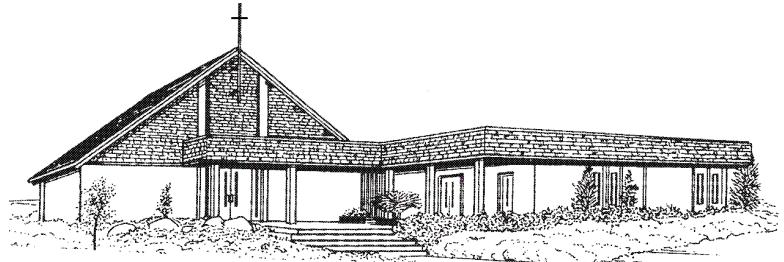


March 2013

Volume 11, Issue 3



The Reporter



“What if?”

Inside this issue:

President's Day Dinner	3
& Movie at ORLC!	
March Birthdays	4
March Meetings	4
Reporters Wanted	4
Book Review: Conversion	5
Age to Age Support	6
Stress	6
Holy Week Schedule	7
LWMS Spring Rally	7
Bible Study	7
Devotion	8

Many times when we allow our minds to drift we find ourselves wondering, “What if?” It can relate to many different situations in life. What if I had made a different decision? What if I had chosen a different path? What if things had turned out differently? While we may pause to wonder, any definite answer is elusive because “what if” is a hypothetical question. It assumes things would have turned out differently, but there is no way to really know for sure. There is also a subtle flaw. “What if” makes the assumption we are in complete control of our lives. While we may think we are, we are not. God still exercises control and he says without compromise, “I know the plans I have for you.” We finally have to confess it is difficult to understand and comprehend the way God works in our lives. We do know one thing for certain, he will accomplish his gracious good will. For this we are grateful, yet we still tend to wonder, “What if?”

We may never know the answer to what might have been in our lives. We do know what might have been in our Savior’s life. Take a moment to think about some of the “what ifs” in his life and ministry.

- What if Jesus would have decided it wasn’t important for him to be in the synagogue weekly when he was between twenty and thirty years old?
- What if Jesus would have thought more about his physical well-being and turned the stones into bread?
- What if Jesus would have decided to take the path of least resistance and accepted the devil’s offer for a kingdom?
- What if Jesus would have become angry with the slowness of the disciples to understand his teaching and gave up on them?
- What if Jesus would have opted for the praise of the crowds on Palm Sunday and simply became an earthly king?
- What if Jesus would have made personal preservation more important than being captured in the Garden of Gethsemane?
- What if Jesus would have resisted restraint and struck back at the guards who mistreated and mocked him?

Continued on page 2

What if, from page 1

- What if Jesus would have vehemently appealed the unjust treatment he received by the Sanhedrin and from Pilate?
- What if Jesus would have come down from the cross to answer his enemies' challenge that he was the Son of God?
- What if Jesus would have been so self-absorbed with his own suffering that he ignored the dying thief next to him or the future care of his mother?
- What if Jesus would have refused to go to the cross because he knew people would never appreciate his precious work?

While all the hypothetical situations never became a reality, they could have. The devil was a very real and powerful enemy who tried to disrupt Jesus' ministry. He knew Jesus' obedience meant his downfall and defeat, so he tried everything he could to keep Jesus from being faithful. It is important for you and me to reflect on this incredible work of Jesus' humiliation and sacrifice. Any misstep, any departure from the path prescribed by his Father, any dereliction in his divine duties, and we would have been doomed forever.



There is no doubt that Jesus was perfectly obedient to his Father's will, and that he was completely committed to our rescue. Consequently any question - hypothetical or otherwise - regarding Jesus is mute. On the other side of the coin, it would be beneficial for you and me to ask ourselves a few "what ifs?"

- What if we choose to ignore what our Savior did on our behalf?
- What if we declare his work is unimportant or irrelevant by our actions and daily decisions?
- What if we decide our priorities and our enjoyment of life require a greater priority and greater portion of our time than worshiping and serving the Lord in love?

How you and I answer these questions is important. It is the difference between being confident or uncertain of heaven. If we think we can ignore Jesus, or relegate him to a less important position in our life, we are sadly mistaken. When Jesus is not "first" in our life and when we do not love him with all our heart, souls and strength, we are guilty of rejecting him and his precious work. The end result of this decision is dangerous, destructive and damning. If we should choose to follow this course of action, should we be surprised if we lose our hold on eternal life? Should we be shocked if Jesus finally declares, "Have it your way?"

You and I need to realize what we have and hold is priceless. We can never afford to let it slip through our fingers. Nor can we put it on a shelf and hope it will be there when we get around to look for it. God can, and in the past he has withdrawn his blessing when it was not appreciated or received with thanksgiving.

If we choose to let this precious treasure remain unappreciated, or ignore it because we feel we don't need it, we shouldn't be surprised by the consequences. Not only will we lose out on God's blessing for this life, we will also lose out on his blessing for eternity. This means, instead of being united with the Lord in the end, we will endure eternal separation from him. We will also be plagued by the torture by knowing we lost what we once had.

Jesus did everything he did so that the Christian's life could be one of confidence and peace. Through faith there is no remorse, no regret, no need to wonder, "what if?" You and I know what we have through faith.

President's Day Dinner & Movie at ORLC!

By Alan Todd

On Sunday February 17th at 5PM, Our Redeemer hosted our 8th annual “pizza and movie” event in honor of the President’s Day ‘holiday.’ Though President’s Day was Monday the 18th, the gathering was on Sunday because many don’t get a “day off” on President’s Day itself.

The Fellowship Hall was set with tables and chairs for dining, as well as separate tables to serve pizza, salad, soft drinks, water, and coffee. Pastor Proeber led us in giving thanks to God for the blessings we enjoy as Christians and as American citizens.

Following supper, the movie began at 6:00PM in the Sanctuary. *Washington the Warrior* described George Washington’s military career to the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War which led to Washington’s inauguration as our first President. This was an 80 minute movie produced by the History channel. Although, in my opinion, most History channel offerings come from a "liberal" point of view, I found this one to be very good, presenting a balanced account of Washington’s military background and exploits.

Most folks don’t know that Washington first served as a colonial officer in the British Army fighting against the French (during the French and Indian Wars) for control of the Ohio territories (the "frontier" in 18th century America). Washington’s goal was to become a "regular" British officer with all the prestige and social standing that usually followed such a commission. He never achieved this goal.

The movie showed how Washington’s many losses in battles against the French, including some “bone-headed” battle field decisions, far from discouraging Washington, just made him want to improve himself even more as his ambition drove him to solidify his station as part of the Virginia gentry class.



Another reviewer wrote (copied from Amazon.com): “The show covers Washington’s career from his early 20s until victory in the Revolutionary war. It’s fascinating to see how he learned from early mistakes, eventually developing the skill and judgment that would stand him above his peers. As someone said, good judgment comes from experience, and experience from bad judgment. He did this by losing almost every battle he fought! But he never lost enough so that he didn’t continue to fight. It’s basically how guerrilla warfare worked in the 20th century against better equipped western nations.”

When the American colonies declared their independence from Britain, George Washington, who had experience (albeit with mixed results) as an Army field officer commanding men in battle, was recalled from his Mount Vernon estate and made General of the fledgling American fighting force. The Revolutionary War is pretty well known; nevertheless, the movie did a good job summarizing the key events that led to the Colonial victory over Britain and the beginning of the American nation.

Washington, like all other great Generals in history who have won decisive game changing wars, enjoyed the adulation and loyalty not just of men of their Army but the populace as a whole. In fact, the great majority of Americans were ready to make him supreme leader. Washington did something, however, that no other General in a similar position had ever before done. He gave up his power, surrendering his sword to the new American governing coalition and went back to private life at Mount Vernon. This is why Washington is such a pivotal figure in American history and why most historians credit him with ensuring that America would be a democratic republic governed by rules, not by men. He is rightly called the Father of our Country.

Continued on page 4

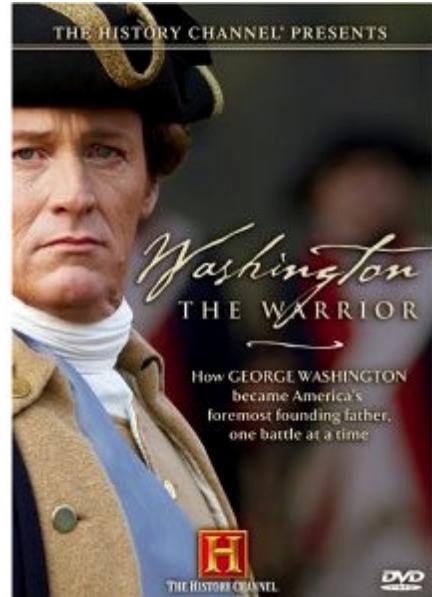
Movie and Pizza, from page 3

Because Washington wrote little about his Christian faith, many assume he was merely a "cultural" Christian. If you tour Mount Vernon today (I highly recommend it; it is privately maintained in excellent condition), however, you will see where Washington is buried (he died in 1799) and the inscription over the burial vault is John 11:25-26:

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

A very Christian message indeed.

After the movie, we returned to the Fellowship Hall for dessert and fellowship. These events are good opportunities to invite friends and family to meet church members, have a complimentary meal, and watch an interesting movie. Please plan to attend next February!



Meetings for March

Outreach	March	2nd	at	10:00 am
Church Council	March	5th	at	7:00 pm
Board of Education	March	12th	at	7:00 pm
Board of Elders	March	19th	at	7:00 pm
Board of Trustees	March	26th	at	7:00 pm

Congregational Work Day March 16th at 0930

We will undertake the "spring clean up" of the church and fellowship hall, as well as some outdoor projects. Speak with Jim Brown for more information

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



- 9th - Frank F.
- 12th - Zachary W.
- 16th - Kallie H.
- 28th - Chris M.

Please let us know if we have missed anyone.

in MARCH

Reporters 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@hotmail.net) or Pastor Proeber
(pastor@orlcsb.net)

A simple and rewarding way to serve!

Thanks to Karolyn, Carl, and Al for their articles, and to Sonja for the information on the up-coming LWMS Rally in April.

There is always a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. In the past, members have submitted over 300 articles which really makes every issue more interesting.

We pray that every member will provide an article, a good story, or some pictures for 2013. 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!

Book Review: *Conversion*

Reviewed by Carl Schueler

Conversion: Not by My Own Choosing

Series: People's Bible Teachings; Author: John M. Brenner

Our gracious God makes Christians; he did the work. Man's contribution to the saving faith is error - the false teachings that promise a miraculous experience or require a decision for Christ. Discover the details of God's answer to the question of salvation in *Conversion*. Learn more about reaching out to those who have fallen from faith and about using Christian discipline. *Conversion* examines doctrine and explains with simplicity its daily application to our lives and faith.

(Note to Congregations: A Bible Study Kit is available with the same title as this book, *Conversion*, 22N0920, by Jonathan E. Schultz.)

Papercover. Size, 5 1/2 x 8 inches. 175 pages. Published 2000 Catalog Item Number: OL-150612 Price: \$15.50

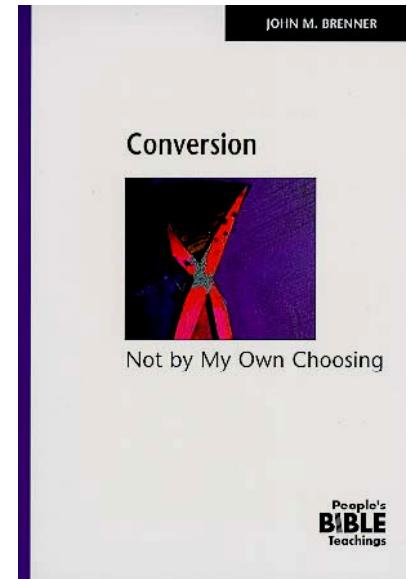
Conversion: Not by My Own Choosing clarifies and defends the doctrine of conversion as taught by the WELS and other Synods in fellowship with the WELS, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS).

The doctrine of conversion may seem to us who attend ORLC clear and not subject to debate. Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Apostle's Creed properly states the Biblical position on conversion (also the WELS' doctrinal position): "I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith." Conversion by the Holy Spirit is clearly stated in *1 Corinthians 12:3*: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit..." The first eight of twelve chapters of this book are devoted to clarifying the Biblical principles underlying the proper understanding of the doctrine of conversion:

1. The Human Predicament—Our Sin and God's Righteous Judgment
2. God's Solution—Salvation in Christ Alone
3. Salvation Received—By Faith Alone
4. The Bondage of the Will—Our Inability to Believe on Our Own
5. Conversion—The Bestowal of Faith by the Holy Spirit
6. The Means of Conversion—The Gospel in Word and Sacraments
7. The Results of Conversion—Salvation and Sanctification
8. Repeated Conversion—Falling from Faith and Restoration

The final four chapters review doctrinal errors regarding conversion and cite groups that teach these errors so that the reader can be better prepared to discuss conversion with those who might ask. False teachings regarding conversion include Pelagianism (no "original sin"—conversion unnecessary for salvation) taught by the Masonic Lodge and the Boy Scouts of America, and Synergism ("decision theology") taught by the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), "reformed" and Pentecostal churches.

The Scriptural and WELS teaching regarding conversion is repeatedly stated in our Sunday services through use of the Apostle's Creed, but there is always the concern our members may fall prey to errors in this doctrine. Because of that fact, this book is educational in clarifying this basic doctrine. Moreover, it was enlightening regarding how far afield most "Christian" churches (especially "Lutheran" churches) have gone regarding their teaching of conversion. How ELCA can claim, for example, to hold to the Apostle's creed yet simultaneously teach that an unbeliever cooperates in conversion is beyond me—but that's the case. *Conversion: Not by My Own Choosing* is in the ORLC library for convenient checkout.



Age to Age - Support and Encouragement from One Generation to Another

Age to Age is a program being offered through Our Redeemer to provide education and support for those who are concerned about the needs of aging parents or friends. The bi-monthly meetings will be offered on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month. Meetings will begin at 3:30 pm and last for about two hours. The program is held in the fellowship hall. Age to Age will help answer questions about --

Home Safety

Comfort and Support

Estate Planning

There will also be time to discuss other issues and resources, as well as time to share thoughts, concerns, and experiences. Below is a schedule of the presentations. Remember, this program will be effective if first, each member participates in some way; and second; each member promotes the program with friends, neighbors, and family members.

Schedule of Presentations

Each presentation and discussion begins at 3:30 pm and finishes at 5:30 pm

March 23rd Estate Planning - Deborah Aitkins - Estate Planner

April 13th Compassion in Action - Social and Intellectual Engagement
Caroline Pettus - Nursing Home Activities Facilitator

A Great Lesson on Stress

Submitted by Karolyn Hanna

A young lady confidently walked around the room with a raised glass of water while leading a seminar and explaining stress management to her audience. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, ‘Half empty or half full?’ She fooled them all. “How heavy is this glass of water?” she inquired with a smile. Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz.

She replied, “The absolute weight doesn’t matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that’s not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I’ll have an ache in my right arm.

If I hold it for a day, you’ll have to call an ambulance. In each case it’s the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.”

She continued, “That’s the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won’t be able to carry on.”

“As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we’re refreshed, we can carry on with the burden - holding stress longer and better each time practiced.

So, as early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Give them to the Lord in prayer. Don’t carry them through the evening and into the night. Pick them up again tomorrow *if you must* — but with the confidence that our Lord will help you with carrying them.



“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Notes & News

Coming Events & Worship

March 24th - Palm Sunday

“Hosanna to the Son of David!” This is the message of Palm Sunday. Not only is it the first day of Holy Week, it also reminds us of our Savior’s commitment to our rescue. Nothing could have turned him away from the work his Father set before him. Knowing what is ours through Jesus’ faithful obedience and his “victory march” into Jerusalem, we can join with all believers in proclaiming, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Worship is at 9:30 am with the Lord’s Supper

March - Maundy Thursday

“Do this in remembrance of me!” In great love Jesus gave his disciples and his church a sacrament which offers the forgiveness of sins, new life, and eternal salvation. This assurance is the result of his faithful promise, as well as his body and blood given into death. In this evening service we return to the upper room to receive our Savior’s blessing and his undeserved love.

Worship is at 7:00 pm with the Lord’s Supper

March - Good Friday

“Jesus died to save sinners!” While the words are familiar, we may not always appreciate what Jesus had to sacrifice so we could be forgiven. This evening we stand before the cross to view the sentence Jesus endured for our sins. We will also hear the proclamation of peace Jesus made when he said, “It is finished.”

Worship is at 7:00 pm

March 31st - Easter Festival Worship

“I know that my Redeemer lives!” Whether we consider Job’s words, or the words of the hymnist, we know what comfort this sweet sentence gives.

In this service of Gospel proclamation in music and lessons we will hear how Jesus was Valiant and Victorious.

Worship is at 9:30 am with a Brunch following



Remember, each of these services is something to be savored because they offer us the complete picture of our faithful Savior and our gracious God.

Also, take the time to invite friends, neighbors and family members to attend!

LWMS News

By Sonja Todd

The Spring Rally of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society will be held April 13th, at St. Paul’s First, North Hollywood. The guest speaker will be Rev. Jon Buchholz. He currently serves as the District President of the Arizona-California District of the WELS, as well as a representative on the Latin America Administrative Committee. The theme of the Rally will be “Christ Across Borders.” It will focus on our Synod’s outreach to Cuba.

Registration starts at 8:15 am with the Rally beginning at 9:00 am. The closing devotion will be around 2:15 pm.

St. Paul’s First is located at 5244 Tujunga Avenue in North Hollywood, just off Highway 101 - about 1.5 hours travel time on a Saturday morning.

Please speak with Sonja Todd for more information and car-pooling availability.



Bible Study

“The Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.”

Proverbs 2:6-8

Although we do not have the regularly scheduled Wednesday evening class for the duration of Lent, the Sunday morning class continues to meet.

Following the worship service, we continue with the study of the general epistles of First and Second Peter. Both are interesting and offer clear instruction to help us “Stay Alive” in the faith. Come and enjoy this study in the Word.

Bible Class starts at 11:00 and lasts about one hour.

CORNER

“How Could He Do That?”

Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Luke 15:1-2

Questions have always followed Jesus. Most have dealt with why he came to this earth. While the easy answer might be, he came to save the lost, the question persists: who were the lost? When the Pharisees answered this question their answer was surprising. The lost were certainly not the tax collectors and the people who were branded with the label “sinners.” Their lives were too appalling and far outside the confines of any moral decency. They were beyond lost. This is why the question followed, how could Jesus associate with these people?

The question persists today. I may have even asked it on occasion. How could Jesus do something like this? How could he love the really evil people of the world?

There is a serious flaw in this kind of thinking. To see it all I need to do is look at my own life. From my own perspective I am not a bad person. Certainly I have my faults and foibles. Still, I am nothing like the really evil people of this world – murderers, thieves, habitual criminals and the immoral. So it is easy to conclude God must like me the way I am. This view changes once I look at myself from God’s perspective. According to God’s view I am no different from the evil people of this world. This is only magnified when I look at the Ten Commandments. Even if I could work around the command to be perfect, how do I escape God’s accusation that I am an idolater, a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, a gossip, or a liar? God’s holy law accuses and condemns me just as quickly as any one else.

In spite of my depraved and evil ways, God loves me. He also sent Jesus to rescue me. Jesus came to save me not because I was so good, but because God was so merciful. He didn’t spare his only Son from death, but sent him to the cross so I could be declared not guilty. This act of love leaves me lost in wonder and praise. How could he do that? How could he love such a miserable wretch as me?

I may never fully understand God’s love. I may never be able to explain it logically. I can, however, thank him for it. I can also live in it and rejoice in knowing he welcomes sinners like me!

Prayer Thoughts

O gracious Savior, I thank you for showing me God’s undeserved love. I also thank you for inviting me to come and know that love, as well as the joy and peace which you offer through it

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.”