

Grace News

Volume 8, Number 4

Fourth Quarter '09

Psalm 103:2 (NIV) **Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--**

The ads for "Black Friday" are already starting to hit the internet. Soon the advertising blitz will hit the airwaves— probably more so than other years as stores try to convince people to spend money in an uncertain economy. Advertisers are very good at stirring up the greed and discontent that lives in all of us, because we all still have a sinful nature. It's real easy this time of the year, to feel sorry for ourselves and forget all the blessings that God has showered on us.

God has given even the poorest among us material blessings that are greater than any people of any generation before us ever had. Even the poorest among us usually has a car, a TV, even a computer and a cell phone. Most of us have closets and dressers that are overflowing with clothes. We have basements and garages and storage buildings to hold all the stuff we have accumulated over the years. We truly have much more than we need for our daily lives.

But even if we didn't know where our next meal was going to come from and we were living in a box on the street, we would still have much to be thankful for. The Psalmist reminds us not to forget the most important blessings that God has given us. **He forgives all your sins. . . He redeems your life from the pit. . . He does not treat us as our sins deserve. . . As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.** Remember these "benefits" and you will be able to overcome the temptations of greed and discontent this holiday season.

Mark A. Haefner



Voters' Meeting Summary

Pastor's Report:

We are continuing to provide devotions twice a month at Ridgewood and are having good attendance. Thanks to Anna Richert and Carol Kratochvil for playing for these services.

We continue to offer a weekly Bible study at the Greene House for those who are interested.

We are offering the "Heart in Focus" financial management course on Thursday evenings and have advertised this study in the community.

Pastor Nathan Biebert, a tutor at NELHS, will fill in for Pastor Haefner when he is gone in November.

Membership:

Our current membership is 62 baptized members and 50 communicant members. We welcome Kathleen Goodrich and her son Paul who have transferred from St. Marks in Lincoln. Kathleen's husband is John. We welcome him as a visitor and friend of the congregation.

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Birthdays

11-3 Kristie Richert
11-6 Kali Fickel
11-10 Paul Goodrich
11-11 Luke Otte
11-24 Wendy Tibbetts
11-26 Teri Fickel
11-28 Bruce Burger

12-6 Vada Schleusener
12-18 Anna Richert
12-27 Matthew Haefner

1-3 Abbey Kuhl
1-9 Kent Fickel
1-29 Brogan Dredge

Anniversaries

12-5 Clayton and Teresa Dredge
12-31 Kathleen & John Goodrich

Congratulations

Treasurer's Report 3rd Quarter 2009

Beginning Balance:	11,566.29
Offerings:	<u>141,608.42</u>
Total	153,174.71
Expenses:	
Salary	4,479.00
Ins & Tax	748.25
Maintenance	0.00
Office	428.46
Phone	45.09
Utilities	411.04
Ministry	428.62
Worship	284.25
Expenses	320.13
Insurance	1,821.00
Pension	438.00
To Building Fund	<u>15,756.24</u>
Total	25,160.88

Designated funds:	
WELS Synod Budget	2,799.00
NELHS Budget	2,120.00
Trinity	9,905.00
Synod Special(LATTE)	<u>200.00</u>
Total	15,024.00

Total Expense	<u>40,184.08</u>
Balance (less Building)	21,193.44

Building Fund balances	
In CD's	355,941.91
At NELHS	104,297.29
In Checking	98,010.18
In Savings	<u>12,009.78</u>
Total	570,452.60

WELS Commitment: 7,500.00, 140% of our yearly commitment has been met.

NELHS Commitment this year is 7,000.00 divided 75% to Operating 25% to BFC. 78% of our yearly commitment has been met.



Cleaning and Ushering Lists



Cleaning

Nov. 1-8 Winterfeld, 15-22 Aulenback
 Nov. 29-Dec.6 Dredge, Dec. 13-20 Fickel
 Dec. 27-Jan 3 Haefner, Jan 10-17 Otte

Ushering

Nov	Fickel
Dec	K. Richert
Jan	A. Richert



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A suggestion has been made that we welcome our new members at the annual Christmas fellowship.

Elder/Trustees:

A carbon monoxide detector was purchased at the suggestion of the furnace technician as he noticed some cracks in the furnace heat exchangers.

Building Committee:

We have applied for a zoning special use permit for the Pinewood property. No problems are anticipated as the zoning commission and city council consider our request.

Kiewit construction is meeting with our committee and Sinclair Hille on a regular basis. Members have been working on a kitchen plan which will be reviewed by the ladies and submitted to the architect and builder. The committee is discussing the possible use of our current stained glass in the new building. As information about this possibility becomes available it will be shared with the congregation. Our desire is to begin dirt work on the property as soon as possible and to begin construction in the spring.

Two groups may be interested in our current building, Might Fortress

Lutheran Church in Seward, and the Seward Dental Clinic. Coincidentally, they currently share the old Seward clinic building.

Evangelism:

A total of 50 calls were made in Seward during the quarter, of those 40 were churching and 10 were unchurching. 18 calls were made in Utica, 12 were churching and 6 were unchurching. Keith Schleusener shared the story of Gary, a man we had visited a number of times and was on our mailing list. He never attended one of our services, but was visited again when we learned he had incurable cancer. He stated that he read our monthly newsletters faithfully and confessed Jesus as his savior. Praise God!

As we begin the building process we expect increased interest in our church. Be sure that you make an effort to greet all visitors and do what you can to let them know that they are welcome.

Education:

Christmas for Kids will be held December 5 from 9 AM until 2 PM.

Our Sunday School attendance has doubled recently. We thank God for his blessings and for those who are willing to teach.

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NELHS:

The special anniversary debt reduction drive started on March 22, and has a goal of 300,000.00 that will go to eliminate bank debt. As of the meeting over 155,000.00 had been received. The drive will continue through Thanksgiving.

The NELHS Endowment fund has begun to produce earnings again after two years of not producing income. The earnings from this fund are used for tuition assistance.

The NELHS board is looking for places to cut 150,000.00. The Association raised the health insurance plan to the highest deductible level to help cut expenses, however this puts a greater burden on the staff.

The bank loan for current expenses (line of credit) is at 143,000.00, the limit is 225,000.00.

NELHS has the second lowest boarding cost of all WELS high schools.

Trinity:

The annual Trinity School cook out was held.

There are 22 students this year.

Trinity will have a student teacher from MLC in Mr. Stern's room again this year. Her name is Elyse Limpert. She will be helping us with Christmas for Kids.

Due to the larger than normal summer expenses to replace doors and tile, money had to be borrowed from the special salary fund so that payroll could be met. The fund is down to about 2,500.00.

WELS:

Congregations are encouraged to commit 10% of their budget toward our work together as a Synod, or to raise their current giving by 10%.

Other Business

Because of cost savings the WELS VEBA health insurance plan is granting each enrolled congregation a payment holiday in November. The Synod in convention encouraged congregations to send this payment to the Synod as a gift toward our work of educating future workers and reaching out with the word.

The voters approved a motion to send our premium payment to the Synod as a gift.

Church Council

President: Keith Richert
Secretary: Nathan Schleusener
Treasurer: Bruce Burger
Fin. Sec: Thomas Otte
Elder/Trustees:
Gordon Schlechte
Keith Schleusener
Clint Ridpath

Building Committee:
Armand Richert
Keith Richert
Allen Plautz

Evangelists:
Keith Schleusener
Gordon Schlechte



We are testing personal assisted listening devices. If you have trouble hearing in church, give them a try. Those who have tried them like them. Simply insert the earpiece in your ear and turn it on. You can adjust the volume on your personal receiver. If you have any trouble ask and usher or elder for help.



Our Thanksgiving worship at Grace will be on Thursday morning, November 26, at 8:45 AM. Bethel will be holding their Thanksgiving worship on Wednesday Evening November 25, at 7:00 PM for those who might prefer a Thanksgiving Eve service. The two services will be the same.



Bethel will be offering two mid-week Advent services. The dates are December 2 and 9, at 7:00 PM. The NELHS students will also be in attendance.

Trinity will have their Christmas program at Bethel at 7:00 PM on December 17.

Dates to Remember

- 11-26 Thanksgiving Worship
- 12-2 Advent Worship at Bethel
- 12-5 Christmas for Kids
- 12-6 NELHS Concert
- 12-9 Advent Worship at Bethel
- 12-13 Fellowship at Seward
- 12-17 Trinity Program at Bethel
- 12-24 Christmas Candlelight
- 12-25 Christmas Festival
- 12-31 Worship at Bethel
- 1-4 School Resumes
- 1-10 Quarterly Voters ??



Christmas for Kids

We will be offering Christmas for Kids on December 5 from 9 AM to 2 PM. This program is for children 4 yrs old through 6th grade. There will be Bible Stories, crafts, singing, and lunch. There is no charge for this program. Pass the word and invite your friends and neighbors.



New Beginnings' Needs List: September-October 2009

(Bolded Items: Great Need at this Time) 1-800-720-MOMS; info@homeformothers.com

NOTE:

All gifts must be shipped to New Beginnings at your expense. Thank you! If this requirement is a burden, we suggest the purchase of a gift card which enables New Beginnings' staff to purchase needed items locally.

Academic Needs

Cookbooks on Eating Habits During Pregnancy (To encourage healthy eating habits)

Study Bibles (To hand out to new residents when they move in) – **THIS IS OUR GREATEST NEED**

Apartment Needs

Donations Towards New Apartment-Sized Stoves (To replace old units with non-usable burners) [9 Needed]

Donations Towards New Vacuums (To replace non-efficient and well-used vacuums)

Standard-Sized Rugs for Apartments – or Donations Towards Same (To reduce wear and tear on linoleum which is more expensive to replace)

Shower Mats for Bathroom Floors (Less wear and tear on linoleum) [6 Needed]

Vegetable Peelers (8 Needed) - New Only, Please!

Building & Maintenance

Branch Trimmer (To keep property looking clean and well kept)

Entertainment

G-Rated DVDs (To encourage wholesome, family-friendly viewing)

Family Board Games (To encourage wholesome family fun)

Craft Projects for 6 Residents to Complete (to encourage wholesome, family fun)

Pedometers (To encourage healthy exercise for the residents)

Exercise Mats (To encourage healthy exercise at New Beginnings: residents don't have to worry about safety going to or coming from an outside location)

Exercise Balls (Same as above) [Exercise program coordinated by volunteer who will use these items]

General Household

Alkaline Batteries: All Sizes But Especially Sizes AA and DD for Bouncy Seats and Swings (Unlimited Need)

Laundry Detergent (Unlimited Need)

Dryer Sheets (Unlimited Need)

Cleaning Supplies (All Types Needed)

Residents'/Children's Needs

Lip Balm (such as Chapstick)

Hygiene Items: Toothpaste, Toothbrushes (Unlimited Need)

Disposable Diapers – **NEED ALL SIZES – ESPECIALLY SIZES 2, 3, 4, 5** (Unlimited Need)

Baby Wipes – **DESPERATE NEED!**

Baby Medications (such as Tylenol, Oral Gel, Etc.)

Gift Certificates: Grocery Chains in Denver Area, Target, K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Albertson's (Unlimited Need)

Special Needs

Gently-Used Basic Sewing Machine (To encourage residents to fix small tears/hems instead of discarding clothing which can be beyond their budget)