



St. Paul's Epistle
St. Paul Lutheran Church
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Paul's
Epistle

Volume 39

MARCH 2009

Issue 3

A Word from the Pastor ~

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Psalm 51:17 (ESV)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are now in the season of Lent. Lent is the 40 day period (not counting Sundays) before Easter in which we ponder the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ who suffered and died for our sins that we might have life in Him. Some people have commented to me in the past that they don't like Lent with its "gloom and doom" mood. On the contrary Lent is not gloom and doom. Yes it does take on a certain somberness as we contemplate our part in the death of Christ and are sorry for our sins. Yet ultimately this holy season isn't so I can feel bad. Lent is a time to appreciate Jesus who gave up everything to save us - so therefore it is a season of great comfort for us who are broken and contrite in heart.

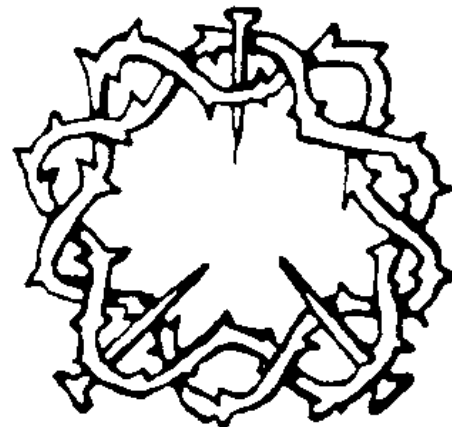
As such, some of the best hymns ever written are those we sing in Lent. I invite you to page through the Lent and Holy Week sections in the Lutheran Service Book (LSB) sometime before a service and read the text of some of those hymns. They are a great source of comfort and reassurance to those with guilty consciences and anxious hearts afraid of death. For instance, "Jesus I Will Ponder Now" (LSB 440, st. 5) has been one of my favorite sources of comfort as regards forgiveness of my sins: **"If my sins give me alarm And my conscience grieve me, Let Your cross my fear disarm; Peace of conscience give me. Help me see forgiveness won By Your holy passion. If for me He slays His Son, God must have compassion."** In the midst of the somberness of Lent we hear the most comforting Good News of forgiveness of sins, life and salvation for Christ's sake. The joy of our salvation is restored (Ps 51).

This season of Lent you are invited to meditate on Jesus' passion for you during our midweek Lenten Vespers services in which we will hear and sing about Christ's passion in the great hymn, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded." Each Wednesday in Lent the sermon and hymns will focus our attention on the wounds of Christ sustained during His suffering and death – wounds by which we are healed. Also, during the Sunday Adult Bible Study we will study and ponder the Wednesday readings in greater depth to enhance our understanding of what Jesus did to save us and to strengthen our faith and lives in our Lenten walk with Him.

Of course during the Divine Services every Lord's Day you'll have the opportunity to be fed with the very body of our Lord crucified for you and drink His blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. What we meditate upon on Wednesdays and in Bible Class you eat and drink on Sundays. Our Lord not only tells you what He did for you – He gives it to you!

May you discover again this blessed season of our Lord's Passion how much He loves you and what He did that you may be His own.

Pastor Anthony



Sacred Head, Now Wounded

Notes & News ~

More People Needed to join the Christian Book Club!

The Christian Fiction Book Club will meet Sunday, March 8 at 7:00 p.m. at the church. We will discuss the book, John 3:16 by Nancy Moser. Everyone is welcome and bring a treat to share with the others. This meeting was postponed from February.



Confirmation Classes:

During Lent, Confirmation classes will begin at 5:45 p.m. This will allow the students to eat at the Lenten Supper at 5:45 before class. Please be prompt.



St. Paul Softball

Softball players are needed for this year. Anyone over the age of 15 and wanting to participate, please contact Jeff Hoffman. The games will be on Sunday nights from June to early August. Anyone with questions, contact Jeff at 792-2217 or email jjhofmn@win-4-u.net This is all for fun.



Receive your church news- letter by email and save on paper!

Over 95 member households are receiving their newsletters by email.

Sign up today by emailing Donna at stpaul@stpaul-ia.com

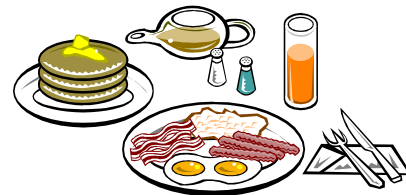
Free Tax Preparation & Rent Reimbursements

A volunteer will do tax preparation and rent reimbursements in March and April on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at Elderbridge Agency on Aging in Carroll. An appointment is needed. Please call 792-3512 between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. The volunteer completes basic tax forms and rent reimbursements free of charge.



Labels:

The Carroll Community School District wants to thank you for your support in collecting the UPC Labels for Education Code from **Campbell Soup products, Boxtops for Education, Tyson labels, and Nestle Water Bottle Labels**. Place them in the box on the table along the north wall of the Narthex. Thank you for your support of the CCSD.



Iowa District West Men's Ministry Breakfast— God in the Workplace

This event is Saturday, March 28, 8 a.m. to Noon at Christ Lutheran Church, rural Bouton (east of Perry at the intersection of Hwy 169/141)—

Featuring:

Rev. Max Phillips, pastor, Christ-Bouton
Mr. Charles Sukup, President, Sukup Mfg. Sheffield
Honorable Scott Raeker, State Representative
Mr. George Davison, Esq., Lawyer & WHO Radio News Team
Mr. Jaymie Bral, Asst. Principal, Storm Lake School
Dr. Stan Ullerich, Dean of the Siebens School of Business; Economics Professor, Buena Vista University

Cost is \$10, payable at the door.

All Men are welcome.

Register by Tuesday, March 24 by contacting
Larry Bayless (792-1609) or
Donna in the church office (792-4354)

Little Lamb Preschool Registrations are Being Accepted

Little Lamb Preschool registrations are now being accepted for the 2009-2010 school year. Children must be 3 by Sept. 15, 2009 and potty trained.

3 year old classes are Tuesday & Thursday
8:00-11:00 a.m.
Tuition is \$60 per month

4/5 year old classes are
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday
8:00-11:00 a.m.
Tuition is Free

A Registration Fee of \$15 must accompany the Registration Form which can be found on the bulletin board by the Preschool Room or check with the church office. Call Durene Eisenbacher at 792-9455 if you have questions.



Simply Giving—an easy way to donate to the Church.

Switch to giving your offering donation electronically and save on writing checks. It's easy to sign up and there is no charge.

You may have your donation withdrawn from your checking or savings account and deposited directly in the church's account either weekly on Monday; weekly on Friday; semi-monthly on the 1st and 15th; monthly on the 1st of the month; or monthly on the 15th of the month—minimum donation is \$5.00.

To sign up, contact Donna in the church office for an Enrollment & Authorization Form, complete it and return it to Donna with the appropriate attachment. Donna will take care of the paperwork—it's that simple. You may make changes in the amount, date of withdrawal, change the account or cancel completely at any time by contacting Donna. Your authorization is good until you decide to make a change. You do not have to sign up each year.

Lenten Worship Schedule

Wednesday, March 4, 11, 18, 25

4:00 p.m. Lenten Vesper Service

5:45 p.m. Confirmation Classes

**6:00 p.m. Lenten Supper
(confirmation students eat at 5:45)**

7:00 p.m. Lenten Vesper Service



LENTEN SUPPERS

Lent began on February 25, and we are once again serving Lenten Suppers at 6:00 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent. Various Boards will serve each week with the proceeds going to that Board.

The current menu schedule is as follows:

Mar. 4—Tacos—served by the Evangelism Bd.

Mar. 11—Hot Dish & Salad—served by Youth

Mar. 18—Sloppy Joes—served by Bd. of Ed

**Mar. 25— Pulled Pork Sandwiches—served by
Little Lamb Preschool**

April 1—Potato Bar—served by the Choir

In the past we enjoyed the great blessings of food and fellowship at our Lenten Suppers. Let us join together again this year. Bring a friend!

From the Parish Nurse ~

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

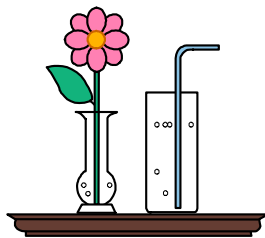
March is National Kidney month. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) affects 26 million American adults (1 in every 7 to 8 adults). Early detection is important because people feel fine until CKD is advanced. Primary risk factors include diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, family history of kidney disease, and age over 60. Other risk factors include obesity, auto-immune diseases, urinary tract infections, systemic infections, and kidney injury/infection.

Complications of chronic kidney disease include anemia, bone disorders, malnutrition, loss of kidney function, cardiovascular disease, and death. Warning signs are swollen ankles, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, decreased appetite, blood in urine, muscle cramps at night, and dry/itchy skin.

Chronic kidney disease can be prevented by exercising regularly, low salt diet, controlling body weight, and monitoring blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Getting an annual physical is necessary in diagnosis of CKD. Three tests are recommended: Blood pressure measurement, urine albumin, and serum creatinine. See your health care provider if you have risk factors for or symptoms of kidney disease. Appropriate medication, diet, and lab tests are an important part of a healthy lifestyle. May God bless your health and the health of your loved ones. (Information obtained from National Kidney Foundation website).

In His Service,
Darlene Rueter, RN
St. Paul Parish Nursing
rrueter2642@msn.com



IRA to Charity Bill Passes Congress

In October of this year, Congress approved a bill allowing people to make direct gifts to charities from their IRA's as was the case in 2006 and 2007. That has now been extended to the rest of 2008 and 2009.

- The bill provides the opportunity for individuals to make gifts directly from their IRA's (employer sponsored plans such as 401k's are not included) to the eligible charity.
- Only direct gifts are included. These distributions cannot fund gifts such as Charitable Remainder Trusts or Gift Annuities.
- Such contributions must be transferred directly by the trustee of the IRA to the charity. They cannot first be distributed to the individual and then sent on to the charity.
- Such distributions are not subject to federal taxation and do not qualify for charitable deductions. Whether or not they are subject to state income tax will vary according to the state in which the individual lives.
- These distributions are limited to a maximum of \$100,000 per year and do count toward the minimum distribution requirements for IRA's.
- A donor must be at least 70 1/2 years old to take advantage of this bill.

Who are the donors for whom this bill will be beneficial? While various groups of people may benefit from this bill, those who will benefit most are those whose charitable contributions exceed the limit for itemized deductions, and those who would use the standard deduction ordinarily if it were not for making larger charitable gifts.



Census Jobs Available in Carroll and Greene Counties

The U.S. Census Bureau is currently recruiting individuals across Iowa to fill full and part-time temporary 2010 Census jobs. For more information, call 1-866-861-2010 or go to www.2010censusjobs.gov

Lutheran Women's Guild News

Ready, Set, Recycle!"

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) of Iowa will host the 2015 National Convention in Des Moines! You can help our Guild earn funds to cover expenses by being a part of our "Ready, Set, Recycle" campaign. Bring the following recyclable items to church and place them in the box in the cloakroom off the Narthex or call Barb Brockelsby at 790-9592:

- Empty inkjet printer cartridges
- Empty laser printer cartridges
- Used cell phones
- Laptops, including power cords
- Palm Pilots (PDAs)

Please leave in original boxes if possible or place in plastic zip-lock bags. Thank you for your help.



Circle Dates—

Lydia: Tuesday, March 10, 7:00 p.m.
East Room, Lois Buck, hostess;
Vicki Grundmeier, topic
**Reminder to bring \$6 for
health kit items for LWR.**

Rachel: Wednesday, March 11, 1:30 p.m.,
Fellowship Hall, Pearl Kurth &
Myra Asmus, Hostesses; Pastor,
topic

LOOK! Look for those forms! Registration for the 2009 LWML convention and hotel reservations opens March 2. Send those forms from the winter *Lutheran Women's Quarterly* in as soon as possible to receive your first choice, or register online at www.lwml.org Only three months to go! Did you know our song leader for the convention will be Dina Vendetti, an energetic and exciting Lutheran school principal and teacher, who also led us in song in Sioux Falls? Or that you might be *Struck with Laughter* by Jan Struck, the humorous inter-rupter?

LWML has contracted with Plans and Action of Portland to provide day tours on Wednesday and Thursday prior to convention and Monday afterwards. Come early or stay late to visit some of the sights around Portland from the mountains, to the seashore, to the rivers and much more! The complete tour brochure with registration form is available at www.lwml.org Join us! The place to be is Portland, June 25-28, where we will *Look to the Hills...God Reigns!*



LWML Day of Prayer

Friday, March 6

**9 a.m. Coffee—10 a.m. Service
Here at St. Paul Lutheran Church**



ST. PAUL LUTHERAN WOMEN'S GUILD

1/1/09 – 2/15/09

	<u>BALANCE FWD</u>	<u>PLUS INCOME</u>	<u>MINUS EXPENSE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>
Parish Nurse	\$ 10.91	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$10.91
Lydia Circle	93.39	14.00	45.00	62.39
Rachel Circle	140.00	0.00	0.00	140.00
Mites	0.00	43.97	43.97	0.00
Coins For Christ/Mites	(58.50)	0.00	0.00	(58.50)
Quarterlies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social Ministry	124.28	0.00	0.00	124.28
Gifts of the Heart	30.00	0.00	0.00	30.00
Hurricane Ike	55.00	0.00	0.00	55.00
TOTAL RESERVES	\$ 395.08	\$ 57.97	\$88.97	\$364.08
General Fund	248.14	305.00	95.00	458.14
TOTAL CASH FUNDS	\$ 643.22	\$362.97	\$183.97	\$822.22

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3-1 Colene Beidler
 3-1 Luanne Andersen
 3-2 Jan Abbe
 3-2 Carol Onken
 3-3 Matthew Janssen
 3-3 Denise Rohrbeck
 3-3 Merlin Schau
 3-4 Paige Licht
 3-6 Megan Anthony
 3-6 Tyler Tornow
 3-7 Keziah Janssen
 3-7 Charlene Vonnahme
 3-8 Lindsay Brockman
 3-8 Carolyn Dammann
 3-8 Dorothy Grundmeier
 3-8 Shirley Schmidt
 3-8 Deb Venteicher
 3-9 Nicole Buck
 3-9 Glenn Jochims
 3-12 Dale Hanson
 3-13 Don Meiers
 3-13 Jeff Peterson
 3-15 McKinsey Lehrkamp
 3-15 Sydney Renning
 3-16 Jaxson Kuhlmann
 3-17 Desiree Davis
 3-17 Elsie Stanfield
 3-18 Arlo Jochims
 3-18 Denis Schirck
 3-18 Lenora Warnke
 3-18 Brian Widdel
 3-19 Jean Halbur
 3-19 Madie Pate
 3-20 Amelia Henson
 3-20 Logan Lehrkamp
 3-20 Kari Miller
 3-21 Todd Nelson
 3-22 Kacey Beyer
 3-22 Janet Janning
 3-24 Marrola Martens
 3-24 Cassie Reiling
 3-24 Katelyn Sander
 3-26 Hans Halbur
 3-26 Zach Halbur
 3-26 Eileen Pettitt
 3-26 Mara Schapman
 3-26 Russ Wunschel
 3-27 Matt Halbur
 3-27 Carolyn Johnson
 3-27 Shawna Wagner
 3-28 Sarah Dryden
 3-29 Holly Carter
 3-29 John Heuton
 3-30 Tami Brant
 3-30 Jennifer Kent
 3-30 Karter Sander

**MARCH
WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES**

3-2 Randy & Becky Toft
 3-4 Richard & Deb Henry
 3-7 Jeff & Janet Hoffman
 3-19 Jeff & Marilyn Dryden
 3-21 Bernie & Dawn Greteman
 3-25 Richard & Ann Lorenzen
 3-27 Tracy & Cheri Onken

Please call the church office at 792-4354 if any of the above information is incorrect or if your birthday or anniversary is omitted. Thanks.

* * *

JANUARY ATTENDANCE

	Sat.	Sun.	Total
1/4	---	103	103
1/11	78	161	239
1/18	76	117	193
1/25	74	131	205
Avg.	76	128	204

Sunday School Avg. 31
 High School Bible Class Avg. 7
 Adult Bible Class Avg. 24
 Total Communed: 565

* * *

OFFICIAL ACTS**Transfer Out**

Brad & Athena Puck & Taylor to St. Paul Lutheran, Ames, IA

* * *

***Daylight Savings Time
begins
Sunday, March 8***

***Remember to set your
clocks ahead one hour.***

**TREASURER'S REPORT
January 2009****Budget & Non-Budget Figures**

Bal. on Hand 12/31/08	\$ 5,166.44
Jan. Receipts	17,989.82
Jan. Disbursements	<u>19,070.89</u>
Bal. on Hand 1/31/09	\$ 4,085.37

Actual Budget Figures for January

Actual Jan. Budget Rects	\$16,913.90
Actual Jan. Budget Disb	<u>17,871.22</u>
Shortage for January	\$ -957.32

African Missions/International Students/Hispanic Ministry/LBT

Total Needed for 2009	\$9,000.00
Received by 1/31/09	530.92

Carillon Replacement

Needed:	\$15,000.00
Received by 2/15/09	2,500.00

Fellowship Hall Flooring

Needed:	\$40,000.00
Received by 2/15/09	1,550.00

* * *

HELPING THOSE IN NEED

The Board of Human Care would like St. Paul members to know that we can help one another. If you have a special need, whether it would be furniture, appliances, clothing, or personal assistance with some difficulty you are having, please contact a Human Care Board member. Connie Boeing #292-4073, Ryan Rueter (cell) #830-6790 or Darlene Rueter #792-2642 can be contacted. The Board will make a request to other St. Paul members to help with that need. Confidentiality can be requested. Likewise, if you have something that may benefit another church member, whether it be household items or talent, notify us, too. Together we can serve each other in love.

Worship Assistants for March

LECTORS:

Feb. 28	Pastor
Mar. 1	Pastor
Mar. 7	Pastor
Mar. 8	Ralph von Qualen
Mar. 14	Pastor
Mar. 15	Pastor
Mar. 21	Pastor
Mar. 22	Deb Schmidt
Mar. 28	Pastor
Mar. 29	Pastor

GREETERS:

Feb. 28	Marv & Shari Toft
Mar 1	Cindy Naberhaus
Mar. 7	Reese & Jan Abbe
Mar. 8	Lynette Licht
Mar. 14	Bonnie Dryden
Mar. 15	Harriet Schonberger
Mar. 21	Lisa Quandt/Sally Sullivan
Mar. 22	Ralph & Sharon von Qualen
Mar. 28	Arlo & Lois Buck
Mar. 29	Jeff & Janet Hoffman

ACOLYTES: (Sunday Only)

Mar. 1	Dalton Helmkamp
Mar. 8	Samantha Johnson
Mar. 15	Jordan White
Mar. 22	Hannah Clausen
Mar. 29	Devan Dryden

ALTAR GUILD:

Cindy Naberhaus, chairperson
 Marilyn Dryden
 Marilyn Ruchti
 Cindy Erickson
 Connie Stammer

ELDERS:

Feb. 28/Mar. 1	Jeff Hoffman
Lent Mar. 4, 7:00	Larry Bayless
Mar. 7/8	Larry Bayless
Lent Mar. 11, 7:00	Tracy Onken
Mar. 14/15	Tracy Onken
Lent Mar. 18, 7:00	Scott Bauck
Mar. 21/22	Joe Eisenbacher
Lent Mar. 25, 7:00	Mike Janssen
Mar. 28/29	Mike Janssen

SATURDAY USHERS:

Barb Brockelsby
 Max Sherwood
 Denis Schirck
 Reese Abbe

SUNDAY USHERS:

Neil Trobak
 Merle Holmes
 Marv & Shari Toft

HIGH SCHOOL USHERS:

Mar. 1	Alison Luft
	Nick Nelson
Mar. 8	Brandon Throckmorton
	Brandi Wagner
Mar. 15	Holly Carter
	Austin Crouse
Mar. 22	Shelby Erickson
	Katelynn Fagan
Mar. 29	Dale Gottsch
	Hunter Harmening

THE LUTHERAN HOUR

The Lutheran Hour may be heard on Sundays on the following radio stations in our area:
 KAYL, 990 AM, Storm Lake, 10 a.m.
 KDSN, 107.1 FM, Denison, 6:30 a.m.
 KDSN, 1530 AM, Denison, 10:30 am

Also available 24 hours/day on the Internet @ www.lhm.org
 Speaker: Rev. Ken Klaus

Mar. 1—*A Temptation Designed For You*

Feel trapped in a desert? Afraid? Find out how to cope!
 (Mark 1:12-13)

Mar. 8—*A Good Reason To Die*

If you don't stand for something, you're bound to fall. Find out what we mean! (Romans 5:7-8)

Mar. 15—*A Foolish Cross?*

What's so important about a cross at this time of the year—or ANY time, for that matter? You might be surprised! (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Mar. 22—*Do More—Try Harder*

Is it true that no matter how hard they try, some people won't be successful? (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Mar. 29—*To be Announced*

Guest Speaker: Rev. Nathan Meador





Lutherans For Life

From *LifeDate* - Winter 2008

Observations From the Pew

by Karen Frohwein

In this issue of "LifeDate" we are focusing on shining as lights in the world. Here's a reminder of the Source of that light and where we go to receive God's gifts that allow us to "let it shine" as His children.

Sitting in my pew one Sunday at church, I was watching the procession of people heading up to the communion rail. (Unless you keep your head down through the whole distribution process, you do tend to people watch.) As I watched my fellow members approach the Lord's Table, I realized I was seeing the true God-given sanctity of human life manifested through the receiving of this precious sacrament.

I watched as a grandmother with a slight limp approached with her autistic grandson at her side. I saw the awe-struck face of a young woman with Down syndrome come forward to receive that mysterious gift of bread and wine and body and blood. I watched the former pastor push his walker forward with the impatience of someone who fully understands his limitations, but desires the body and blood of Christ at every opportunity he is given. One of my favorite sights was 4 year-old Bonnie, pulling her yawning father down the aisle in her excitement to kneel and receive a blessing from the pastor! There were singles and widowers, young and old, canes, eye patches, casts, and oxygen tanks as well as those who carry their burdens on the inside where no one can see. Everyone of them approaching the front to receive something the world cannot understand.

Can you imagine what the world would think of such a crew?! How would these lives be valued in our culture? What good is the life of a handicapped child, a terminally ill man, a person breathing through a tube in their nose attached to a tank of air? If life is sacred, then why do we suffer? Why is there loneliness and mourning? And, seriously, why do we have to go to church and put up with those noisy kids?!

We can talk about the value of life in worldly terms. But, if you really want to understand the sanctity of life, go to your church. Hear and receive the blessings given to you because of the Life given for you. See people just like you, flawed and broken sinners, being made valuable in Christ through the gifts of Word and Sacrament. What a wonderful affirmation of the sanctity of your life and those who join you in worship. To receive is to under-

stand that your life has value because God gave you value. This is the understanding that changes hearts and minds, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Next time you worship, don't be afraid to look around you. You may see Jesus in the face of a child, or the smile of a teen, or the tears of a friend. You might understand the value of life through the rhythm of a breathing tube, or the unfolding of a walker, or the chatter of a toddler. Above all, your life will be given value through the means of grace—gifts from the God who created us, redeemed us, and continues to sanctify us. Come to the Source of Light—then go out and let it shine!

Camp Okoboji 2009 Schedule

Serving Christ in Outdoor Ministry!

April 17	Camp Board of Directors
April 18	Camp's Annual Meeting
April 17-18	Clergy Wives Retreat
April 24-26	Spa Weekend Women's Retreat
April 24-26	Spring Volunteer Weekend
May 17-20	Pastors Continuing Ed
June 7-9	Kids' Kamp
June 7-13	Okoboji Girls Basketball Camp
June 7-13	Okoboji Girls Volleyball Camp
June 7-13	Life Aquatic Camp
June 12-14	Family Bike Camp
June 14-20	Minneboji
June 21-24	IDW Convention
June 26-28	Calm Down (Grades 9-12)
June 25-July 2	LCMS Servant Event
June 29-July 1	Jr. Joy Camp
June 28-July 4	July 4th Family Retreat
July 5-11	IDW Junior High Week
July 9-12	Ginny DeWall Joy Camp
July 12-18	Concordia Cub Week
July 19-24	Building Families of Faith Retreat
July 26-Aug 1	IDW Youth Week
August 2-8	Family Retreat I
August 9-15	Family Retreat II
August 15	Camp Board of Directors
August 21-23	Young Adult Retreat
Sept 20-22	IDW Outdoor Education
Sept 25-27	Adult Retreat
Sept 28-Oct 2	Grace Place
Oct. 2-4	Fall Volunteer Weekend
Oct. 5-7	IDW New Workers & Board of Directors
Nov 20-21	Camp Board of Directors <i>"Jesus At The Lake"</i>

MEYER MISSION NEWS*Reporting on Ralph von Qualen's visit with them.***Challenging the Impossible****February 2009**

Dear Friends:

The New Year of 2009 found Linda and me in Liberia welcoming a visit from Dr. Ralph von Qualen who did training with us in Bong and Lofa Counties, and lastly we did three days of training at Christ Assembly Lutheran in Monrovia. Dr. von Qualen's expertise as a plant pathologist was very much appreciated by those with whom we visited. Ralph and his wife Sharon had served with LCMS World Mission in Northern Ghana in the late 1980's and early 90's, and so his past mission experience was of great importance as he served in Liberia. Also Ralph's experience in running his own business in Carroll, Iowa, gave him valuable insights that he could share during sessions in Monrovia. Most Lutherans, even in the city, do gardening even if they have a job or businesses. A garden and farm gives you food even when there is no paycheck or business is bad.

God's command and plan for us works at all times and all places. During training sessions in West Africa we often hear laments about how African society is troubled by disintegration of the family. Western non-governmental organizations promote children's rights without Biblical guidelines of honoring father and mother. Parents are often accused when trying to discipline an unruly child. We were told of a case where a rebellious teenager died as a result of his own lawlessness and disregard for authority. His parent had spent time in jail for trying to control the child and so the child became a tyrant in his own home; the first step toward self-destruction. The Christian family is under attack everywhere and so we teach about God's wonderful plan for our lives within the family of Christ and how Christian families living in love toward one another, reflect Christ in society. God's people are lights in this troubled world. Mankind benefits now and forever when believers follow Jesus; that is why we always teach from the Bible.

During our sessions in Liberia, Dr. Ralph taught from 1 Corinthians 6: 12 through 20 which warns about immorality and proclaims in verse 19 that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. What an honor and profound responsibility! "You are not your own, you were bought with a price, therefore honor God with your body." We as God's children around the world need to stand firmly on God's Word to overcome temptation and to address problems in home, school, business and government.

Central Agricultural Research Institute and Cuttington University, Liberia

A visit to Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) near Gbarnga, Liberia was helpful as we learned about their work importing and testing new varieties of rice. We encourage our own Lutheran farmers to actively use the opportunities available to them through research facilities like CARI and Cuttington University. Cuttington is doing animal production in poultry and swine. Improved breeds are available for sale outside of the university. Often we find our training sessions need to focus on helping people see that they themselves can and should make a positive change. Jesus Christ overcomes fatalism and apathy.

"That's Impossible" protested the old man during a training session. Twice during sessions the old man said this is impossible. First during Linda's training on health, a picture of a small child playing in the dirt offended him, Linda mentioned that germs are in the dirt and small children can easily bring germs into their body by eating and playing in dirt. The old man was offended, not because Linda was wrong, but because he had 5 grandchildren just outside the church living, eating and playing in the dirt. The truth often hurts - especially if we ourselves feel convicted. Another picture showing the same child sitting on a clean mat entertained by an older sister did not bring a response like "YES - We can do that!"

The second protest came when we talked about the devastation caused by slash and burn or shifting cultivation. The old man again said it was impossible to do things differently. I gained some satisfaction in seeing others respond to his statement and feeling that at last in this discussion we had allies. The old man said also, "Any other way of doing farming is far too much work; you need to cut and burn to get a crop". Interestingly, we had already gone through sessions showing how the environment was already suffering under this wasteful and destructive traditional practice. All those present seemed to agree that their environment was in trouble, but when it came to change of time honored practices, the old man protested.

Thankfully that training sessions had several men and women present who have been very progressive in their attitudes and had helped us do training sessions in previous years. I asked a Liberian friend why the old man was so negative. Our friend said, "The old

people group works differently than many in Liberia. In his people group, the men only cut the forest for about two months of the year and burn it. After that the women do all of the planting, weeding, harvesting and processing.” I asked, “Do the men just sit around, smoke and drink?” “Well”; responded our friend, “they also baby sit and hunt.” No wonder the old man protested so violently! Some would argue that he had the perfect life style! Traditionally, the old system probably worked – somewhat at least. Remember too that often in the past there were battles between tribes and clans. The men were the warriors who protected the village. Yet in a changing society with cell phones everywhere, public schools and modern medicine, people do need to earn cash to fulfill responsibilities, wants and needs. The model of the Christian family is certainly in order here.

Positive reports with helpful insights from the people

Linda and I had taught in Foya, Lofa County, Liberia two years ago. We were delighted to learn there were positive responses to training in “Management of the Harvest” by ourselves and others. When asked who had tried some of the ideas we shared, 9 men and one woman responded. Comments from several mentioned they had worked with their wives to better manage the rice harvest and that this year they had rice from harvest to harvest. Their hungry season is gone due to God pleasing management of God’s gifts.

During discussions about better ways to improve soil, I had encouraged them to use methods called “improved fallow” which uses legumes to improve the soil instead of just abandoning a farm for 7-15 years and expecting the soil to regenerate by itself. Tropical legumes are a gift from God to hold soil from erosion and add important nutrients including nitrogen to the soil. They suppress other weeds and form a thick soft mat of vegetation that enhances microbial growth and helps absorb rainfall. Reports say one year of improved fallow equals 15-20 years of forest fallow. We were encouraged to hear a lady say that near her village where pueraria (tropical kudzu) grows, they get a very good harvest of rice. What a blessings to get positive responses from folks with whom we have worked.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Thank God for strength and health for Ralph and us while in Liberia, and pray that people will apply the training.

Pray for safe travel for our son Brian, his wife Robin and daughters, Marisa and Heather, who plan to visit us in Sierra Leone in February. They will join us as we teach in Kono District villages.

FINANCIAL SUPPPORT

Thank you to all who have contributed gifts “for the support of Delano and Linda Meyer.”

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Ralph von Qualen & Delano Meyer on a visit to Central Agricultural Research Institute near Gbarnga, Liberia. We also met the department head for animal research in Cuttington University.

St. Paul Lutheran Church

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St. Paul's Epistle—March 2009

St. Paul Lutheran Church

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