

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

December 26, 1989



LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

COVER PHOTO

Winter trail near Bozeman, Mont.
Roger C. Huebner, D. D. S.

Volume 27 Number 24

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Studies in I Peter

A great and glorious promise is given by the Holy Spirit in I Peter 2:4-8, when Peter quotes from the Old Testament, "And the one who believes in Him will never, ever be put to shame" (my translation). This is the assurance of the believer, that God will never be untrue to His Word, that what He has said will come to pass, and thus we who have believed Him will most certainly not be disappointed. God is ever faithful.

I Peter 2:9-10

Here, Peter continues a description of the Christian Church, using words rich with Old Testament significance. The believers are those who are coming to Christ (I Peter 2:4), they are those who are being built as a spiritual house unto a holy priesthood (I Peter 2:5), and they are people who offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:5). In verses 9 and 10, Peter declares that the believers are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's possession who have been "mercied" by God.

The description of the Church in verses 9 and 10 recalls the description of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. In Exodus 19:5 and 6, Israel is described as a people of God's own possession. The word "possession" means "prized treasure," or "the apple of His eye." What a great comfort to believers to hear God call them His own prized possession. This is possible because of the redemptive work of Christ on the cross.

Exodus 19:6 also declares that the people of Israel were a "kingdom of priests" to God. Peter says the same thing in I Peter 2:9. He describes the Church as a "royal priesthood." The Old Testament priesthood did not involve royalty; the Old Testament priests were taken from the tribe of Levi only. It is in Christ that the idea of royalty and priestliness are combined. Christ is the king-priest according to the "order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7:1-10). The priesthood of believers is a royal priesthood, established not through physical birth in the order of Levi, but established through spiritual

A royal priesthood

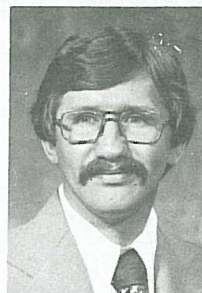
birth by faith in Jesus Christ. That we as believers are both "royal" and "priestly" is possible only because of a relationship to the One who is Himself both Priest and King. As royal priests, the Church offers spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus. The Church also brings God to men by proclaiming the Word, so that men through the Word may be brought to God.

In Exodus 19:6, God also describes Israel as a holy nation, and in Deuteronomy 7:6, He refers to them as a "Holy people...Chosen...for His possession." Peter also describes the Church as a "holy nation" and as a "chosen race." The word "holy" means "to be set apart." It is by the blood of Christ shed on the cross, through faith, that we are "set apart" unto God, separated from sin and death and condemnation. He has chosen us in Christ, graciously effected His choice through His Word and the Sacraments, and has established us as His holy and precious possession.

The Holy Spirit, through Peter, declares in verse 9 that the believers are the elect, holy, royal priesthood of God's possession "so that (expressing purpose or result) you may proclaim the excellencies of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." The "excellencies" of God are His marvelous deeds, chief of which is His great deed of redemption. We are called to proclaim these great things.

The believer cannot help but marvel at the magnitude of what God has done. He has taken lost and condemned sinners and by grace through faith has made them His own, to live with Him in His kingdom forever. What a marvelous redemption! What a message to proclaim!

(End of a series.)



by Pastor
Philip Haugen

Psalm 23:5

We all know that the tables in our homes have many purposes. They are grand collectors of our stuff: mail, books, newspapers, hats, gloves, even meals. Meals are special in that they require that the table be cleared of stuff, but within minutes after a meal, the stuff magically begins to reappear on the table. Of course, no one put it there.

At Christmas our tables are put to use in a most festive way. We gather around them, thankful for the food that overflows, thankful for the family members who surround them.

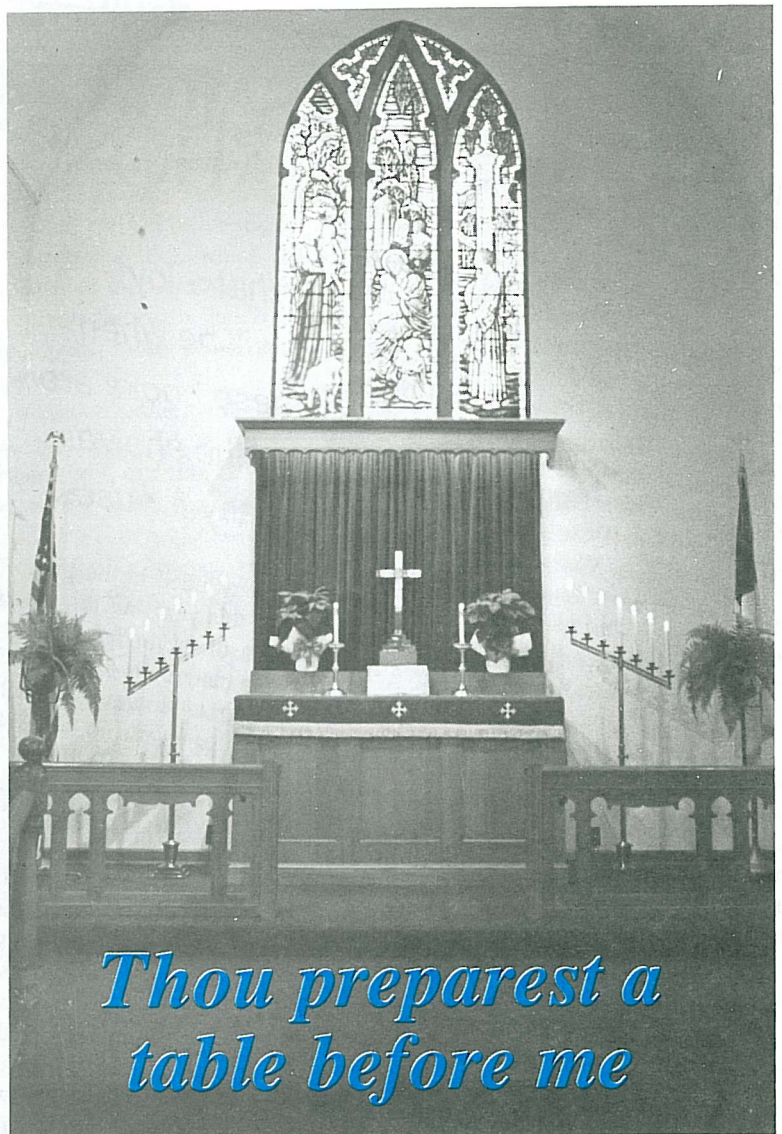
From the earliest time, tables have symbolized fellowship and peace. It is interesting to note that the moment Judas left the Lord's table, he took his final stand. It was when the traitor was gone that fellowship and peace could resume. And it was only then that Jesus could institute what we now call "the Lord's Supper."

David affirmed that God has indeed prepared a table for us, one of peace and fellowship. We all have a distinct advantage of pondering the richness of God's table every time we worship in our churches. Your church probably has a beautiful altar table which contains powerful symbols of God's presence, His peace and fellowship.

The altar tables in both churches that I serve (Pukwana and Ola, S. Dak.) both have large crosses mounted above them, directly in the center. The cross of Christ, of course, makes a table with God possible. Christ's death on that cross bridged the gulf that at all times separated us from a holy God. The cross is God's instrument of peace.

On each end of the altar table there is a set of three candles, reminding us that the very Trinity invites us to this table. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are at work in making this table possible. The candles are lit during worship services, reminding us that the Holy Spirit is present, dwelling in the hearts of believers. At the center of the table is a large, open Bible. It is God's Word that tells us what God is like. It is God's Word that brings us the Gospel invitation. The Bible is always the foundation upon which to build our lives and our homes. Christians are sanctified by the Word of God, changed into Christ's likeness.

One more item is found on the altar tables in the churches that I serve, the offering plates. Offering plates remind us that we have a responsibility in serving God. It's not that we try to impress God with our giving. He is not interested in our money. He wants us to give



ourselves to Him, our very lives. Hopefully, our funds are symbols of that other, deeper kind of giving. The offering also reminds us that God's work goes forward on two kinds of energy: the energy of the Holy Spirit and financial energy. Without the Holy Spirit at work in hearts, the church has lost its reason for existing. And without financial support, the church will lose its ministries.

God has indeed prepared a table for us, one of fellowship and peace. On Christmas Eve the churches that I serve celebrate the Lord's Supper, the ultimate reminder of God's peace and presence. In that most beautiful worship service, we are reminded again of the supreme gift of God: Bread and the fruit of the vine assuring us that indeed God Himself has entered through His Spirit, that he dwells within us, with full and free forgiveness.

"O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord." ◇

"God has indeed a table for us, one of fellowship and peace."

—by Rev.
Wesley Johanson
Pukwana, S. Dak.



AMBASSADOR PUBLICATIONS

Many good things are happening in AFLC Parish Education. Since February, 1989, the Board of Parish Education has been operating with its own budget, independent of the AFLC General Fund. During these past months, we have seen God provide financially by gifts directed specifically to the work of parish education. We have also seen results of the most import work of prayer as progress is made on the revision of the Sunday School material. For these good things we say, "Thank you."

The revision and completion of each grade of the *Ambassador Sunday School Series* is coming along well. The first of the three quarterlies for fourth grade, *The Apostles' Creed*, will soon be ready to go to press. This has been a joint effort of many dedicated people, all working in their own areas of interest and expertise. Somehow, this all comes together for a completed book. What a joy it will be when these books are on the shelves, ready for use in the Sunday School classroom!

One of the concerns of the Parish Education Board, especially now for the fourth grade books, is financing the printing of the new books. Each of the the three quarterlies will cost between \$7,000 and \$8,000, for a total cost of \$21,000 to \$24,000. These anticipated costs, of course,

*"What a joy
it will be when
these books are
on the shelves,
ready for use..."*

are included in the proposed budget for this year, but it is a sizeable portion of the budget. In fact, printing any material is the largest item in the budget. However, for the sake of good stewardship, and future policy, new materials will not be printed unless the needed funds are available.

As of October 1, Parish Education has received \$12,736.25. That is 18% of the budget. As of today it will be impossible to print the new fourth grade materials. Please pray for this need. Pray that all will be done in God's way and for His glory. Pray that we can meet our printing bills. And pray that we will be sure to thank God for all that He provides.

As our new materials are completed and ready for use, a notice will be placed in *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

*The Board of Parish
Education, AFLC*

Interest in Wisconsin

Rev. Elden Nelson, AFLC Home Missions Director, reports that a recent request for a possible new congregation has been received from the Waucoma, Wis. area. Several families with previous AFLC connections live near the central Wisconsin community and an informational meeting was held Nov. 16.

Readers of the *Ambassador* are encouraged to refer the names of any member prospects to the Home Missions office in Minneapolis.

**"We thank God
for your vision
and willingness
to help start
new, free
and living
congregations."**

from a two-year-old
South Dakota congregation

article on p. 6

Correction: Home Mission Update. The correct phone number for Living Faith Free Lutheran Church, Tucson, Ariz., is (602) 883-8778. Rev. Robert Giles is the pastor.

TABLE

Biographical Sketch

Wesley Johanson was born in Passaic, N. J. He is a graduate of Shelton College, Cape May, N. J., and the Seminary of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, Fergus Falls, Minn. He was ordained into the ministry of that church in 1969 and served parishes at Bethania, Viscount, Sask.; Williston, N. Dak.; and Nampa, Ida.

Pastor Johanson's wife's name is Lynn and they have four sons: David, a student at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; Peter, at the University of Idaho, Moscow; and John in 9th grade and Mark in 7th grade in Pukwana.

Pastor Johanson is a member of the Fellowship Clergy Roster of the AFLC.

Upsala, Minn. congregation begins

The Word of Life Lutheran Church, Upsala, Minn., has been in operation for one year.

It was conceived in the spring of 1988 when our former church voted to join the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A number of people had been concerned for months, even years, at the direction the merger was taking, especially concerning the authority of the divinely-inspired Scriptures. We met for prayer, study and discussion. An Independent Lutheran Fellowship was formed. We found a room available to rent in the new telephone building on main street.

We asked the AFLC Home Missions Department for help in pastoral service. The quality of the seminary students and pastors who came has been outstanding. We are especially grateful to Mike Crowell, Steve Olinger, Jonathan Unverzagt and Rev. Martin Horn, who became regulars, and then to the entire seminary and staff.

In December a year ago we were accepted into the Association as a Home Mission church with 35 adults signing the charter roll. We are happy to be a part of the Association and grateful to all who have helped make

continued on next page

Below right:
The congregation at worship.

Below:
The parsonage for Word of Life.



Abiding Savior Lutheran Church

God has provided

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14). When God's children humbly pray and trust in Him, He always shows us the resounding answer is "No!" He has richly blessed the congregation of Abiding Savior Lutheran in Sioux Falls, S. Dak. We had our first worship service in a school on January 22, 1989. Pastor Ronald Knutson of Redeemer at nearby Canton was our pastor through May and Lloyd Quanbeck, a seminary student, and his wife Jean led our services through the summer. By the end of the summer the Lord had led us to a church building which we purchased and took possession of Sept. 1st. Through the various talents of each member, the building was made ready for service.

Pastor Erwin Brandt and wife Lorraine had retired from the ministry and are members of our congregation. The Lord has blessed us by enabling us to

call Pastor Brandt to be our pastor until we are able to call a permanent pastor. On October 8th, Pastor Brandt was installed at the morning worship service and the dedication service was held at 2:30 that afternoon.

We have an active Sunday School, adult Bible class and confirmation class. Currently, on Sunday evenings Pastor Brandt is leading an adult membership refresher course. When this course is finished, we will begin Sunday evening prayer and praise services. On Wednesday evenings we have Bible study. We are currently having a study on discipleship that teaches us how to share our faith in Jesus Christ with others.

We thank all of you in the AFLC for your prayers and love. The Lord has blessed each of our congregations. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Ps 34:3).

— Corr.



HOME MISSIONS

Pastor installed at Floodwood, Minn.



On Oct. 22, Grace Lutheran Church, Floodwood, Minn., had charter membership Sunday for 21 members and installed a pastor, Rev. Emerson Anderson, who will also have duties at St. Paul's Lutheran in Cloquet. He was installed by Rev. Elden Nelson, Director of AFLC Home Missions. Pastor Anderson formerly lived in Cleveland, O.

Pictured here are the pastors and some members of Grace Lutheran. Left to right, Bernie Goebel, Matt Lahti, LuAnn Heikkila, Mitch Rautio, Pastor Anderson, Pastor Nelson, Bob Lund and Steve Ario.

New members at Wheatland, Iowa



Accepted into membership at Christian Lutheran Church, Wheatland, Ia., on Nov. 12 were, left to right, Pastor and Mrs. Tim (Rose) Carlson and Hannah, Berneita Riedesel, Sandy Klahn, Emmalee Klahn, Paul Riedesel, Christain Klahn and Jim Klahn.

New congregation

Just over two short years ago God began a stirring within the hearts of people in east central South Dakota. It was a stirring that would soon give birth to a new AFLC Home Mission congregation — Calvary Lutheran Church of Arlington.

The people, who were from many different congregations and communities, had one common desire and longing. They wanted a conservative, Bible-believing, Gospel-preaching, evangelical Lutheran church where lost souls could be saved and where believers could be built up in faith! And so the possibility of a new AFLC congregation was discussed at an informational meeting in Arlington in July, 1987, with the Rev. Elden Nelson, Home Mission Director, speaking and answering questions.

The decision was clear. Arlington would be home to new AFLC Home Mission work! Little did we realize how quickly God would bless this decision!

The first worship service was held on August 23, with Pastor Donald Greven, Dean, AFLBS, speaking. The Home Mission department arranged for weekend pulpit supply with willing help from our AFLC Schools. Pastor Greven served as interim pastor, along with seminarian Brian Pearson. The services were held in the basement of a grocery store.

UPSALA

this possible. The Erling Johnson family deeded ten acres of land to us in January. As we sought the Lord for direction, we were led to build a parsonage and then call a pastor.

In June we were made aware of a house that was built by the carpentry class of the local high school. The school district was accepting sealed bids, so the council brought a resolution before the congregation that a bid be submitted and this was approved. Our bid was the only one submitted and the house was ours. We knew that God was at work!

From then on the men of the church went to work constructing a block basement. The house was moved on to

it in the last week in August. A study and double garage have been added. The house was complete except for bathroom and kitchen fixtures, so there was still much work to do.

Members and friends of the congregation have worked many hours. The women have provided Saturday meals. We praise God for the willingness of His people to spend and be spent.

Rev. Lyle Aadahl, formerly of Grafton, N. Dak., accepted our call to be pastor and began his work on Nov. 26 as shepherd of the flock with Word of Life.

It is our desire to proclaim the "Word of life" in our community and to the uttermost parts of the world.

—Mrs. James Swanson

New congregations received

Applications for membership in the AFLC from two North Dakota congregations were approved by the Co-ordinating Committee at their November meeting.

Hope Lutheran Church, located in the central North Dakota city of Rugby, was established as a Home Mission congregation last January and has now adopted a constitution and applied for official AFLC affiliation. The congregation is presently served by Lay Pastor Henry Mohagen, a

Towner, N. Dak., rancher, who is also a member of the Home Missions Committee.

Middle Grove Lutheran Church, six miles east of Mekinock, N. Dak., has been an independent congregation since withdrawing from the ELCA merger two years ago and studied various alternatives before voting to join the AFLC. Organized in 1885, Middle Grove is presently served by an AALC pastor, Rev. Clair Schwalm.

Hitherto the Lord hath blessed us,
guiding all the way;
Henceforth let us trust Him fully,
trust Him all the day.
Hitherto the Lord hath loved us,
caring for His own;
Henceforth let us love Him better,
live for Him alone!

— F. A. Havergal

While being thankful for a place to worship, God began to lead this new congregation into a building project. Four beautifully wooded acres of land were donated to the congregation by the late Rev. Leslie Vanderpan and his wife Norma. Surely God was providing! A building committee was formed, a building fund was started, and with the added encouragement of a loan from the AFLC Church Extension the congregation began building a new church home. The footings and ground work were done in the fall of 1988 and the building was erected during this past summer.

The first Sunday worship service in this new building was held on November 12, which also marked the beginning of five days of evangelistic meetings with Pastor Michael Brandt, Cloquet, Minn. God has richly blessed these days! The congregation is being served by Pastor Brian Pearson who became the full-time pastor on July 1, 1988.

We as a congregation thank God for His wonderful grace and blessings. We thank Him for the people and leaders of the AFLC who have stood firmly upon the Word of God and have given so much encouragement to us. We thank God for your vision and willingness to help start new, free and living congregations. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

— Pastor Brian J. Pearson



Proper Priorities

The need for a new Administration building is very real, and soon, in just a few years, will be extremely acute. The decision at our last annual conference to build was wise.

Some may feel this is much too ambitious an undertaking. We continually seem to struggle with budget shortfalls, resulting in reduction of the scope of our ministries. Some would question the wisdom of entering into this campaign now, when we are so short of funds.

Are we really short of funds? May I suggest that the funds are available in great abundance? "We spill more than we save, and we save more than we give!"

What would happen if every giving unit would not eat out at a restaurant twice a month, and give to the AFLC? Or, if some other luxury was given up, and given instead? If each family would do this each month, it is staggering to realize that our AFLC annual budget would be roughly \$2,000,000.

The ministries of our AFLC would prosper, and the new Administration building could be built in one year, debt free!

We would challenge everyone to pray earnestly, seeking grace from God to enable us to establish properly our priorities. Jesus said, "We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:14).

Clifford Johnson
Esco, Minn.
Campaign Director

Lutheran churches to observe

"Sanctity of Human Life Sunday"

Hundreds of Lutheran churches nation-wide will again observe "*Sanctity of Human Life Sunday*" with special worship and educational materials published by Lutherans for Life.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is observed by congregations of many denominations to commemorate the January 22, 1973, *Roe v. Wade* decision of the U. S. Supreme Court which legalized abortion-on-demand through all nine months of pregnancy. Many congregations have chosen Sunday, January 21, 1990, (the Sunday nearest the anniversary of the *Roe* decision) to observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Some congregations choose an alternate Sunday to fit their church calendar, while others schedule one or even two weeks for "life issues" emphases.

Lutherans for Life, a pan-Lutheran pro-life organization with national membership, ten state affiliates, and over 230 local chapters, offers congregations new educational and worship materials for 1990.

The theme chosen for this year is "God of Life — Now and Forever." This theme is reflected in the full-color worship bulletin and bulletin insert. Also available is a beautiful poster to publicize *Life Sunday*, a youth insert ("Just for Kids") a two-week Bible study, a children's object lesson outline, sermon outlines on the three readings, and the Lutherans for Life One-Month Devotional Booklet. Lutherans for Life also has *Life Sunday* materials available from previous years, as well as an extensive line of educational resources.

For ordering information, or a full catalog of Lutherans for Life resources including a listing of audio-visual resources for purchase or rent, contact Lutherans for Life of Illinois, 412 S. Highland, Lombard, Illinois 60148, or call (708) 495-4783.

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

Another year is ending

We cannot help but be filled with nostalgia as we realize that this article will appear in the last issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* for the year 1989.

As Christians we need ever to be conscious of the fact that with the passing of time we are using up the valuable substance which constitutes life. Eternity will be colored by our use of time in the year that will so soon be over.

The passing of a year challenges us to take stock, to reflect, thoughtfully, silently, on that which has transpired in those days that are now forever gone.

There are always failures and sinnings which leave us with regrets. What has been written on the pages of the year now gone cannot be re-written to our liking. 1989 will soon be a closed book. God will deposit it on the shelf of time until He opens it again for His final review and judgment.

I am so thankful for the words of Samuel in I Sam. 7:12: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Not only has God been there to help us, but the fullness of His grace has always been there. There was forgiveness for our failures and sinnings. Above what we were able to ask or think, there was healing for our hurts.

We are wiser for our experiences. Our faith has been strengthened. God was there to help us. We hope because of the past.

The close of the year is not the end. We turn our faces to the dawn of a new year, and a new decade. Because God has been there, faithful in the past, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Our hope for the future is sure, because God is sure. We have yesterday's answers to our prayer.

Yes, we prepare to close out the old and begin the new year. May it be that the brevity of life and the eternal consequences of our actions will impress upon us how necessary it is that we wisely redeem the time for each day that lies before us.

I believe that God has many rich blessings in store for us as an AFLC as we move into the future with our hope in Christ.

—Pastor Snipstead

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

EDITORIALS

THANK YOU, PASTOR HAUGEN

As we noted six months ago in introducing Pastor Philip Haugen as our new devotional writer for the *Ambassador*, he has the reputation as a biblical textual scholar. And as we expected, that gift has been very evident in the articles he has written since July. All but one of them have been based on the First Letter of Peter. Our readers have had a taste of the value of carefully looking at Bible words and phrases in order to glean as much meaning as possible from Scripture texts. Not least interested in his articles have been the growing number of students and former students of our Association Schools who have sat in his classes.

Thank you, Pastor Haugen, for doing this writing for us. It has been a blessing and will continue to be so. May God continue to bless your ministry at our Bible School and Seminary. You have the gift of teaching and are engaged in a very significant work in our church.

We are pleased to present Rev. James Asp of Brooklyn Park, Minn., and Fargo, N. Dak., as our next writer for page 2 of each *Ambassador*. When he isn't out serving as an interim pastor, he and his wife Anna have their home in Brooklyn Park. Presently they are taking care of the work at St. Paul's in Fargo, N. Dak., while the congregation seeks permanent pastoral service.

Wherever they go they endear themselves to the people. Pastor Asp has an enthusiasm for the Lord and the parish ministry. Mrs. Asp grew up in a parsonage family (Masted) herself and that only helps matters. Pastor Asp is a brother of the late Robert Asp, who built the Viking ship "Hjemkomst," but did not live to sail it to Norway.

We look forward to your articles these next six months, Pastor Asp. You can write from a long period of service in the Lord's vineyard.

With this issue we also are concluding a set of six articles by Mrs. Kenneth (Ruth) Tweed of McHenry, N. Dak., called "From My Heart to Yours." She has drawn illustrations from everyday life and has revealed an inquiring mind about some

topics not a few of us think about. And her conclusions have come from the Bible itself. Thank you, Ruth, for your articles. Keep on using your talent for written expression and we are sure you will find opportunities for that.

In 1990, Pastor Henry A. E. Johansen of Willmar, Minn., will be writing the once a month feature articles in the *Ambassador*. He is in his second parish, the first one being in Virginia, Minn. Pastor Johansen had another vocation before entering theological studies and the ministry, but in the latter he has found much greater satisfaction for his life.

Pastor Johansen has written Christian articles for his local paper at Willmar. We've asked him to do some writing for us this next year. We believe you will be blessed by what he writes. God's blessings, Pastor, as you write.

THE TASK BEFORE US

Pastor Snipstead, our president, has recently written (Nov. 28) about the subject of stewardship and the need which exists to close out this fiscal year on a good basis.

May we also add our voice of encouragement, a month later and with less than a month to go in the fiscal year, by the time some of you read this. January 31 is the closing date.

We are a church with a much broader base than just a few short years ago. Our budget is higher than a year ago but not out of reason, by any means. It is attainable and we must all work toward that end.

As we give to other causes, many of them very worthy, let us give first importance to that work which has no large nation-wide mailing list from which to solicit, but is 95 per cent dependent upon us, the members of the AFLC. If we don't give the support, it isn't likely to come in from any other source.

We are beginning a large capital fund drive for a much-needed administration building. We want it to be a success, but let us finish this fiscal year with our minimum goals met.

Congregations, people, give generously in these closing weeks of the fiscal year. We can make the goal!

Seminary news

Three members of the AFLTS faculty traveled to southern California in November, where they attended the annual conference of the Evangelical Theological Society on the campus of Bethel Seminary - West in San Diego. Dean Francis Monseth and professors Philip Haugen and Ralph Tjelta also visited the AFLC district pastors' conference on Saturday, November 18, at the home of Rev. and Mrs. Orville

Hiepler and worshiped with the new congregation at Murrietta before flying back to Minneapolis on Sunday.

This was the second year that AFLTS faculty members have participated in the ETS conference, which focused this year on "The Gospel and World Religions." Major topics of discussion included the doctrine of universalism, the "lordship salvation" controversy, and Peter Wimber's "third wave" movement.

The 1990 convention will be held in New Orleans, La.

The fall seminary retreat was held November 20-21 at the Association Retreat Center (ARC) near Osceola, Wis. The guest speaker was Rev. Richard Anderson, Lakeville, Minn., who led two sessions on the subject of Scriptural leadership principles, sharing many insights from the ministry of his congregation, Minnesota Valley Lutheran Church.

Musings at Christmas time

— By Mrs. Kenneth (Ruth) Tweed
McHenry, N. Dak.

It is interesting to consider the many concepts of the Nativity and all that surrounds it. Most of us are intellectually aware that we do not have the historical details of our Savior's birth accurate in our Christmas celebration. The date was picked by man — not biblical evidence. Although we can point to the symbolism of the lengthening of the daylight hours, experts tell us that the time was chosen to coincide with a pagan festival.

Now — don't call me Scrooge. I love Christmas and I need it. I look forward to the social contacts and the festivities with good food and decorations. The time is perfect here in the North where November and December days are short and often dreary. Even more, I need the spiritual part of it — the reminder of God's gift of His Son. The calendar is unimportant.

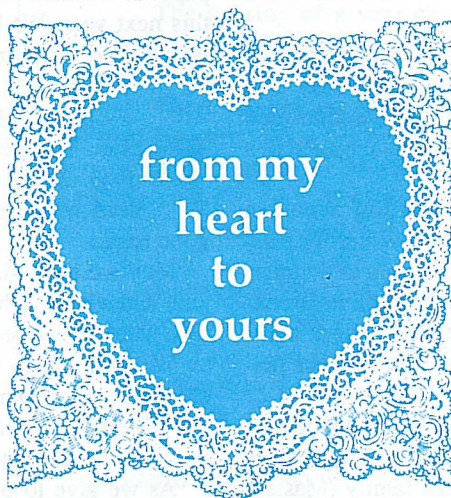
The Nativity has been the subject of all forms of art throughout the centuries. Paintings, sculpture, music and literature center on the manger. I wonder if the assorted characters of the first Christmas would recognize themselves.

Matthew and Luke didn't give details. There is no mention of animals present, although they are usually pictured. Most likely they were removed. The stable might have been a nicer place than the overcrowded inn that would have been noisy and dirty. We don't know who provided the stable or if Mary was attended by a midwife or how she got the swaddling clothes for the baby. The text does not mention the hard times but we know from our own experiences that the time was very difficult. Imagine — a trip to a strange city, the uncertainty of finding shelter and then learning that they could not return home!

Very few people saw the fulfillment of prophecy in the incident but I'd like to think that I would have been like the prophetess in the temple, or the old man Simeon, who recognized the promised Child. But more likely I would have been lost in the crowd and

not noticed the young family in need.

This is being written at the beginning of the "Christmas rush." It will be read when it's over and we look to the new year. It's a good time to look at ourselves and our priorities. It's customary to say piously, "Let's put Christ back in Christmas." We can't do that — He is already there. We say glibly, "Jesus is the reason for the season," a cliché about a God who *made* the seasons.



A well-known talk show host was discussing Christmas on his late night broadcast. Although he has Jewish roots, he professes to be an agnostic. It seems he rather likes Christmas and has little sympathy for the people who protest its symbols around them.

"I am not offended by the manger," he said. "But I *would* be offended by a cross."

If he speaks for the secular world, we need not mourn the absence of the manger scene in public places. When we celebrate a birthday we focus on what the person is or what he became. We don't usually relive the birth. (I would not like to have my family drag out my baby pictures on my birthday and fail to recognize me in my adult role.)

There is a seldom sung hymn in our *Concordia* hymnal that has been running through my mind as I have been trying to organize my thoughts for this article, although I have never heard it

sung at Christmas. The first stanza is this:

"I saw Him in childhood with eyes brightly beaming,

In rays of the rainbow on mountaintops gleaming;

He fondly embraced me, my fancy befriending,

But veiled by the verdure the cross was impending."

The cute Baby in the manger, the child, who brought the humble and great to His side, the Child we sing about and whose imagined image is part of the Yuletide scene, is there. We talk so easily about having the Christ Child in our hearts and the Spirit of Christmas. We forget the shadow over the manger.

As the hymn goes on, the fourth stanza puts the "reason for the season" in perspective:

"'Twas then I beheld Him as merciful Savior

Whose cross lost offense and restored me to favor.

Embracing my burden I found a reunion:

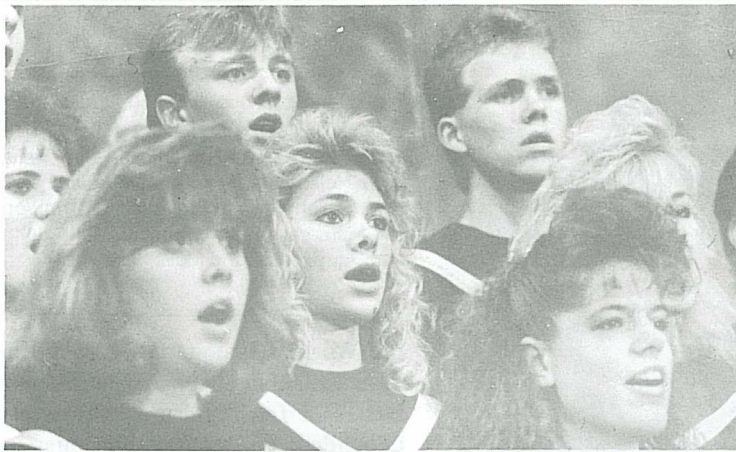
The Savior and sinner once more in communion."

The manger has long been empty — the shadow removed. The cross, long ago a symbol of death, gives meaning to life. The Child was removed from the manger. The Man was removed from the cross and the gift of Christmas was made complete.

Our church does not display a crucifix with the suffering Jesus in sight. The plain gleaming cross on the altar reminds us of the words of Jesus when He said, "It is finished!"

At the beginning of this article I stated that I *need* Christmas. We *all* need the festivities, the sharing and fellowship. But most of all we need the reminder of a promise fulfilled for us. May we be reminded that the Promise goes beyond the cozy niche in which we celebrate the season. As we enter a new year with an uncertain future, it is a promise for us all to hold tightly, yet share with the world.

(End of a series.)



AFLBS Choir



All my heart this night rejoices, as I hear, far and near, sweetest angel voices; "Christ is born," their choirs are singing, till the air everywhere now with joy is ringing.



Seminarians Jim Haga and Milton Flores



The Seminary Chorus



Missionaries John and Ruby Abel

AFLC Schools Christmas Concert

December 10



Combined AFLBS Choral Club and Choir



Some found the best view in a standing-room only crowd.

Photos by J. L. Johnson and S. Hjermsstad





Pictured are the Brazil '89 Team: front row (l. to r.), Scott Schierkolk, Peter Tjelta, Jane Nelson and Kyle Skartvedt, and, back row, Sarah Skramstad, Wendy Knutson, Bill Momerak, Blair Johnson, Marla Johnson, Amy Ylitalo and Melissa Kruse.

the World Missions Office at Minneapolis. All of our endeavors are ministries of faith and are completely dependent upon concerned mission supporters.

—Pastor Eugene W. Enderlein
Missions Director

Brazil '89 Team

Eleven dedicated young women and men were busily serving the Lord in Brazil during the summer months of 1989. These young people assisted our missionaries at various locations in Brazil by doing physical labor, sharing in spiritual evangelism and outreach and enjoying the new friendships with our Brazilian sisters and brothers in Christ. Before leaving for Brazil they received a week of training at AFLBS. They were sent out under the World Missions Department and received support from caring friends and loved ones within their local congregations, the student body and the Student Mission Fellowship of AFLBS. These enthusiastic summer ministry team members are available to share their experience, photos and a mission challenge at your church.

While they were there, the young people became keenly aware of the critical need for teachers for our missionary children in Brazil. After much prayer, Jane Nelson and Sarah Skramstad decided to remain in Brazil to meet this need. Jane is from Cannon Falls, Minn., and is teaching the David Abel children, Tamara and Robert, in Vitoria, Espirito Santo. Sarah is from Bloomington, Minn., and helps in the education of Vicky and Chester Dyrud at Campo Mourao, Parana.

Earlier in 1989, several missionary

families had made plans to begin a Christian school in Curitiba, Parana, for their children. Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel made this need known as they traveled to churches during their furlough months.

We were all very thankful for Mr. and Mrs. James Sundby of Karlstad, Minn., who responded to this need and were willing to go to Curitiba, along with their two sons, to set up the school and teach there for a year. The Sundbys planned to do this as a ministry of love, at their own expense, and to temporarily leave their Christian school in northern Minnesota. Just before the Abels left for Brazil, they were informed by the other missionaries that they could not commit themselves to the establishment of a new school. It did not seem to be a wise stewardship of their talents and resources to ask the Sundbys to go at this time. However, a teacher was still needed for Joanna and Christina Abel. The Lord placed this upon Melissa Kruse's heart. Melissa, from Eagan, Minn., has settled into Curitiba.

We praise the Lord for these willing servants of His! These new teachers receive a small monthly stipend and their room and board. If you would like to share in the support of their ministries, please mark your gifts for *Missionary Teachers* and send them to

Five-week trip continues

It has been over four months since I said good-bye to the unknown of Brazil. As I sat on the airplane with fellow members of FLY '89, my mind raced with anticipation. What would we find upon our arrival? How would we really be able to share Jesus effectively without a knowledge of Portuguese? How would this five-week "trip" affect my life and service to Christ?

Information gained through classes at AFLBS in past years, experiences shared by "alumni" FLY team members, and preparation received during our week of training were all beneficial, but even with these resources, my view of world missions remained narrow. Little did I realize then how God would use this time to pry open my eyes to the needs of another country.

After the first days of becoming acquainted with this scenic country, we were able to meet some of our brothers and sisters in Christ. As we walked, worked and worshiped with the people of Vitoria and Campo Mourao, we witnessed God's Spirit working mightily in the hearts and lives of the believers here. Our outlook was expanded as we for a short time experienced the everyday happenings of foreign missionary life.

YOUTH PAGE

"Missions is the heartbeat of God, demonstrated by God permitting His Son to die on the cross for every descendant of Adam. We manifest our obedience to God by volunteering our lives to win lost souls in any part of the globe, to disciple converts and plant indigenous churches."

Dr. Alban Douglas, Missions Professor

humbles me as I see their sincere service to Jesus. When a decision is made for Christ, it means being shunned by friends and families that are active in the Roman Catholic Church or in Spiritism. It also means being warmly welcomed into a close family fellowship, the Family of God, to which all believers belong. Loyalty to the Church is a high priority and can be seen in the number of weekly activities. Young people make up a large percentage of the church membership and participate with enthusiasm.

The day soon came when the FLY team, minus Jane Nelson and me, returned to the U.S. Through the experiences here, we both felt the call to remain and serve as missionaries. Jane is with the Pastor David Abel family, and I am with the Pastor Connely Dyrud family. Melissa Kruse also a team member, returned in September to be with the Pastor Paul Abel family.

So my "Hello" to Brazil has been extended. As I have the privilege of working with Carolyn (Mrs. Connely) Dyrud with the education of Vickie and Chester, and working on craft projects with Helen Knapp, and participating in church activities, I see Christ's Word going forth, reaching those who have not yet heard the Gospel, and strengthening the faith of those who have been in His service for many years. Please remember the work here in your prayers and know that you are in ours.

— Sarah Jane Skramstad

Roseau, Minn.

On Sunday, Oct. 29, Roseau Lutheran Church, Reuben Unseth, pastor, hosted the Northwestern Minnesota District youth rally. The theme verse was II Chronicles 16:9, which reads, "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

The afternoon started with registration at 1:30. At 2:00 there was a singspiration and opening devotional, followed at 3:00 with a business meeting. Recreation time was between 3:15 and 5:30. At 5:30 a banquet was held, with Pastor Del Palmer speaking. The closing service featured the movie, "They Lied To Us." — *Corr.*

1990 Minneapolis District

Sno - Daze

Feb. 2 - 4

ARC, Osceola, Wis.

"What If It Were Today?"

Teens - ask your pastor for information.

Dalton, Minn.

The Dalton (Minn.) Parish Luther League met at the farm home of Pastor and Mrs. Merle Fagerberg this fall. There were two teams of horses plus two hayracks to ride on, with 64 young people and ten adults in attendance. A devotional time was held by the campfire with everyone roasting many hot dogs and marshmallows. The Parish Newsletter states, "It was a perfect afternoon and evening. The colors on the bushes and trees were beautiful — also the sunset on the lake." It is the Pastor Fagerberg's prayer that through these special times, God's creative work became more precious to all!

Norman Westrom provided the hayracks and horses and his brother Knute drove one team and played his mouth organ. Mr. and Mrs. Merrel (Darlene) Moore arranged the food.

The Dalton Parish also had a Luther League Gospel team come during the first part of August. The team, under the direction of Steve Carlson from Amery, Wis., taught Vacation Bible School and was involved in Luther League activities.

— Pastor Merle Fagerberg

Faculty named for ARC Family camps

The faculty for the two Family Camps to be held at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis., next summer have been announced. In the first week, July 1-7, the Bible Hour teacher will be Rev. Philip Haugen, AFLC Schools, and the evening speaker will be Rev. Peter Franz, Mankato, Minn. There will be a variety hour each morning with various topics of interest being considered.

In the second week, August 5-11, the Bible Hours will be led by Rev. Robert Lee, Helmar, Ill., and Rev. Robert Rieth, Seattle, Wash., will be the evening speaker. Rev. Elden Nelson, AFLC Home Mission Director, will lead the Mission Hours for the week. Senior High teacher will be Rev. Richard Anderson, Lakeville, Minn., and Rev. James Ritter, Bloomington, Minn., will teach at the Junior High level.

Theme for the two camps is
"Rejoice in the Lord" (Psalm 105:3-4).

Lake Bronson Family Camp is scheduled for July 9-15.

Include a Family Camp in your summer vacation!

Deaths noted

Mrs. Rolf (Shirley) Heng, 55, Fertile, Minn., died on Sept. 9 and funeral services were held in Beltrami, Minn., where her husband is pastor of Resurrection Lutheran (AFLC), and in Minneapolis, Minn. She is also survived by three daughters and a grandchild, as well as her mother and a brother.

Former Evangelism Committee member dies

Mr. Haldor Hegg, McIntosh, Minn., an original member of the AFLC Commission on Evangelism, and who served for nine years, 1970-79, some of the time as secretary, passed away on Fri., Nov. 17, in the Manor Nursing Home, where he had lived since June, 1988.

His funeral service was held on Tues., Nov. 21, at Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church with Rev. Thomas Tuura officiating.

John Haldor Hegg was born June 5, 1897, in Winger, Minn., the son of Halvor and Martha Hegg. He graduated from Mahanomen, Minn., High School in 1918. He served with the U. S. Army in both the First and Second World Wars. He was united in marriage to Evelyn Johnson on Nov. 12, 1943, in Winger. She died May 16, 1977. Haldor worked in the Winger area until he was employed as a rural mail carrier from the McIntosh Post Office. He is survived by his sons, Paul, Pocatello, Ida., and Tom, Winger; one daughter, Eileen, Mrs. Wendell Tømmervik, Bejou, Minn.; 14 grandchildren; one sister, Carrie, Seattle, Wash.; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Melvin, and two sisters, Jennie and Clara.

Blessed be his memory.

IN MEMORIAM

Key: The name of the town was the address of the deceased. Following that is listed the name of the deceased, age, date of death and the church in which she held membership.

NORTH DAKOTA

Hampden

Mrs. Emma Dahl, 87, Nov. 5, Zoar.

Rev. Holger E. Hagen, 87, died on Sept. 19. His first parish was at Pukwana (Pukwana and St. Olaf), S. Dak. Other parishes were at Westby, Mont., King, Fosston; Nordland, Paynesville; Lake Sarah, Garvin; and Zion, Balaton, all in Minnesota.

Mrs. Martin J. Olson, Minneapolis, passed away in October. Her husband served parishes at Bethel, Portland, Ore.; Blanchardville, Wis.; Trinity, Minneapolis; and Calvary, Mora, Minn. She was the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Ole Swensen, who served congregations at both Binford and McVie, N. Dak., earlier in this century.

Rev. Jasper Swenson, 69, passed away on Oct. 12 in Fergus Falls, Minn., where he and his wife Phyllis were making their home in retirement. He served at Wallace, S. Dak., and last June spoke at the 75th anniversary of Calvary Lutheran there. He also served a parish at rural Madison, S. Dak. He is survived by his wife, two sons, two daughters, four grandsons, a brother and a sister.

Rev. W. E. Klawitter, 84, director of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement from 1960 to 1973, died in early November. His funeral was held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, on Nov. 10. He was on the faculty of the Lutheran Bible Institute, Min-

neapolis, and director of the Psalm of Life radio program from 1944-60. Earlier he had served parishes at Burkhardt, Wis., and Messiah, St. Paul, Minn., and been a Lutheran Welfare Society chaplain in Duluth, Minn.

Rev. Philip Hyland, 77, who served Buffalo Lake Lutheran, Eden, S. Dak., from 1942-46, while pastor at Peever, died on Nov. 18. His wife, the former Judith Skogerboe, was a prisoner of the Japanese for several years during World War II and wrote of those experiences for the 1987 Christmas *Ambassador*. The couple were married in 1945 upon her release and they spent 30 years as missionaries in Japan. Since 1980 Mr. Hyland had worked with youth and on evangelism efforts at Christ English Lutheran in north Minneapolis. Mrs. Hyland, three daughters, nine grandchildren, two brothers and two sisters survive him.

Blessed be the memory of these departed servants of God.

(Ed. note: Pastor Hagen installed me as pastor in my first parish, in northeastern Montana, in 1953. For his message he used the text, Malachi 2:7).

Women's Missionary Federation

In memoriam gifts

William Mathre, Morris, Ill.
Mary Ostrem, Earlville, Ill.
Anna S. Lauen, Wallace, S. Dak.
Ernest Olson, Tioga, N. Dak.
Mabel Ives, Tioga, N. Dak.
Martha Reuther, Jamestown, N. Dak.
Mrs. Steve Shanenko, Valley City, N. Dak.
Steve Shanenko, Valley City, N. Dak.
Elmer Salberg, Valley City, N. Dak.
Carl Hanson III, Valley City, N. Dak.
Eldrid Peter, Oregon
Orpha Neseth, Kenyon, Minn.
Darrell Courtright, Greenbush, Minn.
Mrs. Merten Kirkeide, Greenbush, Minn.
Alma Hodnefield, Story City, Iowa

*Blessed are
those who die
in the Lord*



A happy lot must
sure be his —
The lord, not slave,
of things —
Who values life by
what it is
And not by what
it brings.

—John Sterling

NEWS OF THE CHURCHES

Webster, S. Dak.

On Sun., Oct. 1, Rev. Lynn Wilson was installed as pastor of Lake Region Lutheran Parish (Buffalo Lake, Hope, Saron and Tabor) in a service at Tabor, rural Webster, S. Dak. Rev. Philip Haugen, AFLC Schools professor, officiated and brought the message. Reading Scripture in the service was Pastor Wilson's father, Rev. Woodrow Wilson.

Pastor Wilson is shown here, left, with his father, Pastor Woodrow Wilson, and Pastor Haugen.

Stanley, N. Dak. — An appreciation dinner was held at noon on Sun., Nov. 19, at Our Savior's Lutheran in honor of the four deacons of the church: Gary Ruden, Paul Slaamot, Roger Trulson and Gary Larson. They have been conducting the worship services and bringing the messages in the absence of a pastor. Our congregation has been richly blessed by God through the talents, gifts and strengths He has given to these men.

— Evelyn Ege
cont. on page 16



Personalities

Rev. Harold Mastad is serving as interim pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church, Grafton, N. Dak. He recently retired as pastor of Helmar Lutheran Church, Newark, Ill., conducting his last service there on November 26.

Rev. James Peterson, Goldfield, Ia., has been accepted by the Coordinating Committee on the Fellowship

Roster. Pastor Peterson, who served a parish at Mondovi, Wis. for several years, moved to Goldfield in November, where he serves the Hauge Lutheran Church, an independent congregation.

Rev. David Hinrichs, Camarillo, Calif., has resigned as the pastor of First Lutheran Church and is open to call.

1990 AMBASSADOR SCHEDULE

Here are the deadlines for The Lutheran Ambassador in 1990. All those who plan to submit material for publication during the year should pay special attention.

In addition to the emphasis listed, others may be added as the year progresses.

Monthly WMF Bible Studies will usually appear in the first issue of the month before they are used.

Please send all materials to the Editor at Newfolden, Minn. See the full address in the masthead on page 2. WMF material, however, should be sent directly to Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, 1151 Geranium Ave. E., St. Paul, Minn. 55106. Thank You.

Please save for reference!

Date of Issue	Editor's Deadline	Special Emphasis
January 9	December 16, 1989	New Year
January 23	December 30, 1989	
February 6	January 13	Patriotic
February 20	January 27	
March 6	February 10	Lent
March 20	February 24	Lent
April 3	March 10	Easter
April 17	March 24	
May 1	April 7	Mother's Day
May 15	April 21	Pre-Conference
May 29	May 5	Pentecost and Pre-Conference
		Father's Day
June 12	May 19	
June 26	June 2	
July 10	June 16	Conference Reports
August 7	July 14	Parish Education
September 4	August 11	
September 18	August 25	
October 1	A new Editor will take office.	
October 2	September 8	
October 16	September 22	Reformation
October 30	October 6	Bible Sunday
November 13	October 20	Thanksgiving
November 27	November 3	Advent
December 11	November 17	Christmas
December 25	December 1	Year's End
January 8, 1991	December 15	New Year

NEWS

Pukwana, S. Dak. — The installation service for J. Wesley Johanson a pastor of St. Olaf Lutheran, Chamberlain, and Pukwana Lutheran was held on Sun., Nov. 5, at a joint service at St. Olaf. Pastor R. Snipstead, AFLC president, officiated. A carry-in dinner and a time of fellowship followed.

St. Olaf held their Harvest Festival on Nov. 12 and Pukwana on the 19th.

Stacy, Minn. — Peter H. Bergstedt was ordained and installed as a pastor of Sunnyside Lutheran on Sun., Oct. 29, by his predecessor, Rev. Wendell Johnson. Dr. Wayne Juntenen, dean of the Inter-Lutheran Theological Seminary and Mr. Bergstedt's former pastor, participated in the service. (We will be introducing Pastor Bergstedt more fully at a later date.)

Bismarck, N. Dak. — Special evangelistic services were held at Calvary Lutheran Nov. 5-8 with Pastor Steve Kneeland, Duluth, Minn., as speaker. He spoke on the different lanes of Christian life. Several visitors from the community attended.

Over 130 people attended the Nov. 4 pancake-sausage benefit breakfast held at Calvary to aid in the payment of medical expenses incurred in the kidney transplant of one of its members, Bruce Magstadt. \$789 was raised and matching funds were supplied by Aid Association for Lutherans.

Wheatland, Ia. — On Oct. 28, Christian Lutheran provided families an alternative to Halloween with a Harvest Praise Festival. Following an afternoon praise service, the youth group served a chili supper. Children through grade six then attended a carnival with games and prizes, while the youth group participated in a hallowed barn hay bale maze that illustrated the importance of knowing the Way. All families then reunited around a campfire for fellowship.

The following weekend, Dr. Steven Lombardo of the AFLC Schools presented a seminar on lifestyle evangelism, where those who attended learned principles for sharing the Gospel with family, friends and neighbors.

Chillicothe, Ill. — Advent services were held at Our Savior's Lutheran on

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

Second-class

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - February 1 - November 30

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN NOVEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund	\$ 169,600.00	\$ 27,877.07	\$ 126,295.04	74
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	128,237.00	12,143.18	74,507.63	58
(AFLBS) . .	187,650.00	14,581.37	96,148.33	51
Home Missions.	397,564.00	27,119.60	189,100.58	48
World Missions.	325,730.00	26,935.41	207,918.44	64
Capital Investment . .	30,000.00	1,580.60	19,205.56	64
Parish Education	69,500.00	3,625.49	21,710.08	31
TOTALS	\$ 1,308,281.00	\$ 113,862.72	\$ 734,885.66	56
1987 - 1988.	\$ 1,057,504.00	\$ 99,963.49	\$ 654,021.04	62

*Goal 83%

three Thursday evenings at 7 o'clock. The themes were "In True Repentance," "In Firm Faith in His Word," and "In Humble Faith." A Christmas Eve candlelight service was held at 6 p.m.

Ersikine, Minn. — Rev. J. G. Erickson, Minneapolis, Minn, who served as interim pastor at Gosen Lutheran at one time, returned to conduct a spiritual life crusade there, Oct. 29-31.

Fosston, Minn. — A spiritual life crusade was held at Calvary Lutheran, Oct. 1-4, with Rev. Steven Lombardo, AFLC Schools, as speaker.

Arlington, S. Dak. — Calvary Lutheran hosted the South Dakota-

Nebraska District Sunday School Workshop on Sat., Oct. 28. Mrs. Ralph Tjelta, AFLC Parish Education Director, conducted the workshop with assistance from her husband, an instructor in the AFLC Schools.

Colfax, Wis. — The fall mission praise program was held at Faith Lutheran Church of Running Valley, on Sunday evening, Oct. 8, 1989. The guest speaker was Pastor John Rieth from Amery Free Lutheran. Pastor Rieth sang several solos and the Freeberg family of the local congregation also sang.

Special meetings were conducted by Pastor Philip Featherstone of Pukwana, S. Dak. from Oct. 22 - 25.