

Atonement's News

A Monthly Publication of Atonement Lutheran Church

April 2014

Very soon Atonement Lutheran Church will be considering together as a parish the adoption of a **proposed strategic plan** for its future ministry. The vision team has composed a plan that will emphasize three general areas where it thinks the congregation should strategically focus its efforts for ministry in the next one to three years. At the meeting the congregation will have a chance to view the plan and ask questions before considering adoption. The parts of the plan that the congregation will consider adopting are a newly proposed **mission statement, set of core values, vision statement, and set of ministry targets.**

In order to assist you in your efforts I have dedicated this article to defining the parts of the strategic plan and then showing how all of those parts fit together. The specific details of the proposed plan will be unveiled in a PowerPoint presentation at a future Sunday morning voters' meeting.

The questions that each of the various parts of the strategic plan answers are as follows:



**The Mission of
Atonement
Lutheran Church
is to be a vibrant,
intimate Christian
community;
nurtured by word
and sacrament,
meeting the
physical and
spiritual needs of
the people with
Christ-like care,
encouraging a life
full of hope with
an eternal future.**

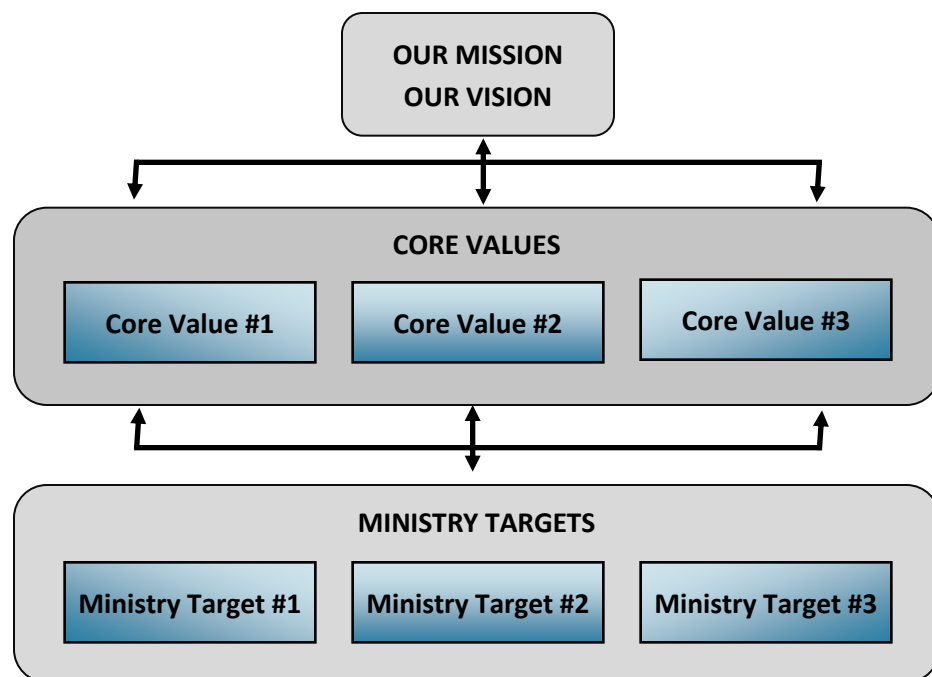
Mission Statement—*Why* do we exist?

Core Values—*Who* are we?

Vision Statement—*What* will we look like in 3 years?

Ministry Targets—*Where* will we target our efforts to get there?

These four parts fit together in the following way:



Through much thought and discussion the vision team is prepared to propose a plan that takes into account the current state of Atonement Lutheran as well as the

makeup and demographics of the community that immediately surrounds the Parish. Please consider attending this meeting. Come equipped with your questions. It involves the immediate future of our Congregation and a path that we will *collectively* decide to take. When we *come together* and are *united* and *aligned* in these ways our Lord can do great things through us! I, for one, am excited about Atonement's future. For, in Christ there is always reason to be hopeful and optimistic about the future.

In Christ the best is always yet to come!

Pastor Josh



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

PALM SUNDAY
Sunday, April 13, 2014
9:00 am

MAUNDY THURSDAY
Thursday, April 17, 2014
7:00 pm

GOOD FRIDAY
Friday, April 18, 2014
7:00 pm

EASTER SUNDAY
Sunday, April 20, 2014
9:00 am

EASTER BRUNCH
An Easter brunch will take place after service.

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Jesus is the Lamb of God, who by His death takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). John's Gospel takes great pains to show us that the crucifixion and death of Jesus coincides with the slaughter of the lambs for the Passover Feast (John 18:39; 19:31). That means also that the day of our Lord's resurrection from the dead coincides with the wave offering of the first fruits of the barley harvest (Lev 23:9–14). The risen Jesus, then, is a wave offering to the Father as the true bread of life come down from heaven, whose risen and living flesh and blood makes us acceptable to the Father (Lev 23:11). By it, our sins are forgiven and in Him, we have life. This marks us as those whom the angel of death will pass over, those who are marked by the blood of the Lamb for life (Exod 12:13).



St. Paul picks up on this theme: "Christ has been raised from the death, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20, 23). We are acceptable to the Father because the first fruits of the harvest of those who have fallen asleep, our Lord Jesus Christ, has been offered and accepted. The offering is holy, and so then the rest of the harvest is also holy (Rom 11:16). This is the generosity of the Father toward us. He offered His Son as the first fruits of those who die, so that we may be acceptable to Him, be reconciled to Him and to one another.

Christ was offered to the Father for us. He was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification (Rom 4:25). We are acceptable to God the Father by His grace on account of the death and resurrection of Jesus through faith. This is God's generosity. This is his love. That while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us and was raised so that the Father would receive us back and that we, in Christ, would be acceptable to Him.

And this is what we celebrate in Holy Week. This is what we sing about and ponder on Good Friday and

BOARD OF LAY MINISTRY

Passover

Still celebrated by Jews, Passover commemorates God's "passing over" the Hebrews' homes as He caused the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians. Moses had told the people to mark their homes with blood, and the angel of death "passed over" them (Ex., 12:29). This last of the ten plagues on the Egyptians had the desired effect. Pharaoh released the Hebrew slaves, whom God had told to prepare unleavened bread (bread without yeast), since they would be leaving hastily.

Passover is followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 23:15), in which the bread without yeast is eaten for seven days. The festival begins with killing and eating the Passover lamb. Both Passover and Unleavened bread were reminders to the Jews of the key event in their history, the divine deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

These holy days were forgotten once the people settled in Israel. Not until the time of the reformer kings Hezekiah and Josiah was Passover again celebrated (2 Chron. 30:1; 2 Kings 23:21). Afterward it was – and is – celebrated faithfully.

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection occurred near the date of Passover (which allows Christians to determine the dates for Good Friday and Easter). Since the first Christians were Jews, they made the connection that Jesus' crucifixion was like the sacrifice of the Passover lamb occurring at the same time, and that God's deliverance of the Hebrew slaves was mankind's delivery from sin because of Jesus' crucifixion: Both indicated a new life. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 5:7 refers to Christ as the Passover lamb. Many times in the New Testament, Jesus was referred to as the "Lamb of God," the perfect and final sacrifice for human sin.

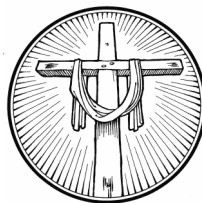
1,001 Things You Always Wanted to Know About the Bible But Never Thought to Ask; J. Stephen Lang

Easter. We meditate on God's love for us and His generous offering of His Son. We have been making our way to the cross and the empty tomb throughout Lent with this singular focus: God by His grace and mercy has redeemed us, forgiven us, sanctified us, and found us acceptable in His sight because of Jesus.

In the same way then, we who have received such mercy and grace from God our Father, who have then been the beneficiaries of His generosity are to be generous with all that He has given us. He has given us all that we have for this body and life and sanctified it for use in His service.

Your reason and senses, your clothing and shoes, your house and your home, your income—all that you are and have—are sanctified, made holy, for use in service to him. You are holy and so what you say, what you do, and what you give is holy too. God, by grace, has accomplished it, but He brings you into this service. He makes you fellow workers. Just as Christ is the first fruits to make you acceptable, you are living sacrifices to the Lord, holy and acceptable. Everything you do and are is employed by God, put into the service of the Gospel for the life of the world.

Your lives, your giving, your conversations as fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, citizens and workers proclaim this reality "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." With the blood of the Lamb upon you, by water and word, bread and wine, all that you do and give is put into the Lord's work of making those around you acceptable in Him who died but was raised. For He has died. But He is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT



For the month of February we received offerings in the amount of \$9619.13

Lay Minister News

The Board of Lay ministry welcomes two new members Robert Bryant and Larry Betancourt to the Board. They were appointed by the Church president to serve the last two months of the church year. Their names will be on the ballot to be elected for a two year term at the Voter's Meeting in May.

The Board at our March meeting discussed and voted to have a special budget item to help Pastor Josh reduce his education loan.

ATONEMENT'S LWML

UPCOMING LWML EVENTS AT ATONEMENT:

April 27th the Spring Craft and Bake Sale

May 10th Mother's Day Tea

I've often been asked, "What are mites"? So here is a brief history on Mites and how they began with the LWML. If you would like a mite box let me know and I'll get you one! This History of the Mites comes from the lwml.org website.

The Widow's Mite

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything - all she had to live on" (Mark 12:41-43).

Mite Boxes - How They Began



Perhaps inspired by the various "cent" or "mite" societies of the early 1800s, the Woman's Mission to Woman (Baptist) urged members in its first circular letter in 1871 to use their new mite box to raise funds.

The entire family was encouraged to contribute. The garnet-colored paper box had an opening on the top and the words, "Woman's Mission to Woman," in gold letters on the side.

St. Paul's Counsel on Giving

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us - see that you also excel in this grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:1-7).

LWML Mite Boxes



Over the years, many Lutheran Ladies Aid societies used a box to gather funds in support of local and synod ministries. Under the original 1928 Lutheran Women's Missionary Endeavor organizational plan, each woman

in every congregation would receive a Mite Box if she participated in the Ladies Aid. Receipts from the 92 Ladies Aid societies totaled \$6651.31 in 1930.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League, formally recognized by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in 1942, required by the newly adopted constitution and bylaws, that 25% of all missionary contributions be given to the national organization, shared from the districts.

At the 1953 convention, delegates reaffirmed the policy of raising funds only through voluntary offerings. Instead of "mite boxes" some societies called their ingathering devices "blessing boxes" or "mission boxes" or "thank offering boxes." The first

Mite Box design had space for districts to imprint local messages. In publications and speeches, Leaguers were reminded not to just tuck their Mite Box away out of sight and then on the day of the meeting take out a dollar bill, put it in an envelope and hand it to the secretary. Among the suggestions offered were:

- Put your pennies in the box at the end of each day
- Say "thank you" with an appropriate amount whenever calamity or misfortune has been averted
- Empty all your loose change from your kitchen coin bowl into the box on meeting day

Throughout the decades, Lutheran women have stepped out in faith, setting goals and trusting God to move the hearts of His people to give generously to LWML to proclaim the Gospel.

Times and Mite Boxes Change

Mite boxes have changed in color and design over the years, but what has never changed is the dedication of freely given offerings for the purpose of reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Districts still retain 75% of mite offerings for the work of the LWML at that level. National mites fund over \$1 million in mission grants. Visit www.lwml.org/missions/mission-grants for the current grant recipients and payments.

FROM THE PEWS



The palm is a beautiful and useful "branchless" tree crowned with tufts of fan-shaped leaves. Israel came upon 70 palm trees at Elim (near the Red Sea). To the weary, hungry, thirsty traveler, the palm was the most welcoming sight because it signifies a place of shade, rest, food, and refreshment. Where palms grow, their long roots strike water. The trees grow to a height of about 60-100 feet. If properly cared for and watered, palms will grow in Jerusalem. The date palm can live more than 200 years and

furnishes juicy, edible dates. Some of the other uses for palm trees were wax, sugar, oil, tannin, dyes, resin, and alcoholic drink called "arrak". It was called the "city of palm trees". Palms were among the "goodly" trees to be used in celebrating the "Feast of the Tabernacles". The palm became the symbol of the righteous enjoying their well deserved. They were used by the Early Church to express the triumph of the Christian over death through the resurrection. Also, these symbols appeared on tombs along with the monogram of Christ, signifying that every victory of the Christian is due to this divine name and symbol. Then, finally the palm became the sign of martyrdom in the primitive church. Thus, it was fitting that the worshippers would wave palms as Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on that most fateful of all week. (John 12:13)

Remi Tufts

OUR PASTOR – GOD’S GIFT

Beth and I use the PORTALS of PRAYER as part of our daily devotions. This is a long standing tradition in our family. The devotion for March 10th caused us to thank the Lord for the pastors that continue to touch our lives and especially our Pastor Josh. So here is the reprint of this devotion for you, in case you missed it.

THE LORD’S OFFICE

“And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach”.
(Mark 3:14)

Sometimes, we are less than enamored with our Pastors. Pastors are sinners, and sinners are imperfect. We find it hard to look past their imperfections. They are, after all, just men.

But there is something different about our

pastors, something that sets them apart. They are not different in the sense that they are better or more valued than we are, but the Lord has placed them in an office to serve us, to shepherd us, to protect us from those things that would harm us, to show us Jesus.

Just as the Lord chose men to be His apostles so also today the Lord picks men for the Office of the Holy Ministry, placing them in a vocation that bears His authority with it. In and by Him, these men pronounce forgiveness of sins, administer His Sacraments, deliver His Word, listen, console, counsel, and comfort the sheep in their care.

A pastor's vocation is a weighty one, and the devil particularly preys on pastors. They are in need of our prayers. Your pastor isn't perfect. He will mess up. He is sure to disappoint you. But the Lord has placed him in your life for your benefit, for your protection, for your good. He is there to stand in Christ's stead . . . for you.

Dear Jesus, we give thanks that You instituted the pastoral office, that men might deliver Your gifts of life and forgiveness to us on your behalf . . . and especially we thank you for our Pastor Josh. Amen

Now I wish to share with you something you may not be aware of. Each year our two seminaries graduate around 200 candidates – God's gifts to His church. They have devoted themselves to a strenuous academic course of study of at least 8 years of under graduate and graduate studies. We have an excellent example of our seminaries' product in our Pastor.

Unknown to many is that most all of our new pastor's leave the seminary with a considerable academic debt. They begin their ministry with a very modest salary, considering their years of education, and yet have to service a huge debt. Like having a mortgage payment without a home! This can go on for years and become a family burden.

We are the present beneficiaries of all the hard work and challenging theological study of our pastor. We know his passion and commitment to be a faithful pastor to us. To be the caring congregation that we are the Board of Lay Ministries has established a special Memorial Fund to support our Pastor. It is called "PASTOR'S SEMINARY DEBT FUND." Pastor Josh is very grateful for this consideration and has requested that all the gifts given be paid against the principal of his debt. This is indeed a wise choice and it offers us the opportunity to help and relieve him of this debt as soon as possible.

We love and appreciate our Pastor Josh. We thank the Lord for this gracious pastoral gift. May God continue to bless and prosper our life together here at Atonement .

Pastor Puls



PRAYER CHAIN

Please contact Carol Hernandez if you would like a prayer on the Prayer Chain. Carol can be contacted by phone at (619) 334-8015 or by e-mail at catseyedesigns@cox.net. If you can't get a hold of her by phone, you can call Joanne Luther at (619) 461-6366 or Jennie Green at (619) 465-6051.

ATONEMENT'S HIKING CLUB

We will hike on Saturday, April 26th. Stay tuned for more information!



MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Tuesday Evenings (6:00 pm—7:00 pm)

Church Library

Study of the Book of Acts

Newcomers Welcome!

Contact Person—Don Geisinger (619) 698-6045



The spring quarter of the Growing in Christ Sunday School Program focuses on New Testament Stories.

Our March stories and readings include:

Lesson 6—April 6th

Jesus Raises Lazarus

Reading: John 11:1-45

Bible Words:

[Jesus said,] "I am the resurrection and the life."

John 11:25

Lesson 7—April 13th

The Passion of Christ

Reading: Matthew 27:11-66

Bible Words:

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29

Lesson 8—April 20th

No Sunday School Due to Easter Activities

Lesson 9—April 27th

The Empty Tomb

Reading: John 20:1-18

Bible Words:

[The angel said,] "He is not here, for He has risen, as He said." Matthew 28:6

APRIL LAY MINISTERS

- 6 Jim Dysart
- 13 Larry Betancourt
- 17 (Maundy Thursday) Robert Bryant
- 20 Don Geisinger
- 27 Manny Cruz

APRIL USHER

Doug Wilson

APRIL FLOWERS

- 6 Dylan Smith's Birthday
- 13 [OPEN]
- 20 Puls
- 27 [OPEN]

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 8 Mike Heidtbrink
- 10 Kathy Munnik
Dylan Smith
- 14 Erika Luther
- 20 Leslie Olson
- 30 Chaz Riley

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- 8 Bob and Bonnie Imig
- 30 Jared and Jobana Weber

EASTER EGG HUNT AND GAMES



Children are invited to join us before Brunch on Easter Sunday, April 20th, for an Easter Egg Hunt.

Easter games (egg toss; 3 leg race, etc.) will take place after brunch.



Altar Flowers

Don't forget to sign up for flowers for 2014. The suggested donation is \$30 and the new flower chart is hung in the narthex.

2013—2014

Officers and Board/Committee Members

Executive Board

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| President | Todd Martens |
| Secretary | Carol Hernandez |
| Financial Secretary | Ann Duggan |
| Treasurer | Nancy Riley |

Board of Lay Ministry

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Chairperson | Manny Cruz |
| Member | Don Geisinger |
| Member | Jim Dysart |
| Member | Robert Bryant |
| Member | Larry Betancourt |

Board of Stewardship

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Chairperson | Judy Dysart |
| Member | Lynn Chiaravalle |
| Member | Sue Pollock |
| Member | Kathy Martens |

Board of Properties

| | |
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| Chairperson | Art and Beth Puls |
| Member | Manfred Luther |
| Member | Bobby Riess |
| Member | Bob Imig |

Board of Fellowship

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Chairperson | Jennie Green |
| Member | Donna Hurd |

Board of Education

| | |
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| Chairperson | Gloria Ollhoff |
|-------------|----------------|

Board of Outreach

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Chairperson | Sandee Boelter |
|-------------|----------------|

Flowers

Carol Hernandez

ATONEMENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

10245 Loma Rancho Drive
Spring Valley, CA 91978
(619) 670-7174

Rev. Joshua LaFeve, Pastor
atonementspringvalley.org
atonement.sv@gmail.com

Weekly Service

Sunday at 9:00 am

Bible Study

Sunday at 10:30 am
Tuesday at 6:00 pm (Men's)
Wednesday at 10:00 am

Sunday School

Sunday at 10:30 am

Confirmation

Tuesday at 5:00 pm

Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday at 7:00 pm

Atoner's Bell Ringers

Tuesday at 6:00 pm

Hiking Club

Last Saturday of each month. Location and times to be announced



MAY 2014
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 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|
| 6 8:20 am Chancel Choir 9:00 am Divine Service 10:30 am Bible Study 10:30 am Sunday School | 7 | 8 10:00 am AI Anon 5:00 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm Men's Group 6:00 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir | 9 10:00 am Bible Study 6:00 pm Soup/Salad 7:00 pm Lenten Service | 10 11:00 am Lay Ministers 11:30 am Better Life Together | 11 8:00 am Work Party | 12 8:00 am Work Party |
| 13 8:00 am Chancel Choir Bell Choir 9:00 am Palm Sunday Worship 10:30 am Bible Study 10:30 am Sunday School | 14 6:00 pm Church Council | 15 10:00 am AI Anon 6:00 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir | 16 10:00 am Bible Study 6:00 pm Soup/Salad 7:00 pm Lenten Service | 17 11:30 am Better Life Together 6:20 pm Handbell Choir 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Service | 18 6:20 pm Chancel Choir 7:00 pm Good Friday Service | 19 9:30 am Handbell/Choir Dress Rehearsal |
| 20 7:45 am Handbell Choir 8:00 am Chancel Choir 9:00 am Divine Service 10:30 am Easter Brunch | 21 6:30 LWML | 22 10:00 am AI Anon 5:00 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm Men's Group | 23 10:00 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Scouts | 24 11:30 am Better Life Together | 25 | 26 9:00 am Hiking Club 10:00 am AI Anon Business Meeting |
| 27 9:00 am Worship 10:00 am LWML Craft/ Bake Sale 10:30 am Bible Study 10:30 am Sunday School | 28 | 29 10:00 am AI Anon 5:00 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm Men's Group 6:00 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Chancel Choir | 30 10:00 am Bible Study 6:30 pm Scouts | | | |