kindergarteners, please share with their parents this wonderful opportunity. More information can be requested through Principal Leifer at 916-652-0459 or [principalleifer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:principalleifer@sbcglobal.net) Please continue to keep our school in your prayers as we train young minds for life and prepare young hearts for eternity.

### **2009-2010 School Year**

Our theme for Hope Lutheran School's 14<sup>th</sup> year will be "Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me." The theme is based on Psalm 73:23-24 which says, "Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory." If you would like a calendar for the 2009-2010 school year please see Mr. Leifer.

### **Yearbook Signing Party**

School yearbooks should be available for purchase very soon. There will be a yearbook signing party in the Fellowship Hall on Monday July 27, at 7:00 PM. All students, teachers, parents, and volunteers are invited to attend. If you would like to purchase a yearbook, please contact Mr. Leifer or come to the party. Thanks to our new sponsorship page we were able to keep the cost at \$20 per book. See you there!

### **Wish List**

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

## **YOUNG AT HEART**

The Young at Heart group will meet on Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:30am in the Fellowship Hall for a general potluck. Please bring a dish to share and join in the fun.

### **NEWS FROM THE INDIA ORPHANAGE**

May 2009

Dear Friends,

India is Hot! There is just no other way to put it. The temperatures have been above one hundred degrees for several weeks now. There will be no let up until the rains come in June. The children in our homes have returned to their villages. The school year finished at the end of April and will begin again in mid-June. It seems that everyone is just biding their time until the month of May passes and we can look forward to the rains and cooler temperatures.

We are hard at work preparing for the new orphanage year. We are gathering the equipment from the two homes that closed and are preparing to transport it to the new home which will open in June. The changes in the number of homes will not affect the number of children we care for. Each home will now have 30 children and the total number of children in our care will remain at 300. We will care for these children in 10 homes.

We are also doing some much needed maintenance on the buildings we rent for homes. We are painting 5 homes and will do the remaining homes next year. In India, the building is yours to maintain if you live in it.

We are also looking at the games the children have. Nothing lasts forever and even balls and skipping ropes have to be replaced.

A number of children completed their 10th class exams and will not be returning to the homes where they have grown up. We often wonder what happens to them when they leave us. Pastor Sudhakar Raju recently reported on a girl who left his home last year. She was an excellent student and did exceptionally well on her 10th class exams. Pastor Sudhakar reported that the girl had contacted him to tell him that she was enrolled in nursing school in a large city near Guntur. She called to thank him for giving her the opportunity to live in the home and for providing her with a good education.

## 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.

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

## SYNOD CONVENTION THIS SUMMER

The 60th Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be held July 26th – 31st at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Michigan.

One in ten pastors and male teachers serves as a delegate, and one in ten congregations sends a lay delegate. The down turn in our nation's economy is effecting not only our congregations, but our synod as well. Delegates will have to make painful choices about which ministries to continue and which to close. None of the choices will be easy, and all of them will affect the future of our church body.

The other major issue before the convention is the adoption of a wide-ranging report on the entire ministry of the WELS. This report is from an ad hoc committee that was commissioned by the last synod convention. Their report recommends some reorganization of our synod structure, suggestions for strengthening congregations and their members, pursuing excellence among called workers, synod-wide theological studies, and ways to deal with the increasing costs of called worker training.

Keep the delegates of the convention and our synod in your prayers!

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU

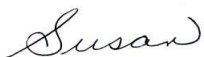
I want to thank all who came out to help beautify the church grounds and make a good first impression for those who came to VBS. What a wonderful reflection of using our time and talents to give glory to the Lord! No one can do the church's work alone, and this was a great display of "many branches" producing fruit.

You may wonder how this is financially possible for a child in our homes. The government of India sets aside jobs and provides money for students who belong to low castes as a way to improve their lot in life. A number of people have told me that if our children do well in school, the government will take care of them. It seems that this is happening to this girl. One of Pastor Jai's orphan home girls, Pinky, is teaching in a village elementary school. Her father refused to allow her to continue her education but because she did so well in school, she was able to get a good job teaching. Several boys are working at the jobs their fathers have. A large number of our children come from non-Christian backgrounds and we have no control over what happens to them. Some of them return to Hindu families. Some are migrants and will probably not live near a Lutheran congregation. Many are married with children of their own. We trust these children to God's care knowing that they have been faithfully taught the Word of God while they were with us. They will always remember that they were raised in Christian homes where they were treated with love and kindness.

Being continually mindful of the financial difficulties faced by people in the United States, including WELS members, we are doing our best to reduce costs. If you receive this via air mail and you have an e-mail address, we can save some money. Postage has risen dramatically in India recently although it is still substantially cheaper than the cost of sending a letter from America to India. If you would like to have these updates sent via e-mail instead of via the post, please send us your e-mail address and include the mailing address to which these letters were sent. Our e-mail address is: mkrueger51\_1999@yahoo.com.

We thank you again for your prayers and support for the children in our homes. We could not do this work without your help. Thank you so much! I hope to see some of you at the LWMS Convention in Denver. I'll be at the India display. Do stop by!

In Christ,





Thank you to all of the volunteers that helped make Hope's Vacation Bible School so successful. This includes Pastor that led our Adventure through Damascus, Joppa, Phillipi, Malta, and Rome; the teacher's who led the children on Adventures with Paul and Peter; the classroom assistants that did crafts and other things to help; the music staff that taught so many songs to wiggly children; the members who provided cookies and snacks; and of course to the kitchen staff that kept everyone fed at "snack time" and the wonderful picnic on Friday.

### **CLR Condemns the Killing of Dr. George Tiller**

Christian Life Resources (CLR) is a WELS organization whose purpose is to offer counsel about life issues. Below is an article about the murder of Abortion provider, Dr. George Tiller:

Notorious late-term abortion provider Dr. George Tiller was shot and killed during a church service Sunday in Wichita, Kansas. Tiller, 67, was gunned down in the foyer of Reformation Lutheran Church (ELCA), according to Wichita Deputy Police Chief Tom Stolz.

The gunman fled the scene, but authorities detained a 51-year-old three hours later in suburban Kansas City in connection with the fatal shooting. A sheriff's spokesman identified the man as Scott Roeder. Federal law enforcement agents are now coordinating with local authorities on the investigation, and formal charges could come on Monday. A motive into the shooting of one of the nation's few late-term abortionists is not known.

Tiller's clinic, Women's Health Care Services, is one of just three in the U.S. where abortions are performed after the 21st week of pregnancy.

Pro-life organizations across the country have denounced the shooting death, saying the act runs contrary to a respect of human life.

Rev. Robert Fleischmann, national director of Christian Life Resources, commented on the news of the death of Dr. Tiller, "The mainstream pro-life Christian community will rightfully condemn this

killing. While Dr. Tiller has been vilified in the pro-life movement for his willingness to kill unborn children in the third trimester of a pregnancy, his killing was not right and is not a solution to any problem.

"Dr. Tiller had seen the pictures of aborted children. He had heard the harsh condemnation of protestors and those who had written letters. None of that had been persuasive. Yet, there is still one thing that can change a heart, and that is the Word of God. How shameful it is that Dr. Tiller's life was ended in the very place where he could hear the words that could have changed his heart.

"Taking the life of Dr. Tiller is as forbidden in Scripture as taking the lives of the unborn children he aborted. Taking the life of a man who needed to hear God's life-changing Word in God's own house is blasphemous, cheapens both human life and is an affront to the Author of life.

"It is our prayer that zealots on both sides of the issue stop the killing and that no one's time of grace be shortened either by an abortionist's knife or a killer's bullet. God has given us His Word as an instrument to change hearts. Christians should focus on administering that Word to bring about the protection of life that a majority of Americans prefer when it comes to abortion.

"In our nation we have a democratic process that can be used to remedy the wrongs of abortion. Shortcuts are no solution. To protect all human life, born and unborn, requires the patient methodic work of electing the right people to make the right decisions to protect the most vulnerable of our society. Until then Christian can seek to change hearts with God's Word."

## TOGETHER



### News from the WELS

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

June 1, 2009

### ANSWERS TO SOME TIMELY QUESTIONS

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

Many across synod have been raising questions now that the impact of the budget cuts proposed by the Synodical Council is beginning to be felt. Some reductions in missions, at our synodical schools, and here at the Synod Administration Building have already begun. Call days were held at Martin Luther College and at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, with 21 unassigned candidates at MLC and 11 at the seminary. Here's what we know at the present time about the most common concerns:

**Why does the proposed budget require \$8 million in reductions?** The Synodical Council is required by the constitution to submit a balanced budget. The reduced budget was necessary because the total financial support from all sources is estimated to be \$8 million less than the current budget.

**Why did the Synodical Council propose a budget with two options?** Shouldn't they have proposed one budget? After making significant reductions in all areas of the synod's budget, the Synodical Council was aware that the issue of maintaining two prep schools would be before the convention. The SC concluded that it could best equip the convention to make difficult decisions by preparing two options—one that provides for two prep schools and one that would provide for only one—and providing all the necessary information to make an informed decision.

**Do these two options pit missions against ministerial education?** Any budget choices will involve difficult decisions about where to place our precious and limited resources, so in a sense any prioritization of budget dollars involves making choices favoring one area over others. Both missions and ministerial education are vitally important, but the final decision will come down to where the

convention decides to allocate the available resources.

**Will these reductions cause irreparable damage to our missions and schools?** All reductions will have a serious impact on the scope and nature of the work we do both in missions and in schools. We pray that wherever the reductions take place, God will provide ways to limit the damage and to enable us to restore and rebuild our efforts in those places.

**How were the priorities of reductions determined?** The level of funding for each area of ministry was determined by the Synodical Council after discussion of the impact of reductions. Within each area of ministry, administrators were responsible for developing their own prioritized list of reductions, based on their knowledge of their area and with input from people working in those areas.

**Why are reductions taking place before the budget is approved by the convention?** The convention does not meet until the end of July, one month after the new budget year actually begins. The convention will make the final decisions on budget allocations, but with reductions of \$8 million, significant cuts across all areas of ministry are unavoidable. When positions or calls are eliminated, the synod provides three months of salary to those affected. If cuts in missionary and faculty positions are not made until after the convention, the budget would need to include four months of support for those positions. This would require eliminating even more positions. Beginning to make some reductions now will spare us from having to make even more later on.

**Some calls have already been terminated in all areas of ministry. What is being done to help those faithful workers?** The Conference of Presidents is using the names of those workers on call lists. There are also plans to form a task force that will explore all possible ways to help these workers when they are without a call and to explore options for them to serve in temporary calls.

**What about graduates of Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary who did not receive calls?** The Conference of Presidents will assign these graduates on a continuing basis as requests for graduates are received. They will also be looking for ways in which these graduates can serve in temporary calls.

**We hear a lot about budget reductions and cuts in programs and staffing. What is being done to encourage additional financial support from congregations and individuals?** The Conference of Presidents will be encouraging all congregations to be sure to meet or exceed their Congregation Mission Offering (CMO) subscriptions and to submit them in a timely way. Since CMO is the foundation on which our budget is built, and since CMO provides the most dependable source of ongoing support, it remains the most important part of our funding. Some WELS members are encouraging special offerings from individuals and congregations. These efforts will certainly help in the short term and may provide some immediate relief; those efforts are certainly appreciated and may prove to be a special blessing.

**Can the convention make changes to the recommended budget?** The proposed budget will be assigned to a floor committee. That committee will hold an open hearing early in the convention in order to answer questions and hear various viewpoints. The committee can either recommend the budget that has been proposed (with one of the two options) or it can make changes. It will then forward its recommendation to the convention, which will adopt a final synodical budget.

**What can we do to prevent the kinds of reductions that the budget calls for?** Increased offerings from congregations and individuals would certainly be a blessing in the short term. The potential benefit would depend on the total offerings received and on when they are given.

**Is it possible that the reductions will need to be even greater than what has been described?** The reality is that the budget, with all of its reductions, is based primarily on the Congregation Mission Offerings that have been promised. If congregations fall behind on those commitments or if their actual gifts to the synod are less than what they committed, we will likely be forced to make even more reductions than those already announced. This is why Congregation Mission Offerings are so vitally important.

**What is being done to prevent this kind of situation from happening again?** This situation came about very suddenly primarily because of a significant reduction in support from individuals and foundations. The Synodical Council has put a plan into place that will, in the future, enable us to spend

these non-CMO dollars only in the year after they are received, not in the year in which they are expected. While this will not prevent future shortages, it will enable us to have real dollars on hand prior to our plans for their use, rather than making plans on the basis of expected financial support.

**What can I do?** Pray that God will bless our convention delegates with faith, courage, and wisdom as they make difficult decisions. Ask God to be with those whose calls have been terminated and who are waiting for a new place in which to serve him. Ask the leaders of your congregation to make these issues known to your members and to encourage generous and timely offerings even in these difficult financial times. Above all, trust that our gracious God will use this difficult situation to bless us according to his grace and wisdom and to enable our synod and all of our members to recommit ourselves to the mission that he has given us. If you have other questions, please feel free to e-mail me at [mark.schroeder@sab.wels.net](mailto:mark.schroeder@sab.wels.net).

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

### Also in this Issue...

#### **BORAM, other convention info now available**

The 2009 Book of Reports and Memorials (BORAM)—designed to inform and prepare delegates and called workers for this summer's synod convention—is now available. The book contains reports of the last two years of WELS ministry activity and presents the ministry plan for the next biennium.

While BORAM is being distributed about a month later than in previous convention years, it contains all the latest pertinent budget projections and proposals—information that previously had to be posted as supplemental reports online.

#### **Sending aid to Pakistan**

WELS is stepping in to help refugees displaced by violence between the Taliban and Pakistani Army in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. WELS Committee on Relief sent \$3,000 last week to the synod's contact in Pakistan, who will purchase and distribute essentials like food and small coolers within the camps.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, almost 2.5 million Pakistani people have fled the

combat zone since the beginning of the month, making it one of the largest and fastest displacements to occur anywhere in the world in recent years. These refugees join almost 550,000 other Pakistanis who were displaced by violence and natural disasters since last August.

June 15, 2009

## **DISTRICTS GRAPPLE WITH ISSUES**

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

By the end of this week, meetings will have been held in nearly every district of the synod to discuss the important issues that will be considered at the synod convention later this summer. In some districts, those meetings have been full district conventions involving pastors, teachers, staff ministers, and lay representatives. In other districts, district-wide pastor/teacher conferences have been taking place. In still other districts, regional conferences have been held.

These meetings are an attempt to keep the grassroots members—called workers and lay leaders alike—fully informed and to give them an opportunity to provide additional input and direction for the delegates to the synod convention. The two primary topics of discussion were the recommendations contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Commission and the budget proposed by the Synodical Council.

As the scope and impact of the budget reductions become clearer, questions are being voiced: "What can we do to reduce the scope and impact of these reductions on our mission fields and on our ministerial schools? Are there other options available that can be considered?" Ideas and suggestions were in plentiful supply, and many of these will likely be forwarded to the convention for consideration.

Regardless of what the final convention's decisions may be, any mission program of the synod will be supported primarily by Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO). Congregations have already made commitments for the year, and the proposed budget is built on those commitments. For that reason it is absolutely essential that all congregations meet or exceed the commitments they've made. Since Congregation Mission Offerings are the foundation of our synod's financial support, a shortfall in CMO could result in even more extensive reductions in our mission efforts.

Throughout the synod, prayers have been offered for the faithful missionaries, pastors, professors, and lay workers whose positions have been eliminated. On a positive note, we are happy to report that five world and home missionaries have received calls to congregations. In some home missions, creative ways are being considered to retain pastors whose funding from the synod has been reduced or withdrawn. Commendably, some home mission pastors have indicated they would find a way to stay with their congregations even without full salaries provided by synodical funding. A number of world missionaries have also chosen to remain in their fields of service beyond the time when funding for their positions has ended. Thank God for these faithful and committed workers!

We also continue to pray for the unassigned graduates of Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. We are pleased that several unassigned candidates from both schools have recently been assigned and that several more assignments are in the process of being made. It has also been gratifying to see that the district discussions are characterized by sincere concern for the work of the synod and a desire to find solutions to our difficult challenges. There has been anguish and heartache over the painful choices before us, to be sure, but there has been no anger. The people of our synod, it seems, have been led by God to look to him in faith in this difficult time and to work more closely with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. In this time, we are reminded again that God has promised that he will use all things to work for the good of those who love him and that he will allow nothing in this world to prevent his Word from accomplishing his purpose. Those promises, not human resolve or solutions, will continue to be the source of our hope and confidence in the weeks and months ahead.

Serving in Christ,  
Mark Schroeder

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

#### **CPS administrator accepts call**

Mr. Jim Brandt, administrator of WELS Commission on Parish Schools (CPS), accepted a call June 4 to serve as the vice president of Adult and Graduate Studies at Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC), Milwaukee. Brandt will begin his work at WLC in early July.

### **New Women's Ministry conference set**

WELS Women's Ministry Committee, a part of the Commission on Adult Discipleship, has scheduled the second national WELS women's leadership conference for July 16-18, 2010. Under the theme, "Leading with a Christ-like attitude," the conference will focus on Philippians 2:1-18. It will again be held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

The first national WELS women's leadership conference was held on July 7, 2007. It focused on presenting the biblical principles of men and women serving together in God's kingdom that are the basis of the *Heirs Together* Bible study written by seminary professor Richard Gurgel and Kathie Wendland, both members of WELS Women's Ministry Committee.

The Women's Ministry Committee, which added 19 new members in October 2008, is working on a variety of other new projects, including compiling strong Bible-based materials for WELS women and gaining feedback on women's ministry in WELS through a Web-based survey.

Rev. Dave Kehl, administrator of WELS Commission on Adult Discipleship, says, "The energy and excitement of the women in our expanded WELS Women's Ministry Committee has been outstanding. It is evident that their desire is to help women get into the Scriptures to better know their Lord and help congregations encourage women in their service as part of the body of Christ."

Kehl asks that pastors complete a simple survey about women's ministry that was recently sent out. "The team wants to better understand the women's ministry needs and opportunities within your congregation," he says.

*For more information about WELS Women's Ministry, including the Heirs Together Bible study, visit [www.wels.net/women](http://www.wels.net/women).*

### **Gifts toward Year of Jubilee continues**

The synod's special Year of Jubilee celebration will be coming to an end next month at the synod convention in Saginaw, Mich. So far, 62 percent of congregations have submitted offerings, giving more than \$3.6 million. The offering was authorized by the 2007 convention to eliminate or reduce the synod's \$22.4 million debt. Combined with regularly

scheduled debt payments, the offerings have reduced the debt total to \$15.1 million.

### **TAHOE ALPHABET**

By Lauren H

**A**wesome candle stick tag at all campgrounds  
**B**ig hot air balloon billowing in the blue sky  
**C**atching creepishly huge crawdads  
**D**are devil dudes dash into the dreadfully cold water  
**E**ating excellent walking tacos that were ecstatic  
**F**ire fighters fight a few flames for a fire  
**G**iving God the glory for giving us great weather  
**H**olly going on a hilly hike  
**I**ll was Jimmy in the camp  
**J**if's peanut butter was used for our PB&J's  
**K**ids laughing all the time  
**L**auren and Lindsey lollygag while laughing  
**M**any people make dinner  
**N**ot many people did not have fun  
**O**pen grounds everywhere  
**P**acking up precious stuff is depressing  
**Q**uivering kids in cold water  
**R**unning bare foot rapidly in the rad waves  
**S**tuffed bears sat silently staring at the stunned Smith  
**T**reacherous tight turns to Lake Tahoe in the car  
**U**nder many trees  
**V**andalization did not happen here  
**W**aiting for walking tacos with wonderful friends  
**X**-citing and x-static kids run to the beach  
**Y**awning around the campfire  
**Z**ombies are zapped here