



# Lutheran Church of the Atonement

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October 2004

Campaign Newsletter #2

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## Letter from Pastor

Did It Make a Difference?  
Will It Make a Difference?

Prepaying \$300,000 of our building indebtedness in 1997-98 made a huge difference. In fact, one could argue that the Lungkuntz Hall Classroom project—plus all the related renovations—would not have been possible, if Atonement had not prepaid enough debt, effectively, to “knock five years off” of our indebtedness for the Kretzmann Hall project.

By the time Atonement began our most recent building program, the Kretzmann Hall debt had been reduced to the point here we could afford to take on additional indebtedness.

Yes, it made a difference!

So, could prepaying a portion of our current indebtedness make a similar difference? Here's what our bank has told us: if Atonement were to prepay \$350,000 of our current debt, we could do one of two things (or a combination)....

--We could lower our monthly mortgage payment by more than 20 percent  
(down to \$14,456) – (or)—

--We could “knock six years off” of the total length of our mortgage (down to 147 months), and more of each payment would reduce principal, rather than pay interest.

The simple reality that is that money not spent on interest payments is money that is “freed up” for more important projects around Atonement.

The second goal of a successful capital stewardship campaign is to make a substantial immediate reduction in our long-term indebtedness.

-Pastor Mueller

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## So, You're Not a Grandparent...

One of the highlights of the Atonement Lutheran School year is the annual Grandparent's Day, usually held in early March in connection with Lutheran Schools Week.

On that day, grandparents of students gather, some coming as far as from Arizona and Connecticut. They enjoy hospitality in the Fellowship Hall; they worship with our students in Chapel; and they experience a morning of academic life in the classroom.

And, when the day is over, these grandparents come away with a new appreciation for the excellence of the education offered at Atonement and for the way in which the love of Jesus permeates every aspect of school life. The comment is consistent: “What a great school!”

There's only one problem with Grandparent's Day; it's just for grandparents. And, many, many members of our Atonement congregation – who faithfully support both the on-going ministry of the school and the new building projects which bless our school – never get to come and to experience our school first-hand.

On Wednesday, November 3 [the day after Election Day], we're going to “fix” that!

Members of Atonement are invited to a “Not Just for Grandparents Day” –to a welcome gathering in Fellowship Hall, to a Baptismal Remembrance chapel, and to participate in morning activities in the classroom.

Come, and see what your gifts help make possible for some 200 students in Grades K-8 and for some 60 more in pre-school. Discover how your offerings help make the love of Christ real in so many young lives.

Advance reservations will be helpful for the planning team. Look for opportunities to register on the worship attendance form. Thanks to Brenda Blight, the planning team, and our wonderful faculty for making this opportunity a reality.

## 'Come to the Fair'-November 6-7

Quick! Name all the ministries at Atonement. Can't do it? Neither can your pastors. As soon as they think they have a complete list, someone reminds them of another.

In fact, naming them all would be impossible, because each of our members and families, as they bear witness in their daily lives to the love of Jesus, is a "ministry of Atonement."

So, our ministries continue to multiply as one-life touches another with Good News of God's grace.

But, also multiplying are our organized ministries more formally under the banner of the Lutheran Church of the Atonement. And, just as some of the newer ones continue to prosper: Baptismal blankets, Breakfast at Immanuel, Seniors Alive, women's and men's Bible study groups, etc., so many of our long-standing ministries continue also to flourish: Cherub Choir, Room at the Inn, parish nursing, scout troops, welcome baskets, nursing home worship, etc.

A Mission Fair scheduled for November 6-7 after each of our three weekend services will highlight nearly 80 of the organized ministries of Atonement. "Come to the Fair" in Fellowship Hall and enjoy the displays depicting so much of what Atonement offers to our community—to make known the love of God in Jesus Christ.



## Thoughts From The Campaign Directors

We've found many of the Sunday readings this summer very disconcerting. This year we are reading from Luke's Gospel, which contains stories of Jesus, which hit us where we are vulnerable, our wallets and our personal loyalties. Remember the story about the wealthy farmer who didn't know how to store the abundance from his land? He had a simple (and, we might say, logical) solution: just build more and larger barns. But don't forget the 'punch line' from this story: the wealthy farmer died before he was able to build the barns.

The next week, we were encouraged to "sell our possessions..." [Get serious, Lord!!!] Three weeks later, we were told to prepare a fine dinner, but invite no one we know; they would be unable to repay us. (Can you imagine spending an entire evening making small talk with a bunch of people you don't know and with whom you probably have nothing in common? That's not our idea of a good time.)

But the real power play came on September 5 when Jesus has the nerve (yes, the nerve!!!) to tell us, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes and even life itself, cannot be my disciple."

Now remember, folks, when finishing each of these readings, the pastor holds up the Book of the Gospels and announces: "This is the Gospel of the Lord." Or, updating it a bit, the pastor tells us "This is the good news from the Lord." Well, if this is the good news, does anyone want to stick around to hear the bad news?

**We at the Lutheran Church of the Atonement are in the midst of another (yes, another) stewardship campaign. These things seem to come up regularly; and, yes, we all get tired of hearing about the church's need for, you guessed it, money! But like it or not, the church needs money, if it is to continue with its many programs, chief of which is delivering to us weekend after weekend, the Good News of the Gospel. And, as many of us wish we could re-write Luke's Gospel with stories that make us more comfortable as we hear them read, so we wish we could escape the reality that Atonement must rely upon us, as members, to contribute from our wealth to ensure the church's continuing viability.**

We have been members at Atonement for 27 years; many of you have been here longer. At no time during those 27 years, can we remember Atonement more vibrant than at this present time. We are blessed with three wonderful pastors, each having unique abilities and skills, and each dedicated to proclaiming the "Good News" weekend after weekend. Our youth program is alive and well, and Seniors Alive seems to have no end to the activities they enjoy. Over 400 parishioners volunteer their time and talent each month to advance the work of Atonement. The Men's Club cooks their hearts out, raising funds, which are used to help the parish. The Christian Day School continues to attract new families. All around us, there is life.

**And all of this takes money. Several years ago Atonement conducted a capital campaign to construct Kretzmann Hall; then another to construct the Jungkuntz addition. Each of these projects added immeasurably to the programs of the church, but we are still in debt for these projects. One purpose of the current capital campaign is to ask our members to pledge their continued support for the next three years to pay off that debt.**

But these are funds needed above and beyond those needed for the day-to-day, month-to-month operations of the parish: salaries, utilities, supplies, maintenance, insurance and all the other expenses, large and small, that arise from operating a vibrant place like Atonement. And so the second part of the current campaign will be to ask our members to pledge their annual giving for the continuing ministries of the Lutheran Church of the Atonement.

Jesus, in Luke's Gospel, tells us over and over that the cost of discipleship is not cheap. Those who follow Jesus must make some very difficult decisions as to how they employ their personal wealth. These decisions never come without a price. They typically leave us a bit uncomfortable and uncertain. But, having made the right decision, it's easier to hear: "The Gospel of the Lord." And then reply, "Praise to you, O Christ!"

Joyce and Wayne Winter



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### Campaign Event Calendar

Wednesday	Nov 3	'Not-Just-for-Grandparents' Day
Saturday/Sunday	Nov 6-7	Ministry Fair
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

