

WE have too often quit ...

...

Praise the Lord! JESUS NEVER QUIT!

Such words or thoughts have traveled through our minds and crossed over our lips ...

“It’s time to throw in the towel ... I quit!”

“I am in over my head”

“It’s time for me to call a professional ... I just can’t fix it!”

“I need to cut my losses and go on and do something else.”

“I’ve put in my time ... now it’s high time someone else does the job!”

What a joy it is to know that Jesus never said, “I quit!” Even on Calvary’s cross, Jesus did not say, “I’m finished”. Rather he said, “It is finished.” In other words, Jesus perfectly accomplished what he set out to do. He had and demonstrated the resolve and determination to do what we did not and could not do. Consider for moment some of those clear expressions and demonstrations of Christ’s unwavering commitment to press on with that work of our salvation ...

- “As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51).
- “Going a little farther, he (Jesus) fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will’” (Matthew 26:39).
- “He said to them (the disciples), ‘This is what I (Jesus) told you while I was still with you; Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms’” (Luke 24:44).

Clearly, there was nothing about Jesus’ ministry that was half-way or partially done. He never quit ... until it was finished!

May we never be guilty of using Jesus’ finished work and his commitment to fulfilling the scriptures as a reason to be lax or lazy in our faith. As if to say, “I don’t need to give forth any effort to doing God’s will perfectly, since Jesus already did. But rather, use Jesus’ love – proven and displayed – as our ultimate source of strength to never quit living lives of service to him. His never-quitting and never-ceasing love is still what enables and empowers us to put our love and Christian faith into action.

IN JESUS’ NAME, *Pastor Lon P. Kuether*

Pastor Lon Kuether = 444-6334 (home) & 444-3939 (church) pastor@stmarksbemidji.org

Principal Nathan Bitter = 759-0398 (home) & 444-9635 (school) stmark@paulbunyan.net

Head Elder Pierre Granger = 751-8688 & Chairman Kevin Peterson = 467-3231

ST. MARK'S MISSION STATEMENT



Because Jesus directs us, "Go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19) our mission at St. Mark's is to nurture believers with the Word and Sacraments, preparing them for a life of service to the Triune God; and to spread the good news of Jesus and his forgiveness to our community and beyond.

CHURCH NEWS AND UPDATES

A SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEAL WILL BE SERVED ON SUNDAY, MAY 3rd

- **MAY 3rd, at 11:30**, our Young Adults Group will provide a full meal for all to enjoy. Free-will donations will be gathered to support their group's activities, especially the costs for entering into our local area churches' softball league.

WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN RECEIVED OVER THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS:
This opportunity to mix together with those who have joined to our church family will happen on Sunday, May 17th, following our morning worship. A meal will also be served. Members may bring a side dish or dessert.

OUR CONGREGATION DELEGATE TO THE PRE-SYNOD CONVENTION MEETING:

Paul Pfeiffer was approved by the voters to represent our congregation together with Pastor Kuether and Mr. Bitter. This meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 23rd at St. Paul's in Litchfield, MN. Please offer your thoughts, concerns or question to any of these men in your behalf.

MONDAY EVENING WORSHIP WILL REMAIN IN USE THROUGH AUGUST!

NOTE, our Monday evening worship (at 7:30 p.m.) has resumed and will remain in use through the month of August. (However no evening service will be held on Memorial Day, May 25th.) It was then decided by the voters to try moving this evening service to Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., after Labor Day. So the Wednesday evening worship services will begin, September 9th, 2009.

UPCOMING WORK DAY HERE AT CHURCH!

Sat., May 2, Noon, Church spring cleaning

SIGN-UP SHEET POSTED! SIGN UP TODAY!

- **LAWN MOWING – VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE NEEDS NAMES.** If you wish to sign-up for a month, please do so to make our schedule complete, and to keep our grounds presentable during the upcoming warm weather months.

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE TRACT RACK

These will be distributed on a monthly basis in this fashion. Please take one to review any action taken at the last council meeting, on April 2nd, 2009.

CENTRAL AFRICA MEDICAL MISSION UPDATE

Can you help? The missionaries proclaiming the Word of God in Africa in the 1950's quickly became known as compassionate people who could provide peace for the soul and treat physical illnesses. The ability to handle the physical care, however, became difficult due to the larger number of people needing assistance. In 1957 the WELS Convention recognized the need to address the physical needs of the African people by establishing the Central Africa Medical Mission. The women's organizations in the WELS congregations were designated to provide for this program with an annual financial pledge and to promote it. In 2009, the medical mission still operates solely on individual donations and the generosity of women's groups. If you would like to make a donation to support this "mission of love", a check (payable to Central Africa Medical Mission) may be sent to WELS/CAMM PO Box 64064 Saint Paul, MN 55164-0064 or given to your local LWMS contact woman.

REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

+ We will have a special evening worship service on Thursday, May 21, 2009. In this way we will ponder and appreciate what Jesus' Ascension into heaven means for me.

REMEMBER THE SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE BEGINS WITH SUNDAY, JUNE 7th

+ For the months of June, July and August, our Sunday worship will begin at 9:00 a.m.



President Mark Schroeder

A bi-weekly and breaking e-newsletter from [WELS](#)

Together

...in God's Word and in our mission

.. [April 20, 2009](#)

Difficult decisions, eyes of faith

From the office of President Mark Schroeder

The Synodical Council will meet April 24 and 25 for its regular spring meeting. This meeting will not, however, be routine. The Synodical Council's main item of business is to adopt a budget that it will recommend to the 2009 synod convention.

By now members of the synod are aware of the difficult task facing the Synodical Council. We are confronted with the stark reality that approximately \$8 million will need to be cut from the current budget of \$38 million that supports the mission and ministry programs we carry out together as a synod. These reductions will require painful and difficult cuts in all areas of ministry. The Synodical Council has received input from all areas of ministry and will consider the impact of budget reductions on those ministries. At the end of the discussion, the council will carry out its constitutional responsibility to recommend a balanced budget for the next two years. That recommended budget will be presented to the convention this summer, where all final decisions will be made.

The Synodical Council will not be able to avoid recommending deep cuts in all areas. As it considers what to do, the council will attempt to make decisions that will enable the synod to carry out essential ministry at a level in keeping with the financial support available. It will also work to establish a list of priorities for restoration if the financial situation improves substantially in the next two years.

When it comes to the priorities and possible reductions, there will be many different opinions and views. Those opinions will be reflected, no doubt, in the Synodical Council itself as it formulates a budget. That discussion will continue throughout the synod once the budget is published, and budget discussions will be one of the main items on the agenda of the synod convention. As we carry out brotherly discussion and debate, we will want to do so in Christian love and with brotherly patience. And we will want to begin and end our decision-making with the fervent prayer that God would lead and guide us in these challenging times to do all things for his glory and for the good of his kingdom.

These are difficult times as we contemplate significant changes in the scope and nature of our synod's work. With our limited human vision, we see only challenges and painful decisions. But we've also been blessed with the eyes of faith. Those eyes can see and trust that our gracious God will continue to bless his people and provide for his church even when all the evidence seems to say otherwise.

Look for a special issue of "Together" early next week that will report the decisions made at the Synodical Council meeting. (www.wels.net)

Serving in Christ,
Mark Schroeder

Top Stories

Compiled by WELS Communication Services

Anticipated budget shortfall widens

Results for the third quarter of the 2008-09 fiscal year indicate overall support for the synod's operating budget was \$6.0 million, or \$3.2 million less than expenses. Year-to-date support is \$25.1 million, or \$3.1 million less than expenses. The year-to-date results point to a deficit of \$5.9 million—that's up from the \$3.7 million projected at the end of the second quarter.

Mr. Todd Poppe, WELS' chief financial officer, says the synod's financial situation is indicative of "the economic challenges facing our country and the world."

Congregation Mission Offerings (CMO)—given by congregations for the synod's collective ministry—were \$3.76 million for the quarter, down nearly 14 percent from the same quarter last year. Some of the difference may be due to the timing of Easter, which occurred in March last year. Foundation grants and gifts from individuals are also down dramatically.

Despite the growing shortfall, Poppe anticipates the deficit will be met through the \$3.4 million surplus from last year's budget, a grant for Home Missions from WELS Church Extension Fund, unrestricted bequests, and other cost savings.

Poppe warns the deficit could continue to grow if congregations are unable to meet their CMO commitments, as has been the case for the first quarter of the calendar year.

For more information, download the complete [financial summary](#) prepared for the Conference of Presidents and the Synodical Council.

WELS members evacuate

As flooding remains a threat in the upper Midwest, Rev. Newt Trimmer of St. Paul's, Valley City, N.D., reports 40 to 50 members, including his own family, have evacuated the community after officials urged residents to stay out of town as they wait for the Sheyenne River to retreat.

Trimmer reports that although the river has been over flood stage for three weeks, the most serious problem is the backed up sewer system, which was damaged by all the heavy machinery brought in to shore up the dikes in the area.

Officials say it may take as long as three to four weeks to repair the sewers; until then residents aren't allowed to flush toilets or run water into drains. Many are spending nights at home but using the plumbing at friends or relatives in the area.

St. Paul's was forced to cancel services Sunday, but Trimmer says plans are to worship again this coming Sunday—with portable toilets on hand.

[WELS Committee on Relief](#) has contributed \$3,000 to the cleanup effort. Among other things, the congregation has used the contribution to purchase portable generators, hoses, shop vacuums, pressure washers, and sewer drain plugs.

Cost Analysis of and Step Progression to Starting a Kindergarten

Last October the Board of Education presented the format that they thought would make the most sense in having a kindergarten at St. Mark's. That report is on the backside and is meant as a reference. Since then we went ahead and did a cost analysis and what steps would be needed to start a kindergarten in such a format. Below is that report:

The Board of Education explored the cost that adding a full-time teacher to the staff would have to the yearly budget of the church. We looked at what the highest impact would be to the budget knowing that shortcuts could be taken to avoid some of the costs, but felt that the "worst-case scenario" should be planned for so that the church could be prepared as much as possible. Because of the huge impact that a 2nd full time teacher would cause to the yearly budget, it was decided not to pursue an estimated cost for building and furnishing a classroom and also the cost of classroom materials for a kindergarten until it looked more feasible that the 2nd full-time teacher could be added.

Estimated cost possibilities for a 2nd full-time teacher:

- ❖ Salary: \$28,766-\$33,560 (from 0-10 years experience; lowest level of responsibility)
- ❖ Health: \$10,260-\$14,796
- ❖ Housing: \$11,125
- ❖ Social Security: \$2990-3350

We realize that different shortcuts could be made: salary below synod code; health insurance through a spouse; reduce housing allowance or none if house is provided. There could be some savings from the current budget depending on what we did with the teacher's aide position. Also, there is the hope that the expanded faculty would lead to more tuition students from outside the congregation. The Board of Education thinks that the wisest and safest course right now would be to plan without any shortcuts because counting on any of the above shortcuts would weaken the stability of expanding the faculty and could lead to budget shortfalls that might not only cause the cutting of the 2nd teacher position soon after it was started, but also possibly endangering the current school structure if too big of a deficit was incurred by the growth of the faculty.

The possible following steps could be seen as a way to gradually build up to a 2nd full-time teacher:

1. Make up current deficit in budget and stay in the black
2. Establish a fund that would be used to cover any budget shortfall that might occur during an expansion of the faculty by a ½ time teacher
3. When the fund reaches a designated amount we would call a ½ time teacher from the congregation (either the fellowship hall or basement classroom would be used)
4. The account that was established to cover budget shortfall would be converted into a building fund (but would also be used to cover any budget shortfalls)
5. Build a second classroom when the fund is large enough to make the mortgage feasible
6. Reestablish the budget shortfall fund to build up to cover any shortfall that would occur when full time teacher is called
7. Call a full time teacher and add kindergarten

BOARD OF EDUCATION – REPORT ON KINDERGARTEN AT ST. MARK’S

Why a Kindergarten?

- To provide a Christian education at that level
- To provide a smoother transition into 1st grade
- To increase non-member enrollment
- To enlarge the faculty so that the enrollment cap can be higher

What Would Be the Structure?

- Kindergarten would be combined with 1st and 2nd in a separate classroom
 - This would increase the enrollment cap enabling more non-members to enroll in the school overall
- Would kindergarten be full day/everyday, full day three days a week; or half day/everyday or combo?
 - Teacher and/or parents involved in decision

What Is Needed?

- Full-time 2nd teacher with teaching degree and either WELS certified or willing to work toward WELS certification
- Classroom space – could use fellowship hall or modular to start with, but would need to have a plan for a permanent classroom within 2 to 3 years of start up
- Materials – entire kindergarten curriculum and classroom furnishings

Cost of 2nd Teacher

- Salary
- Social security
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Moving if from another congregation (1 time cost)

MEMBER CHILDREN

- 2008-2009: Kindergarten 6
1st-8th Grade 19
- 2009-2010: Kindergarten 1
1st-8th Grade 24
- 2010-2011: Kindergarten 6
1st-8th Grade 22
- 2011-2012: Kindergarten 4
1st-8th Grade 24
- 2012-2013: Kindergarten 6
1st-8th Grade 28

(The number given is not an enrollment projection, but the number of children that could be in the church at those grade levels in the given years)

