

Renewed and Refreshed

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About two weeks ago we had a special visitor. It wasn't a long time friend or close relative. Nor was it a famous personality or dignitary. It was rain. Although it may seem unusual to talk about rain as a special visitor, just try to remember the last time we had a nice soaking shower. It has been over four months.

Now consider what happened in those four months. There were periods of sustained record-setting heat. There were frequent sundowners. In addition there was the Jesusita fire. As a result of these conditions plants and people showed signs of stress. If that wasn't bad enough, everything was covered with a strange brownish gray layer. Nothing was spared from the extreme conditions. But then the rain came.

I couldn't help but notice the change that followed the day after. The air was clear and fresh. The sidewalks and parking lot were clean. All the plants, the trees and the grass looked healthier. Even the colors looked a little more vivid. It was a dramatic change.

Rain has a special effect on everything. It can even have an effect on people. This is why it was such a special, welcomed visitor at the end of May. It was able to refresh and renew.

Personally I would love to see a nice soaking shower every week. Imagine what that would do for everything. Imagine what that would do for the water bills. Unfortunately, it is not a reality for Santa Barbara and the Central Coast.

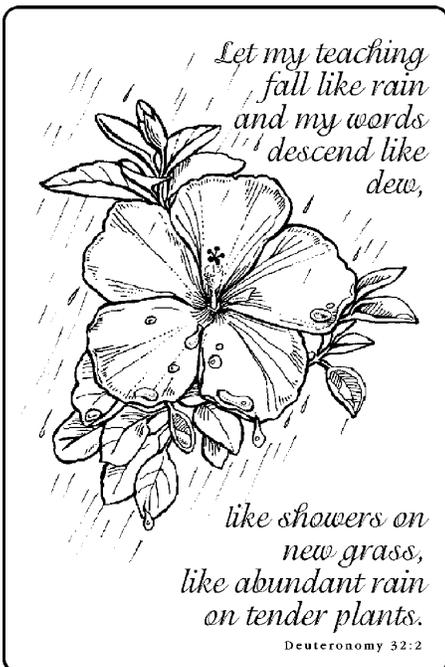
The benefits of this last rain made me think of what the Lord does in love for his people. It is more than a coincidence that he uses the picture of rain and water in the Bible. It is also astonishing to see the difference it makes in the Christian's life. The benefits and blessings of rain are regularly tied to the use of God's Word, the Bible. It is a special picture, and one we need to look at carefully - God's Word renews and God's Word refreshes.

Life can be wearisome. Even if things are going relatively well, there are still daily pressures and demands. Life can be complex. There are numerous demands on time and energy. There is work to be done and schedules to be maintained. On top of that, there is the unexpected. All of this can leave a person exhausted at the end of the day. Physically you may feel worn out. In addition, mentally, and possibly even emotionally, you have had it.

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Renewed, cont'd from page 1

Day to day living can be tiring enough. Unfortunately, every day life is complicated by another challenge. We are sinners. Not only are we covered with the stain of sin, we are wearied by its constant burden. Just like a plant covered with ash and subjected to intense heat cannot grow and thrive, so we struggle. Joy in the Lord turns to regret. Service in love turns to dull drudgery. Fruits of faith wither and turn bitter. We need help.



As the rain renewed and refreshed last week, so the rain of God's Word renews and refreshes. Again, this is a lesson we cannot afford to neglect. Still, we make concessions and substitutions.

If you checked your water bill recently, there has been a definite "spike." Because of the lack of rain it was necessary to water more. There is only one problem. The water received through the meter can never match the results of a good soaking rain.

This is another point well taken. We know reading devotional material like "Meditations" is beneficial. We may also set aside time for private Bible Study and prayer. This is even better. Still, it should never become a substitute for regular worship with the saints. Gathering with fellow Christians on Sunday mornings not only offers the Word, it also offers the encouragement of our brothers and sisters in the faith. Even more important, it provides the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The benefits of gathering with the saints can be compared to a good soaking rain. Running a hose all day will keep things moist, but to really refresh and renew you need the rain. So it is with our faith. We need to gather with the saints for encouragement, and gather around the Word and Sacrament for refreshment and renewal.

Next week "summer" officially begins. School is dismissed. Vacations plans are set. It feels good to have some time off. As you make your plans, don't forget to keep yourself watered. Daily use your Bible and Meditations. Daily spend time in prayer. Most important, don't forget the renewing and refreshing benefits of weekly Sunday worship.

As we sojourn through this dry and desolate wilderness, we will face many challenges. We will especially face the parching effects of sin. But God's Word comes as the morning rain. It will renew our joy. It will refresh our strength.

Meetings for June 2009

Church Council	June	9th at 7:00 pm
Outreach	June	15th at 7:00 pm
Board of Elders	June	23rd at 7:00 pm
Board of Trustees	July	6th at 7:00 pm

Quarterly Congregational Meeting July 12th - after the Worship Service

- Work days for the Storage Building -
Please check with the Trustees

June Birthdays

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

6th - Eileen A.
9th - Sue .
12th - Lori K.
18th - Julie S.
20th - Roger J.
21st - Dave V.
24th - Christina F.
30th - Hilary S.



Successful Islamic Education Event at ORLC

From WELS Bethlehem VA Newsletter October 2006:

“He is a tall man with dark hair, dark eyes, and dusky skin. He answers to ‘Jacob,’ though that is not his real name. He appears to be in his 30s, though he does not give his age. He does not give his address. Revealing such information could put him in extreme danger.

He came to us by virtue of his being a speaker at a Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) conference last spring (2006). Lynnette Hupman, the national LWMS president-elect, asked if he would speak at our church if ever he were in the area. It so happened that last week, he was in DC for a conference of ex-Muslims. Jacob began his talk by asking if there were any Muslims in the audience. After we craned our necks to look at all present, we were able to assure him there were none. He said that Muslims were welcome to listen, but not to argue.

He was born in Kurdistan and brought up as a Muslim. At the age of seven, he began studying the Quor'an and other Muslim writings in Arabic. When he was a young man, some doubts about the Muslim beliefs were starting to seep into his mind. One day as he came out from the mosque after one of his 5-times daily prayer sessions, a friend asked him what he had been doing in the mosque. He said he had been praying, of course, and his friend told him that there really is no Allah. Jacob was stunned. Speechless.

He began reading about other religions, and ended up an atheist. Jacob explained that it is possible to be a non-Muslim (even a Christian) in Iraq, as long as one follows the tri-atheist system: follow Islamic law, pay taxes imposed on non-Muslims, and understand you are going to hell. Not an easy life.

Jacob is college educated, earning a degree in Food Science. Perhaps this was what he was told he would study; he did not seem overly interested in it, but he said he can see it was all a part of God's plan. He was told he would go work in the food industry, specifically, that he would help Italians in cheese making. This program was being funded by Americans.

In 1996, Saddam Hussein invaded Kurdistan. The US announced it would accept as a refugee anyone in its employ, if the person could get to Turkey. Jacob and several others (perhaps a hundred) made a run for it! They had to cross the mountains to get to Iran, thence to Turkey. When

they were halfway up the mountain, Iraqi soldiers shouted up to them from the foothills to come on down--they would not shoot them if they would give themselves "in."

Jacob et al. did not believe this for a minute. They were stuck, though. Easy targets. Jacob decided to pray and he prayed to Jesus, whom he had read about as a living God. Very soon, a huge cloud covered the part of the mountain the group was on, and the refugees were able to cross over into Iran after several hours of walking.

After arriving in Iran, with only the clothes on his back, Jacob walked to Turkey, and was accepted into the US refugee program. He was brought to the US by way of Guam, where he arrived in heavy winter clothes. Lightweight clothing was made available, and Jacob chose a purple T-shirt with a big cross on it, though he did not understand its significance.

His next stop was Hawaii, then California, then Houston, TX. After working so hard to learn English, Jacob was disappointed that everyone either spoke Spanish or a non-understandable form of English (Texan accented) and that it was so hot and humid. He spoke to another refugee friend who had been assigned to VA.

After Jacob lived and worked there for three years, he received an invitation from a local church to attend a service. He decided to go and see what it was like. The pastor talked with him after the service and asked if he would be interested in studying the Bible. And so they did--back and forth at each other's houses for two years. Then Jacob joined the WELS. He believes he might be the first ex-Muslim member of the WELS.

He was asked about his family in Iraq, and the light in his face went out. He said they are not Christians, and he only contacts them now and then. He mentioned that we should befriend our converts, since most of them are shunned from their families following a conversion to Christianity.”

ORLC invited Jacob to visit us last weekend. He provided a full-day short course on the basics of the Islamic faith based on the Koran and on Mohammed's other writings, collectively called the “Hadid.” The overall story

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Islam Education, cont'd

was fascinating and frightening. Frightening because of the worldly political nature of Islam and its fundamentally violent message against “infidels,” that is, all non-Muslims, and especially Christians.

Jacob also explained how to witness to Muslims. One of his most important points was to warn us not to assume the Muslims don't want to hear what we have to say. He told us Muslims are under a great deal of pressure because they believe they get to heaven by having their good deeds outweigh their bad, so they are in a constant state of tension over this.

We have the Good News they need to hear. He assured us that conversion is possible—in addition to himself he noted several more ex-Muslims have become WELS members in the past few years during his ministry to Muslims. He told us how to greet a Muslim (“Peace be with you,”), what and what not to offer in the way of food and drink (offer juice or water, no alcohol, no pork, no non-kosher foods), and a few social customs to observe (remove shoes before entering a home, segregate men from women in social settings, and no loud music). He encouraged us to become friends with Muslims we know before broaching any sort of religious discussion.

Several of us joined Jacob for supper at the Elephant Bar restaurant—Dan G. was our server—and the Elephant Bar manager treated us all to free use of their private dining room, waiving the standard \$50 rental fee.

Last Sunday, Jacob also led the Bible study with a special study entitled “Women and Islam.” This study laid out the basic philosophy and traditions regarding roles of men and women of the Islamic faith, both in church and in society at large. This was quite revealing, with many aspects of Islam somewhat similar to Mosaic Law, but with twists that distinguish Islam from Mosaic traditions.

Finally, Karolyn H. hosted a pot-luck supper at her home with Jacob the guest of honor. With some Mid-eastern delicacies, as well as Chicken Alfredo and other western fare, we continued to converse with Jacob about his plans. Jacob revealed that he is scheduled to become a Naturalized American citizen later this month in Milwaukee, and that he is studying to become a WELS Pastor.

We wish Jacob God's blessings on his efforts on behalf of the lost, whether Muslim or unchurched.

Some Basics to Keep in Mind

Appeal of Islam

- The Natural Law: Appeals to self, sense of order and rules, merit, anger, revenge, eye for eye.
- Strong Family Structure: Parental authority, good deeds among family members.
- Strong Male Role and authority: All power resides in men.
- Apparent mild opposition from Christianity.
- Educated in polemics: Love for debate.
- Identify with minorities: Anti-white, anti-American.

Dangers of Islam

- Anti-Western
- Oil wealth supports terrorism. It also supports expansion of Islam wherever immigrants establish their culture and Islamic practices.
- Significant population growth in several countries, difficult to recognize dormant political cells.
- Strongholds in Africa, Asia, and even in several cities of the United States.
- Chief rival of Christianity especially in Africa.

What to Emphasize

- Jesus as Savior, Law and Gospel (Gradually suggest the question, “Who is the Savior in Islam?”)
- Wonder with them, “Who is capable of keeping the law perfectly?”
- Explain that we know who Jesus is from the Bible. Ask if they know what Islam says about Jesus in the Hadith (that He never sinned).
- Explain what God says about sin and Jesus did for us.
- Explain Jesus' love for us, God's love for us. The Holy Spirit works in our lives. Do not discuss the Trinity until much later on.



By Carl Schueler

He alone is my rock and my salvation – Psalm 62:2

The Lutheran Women's Mission Society (LWMS) 2009 Annual Convention is in Denver, Colorado, *this month*:

June 25 Thursday:	Registration, Practices, and Opening Service
June 26 Friday:	Registration, Lecture Hall Events, Display Room, and Workshops
June 27 Saturday:	Lecture Hall Events, Display Room, Workshops, and Evening Banquet
June 28 Sunday:	Closing Service

The convention will be at the *Sheraton Denver Hotel; 1550 Court Place Denver, Colorado 80202* on the Pedestrian Mall a short walk to the State Capitol (have your picture taken on the Capitol step—5,280 feet above sea level) with restaurants, shops, museums, and galleries at our doorstep. Laid back, bustling with activity, full of interesting people, yet safe and easy to walk. There's even a free shuttle on the mall if you don't feel like walking.

(Phone: (303) 893-3333 Room Reservations: (888) 627-8405 On-line reservations www.2009LWMS.org)

In addition to displays, lectures, worship and social events, the convention will feature four missionaries who experienced mission work at home and abroad, learning different ways to share the gospel:

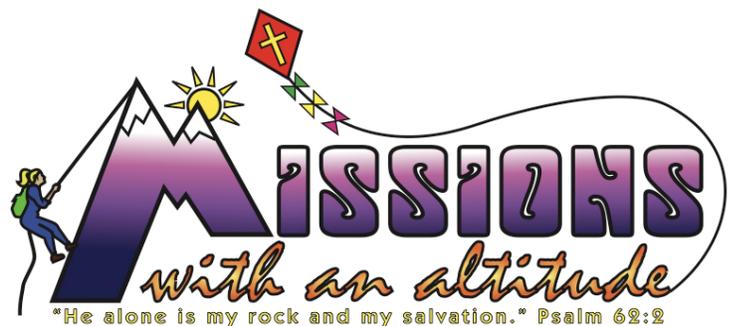
China Wisdom for the 21st Century is rooted in the full apostolic message that Luther championed and that WELS confesses. China has over a billion people and there are only a few missionaries to share the gospel. Pastor John Lawrenz describes the partnership of LifeNet and Asia Lutheran Seminary in bringing the gospel to the Chinese speaking world.

"OK... let's try that!" - a phrase that suggests a tentative action in an atmosphere of change. After over 50 years in Zambia, WELS is seeing an atmosphere of change in a thriving mission field. Are we ready to view our "daughter" church body as a "sister?" Pastor Dan Kroll will share some of the changes taking place in Zambia.

Ya'at'eeh! (Navajo for "hello") The Navajo nation has a rich history of service to our country as code talkers during WWII in the Pacific and as Cold War uranium miners. The Navajo reservation is the largest in America. Pastor Jim Fleming will tell how God has blessed Christ the Rock, Farmington, New Mexico, as they reach out to Native Americans.

"Check out the view from up here!" Pastor Paul Biedenbender has a unique view as he stands six and a half feet tall. He invites you to check out the view as he shares the challenges, funny experiences, and great blessings he has seen serving inner-city Denver.

If you cannot attend the annual convention this month, then consider our LWMS Golden West Circuit Fall Rally October 3, 2009, at King of Kings in Garden Grove. A two-hour drive to a Saturday event you will enjoy.



"He alone is my rock and my salvation." Psalm 62:2

Member's Corner: Karolyn Hanna Honored at SBCC

By Alan Todd

On Thursday, April 30, 2009, Our Redeemer's own Karolyn Hanna was honored by her faculty peers at Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) as 2009 Distinguished Faculty Lecturer. Karolyn was singled out for this honor based on her outstanding classroom teaching, counseling, and unselfish, dedicated faculty service to Santa Barbara City College for the past 29 years.

Those of us fortunate enough to be able to attend Karolyn's lecture were rewarded with a very interesting presentation entitled: "Legacy of Our Past and Challenges of the Future: Nursing Education in Santa Barbara." The one hour lecture kept the interest of two hundred plus faculty and guests in the audience. Karolyn told an interesting story, accompanied by slides, about the important people in the history of nursing from Florence Nightingale to those responsible for the success of SBCC's current nursing program. She also covered a brief history of the evolution of nursing education from hospital-based Diploma Schools into programs operated by institutions of higher education – at both the university and community college level. She then focused on nursing education in Santa Barbara -- highlighting the contributions of the Knapp College of Nursing operated by Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital and their partnership with Santa Barbara City College – an alliance that led to establishing the SBCC Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) Program.



She concluded the lecture by challenging her nursing colleagues and students to continue to work together to meet the current and future challenges in the nursing profession. As expected, Karolyn's presentation struck just the right balance between a rigorous academic presentation of the subject and a personable "connection" with the audience.

Although this is just one of many honors Karolyn has received over the years, which include the 1994 Hayward Award for Educational Excellence and last Fall the Association of Community College Trustees Pacific Region Faculty Award, her latest award this April meant a lot to Karolyn because it was awarded by her peers on the faculty. We were glad to see that both of her brothers and their wives flew in from Minnesota to attend the lecture and the reception that followed.

Congratulations Karolyn, and may God continue to bless your efforts in the future!

Reporter's Wanted!

Book review?
Personal Story of Faith?
Event Reports? (Potluck, gathering, party, field trip?)

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

Hard-copy to Carl Schueler, or email to Carl Schueler
(cfs_home@cox.net) & Pastor Proeber
(pastor@orlcsb.net)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Alan Todd for his "Member's Corner" article, and to Carl for his contributions. *The Reporter* continues to benefit from a variety of perspectives, and this issue is a continuing series with articles by volunteer "reporters."

There is always an open invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. In the past, fourteen members authored over 40 articles which really makes every issue more interesting. These included articles on a wide variety of subjects: ORLC news, past and planned events, thought-provoking instructional articles on WELS history and other religions, and articles relating to personal perspectives on our faith in Jesus.

We pray that more members will continue to think about possible articles for the remainder of 2009.



Through the next half of 2009 there are a number of activities planned that will give us the opportunity to invite our friends, neighbors and relatives to come and learn more about our faith in Jesus Christ. Some of the information is still tentative, but the dates are set.

So keep them open, and keep others informed.

4th of July Barbeque and Fireworks

This is always an enjoyable afternoon and evening of friendship and good food. As in the past we will start the afternoon with a movie at 4:00 pm. The DVD will consider the foundational role religion played for the founding fathers of our nation. It will also call our attention to the danger of sliding off that foundation.

“A Nation Adrift”

Then we will dig in to the traditional tri-tip dinner. Meat, bread, and beverages will be provided. Please bring a salad or dessert to share. The evening comes to a close at Girsh Park for fireworks. This is a great opportunity to invite friends. Starting planning today!

Bike & Barbeque

Last year we tried a new activity, and it was well-received. The Outreach Committee is again looking at August 16th or 23rd for a Sunday afternoon at Goleta Beach. For the physically fit this will include a bike ride from the church parking lot to the beach. For everyone else, we will meet at the beach. Hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages will be provided. Please bring a salad and dessert to share.

We are also inquiring if the folks from Star of Bethlehem would be interested in joining us. Please watch for more information. Also share your thoughts with the Outreach Committee.

Festival of Friendship—September 13th

It is not too early to start thinking about this special outdoor service and tri-tip barbeque. Remember the service starts at 10:30 am. Just plan to bring a friend, a dessert, and a hearty appetite.

Goleta Lemon Festival - October 17th-18th

Once again we will have our booth. Plans are already under way for give-aways, and filling the booth.

Schedule for June

Handbell Choir

Practice is coming to a close for the summer. We thank all who gave of their time every Monday evening through the course of 2008/9. We also thank all those who filled in on short notice. Without your service, we would not have been able to undertake this special service to the Lord and Our Redeemer.

We are also especially thankful for the time and effort given by Debbie A. Not only has she given her time to direct the bell choir, she also orders, marks and prepares the music long in advance of the choir ever seeing or playing it.

Later this year, the handbell choir will resume its practice schedule. If you are interested in playing, or learning, just come. You will have a great time!

Choir

Like the Handbell Choir, the Choir is finishing another full year. We tried some more challenging arrangement, as well as simple ones. Some were more traditional, others were more recent compositions. All in all, the members provided song in many services throughout the year.

Thank you to everyone who gave of their time to practice and to sing.

In late August, practice will begin again. If you would like more information, or would like to sing, please speak with Pastor Proeber.

Wednesday Bible Study

At 7:00 pm we gather to do an “in depth” study of the Bible. Currently we are studying Paul’s First Epistle to Timothy. It is a letter to encouragement both for his young co-worker in Christ, and for the Christian congregation in Ephesus. Please watch the bulletin and the calendar for the summer schedule.

Sunday Morning

After a quick cup of coffee, we return to the sanctuary for Christian Education and Bible Study. Classes have been rotating between the Book of Joel, Luther’s Large Catechism, and “Tactics in Defending the Faith.” Over the next two Sundays (June 14th and 21st), we will conclude Joel and his prophecy of the coming of the Lord and his Holy Spirit. Starting June 28th, Art Battson will continue with the “tactics” class.

Every class has something new, challenging, and informative. Come and learn more!

CORNER ☩

DEVOTIONAL ☩

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 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.” John 14:25-27

“Change I can believe in.”

Change. Although it is a part of life, it can either be a welcome relief or unwelcome intrusion. Regardless of my attitude to change, it will continue to happen. So how do I decide which changes to adopt and which to resist? Unfortunately, this is something only experience will answer.

Experience does show me one area where change is good and is always welcome. It is the change promised by Jesus and brought about by the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised his followers they would see a change in their lives, and a change in the way they look at life. Consider some of those changes. The Spirit would reinforce everything Jesus taught. He would provide the peace Jesus secured through his suffering and death. He would also bring about a change of heart and mind.

These changes Jesus promised through the Spirit, still take place. Daily they are offered to me, so I need to open my eyes to see the change that can take place.

Through the Spirit I come to an understanding and appreciation of what Jesus did for me. Everything he accomplished, everything he taught, I now know what it means to me. Here is change. No longer am I blind and ignorant of the Lord, but I know him through faith.

Through the Spirit I enjoy the peace Jesus secured for me. I have the right relationship with God. No longer am I hostile to him and his will. No longer do I wage a battle against him. I know his goodness and mercy. I have been changed. Now I have peace.

Through the Spirit I also look at life differently. The things that daily disturb me and trouble my heart are gone. The forces Satan hurls against me to make me timid and cowardly are overcome. This is change. My heart is calm. My soul is confident. I know the Spirit is with me, and he will always assure me of my Savior’s love and forgiveness, as well as his strength and victory.

This is change I can believe in. Change that will always work, and change that will always delight and bring joy. Change when it comes from the Lord is a blessing. It leads to joy, to peace, to loving service, and to faithfulness. I want to see that change in me.

Prayer Thoughts

O dearest Jesus you have promised to work a change in my heart and in my life. Send me your Holy Spirit to make that change. Continue your work so that I may know your peace, your presence and your power. Amen!

Daily devotions can be accessed through www.whataboutjesus.com or www.wels.net. Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as “podcasts.”