

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL, STUART, FL



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

Sunday, February 3
Wilderness First Steps
Weekend
Begin Wilderness Journey

Tuesday, February 12
Call my RSVP to Home
Gathering Host

**Saturday, February 16 &
Sunday, February 17**
Participate in Prayer Vigil
and Spiritual Commitment
Events

**Wednesday, February 20-
Sunday, March 3**
Attend a Home Gathering
RSVP to Pledge Event

Sunday, March 10
Attend Pledge Event
Return Pledge Card

Sunday, April 14
Attend Celebration Event



Log On!

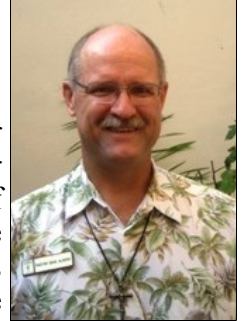
Check out our link on the Redeemer Church & School website home page for updated information about the campaign!

www.redeemerstuart.com

“Crossing the Bridge to the Future”

Dear Friend of THE Redeemer,

I always wondered how St. Paul could keep up his excitement for sharing the Gospel, sacrificing even his body to persecution for the sake of all people so that many may hear the Good News of grace through Jesus and be brought to faith. I think I have the key. He remembered his past and how the grace of Jesus was poured out on him. “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given me to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ....” (Ephesians 3:8) Or hear these words to Timothy: “The saying is trustworthy and deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” (1 Timothy 1:15) Without this connection to God’s unmerited grace he would never have been able to find the resiliency.



It is also true for us as we embark on the campaign called “**Crossing the Bridge to the Future...Together.**” We will need to be connected to the grace and forgiveness of Jesus through God’s Word, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. This entails remembering where we have come from as sinners and how God’s grace transformed us from people dead in sin to alive in Christ.

This is why, for the initial stage of the campaign, we will be focusing on this spiritual growth and connection and challenging each person to grow closer to his/her Lord and Savior through use of God’s Word and Sacraments. In order to achieve this, we will have faith testimonies on spiritual renewal, special sermons, and a Bible study, all capped off with a prayer vigil the day/night (February 16-17) before **Spiritual Commitment Sunday February 17.**

Please read carefully the “**Means of Grace**” and “**Spiritual Exercises**” pamphlets you will receive in the coming days. Think about what each has to say. Pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance as you think about how you could respond. Be ready to make your renewal commitment on **February 17.**

The Spiritual Renewal Phrase of “Crossing the Bridge to the Future...Together” will begin on Sunday, February 3. I hope and pray you will be like St. Paul to continue your appreciation of God’s awesome grace and love for you and make you ready, willing, and able to reach out into this community to be the best for this community.

In THE Redeemer’s service,

Pastor Dave

It's Time to Go "Into the Wilderness"



"We learn to care as we learn to share!"



"Jesus is our bridge to the Father."



"God's gifts are in His people."



By now, you have seen the case statement for our capital campaign many times. The central theme is enthusiastically posted all over our building and on Kick-off Sunday, January 20, the church's children displayed the main words on large puzzle pieces during worship.

The beautiful logo for the campaign, shown in the upper corner of this newsletter, serves as a wonderful visual representation of the theme.

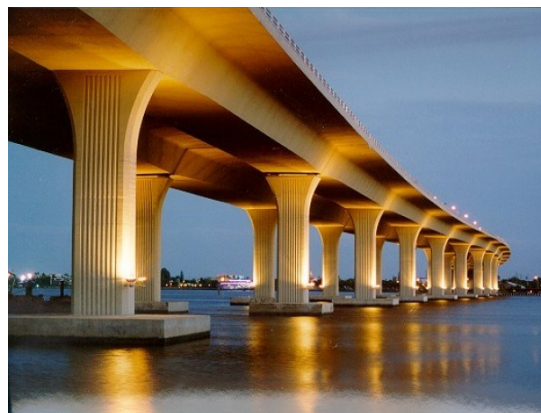
The entire case statement is printed below. We are now focused on the purpose of our capital campaign: raising funds to pay down our mortgage, make facility updates, and fund mission projects.

Before we start thinking about fundraising, though, we want each of our members to make sure that they are spiritually ready to move forward.

That's why we chose to have three weeks of

Spiritual Renewal, or "Time in the Wilderness," at the beginning of our campaign.

Everything in this mailing packet is geared to help you in your spiritual life. Please take time out of your schedule to ponder quietly on your spiritual life and all of the materials in the mailing. Then emerge, refreshed and renewed, for the second phase of the campaign!



Case Statement: Crossing the Bridge to the Future...Together

Our members, school families, and visitors cross many bridges to come to Redeemer, whether year round or for a season. Bridges take us places. Bridges allow us to move past or over challenging terrain. Over time, our bridges also need care and maintenance.

Redeemer Lutheran Church and School is facing some challenging terrain to cross. Christ and His cross are able to bridge any terrain no matter how rough the waves or how much the tide surges.

God chooses each of us to be stewards of His resources at Redeemer. We have some mission-related capital improvements to address, a debt-repayment bridge to cross that will free up future offerings, and a wealth of mission opportunities to span. All these will help us increase support for our mission of "reaching out into the community to be the best for the community."

Before we cross this stewardship bridge, God is challenging us and supporting us in greater commitment to His Word and Sacraments. With this increased faith, let's cross this bridge to the future...together.



Will Our Muscles Get Sore From Spiritual Exercises?



Many people have a physical exercise routine, and those who don't wish they did. We have been reminded over and over again in our culture about the importance of good physical health. What we don't hear about is the need for spiritual exercises that lead to good spiritual health. Our "Crossing the Bridge to the Future...Together" campaign has a helpful prescription to that end.

Ultimately "Crossing the Bridge to the Future...Together" is about raising funds to pay down our mortgage, make facility updates, and fund mission projects. **But the Bible teaches that good stewardship grows out of spiritual renewal**, and so the first phase of the campaign is all about assessing and addressing our spiritual health.

This newsletter is a part of the campaign's *Wilderness Preparation Packet*. For the next three Sundays we are going out into the wilderness, so to speak, as Jesus did when He began His ministry. The purpose is to take a few quiet moments out of the craziness of modern life and assess where we are in our personal spiritual exercise program and then build up the weak muscles and further strengthen the strong ones.

Where is your spiritual strength and weakness? Do you attend church regularly? If so, that is a strength. Does your mind wander when you are at church? That is a weakness that needs to be addressed. Do you own a devotional book? If so, that is great. Do you use it every day? If not, that is another weakness that could be addressed. The enclosed *Spiritual Renewal Pledge* sheet will help you assess these and other spiritual strengths

and weaknesses.

Here is how it works and the steps you are asked to take:

- Read through the enclosed one-page *Spiritual Renewal Pledge* sheet.
- Use the three-Sunday *Wilderness Period* (February 3, February 10, and February 17) to assess your current spiritual exercise routine and pray for strength and commitment to increase it.
- Sometime before February 17, check one or more areas of spiritual exercise on the Pledge Sheet that you will re-commit yourself to or that you will increase.
- On February 17 bring your Pledge Sheet to church. After the offering, all members will bring their spiritual pledges forward in dedication to the Lord. (There will be copies of the Pledge Sheet available at church that weekend.)

If you cannot be in church on February 17, please mail your spiritual pledge to church or bring it to the church office.

These pledges of increased spiritual exercise will bring more of God's Word and Sacraments into our lives which will give us the spiritual strength to make meaningful financial pledges later in the campaign.

Voters Chose Direction of Campaign Funds

Last year, Redeemer's members conscientiously completed the survey regarding Redeemer's needs. They took their time to thoroughly and prayerfully consider and weigh all options. Many became aware of Redeemer's needs and wishes for the first time.

When it's all finished, funds from the capital campaign will:

- ◆ Pay down or off the mortgage to free up monies for other expenses and mission programs
- ◆ Upgrade church and school buildings and furnishings
- ◆ Expand the church and school's security system
- ◆ Set monies aside for future major capital expenses, i.e. or e.g. roof, a/c, etc.
- ◆ Promote missions and outreach

We Will All Be Praying Together!

Our guess is you are available at 2:00 a.m. February 17, or 3:00 a.m., or 4:00 a.m., and so forth. We need your heart, your mind, and your folded hands for prayer at the “*Crossing the Bridge to the Future...Together*” Prayer Vigil on Saturday, February 16, into the morning of Sunday, February 17. The vigil will start at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday morning and continue until worship begins at 8:30 a.m. Sunday morning. If you have never been to a vigil, do not worry! There will be suggested prayers provided along with some resources from the hymnal. Those who come to the vigil will only be praying silent prayers.

Those attending the vigil will be provided with prayer requests from fellow members. Those of you who have been to a vigil before know how meaningful it is, and we hope you will join us. As always, we need some devoted people to join us for the late night and early morning hours.

If you would like to conclude your “time in the wilderness” with a special time of reflection, consider fasting for all or part of the time of the Vigil — from 8:30 a.m. Saturday to 8:30 a.m. Sunday.

Information and suggestions for fasting are on the prayer card sheet in this packet. Think of how joyful it

will be to “break” your fast with the Lord’s Supper during worship on Sunday, February 17.

Please bring your completed prayer cards to the church anytime before or during the prayer vigil. A box has been placed in the narthex to collect them.



Important Dates in the Campaign

- Feb. 1** Home Gathering Hosts pick up invitation packets.
- Feb. 3** Begin three Sundays of sermons, Bible studies, and testimonies on spiritual growth.
All members begin their “Time in the Wilderness” to examine and build up their spiritual lives.
- Feb. 16** Prayer Vigil begins on Saturday and ends on Sunday.
- Feb. 17** Spiritual Commitment Sunday
We come together to celebrate the completion of the “ Time in the Wilderness” (spiritual examination) phase of the campaign and joyfully bring our spiritual pledges.
- Feb. 20-Mar.3** Home Gathering meetings in members’ homes begin and continue through March 3rd.
- Feb. 24** Begin three Sundays of sermons, Bible studies, and testimonies on stewardship.
- Mar. 10** Pledge Event
We come together to celebrate the end of the Stewardship phase of the campaign and joyfully bring our stewardship pledges.
- Mar. 11** Commitment Team begins to reach out to all members who still need to respond with a pledge of financial or prayer support for the campaign.
- Apr. 14** Celebration Sunday
The pledge total is announced during worship services, and we offer thanks to God for His abundant blessings to us.