



# Lutheran Church of the Atonement

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November 2004

Campaign Newsletter #3

## Just Say Amen!

Jim Edmonds pulls a fast-ball over the right field wall in the bottom of the 12<sup>th</sup> inning of a crucial playoff game, and a dozen voices around me shout, "Yes!" The young man hangs up the telephone; the young lady had just accepted his invitation to the Senior Prom; and he exults, "Yes!" The oncologist has just left the patient's bedside. After delivering the surprising good news that the malignancy has not spread and no chemo-therapy will be required; and the patient offers a quiet but thankful, "Yes!"

"Yes" is a wondrous word of celebration and affirmation. And, the Bible has its own word for "Yes." That word is "Amen."

With its roots in a Semitic name for God, "Amen" appears throughout the Hebrew Scriptures to praise God, to confirm the application of divine promises, and to accept tasks whose performance depends on God's will. It can conclude the vows or prayers to indicate that what has been said is valid and binding.

Transliterated into Greek as "Amen," this word fulfills many of these same functions, with one interesting addition, as in Revelation 3:14, where it re-appears as a divine name – referring directly to Christ Jesus. In Second Corinthians 1:20, Paul writes, "For all the promises of God find their Yes in [Jesus]. That is why we utter the Amen through him, to the glory of God."

Jesus is God's "Yes" to us. And, our "Amen" in hymns and prayers is our "Yes" to God – a Yes of celebration, exultation, and triumph.

We have been saved for eternity by God's grace. Yes! We are a precious part of God's family. Yes! God's love touches our lives every day. Yes! Christ is risen and lives in us. Yes! Yes! Yes! And, Amen! -- rem

## Check Out Fellowship Hall

Does Fellowship Hall need a "face-lift"? If you have been in Fellowship Hall recently and have looked around, you know that the needs for change are great.

For nearly 40 years, Fellowship Hall has been our principal gathering place for every event except worship. It serves as Atonement School's cafeteria—on almost a daily basis. It hosts our congregation meetings, Room at the Inn, our Scout troops, wedding receptions, civic elections, the church's reference library, funeral luncheons, weekly Bible classes, and countless other occasions when people gather in the Name of Jesus Christ.

But, if you check out Fellowship Hall these days, you see that the floor tiles are cracked, the ceiling tiles are badly stained, the lighting is antiqued, and the place looks cluttered and dingy. Also worth noting is that both the ceiling tiles and the floor tiles are made of asbestos and need to be replaced.

The third and final goal of a successful capital stewardship campaign will be the renovation of Fellowship Hall. This work would be done by the same firm (Korte Construction), which renovated the primary classroom wing and built Jungkuntz Hall. We can anticipate the same bright cheerful environment in Fellowship Hall that we enjoy in our new and newly renovated classrooms.

Your generous three-year pledge will help make this happen. But first check out the Fellowship Hall today!

# I.P.O.

A few years ago, the initials “I.P.O.” probably meant little to most of us. Had we been asked, we might have guessed that they stood for “indefinite planet orbit” or “intermediate pointed obelisk.”

Now, even if we are not big-time investors, many of us hear of an “I.P.O.” on the news, and we know they are talking about an “initial public offering.” A successful privately held company has decided to “go public.” The owners and managers (with their accountants) have estimated the total value of the company, decided how many shares of stock they want to issue, and divided the first number of the second, which will now be the initial price of one share of stock—to whoever buys it first

An “I.P.O.”—an initial public offering—allows us to get in “on the ground floor,” buying an interest in a business that looks like it will continue to be successful.

Let’s “shift gears” just slightly, and think of Atonement’s “work program” (our mission and ministry budget) for 2005 AD as an “I.P.O.” The estimated value of our combined efforts in worship, outreach, education, service, and fellowship will be roughly \$680,000. [The final budget will be established later this fall.] Let’s then decide that we want to issue 2,000 shares in that work program for Atonement’s “I.P.O.” Each share would be valued at \$340.

Here, then, is a different way to think of our offerings to God’s work here at Atonement. We are not just giving money away. We’re investing—we’re buying shares in the wonderful ways in which God’s love will touch lives throughout the coming year.

Our younger members, just starting out, may decide to invest in one share. Great! We all started out with small “stakes.” More established members might want to purchase multiple shares to continue our church’s momentum for mission. Some members and friends may even want to convert some other holdings and investments into “shares” in what God is doing in ministry in Florissant and beyond.

When presented with the opportunity to advance our Lord’s work into a new year of grace, let’s all think “I.P.O.,” because all of us want to have a “share” and because investments always make us look to the future with confidence and hope. Think I.P.O. --rem

## WE SAY YES!

*“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” First Corinthians 4:1-2*

There are at least two ways to read a mystery novel. The quickest way is to skim through the first few pages, find out who was killed and who the suspects are, and then skip immediately to the end to find out who did it. That’s the quickest way, but it’s not the most exciting.

There’s another way to read a mystery novel. You settle down into a warm cozy chair, dim the lights, put on your reading glasses, and start at page one. You read every single word, following the twists and turns the writer has intentionally included to keep you guessing. You find yourself enthralled. You can’t put the book down, even though it’s way past your bedtime. You read and you read until finally, long after everyone else has gone to bed, you come to the dramatic ending.

Impatient readers might prefer the quicker method. Yet true mystery fans will tell you that the second way is much more fulfilling. Likewise, some people say it doesn’t matter how we do things, as long as we get them done. All that matters is the end result. Jesus would disagree with that. He described the Christian life as a process, not merely a final product. He calls us to take up our cross daily, to say “Yes” to God in every moment of our lives. There are no shortcuts in the Christian journey.

We are stewards of God’s mysteries. Christ is not as concerned about the end product of our lives or all that we accomplish as he is that we be found trustworthy along the path of our life journey. Following Christ and living as a faithful steward may include a few unexpected turns. Yet we are caught up in Christ’s story. Say “Yes” to God’s call. God has some wonderful surprises in store for you

# We Say Yes Stewardship Campaign Goals

As this is the third and final newsletter for the “We Say Yes” stewardship education effort, let’s review the financial goals of the campaign:

**Goal #1** to receive gifts and pledges for the 2005 on-going work program of approximately \$680,000

**Goal #2** to receive gifts and pledges of approximately \$900,000 over the next three years to meet the following needs:

\$650,000 applied to meet our monthly mortgage payment for 36 months;

the next \$125,000 to be used to reduce principal on our outstanding mortgage to retire the debt faster and free up more funds for ministry and mission; and

the next \$125,000 to complete a renovation of Fellowship Hall (cafeteria).

The ultimate goal remains to grow in the grace of giving in response to God’s wondrous love, in response to God’s “Yes” to us.

## First Fruits Sunday

God’s faithful Old Testament people did not just practice “tithing” (giving one-tenth of their income to the Lord’s work). They did it in a way that expressed their faith in the God who loved them.

They developed a practice called “first fruits.” They didn’t just wait until all their crops were in and, then, give ten percent as a thank-offering. Rather, as soon as the harvest began, they gave of the “first fruits” – the first ten percent to be harvested – as a way of showing their confidence that God would indeed provide the remainder of their sustenance.

**On the weekend of December 4-5, Atonement will observe our “First Fruits Sunday.” We will bring our first offerings to the “We Say Yes” effort. Many of us will want to make an initial offering that expresses our confidence that God will truly provide our sustenance.**

On “First Fruits Sunday” in a prior stewardship campaign (2001), Atonement received some \$70,000 in offerings – a parish record for one weekend. May we likewise be inspired to give of our “first fruits” again this year – in response to God’s gracious providing for us.

## Prior Campaign Goals in Sight

Giving to Atonement’s prior three-year capital campaign is very close to achieving its objective.

The goal of the “Next Bold Step for Christ” effort was \$900,000 over three years. With six weeks of giving yet remaining (as of this writing), gifts to the “Next Bold Step” stand at \$877,000. The pledge period for that effort ends on November 28. Gifts after that date will be applied to the “We Say Yes” campaign. Thanks to Dave and Martha Fellwock and to Dave and Anita Cole, who served as “follow-up” co-chair couples for the “Next Bold Step” effort.



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## Campaign Event Calendar

- Saturdays/Sundays    Now-Nov 21    Stewardship Emphasis in Worship
- Selected Dates        Now-Nov 21    Newer Members Home Fellowships
- Saturday/Sunday       Nov 20-21    Commitment Services
- Friday/Saturday       Dec 3-4       Prayer Vigil
- Saturday/Sunday       Dec 4-5       "First Fruits" Offerings



