



# The Reporter

## February 2019

February 2019

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### “The Value of Life”

by Pastor Proeber

Last week there was some bewildering and disturbing legislation introduced by the governor in the Commonwealth of Virginia. While the bill was rejected by the legislature, similar bills did pass in other states, particularly New York. The proposed bill permitted the potential termination of a new-born’s life. As an established rule most states limit this kind of action to the first twenty weeks of pregnancy. Usually extraordinary circumstances would dictate any action after that time.

This unusual piece of legislation clearly contradicted what had been established, and far exceeded most common sense boundaries. The bill opened the door to the termination of a birth up to, and in some cases, even after the delivery of a child. The fateful decision as provided in this bill would be made by the mother and her doctor.

No matter how hard you try to justify this kind of action, it can be accurately described as infanticide. It is a concept whose very nature is horrible. Worse yet, it rebels against God who is the author and preserver of life. Even if you only consider it from a logical perspective, this legislation makes no sense. Why terminate future generations of people?

The arguments for this action are just as strange as the legislation itself. Consider this justification. If a baby is deformed, or if it cannot be determined as viable, the mother—in consultation with her doctor—would have the right to end the baby’s life. One has to wonder, is this action being taken because of kindness or selfishness.

In the light of this horrible piece of legislation, let me share a personal experience. At one point in my ministry a family had a baby boy. From its birth it faced severe health issues. He had heart complications along with respiratory problems. In addition, he had a rare degenerative form of dwarfism. Immediately after the delivery the doctor advised the parents to forgo the much needed, “heroic” medical treatment and allow the baby to die peacefully. “It would be better for everyone,” was his justification. The parents were horrified at the idea. This child’s life was a gift from God. This child, complete with physical challenges was given to them by an infinitely wise Lord who promises everything would work together for his gracious will.

From day one, simple day to day routines were challenging. There were numerous heart and lung surgeries. There were also repeated orthopedic surgeries which often resulted in full body casts. In spite of all the challenges, the parents lovingly and tenaciously cared for their child. What was even more amazing, the child was an inspiration to anyone who met him. You couldn’t help but notice his strength of faith. You couldn’t help but be infected by his radiant joy. Nothing was going to keep him from living life to the fullest.

Through the years I have had occasional contact with the family. The child grew

*Continued on page 2*

#### In this Issue:

Annual Meeting	3
2019 Ministry Plan	4
Outreach News	6
February Birthdays	6
Notes & News	7
Reporters & Meetings	8

*Value, from page 1*

to be a young man. He became an accomplished pianist. He was his high school's Valedictorian. He completed college with honors and was setting his sights on law school. It was at this time when the Lord called him to his side in heaven. I can't help thinking about the lives he touched, the people he inspired, and the encouragement he offered. His life, albeit only twenty-one years, was full. The Lord made him a blessing to so many people.

Now, consider if the parents would have acquiesced to the doctor's opinion. Lost would have been every blessing God wanted people to know and receive through this special young man.

It makes one wonder, doesn't it? All the babies aborted because of inconvenience. All the children sacrificed because of the need for extra love and care. What have we done as a culture! What have we sacrificed in the name of "personal rights?" This is what makes this whole situation so sad. People are allowing themselves to follow their sinful, selfish selves. They are also setting themselves up as God and determining whether or not the life of a child should be preserved.

When we look at where people are heading in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, one thing is terrifyingly clear. Human life has lost its value. Unfortunately when human life becomes disposable, the society is soon buried by the sands of time. History doesn't lie, and is often a harsh schoolmaster. God's sentence on murder is even more severe.

This is where we as God's people need to unquestioningly adopt God's ways. Life is precious. Life is valuable. Life is a gift from God. This is how God wants us to consider it and treat it. A human life should never be connected to the words unwanted, inconvenient, or unsustainable. Life begins with God's decision to give that life. Life continues with God's blessing and gracious provision to sustain that life. Life should only end when God decides his time of grace has come to an end. Anything beyond this usurps the authority God has reserved for himself.

Now, what do we do because we live in a world that refuses to value a human life? We can start with prayer. We can petition the Lord that people humble themselves before God's will. We can pray that God would lead them to value the gift of life he gives. We can also pray that God would prohibit the deceptions of the world and the lies of the devil from taking root in people's hearts. We can even invite people to study the Word with us. Through clear Scripture we can help people come to understand what life is, and what God promises to do with that life.

We can finally be good listeners, patient friends, and slow to criticize and condemn. Many people today act because of ignorance. They don't know what God says. They don't understand the truth regarding life. Their only perspective is what the world offers, and at best it is incomplete.

This means as people who value life we have a duty and responsibility. No we are not going to organize protests, marches, or rallies. No we are not going to take signs to the streets and start fights. We are going to bring people God's truth with gentleness and respect. Here is the only message which can change lives, perceptions, and even hearts. Here is where we can offer correction, clarity, and comfort.

Life is precious. Life is valuable. Life is to be protected. We know this because of what God has said. We are even more confident of this truth because of what God did for us through Jesus. God's Son gave up his life freely, obediently, and joyfully to give us new life. This changes everything about us, and it especially changes how we look at life. We now see it through God's prism, and how precious it is. This is why we cherish it, preserve it, defend it, and proclaim it.

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**"This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself."**

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting

by Carl Schueler

The 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2018 Congregational meeting was called to order on January 13th at 11:00 A.M. by the President, Greg Grunewald. Pastor Proeber opened with a prayer.

There were 7 members present—5 voting members and 2 non-voting members.

The **Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Congregational meeting** were read.

**Old/Unfinished Business** – None

### Reports

Board of Elders - no report

Board of Education – no report

Pastoral Report - complete report is available

Statistics for the quarter were reviewed.

Visits were made to shut-in members (e.g., Sally Krause) and members who moved to Mariposa. Christmas caroling at Wood Glen and Mariposa

Elders plan to visit absent members to restore attendance, or ask for release.

Plan to revise Church Council structure will be undertaken by Elders; a new addition will have community outreach as the specific duty of one elder

Pastor to attend California Pastoral Conference in Las Vegas late January

Property / Trustees Report – no report

Financial Secretary Report - complete report is available

General Fund offerings for the 4th Quarter	\$ 36,709.00
Other (Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc)	\$ 2,915.25
CLHS	\$ 100.00
Synod Missions	\$ 140.00
Pass through	\$ <u>2,219.33</u>
Total Offerings	\$ 42,083.98

Total Offerings 2018 \$151,014.71

Treasurer's Report - complete report is available

Balance October 1, 2018	\$ 42,011.00
Offerings	\$ 39,355.00
Interest	\$ 0.00
Expenses	\$ <u>39,335.00</u>
Ending Balance December 31, 2018	\$ 42,028.00

WELS Investment Fund - complete report is available

Combined Fund Total October 1, 2018	\$164,767
Combined Fund Total December 31, 2018	\$147,538 (-10.46%)

Continued on page 5

## 2019 Ministry Plan and Funding

by Al Todd

The congregation's 2019 ministry and funding plan is broken out into nine (9) categories as shown below:

	2018 Actual	2019 Budget	DIFF	% Inc/ Dec
Income				
General Fund Income	146,136	150,000	3,864	103%
Expense				
Total Advertising/Outreach	954	1,150	196	121%
Total Church Operations	15,924	16,756	832	105%
Total Church Utilities	6,575	6,599	24	100%
Total Education Expenses	855	786	-69	92%
Total Fellowship	875	800	-75	91%
Total Pastor Expenses	107,741	109,857	2,115	102%
Synod Missions	14,613	15,000	387	103%
Total Worship Expenses	582	550	-32	94%
Total Expense	148,120	151,497	3,377	102%
Net Ordinary Income	-1,984	-1,497	487	

In 2018 we saw a decline in the General Fund for the second year in a row. The same Fund grew by more than 100% from 2012 (\$23,563) to 2016 (\$48,901). Since 2016 we have seen a decrease in the General Fund in both 2017 and 2018. We ended 2018 with a balance of \$42,029 which is a 14% decline in the General Fund in the past two years.

If our personal stewardship of God's freely given gifts does not reflect his increase to us, we will continue to see the decline in our General Fund balance which will have a long term adverse impact on the ministry we conduct as a congregation.

To address this trend and begin to make up for the last two years, the voters at the Annual Meeting approved a budget which proposes a **3% increase in offerings** over the 2018 actual offerings. This will not only cover the 2% increase in expenses, but will also insure we can undertake a complete ministry plan, and if God permits, expand in some new areas.

As a reminder, here are just a few areas of ministry that we as members of Our Redeemer support with our gifts given to the Lord:

- Provide weekly services focused on Christ and His sacrifice on our behalf.
- Provide monthly opportunities to partake of the Lord's Supper for the strengthening of our faith.
- Welcoming children into the family of God through Baptism (most recently of Jaden Schueler, Landon Schroeder, and Logan Young).
- Conduct weekly services at both Wood Glen Hall Senior Living Community and Mariposa Senior Living Community (where Bill and Bev Waters and Dave Vetter reside).
- Visit homebound members by Pastor.
- Conduct weekly Wednesday classes on books of the Bible.
- Offer Sunday School classes for two (2) groups of children: pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten through grade 5.

*Continued on page 5*

*Budget, from page 4*

- Support a Handbell Choir which serves the congregation on several Sundays and for special services (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.)
- Support a mixed voice choir which serves the congregation on several Sundays and for special services (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.)
- Publish a monthly newsletter with encouraging words from the Pastor and articles of interest to the congregation.
- Provide the WELS quarterly devotion booklet “Meditations” for every member.
- Sponsor events for congregational members and guests through the Outreach Committee including: President’s Day Remembrance, Easter Service meal, Independence Day celebration, Ice Cream Social, Goleta Beach BBQ, Circuit Reformation post-service meal, Reformation celebration at ORLC, Thanksgiving Dinner, Christmas church decorating and caroling, Christmas Eve post service fellowship.
- Maintain the church property (Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Parsonage, storage building, playground, and landscape) in good condition.
- Provide compensation for our pastor as he serves the congregation with his time and abilities.

Let’s also never forget that Our Redeemer carries out the Great Commission by joining together with other congregations of the WELS to reach “all nations” by training, equipping, sending, and supporting workers in the U.S. and 50 other countries via our Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO). These CMOs are the main source for funding our Synodical ministry. Accordingly, Our Redeemer sends 10% of all General Fund offerings for the work we do together as a Synod. So, as our gifts increase, the Synod is also able to expand its work of fulfilling Christ’s great commission.

Please prayerfully consider the financial blessings God has entrusted to your stewardship, and then through God’s great love for us in Christ, make a plan to increase your offerings by 3% (or more!) in 2019.

Though our offerings did not completely fund our ministry plan in both 2017 and 2018, God still graciously reminds us that he never withholds his very best from us. We see this in Jesus. As we make our personal stewardship plan for 2019, we must never forget it is our humble privilege to respond to our Lord and Savior with the very best we have—recognizing the gifts we give come first from his hands to ours (1 Chronicles 29:14).

If you have any questions regarding the 2019 budget, please don’t hesitate to contact me or any member of the Church Council.

*Annual Meeting, from page 3*

#### **New Business**

The Council recommended the ministry plan and budget for 2019 to the congregation; The Treasurer also reported offerings were not keeping up with the budget, so the voters recommended the Treasurer send a letter to members encouraging a 3% increase in offerings. A motion was made, seconded, and approved, to adopt the 2019 ministry plan and budget

The meeting adjourned with the Doxology at 11:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
C. Schueler, Recording Secretary

## Outreach Opportunities

The Outreach Committee continues to sponsor events and provide opportunities for members to invite friends, neighbors, and relatives to Our Redeemer. Some events are conducted outside the formal worship service. There are also special worship services with food and fellowship afterwards. We hope these opportunities will encourage you to invite people you know to learn more about our church and to hear the message of Grace we proclaim. Please plan to participate, and to serve!

On Tuesday, January 15th, the committee met at 7:00 pm to finalize plans for 2019. There are always the “regularly scheduled” events and worship services, still the committee is interested in new opportunities and activities to add to our yearly outreach calendar. This is what is happening so far —

- ☛ Movie and Pizza on February 24th at 5:30 pm—C.S. Lewis Onstage
- ☛ Midweek Lenten worship begins March 6th, and offers 6 evening services at 7:00 pm
- ☛ Palm Sunday is April 14th
- ☛ Maundy Thursday is April 18th & Good Friday is April 19th
- ☛ Easter Sunday is April 21st with the traditional breakfast following
- ☛ July 4th is our patriotic movie, barbeque and fireworks
- ☛ August 18th is the Beach, Bike and Barbeque at Goleta Beach
- ☛ October 27th is a Reformation movie, dinner and fellowship
- ☛ November 24th is the pre-thanksgiving pot-luck and program
- ☛ November 28th is Thanksgiving Day with worship at 9:30 am
- ☛ December 1st Advent begins with four Sunday and two mid-week services
- ☛ December 15th is the church decorating day, chili dinner and caroling
- ☛ December 24th is Christmas Eve with fellowship
- ☛ December 25th is Christmas Day with fellowship



## February Birthdays



We rejoice in the many blessings God has given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Jameson S.
- 7<sup>th</sup> - Joel D.
- 8<sup>th</sup> - Kathy T.
- 11<sup>th</sup> - Janelle Y.  
Michael J.
- 17<sup>th</sup> - Debbie A.

Please share any corrections—spellings, addresses, or birthdays with Pastor Proeber. We would like to have all our information as correct as possible. Thank You!

## Notes & News

### Handbell Choir

Regular practices have resumed for the new year. Preparations are being made for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Following Easter, songs will be readied for Pentecost and Trinity.

We thank all those who give of their time and efforts to be part of this unique ministry of music.

It is never too late to think about ringing. If you might be interested—young or old—come to a practice to see what it involved. You may also speak to Debbie about joining in the Spring.

### Choir

The mixed voice choir continues to practice. Songs are being prepared for Epiphany, Lent, Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Songs will include contemporary revisions of traditional songs. There will also be some with a more “spiritual” feel. All will lead us to sing for joy to the Lord.

Choir practice is every Thursday evening at 7:00 pm. In the month of February, there will be no practices on the 7th and 14th.

New singers are always welcome!

### Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Bible Class continues every Wednesday evening at 7:00 pm. Currently we are studying the book of Exodus. It is an insightful book which regularly reminds us of God’s undeserved love in spite of our unfaithfulness. It also reassures us with the confidence, the Lord will never go back on his Word.

### Mid Week Lenten Worship

On Wednesday, March 6th, we will begin a series of evening worship services which will draw our attention to the sufferings and death of our Savior. The services will follow the theme: “Thanks be to God for His Indescribable Gift!” It will also lead us into the Lenten Hymn, “Christ the Life of All the Living.”

Jesus Endued the Darkest Depths of Woe

Jesus Endured the Bonds of Sin

Jesus Endured the Curse of God

Jesus Endured the Scorn of Men

Jesus Endured the Accusation of Enemies

Jesus Endured the Torment of the Cross

### Sunday Morning Bible Class

As always there is a regularly scheduled class after the worship service. We are half way through the Reformation Study of “Grace, Faith and Scripture.” In these weekly lessons, there is a video clip and study sheet which help us understand how God was leading Luther throughout the Reformation.

If you have not attended through the first lessons, you can still come. Every week is a separate unit. Some of the remaining studies cover worship, vocation, the importance and power of the Word, and getting God’s Word into the people’s hands.

### Sunday School for Children

The Sunday School continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month.

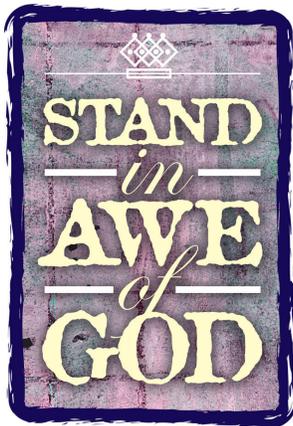
We thank the Lord for the teachers who faithfully commit to teaching our children God’s Word. We also thank the Lord for our parents who faithfully bring their children to receive the blessing of studying God’s Word.

If you have any questions, please speak to John Favuzzi.



### Opportunities

We are always looking for new opportunities for service, outreach, study and encouragement. Please share your ideas with a Board member or with Pastor Proeber.



Ecclesiastes 5:7b, NIV

## Reporters Wanted

Book review? Personal Story of Faith?  
Event report? Potluck—gathering? Party? Field Trip?

Half-page to three pages  
Reviewed for scriptural consistency  
Due by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy to Carl Schueler, or email to Carl Schueler (cfs\_home@hotmail.com)  
or Pastor Proeber (pastor@orlcsb.net)

***A simple and rewarding way to serve!***

Thanks to Carl Schueler and Alan Todd for the minutes of the Annual Meeting and the article on funding of the 2019 ministry plan.

There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have made every issue more interesting. We pray that every member will provide an article for 2019. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Pastor Proeber or Carl Schueler for advice. Thanks!

## Meetings for February

Church Council	February 5 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm
Committees	February 5 <sup>th</sup> at 8:00 pm
Outreach Committee	February 12 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm
Elders—Restructuring	February 19th at 7:00 pm

## C.S. Lewis on Stage

Many of us are familiar with the name. We are also aware that he is one of the most influential Christian writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. We know the “Chronicles of Narnia,” especially the “Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.” We also know his seminal work, “Mere Christianity.” But, do we know that he was previously an atheist? Do we also know it took an

“act of God” to transform him?

On **February 24th at 5:30 pm** we will gather to enjoy a dinner of pizza, soft drinks, and salad. Then around 6:30 pm we will move to the sanctuary to watch the movie: “C.S. Lewis Onstage: The Most Reluctant Convert.”

The movie is described in this way: “Using Lewis’ own words,

Max McClean inhabits Lewis to take us on his journey from hard-boiled atheist to the most reluctant convert in all England.”

Following the movie we will return to the fellowship hall for dessert and discussion. If you know someone who would enjoy this presentation, invite them to come and share the evening with us.

