

The Story Never Changes

Inside this issue:

President's Day Dinner and Movie: God in America 2

Some Bible Mysteries May not be Explained 3

March Birthdays 3

2008 Budget Analysis: Give and it will be Given 4

Notes & News 6

Holy Week & Easter 7

Never Changes, cont'd 8

March Calendar

News from the WELS

In a few short weeks we will be taken through the most poignant part of Jesus' ministry - his crucifixion and death. These are witness to God's boundless and undeserved love. We know the words of John 3:16, but at the cross we see that God meant what he said. In bold and piercing letters, God said, "I love you." Not some kind of arbitrary love that changes all the time. Not some kind of conditional love which depends on us. Not some kind of love that fades because God grows bored. His love is without limits and beyond our comprehension. His love pursued us when we fled from him. His love purified us when we persisted in perverting our lives. His love brought us life when we should have been abandoned to death.

In order to give us the proof and benefit of his love, God sacrificed his Son on the cross. Prior to this death, we witness Jesus' shameful treatment. Justice was twisted. Reason was abandoned. Mercy was forsaken. Hatred and rejection filled the hearts of those who surrounded Jesus. This became evident with every slap of the hand, with every bruising blow of the fist, with every cruel word, and with every piercing tear of the flesh. On the cross Jesus' agony intensified. Not only did he endure the searing pain of the spikes that pierced his wrists and legs, he also felt the life being ripped from his body. As death finally approached, all that was left was the clawing grasp of the grave.

If Jesus' crucifixion was not horrible enough, he also endured the burden and agony of our guilt. Jesus became our substitute to endure what we deserved (Isaiah 53). We know the pain even one sin inflicts as it gnaws at our conscience. We can't begin to comprehend the weight of the guilt of all people.

No matter how some may try to change the details, or diminish the account, we can't. We can't put ourselves into a better light to become more attractive. We can't white-wash our actions to make them less offensive. We can't ignore the truth that we were responsible for Jesus' death. Nor should we ever forget the result of that death.

"It is finished." Jesus' expiring words proclaim what is ours. The proclamation of God's love is certain. So is the assurance of our forgiveness. Jesus endured everything God required so that we could be released from the debt we owed. Jesus endured God's just condemnation upon us so that we could hear the declaration, "not guilty."

This is why the story must never change. The results of changing one sentence would

Continued on page 8

President's Day Dinner & Movie: God & America

By Carl Schueler

Sunday evening, February 17th, some thirty Congregants and friends gathered at 5:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall for a fine supper provided by perhaps one of the best means to assure a good meal: Pot-luck!

This tried and true traditional approach works so well for a number of reasons. First, it assures that everyone will find some surprises in store: only one's own dish is expected! Second, everyone has something to do and contribute to the gathering. This seems to encourage almost better participation and appreciation for the activity than when arrives as a "guest," with nothing to contribute but hearty thanks and a good appetite. Third, there is a sense of real "belonging" that everyone has in active participation. Fourth, no one has to do much work: Many hands make light work!

Following a bit of socializing and organizing, and the Table prayer, the meal was served! It was really good, with a great variety of excellent dishes. These included three kinds of salad and plenty of rolls not only on the main serving table, but in baskets on each dining table, as well. Several entrees were available. It was not practical to even sample a small portion of each on one plate, so the best way to try everything was to sample half the dishes and then return for a sample of the rest!

Beverages included white and red wines, soft drinks, iced tea, and lemonade. Following dinner, dessert was planned, but we discovered on finishing dinner that it was almost 6:30PM, and we decided to defer dessert to follow the movie. As the showing was only an hour, it was not too long to wait.

Moving to the Sanctuary, we settled in as Pastor and Dave Vetter prepared the audio-video system. Pastor provided a brief introduction to the showing of "Rediscovering God in America," a production by Newt Gingrich and his wife. This video is on DVD and is available in our church library for anyone who would like to view it at home: "In this 2007 documentary, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich leads an exploration of religious faith's role in American politics throughout the

country's history."

The Gingrich documentary is a narrative video tour of the Washington D.C. ("District of Columbia"—bordered by Virginia on the East and Maryland on the West—not just a city, but essentially a separate political entity, not part of any State) Capitol area. From the Capitol building itself to the Washington Monument, to the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, to the Department of Justice, and other sites of political power, we were taken on a tour of the "visage" of the United States Federal Government.

"God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed the conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"

Thomas Jefferson

While the focus of many who tour the D.C. Capitol area may be what takes place in the buildings, the focus of this tour was what was placed on the buildings. That is, the architectural ornamentations that decorate the entrance to the Department of Justice, the murals that decorate the ceilings of the Capitol, and the inscriptions that cover entire walls of the Lincoln memorial.

Each decoration or inscription reflects the Federal government's philosophy when it was created. Starting at the founding of the nation with the Declaration of Independence, and continuing with the construction of the Capitol and buildings housing the powerful Cabinet level agencies, architecture tells a compelling story of God's place in American history.

Architectural masterpieces of American art displayed about the D.C. Capitol area offer powerful testimony regarding the role of God in the founding and development of the Federal Government and our Nation's leadership over the past 232 years.

For example, the image of Moses shown on the next page, holding the two Tablets of the Ten Commandments (part of a large mural in which he is flanked by Confucius and the Greek legislator / jurist, Solon) is the centerpiece of a stone-carved mural above the East entrance to the Supreme Court building. Other images of the Ten Commandments adorn chambers within the building.

(Continued on page 3)

Herman A McNeil chose Moses, Solon and Confucius to include as sculptures on the Eastern Pediment of the Supreme Court Building, because they represented three great civilizations from which “Law was naturally and normally derived or inherited.”

*Rediscovering God, p.89
Gingrich*



(Continued from page 2)

These images show that all religions are to be allowed to flourish in a free America.

The narrative pointed out that the “separation of church and state” is one of the founding tenets of American political doctrine. But it also noted that this is not to keep religion out of politics, but to keep the church independent of political action and vice-versa. The church is a separate and distinct entity, not controlled by the government, and the government is not controlled by the church. This does not prevent religion from being part of politics (or vice-versa—at the discretion of individual religious entities).

The movie was motivated by long-term and well-funded efforts by secular thinkers to completely remove religion from the public square. The goal of the documentary is to educate the modern public to the reality that our nation was founded by religious men on religious principles. Quotes such as Reagan’s famous line “If we ever forget we are a Nation under God, we will be a Nation gone under” peppered the narrative to make the point that our Nation’s government must not be allowed to succumb to the secularist agenda.

A movie worth watching—maybe twice!

Following the showing, we stretched and returned to the Fellowship Hall to share our reactions to the documentary as well as a number of excellent and flavorful desserts.

Thanks to all who participated to make President’s Day 2008 a memorable and educational event at Our Redeemer. And, of course, God bless America!

Mysteries of the Spirit...

By Alan Todd

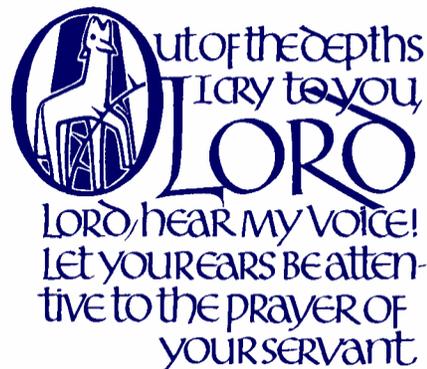
From the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration (1579) concerning the doctrine of election:

53] For our curiosity has always much more pleasure in concerning itself with these matters [with investigating those things which are hidden and abstruse] than with what God has revealed to us concerning this in His Word, because we cannot harmonize it, which, moreover, we have not been commanded to do [since certain things occur in this mystery so intricate and involved that we are not able by the penetration of our natural ability to harmonize them; but this has not been demanded of us by God].

429 years later, we still need this reminder!

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25 NIV



March Birthdays

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

- 7th – Irene E.
- 9th – Frank F.
- 12th —Zachary W.
- 31st —Mike T.

2008 Budget Analysis: “Give, and it will be Given to You”

By Alan Todd

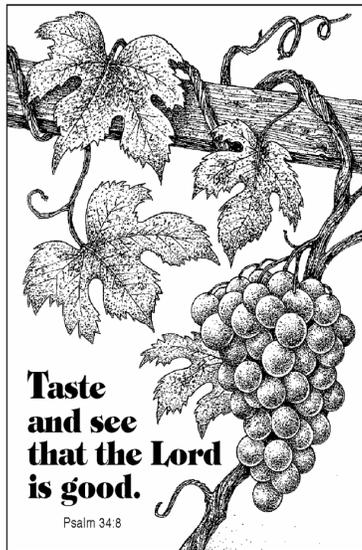
Last month’s newsletter presented a general overview of the 2008 congregational budget. With this report, I will present a more detailed look at the budget.

A budget is nothing more than a plan. It is not “fixed in concrete” and can be modified by the congregation at any quarterly meeting. The congregation, through its elected council members, adopts a budget based on both fixed and discretionary expenses. An example of fixed expenses are those for which the congregation has signed a contract such as the monthly mortgage payment to Thrivent. Other examples are the gas bill, electric bill, phone bill, and the Pastor’s salary.

Discretionary expenses are those expenses that are not incurred as part of our “core” ministry. These are expenses the congregation is under no legal obligation to remit. Examples include advertising, subscriptions, and our monthly offering to the Synod (note that in 2008 as in previous years, the congregation has elected to tithe to the Synod; i.e. 10% of general offerings each month is sent to the Synod).

The congregation’s 2008 budget is in nine categories as shown in the Tables below:

For 2008, these categories total \$149,589. This represents only a 1.24% increase over 2007 *actual expenses*. To put this into perspective, this is the *smallest increase in the annual budget* since the congregation’s inception 35 years ago!



**Taste
and see
that the Lord
is good.**

Psalm 34:8

As offerings are voluntary, the council can never know for sure what the total offerings for any given year will be. 2008 is no exception. It is assumed that when the congregation approves a budget the members, in response to God’s rich grace in their lives, will fund it with their offerings. Hence, in most years the “budgeted” income

equals total expenses and the members are encouraged to increase their offerings from the previous year - again in view of the Lords’ great love and rich blessing.

For 2008, however, the congregation approved a budgeted income of \$154,800 vs. the budgeted expenses of \$149,589. Why the increase of \$5,211 over the budgeted expenses? The reason is that since the beginning of January 2007, we have not provided offerings to match budgeted expenses, nor given offerings to match actual expenses. And this was the case even though actual expenses were 5% under budgeted expenses thanks to a watchful church council.

As a result, the balance in our General Fund (funds used to operate the core ministry of the congregation) fell from \$16,900 to \$10,744 – less than one month’s expenses).

The council noted at the January 2008 quarterly congregational voter’s meeting, that ***if this trend continues, the congregation’s operating funds will be gone by the first quarter 2009!*** Therefore, the council proposed—and the congregation approved—the \$5,211 increase in offerings to return the general fund to the same level as at the beginning of January 2007.

The bottom line is that we, the members of Our Redeemer, to achieve the budgeted income of \$154,800, must increase offerings by 9.3% over 2007. This is close to 10%, so let’s use 10% in the following examples. If you are giving \$200 per week, the increase would be \$20 to \$220 per week. If you are giving \$100 per week, the increase would be \$10 to \$110 per week. If you are giving \$50 per week, the increase would be \$5 to \$55 per week, etc.

It is true that the Lord does not need our money to accomplish His will. What we should understand and take to heart is that the Lord provides each of us with the great opportunity and privilege to serve Him with our time, talents, *and treasure*.

We all, as God’s people, have the privilege to take the Lord at his word when He says in Luke 6:38:

(Continued bottom of page 5)

Test the Lord's Generosity!

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

And again in Malachi 3:10:

“Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

Are we ready to test the Lord?

Elder's Categories (6)	\$ Amount	% Total Budget
Advertising/Outreach	\$ 6,351	4.26%
Fellowship	\$ 1,050	0.70%
Pastor Expenses	\$81,732	54.64%
Support Staff Expenses	\$ 4,000	2.67%
Synod Mission	\$15,500	10.36%
Worship Expenses	\$ 1,755	1.17%

Trustee's Categories (2)	\$ Amount	% Total Budget
Church Operations	\$31,250	20.89%
Church Utilities	\$ 5,751	3.84%

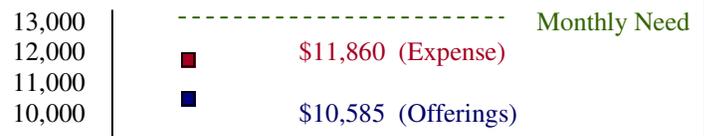
Board of Education (1)	\$ Amount	% Total Budget
Education Expenses	\$ 2,200	1.47%

Overall Plan	2008 Budget	2007 Actual Expenses
Basic Ministry	\$ 149,589	\$ 147,759
Total with Approved Increase	\$ 154,800	

Summary for January

Every month, the Church Council reviews the ministry plans of our congregation, as well as our offerings to support that work. Since the beginning of the new year, we have started with a slight downward trend in the support of our ministry. As you look at the tables to the right, the gifts needed to support our ministry are around \$13,000 a month.

As you consider how to serve the Lord with the blessings he has given you, consider *first* how richly God has blessed you through your Savior. Then, consider what we, as a congregation, have chosen to do. Finally, let your love for your Savior, and your faith, guide you in how you can support our ministry.



Month: January, February, March

General Fund Balance for the Year



Month: 1/1/2008, January, February

Notes & News

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

Due by the 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy to Carl S., or email to Carl
(cfs_home@cox.net) & Pastor Proeber (Pastor@orlc.net)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Alan T. for his articles in this month's newsletter. *The Reporter* continues to benefit from a variety of perspectives, and this issue is a continuing series with articles by volunteer "reporters."

Meetings for March 2008

Church Council	March 4th	at 7:00 pm
Board of Education	March 11th	at 7:00 pm
Board of Elders	March 18th	at 7:00 pm
Outreach	March 15th	at 9:30 am
Board of Trustees	March 25th	at 7:00 pm

Congregational Meeting April 13th

Staying In Touch

After Easter the Board of Elders and Pastor Proeber will put the finishing touches on the Membership Directory. After a great suggestion during the last Congregational meeting, we are also going to set up a means to communicate more effectively with the whole congregation. Part of the overall purpose will be to serve as a "Prayer Chain." Another purpose will be to get in touch with people as quickly as possible.

Those wishing to be part of an "email group," please get us your current email address. Those wishing to be contacted by phone, please get us that information as well.

Thanks for your help!

Building & Grounds Day

On Saturday, March 8th at 9:00 am there will be a work day. In a way this is our "Spring Clean Up." So there will be the usual work day items - cleaning windows, blinds, screens, and taking down cobs webs. There will also be a few additional items - weeding, trimming, and sprucing up the exterior after the winter rains.

The Board of Trustees would like to encourage everyone to participate. There is something for every age and ability. Even if you can spend just one hour, it would be helpful. Also, if you can't make it on the 8th, but would be able to make it the week before or after, please contact one of the Committee members - Justin S., Jim E. or Tom P..

In advance, of your help, Thank You!

Seminary Choir Tour

The Chorus of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, will be in Utah, California and Nevada for its 2008 Easter Choir Tour. It is made up of students preparing for the Pastoral Ministry. The 52 voice male chorus is well know for proclaiming the gospel in a variety of musical styles, both with and without accompaniment.

The closest congregations are listed below, along with the time and date. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Proeber.

Monday, March 24th @ 7:00 pm

St. Paul's First, North Hollywood

Tuesday, March 25th @ 7:30 pm

Grace, Yorba Linda

Wednesday, March 26th @ 7:00 pm

Beautiful Savior, Carlsbad

Thursday, March 27th @ 7:00 pm

Risen Savior, Chula Vista

Friday, March 28th @ 7:00 pm

Christ the Vine, Temecula

Plans and Preparations for Easter

Holy Week

Festival of the Resurrection

Palm Sunday Worship

*“Hosanna to the Son of David,
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord!”*

Sunday, March 16th
9:30 am

Maundy Thursday Worship

*“This cup is the new covenant in
my blood; do this, whenever you
drink it, in remembrance of me.”*

Thursday, March 20th @ 7:00 pm

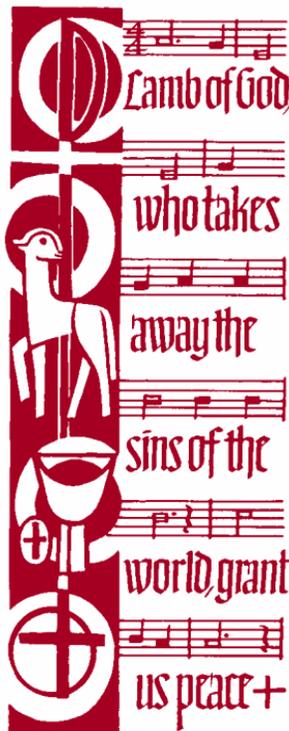
*Not only will we have the opportunity to
celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we will
also consider the “new covenant” in
the light of the “old covenant” that was
part of the Passover celebration.*

Good Friday Worship

*“Did not the Christ have to suffer
these things and then enter
his glory?”*

Friday, March 21st @ 7:00 pm

*On Good Friday we are drawn to the
cross of our Savior, as well as the tomb.
Although both are grim, they are signs
of the victory Jesus won for us.*



The Christian is Triumphantly Certain

Know ye, then, -- sin, death, devil, and everything that assails me -- that you are missing the mark. I am not one of those who are afraid of you. For Christ, my dear Lord, has presented to me that triumph and victory of His by which you were laid low. And from this very gift of His I derive my name and am called a Christian. There is no other reason. My sin and death hung about His neck on Good Friday, but on the day of Easter they had completely disappeared. This victory He has bestowed on me. This is why I do not worry about you.

“ What Luther Says”

Easter Sunday Worship

*“Why are you looking for the living
among the dead? He is not here;
he has risen!”*

Sunday, March 23rd @ 6:30 am
in Tucker’s Gove Park

*A Light breakfast will follow the
service. If the weather is bad, the
service will be held at the church.*

Sunday, March 23rd @ 10:00 am

*at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
The service will focus on the empty
tomb and what it means to our life -
now and eternally.*

*Brunch will be served after
the service. Also, please note the
change in time for the second service.*

Easter Memory Garden

A special tradition at Our Redeemer is to place flowers around the altar in celebration of Jesus’ Resurrection. It is a wonderful reminder, as well as a memorial for those who have received the certainty of the promise their Savior gave them.

If you would like to provide flowers for the Memory Garden, please use the sign up sheet on the table by the front doors. Also, please indicate those for whom you are bringing the flowers.

“Never Changes,” continued from page 1

be catastrophic. Make even one minor omission, one slight alteration, one simple modification, and the results would be unfathomable. We would be lost eternally.

As we approach our Savior’s death, and eventually his resurrection, it is important to focus on God’s love. It is also important to focus on our Savior’s gift. Both are precious. Both are ours. We have no doubt, because the story never changes.

Jesus’ Crucifixion and Burial

Mark 15:16-47

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the Place of the Skull). Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

It was the third hour when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “So! You who are going to destroy the temple and built it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!”

In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe.” Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani?*” - which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.”

One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,” he said.

With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”

e adore You, O Christ,
and we praise You. †
Because by Your holy
Cross You have redeemed the world