

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 22, 1990



*Love
has no
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nor
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it is
the
highest
of
all
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and
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the
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possible*

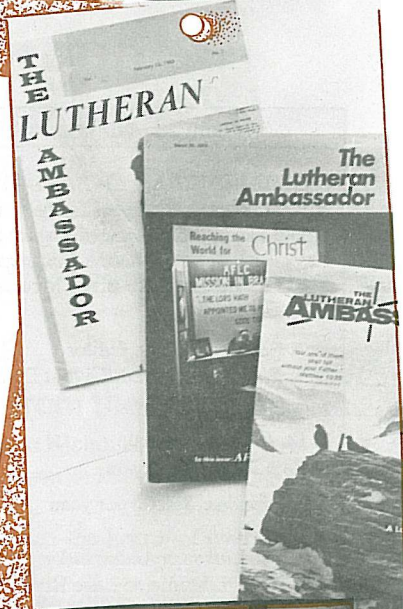


*This and That
from
Here and There*

Between
the great
things we
cannot do
and the little
things we
will not do,
the danger is
that we shall
do nothing.

God tempers
the wind to
the shorn
lamb.

English
Proverb



POST CARD
It was only a little post card
But it brightened a gloomy day,
And set my mind a-thinking
Of a friend now far away.
I was happy to think she remembered
And took the time to write,
And although it was only a post card,
I thought of it into the night.
I recalled many hours spent together
And many a kindness shown,
In my far off girlhood home,
Perhaps, if we thought more often
Of friends who are now far away,
We would write a little post card
And send it on its way.

— Selected



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LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

Volume 28 Number 4

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Have you looked at a picture of a saint lately? If you haven't, why don't you look in an encyclopedia under the heading "Saints"? Chances are that you will see a picture of a "saint" as being a severe-looking man whose face would crack if he smiled. Somehow we get the impression that a saint is someone who is barely enduring life here on earth, who cannot wait until he gets to heaven where he can enjoy himself.

But that is not the picture that we get in the Scriptures. A saint is a believer in Christ. As a believer he has all the joys and sorrows that anyone else has. He is not a super Christian. He is afflicted with all the joys and fears of life. He struggles and strives to be more Christlike. We remember what Paul writes in his epistles. First, he says that he is the least of the apostles and is not fit to be called an apostle because he persecuted the Church of God. Then after he had been a Christian for a longer period, he called himself the least of all the believers. Finally, when he was about to give his life for God, he calls himself the chief of sinners. Did that mean that he was going backward in his Christian walk? Of course not! It was simply that the more he saw of the perfection of Christ, the more he saw of his own sinfulness.

This did not prevent him from being happy. In fact, some of the most encouraging words are given by Paul at this time. Look at Phil. 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." Does this sound like an unhappy Christian? No, a thousand times No! As he fixed his gaze on Christ, he was filled with a holy joy and peace that only Christ can give. Or look at I Cor. 13:6, where Paul says that love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. When the truth of Paul's sinfulness was accompanied by the truth of Christ's sinlessness, it was an occasion to rejoice.

Are you a saint? You certainly are

Happy saints

if you have confessed your sins to Christ and have opened your heart to Him. You see, a saint is one who is justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

In most of the epistles we read that they are addressed to all the saints in that congregation. For example, the letter to the Romans is addressed to the beloved of God in Rome, called as saints (1:7). But when you read the Epistle, you find that they had many faults and shortcomings. They weren't sinless, but they were saved by Christ. The same can be said about everyone today who trusts in Jesus.

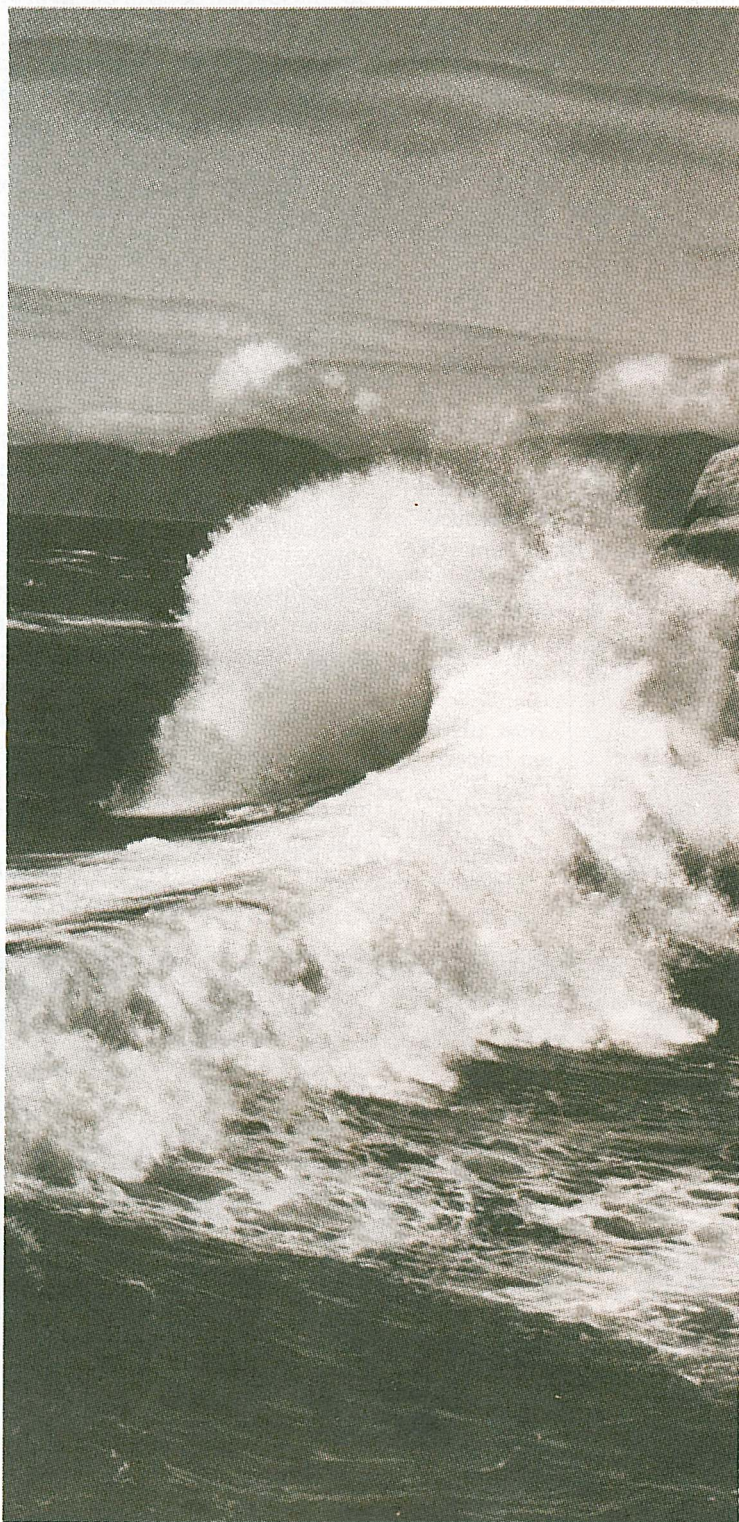
A young man had come to faith in Christ and rejoiced in the joy and wonder of belonging to Jesus Christ. But then the devil attacked. Every sin that this man had committed came to his mind. He was about to despair when he remembered a verse that he learned. He took out his Testament and turned to John 1:13. Although he was by himself, he quoted the verse out loud — "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to be called the Children of God, even unto those who believe on His Name." With that his peace returned and he went his way rejoicing.

Should a Christian be happy? By all means! If we believe the good news of the Gospel, let it be seen in our contact with other people.

We have the Gospel! We have the Word of God! We have the good news brought to us at every service. Let us rejoice in the salvation in Christ. Then we will be "happy saints."



*Pastor
James Asp*



Cherith

“Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook of Cherith” (I Kings 17:3).

God’s servants must be taught the value of the hidden life. The man who is to take a high place before his fellows must take a low place before his God. We must not be surprised if sometimes our Father says: “There, Child, thou has had enough of this hurry, and publicity, and excitement; get thee hence, and hide thyself by the brook — hide thyself in the Cherith of the sick chamber, or in the Cherith of bereavement, or in some solitude from which the crowds have ebbed away.” Happy is he who can reply, “This, Thy will, is also mine; I flee unto Thee to hide me. Hide me in the secret of Thy Tabernacle, and beneath the covert of Thy wings.”

Every saintly soul that would wield great power with men must win it in some hidden Cherith.

Our Lord found His Cherith at Nazareth, and in the wilderness of Judea, amid the olives of Bethany, and the solitude of Gadara. None of us, therefore, can dispense with some Cherith where the sounds of human voices are exchanged for the waters of quietness which are fed from the Throne, and where we may taste the sweets and imbibe the power of a life hidden with Christ.

— F. B. Meyer.

Saved from kicking horses

I have (also) had narrow escapes from what could have caused serious injury from kicking horses. Like the time when there were some horses in a pasture across the road from our place. When I had cut the sweet corn in our garden, I carried the stalks to the horses with a fork. As I came up to them, one horse swung around and kicked. It missed me, but knocked the fork out of my hands so it sailed through the air, I think at least fifty feet; it may have been more. When horses kick with both hind feet, they are powerful. There have been incidents when a horse has killed another horse with one kick to the head.

On a very windy winter day, I was on my way home from the creamery when a cornstalk blew across the road in front of the horses. They got scared and took off as fast as they could go without galloping. I let them go on tight reins and when we had to make a

sharp turn onto a side road, I did not rein them in to slow them down, but let them make the turn as fast as they could go. As they did, the sled skidded over and hit the other bank so hard the milk can I was sitting on tipped over. I was thrown out of the box, but as I had a good hold of the reins, when I hit the bank the horses stopped almost short, as I was too heavy to drag by the bits in their mouths. I had been driving enough by this time to know better than to take a sharp turn like that, and it was foolish of me not to slow them down; however, I was not hurt, so even in our foolishness, God many times watches over us.

"As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him" (II Sam. 22:31).

From *Miracles* by
George R. Nelson, Sr.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

Paul the Apostle II Cor. 1:3-4

A new vocabulary

When a person gets saved and his heart is cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ, something should happen to his speech. One man said that when he accepted Christ as Savior, he lost half of his vocabulary. You can imagine what his conversation was like before his salvation. To those who minimize or think nothing of the significance of careless usage of words (whether they be swear words, profane words or taking God's name in vain), they need to take Christ's sobering words to heart when He said: "By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned." The words that come out of your mouth reveal what's in your heart.

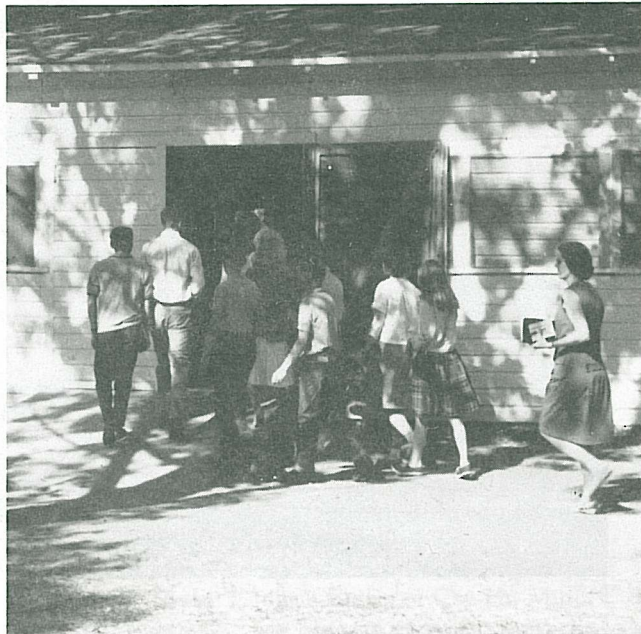
*From a sermon by
Rev. Herbert Franz*

TESTIMONY

A man's action is but the picture book of his creed.



Mr. and Mrs. Ed Mathison, Bagley, Minn.



Campers entering the tabernacle at Lake Geneva Bible Camp, Alexandria, Minn., site of the first AFLC Family Camps.



The early days of Amery Free Lutheran Church, Amery, Wis.



1985 Luther League Convention.

PRAYER

Prayer with obedience is power; prayer without
obedience is presumption. —Bosch

The unanswered prayer

O desert that's near to Beersheba,
What were you not destined to see?
For, lo, all disheartened and weary,
Sat under a juniper tree
That fearless and daring strong prophet
Who had battled the priests of Baal...
And in the conflict had been
victorious,
Yet behold, grim fears him assail.

And list', O ye sands of the desert,
He requests for himself, "Let me die."
What wild rolling surge of sadness
Can be heard through that anguished
cry.

Just lately he prayed on Mount
Carmel;
His prayer then was answered with fire,
now when he prays in the desert,
God deigns not to answer his desire.

No, wilderness, then you did witness
No angel was sent to his aid,
For he should not die in the desert,
Ah, no, that should ne'er be his fate.
And afterward, up on Mount Horeb,
We know how God dealt with His
own:

Not in fire or quivering earthquake,
Not in storms or whirlwind's groan.

No, listen! The Lord of creation
And of heaven's iridescent throne,

When He spoke to His weary servant,
In that still, small voice was known.
And He bids him put on his armor
And again go back to the fray...
But, oh, what marvelous greatness
Was in store for some future day!

When Elijah prayed in the desert,
Most surely he then did not know
That some happy day, without dying,
Up to heaven's land he would go.
And the moaning winds of the desert
Of their dirges then were bereft,
For no strains of funeral marches
Were heard when the chariot left.

Perchance in some wilderness journey,
We sigh that the day is too long
And that all without and within us
Apparently seems to go wrong.
Rise up, and follow the Leader,
Our Master, Who knoweth the way,
For the storms and conflicts will
vanish
With victory and joy some day.

Alma Margarethe Nelson
1882-1975

(Alma Nelson, a nurse by profes-
sion, was a sister of Sister Lena Nel-
son, one-time superintendent of the
former Lutheran Deaconess Hospital in
Minneapolis, Minn.)

For pastors

In Thy providence, dear Lord,
another year has dawned upon us and
further opportunities for service run on
ahead of us like an open road. Grant us
wisdom and willingness to use them
for Thy glory.

Be specially merciful to us pastors,
for we are specially tempted and in
exceptional need of Thee. Men expect
us to dwell apart and walk with Thee,
Christlike and saintly, and we are so
pitifully human.

C. A. Wendell

When school begins

Dear Father, now that school begins
I ask Your help each day,
Not only in my lessons,
But guide me in Your Way.

Help me to be quiet,
To think before I say
An unkind word to others
When we are out at play.

Help me to be honest,
To be fair, and never shirk
The hardest task — and to be neat
And truthful in my work.

Help me not to envy
The boys and girls who make
The highest marks, but help me
To do my best for Jesus' sake.

Monica Williams
(*The Child's Friend*)

Home Missions

THE GREAT NEED

—by Pastor Robert D. Giles
Tucson, Ariz.

There is perhaps a greater need for Home Missions as we enter this last decade of the 1900s than there has been at any other time during this present century. In the 1940s and '50s, during and following the Second World War, as many people were moving from the mid-western states to serve in the armed forces or to take advantage of jobs offered in the defense industries on the west coast of our country, home mission congregations were being planted in many of the new communities and those congregations grew rapidly.

For the most part, those newcomers who were of Lutheran background had come from smaller farms and towns and from churches whose pastors had been teaching the Bible as the inspired Word of God and had faithfully taught their parishioners the way of salvation in Christ as only Savior. These young families gladly welcomed the establishment of new congregations in the new communities where they were making their homes. Many gladly joined, supported those new home mission churches and became faithful members. It was a day of almost ready-made congregations.

How different it is today! Now as the 1990s begin, we are faced with an almost totally unchurched population living in and around our larger cities. Many of the adults who live near our churches have little if any solid church background. Many have very little real knowledge of the Bible as God's Holy Word. What religion a number of them have has been gleaned from occasional listening to TV evangelists of variable background. The children have been raised on television cartoons rather than on Bible stories and Sunday School. If such people seek a local church, they seek one which will cater to their own personal desires, which will give them a bit of entertainment and make them feel good. To such, doctrine means very little.

The need for Home Missions is still here with us. In fact, I believe it's greater than ever, for we are faced with an almost unchurched nation, and among those who have had some background experience with a church, many have been led astray by liberal teach-

ings to the point that they are confused and hardly recognize the truth.

More than anything else we need to see conservative mission congregations established in most every town and in almost every neighborhood of our larger cities. Such congregations must be manned by faithful, well-trained, Bible-believing pastors who themselves have experienced the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and who will be faithful to their calling to preach both the Law and the Gospel. Such men must not be sent out to entertain the multitudes with clever gimmicks and programs but to confront men and women who are perishing for lack of knowledge, with the truth of God's Holy Word and with the offer of the Savior who has died for their sins and has risen again victoriously to give them the hope of life everlasting. America today, in the 1990s, must be approached like one would approach a new and entirely unreached foreign mission field whose people have never heard the true message of the Savior.

The doors of opportunity are wide open. The Savior is calling: "Son, go work today in My vineyard!" The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few. We must pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.

Home Missions in the 1990s and beyond will not be an easy task but it will carry with it great challenges and especially great rewards: the reward of seeing men and women, yes, whole families awakened to the truth and accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. It will take men of courage and vision to fulfill the great commission of re-evangelizing our nation for Christ in the few years we have left before He comes again. Not everyone is able to go out as a foreign missionary, but all true believers on the home scene can be effective witnesses to their neighbors, their family and their friends. America can once again be a truly Christian nation, sending out the Gospel to all the world. Home Missions is the place to begin.

"Many...who live near our churches have little if any solid church background."

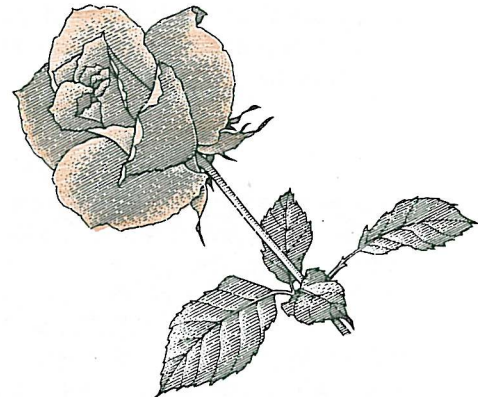
The flower garden

I have a lovely garden
that my Lord prepared for me,
And through the beauty of flowers
His love for me I see;
I love to watch them growing
While their leaves and buds unfold,
And the dewdrops and the sunshine
Make them glitter bright as gold.

Our God Who clothes the lilies,
And causes them to grow,
Is surely fully able
To care for us, we know.
Our life is like God's flowers,
Unfolding day by day,
Until He takes us home to heaven,
Forever there to stay.

Matthew 6:28, 29 and Isaiah 40:8

Laura Norum



WORLD MISSION NEWS

Brazil

I want God's will

My name is Margarida Maria Pelissari. I was born in the interior of the state of Espirito Santo, in a town called Sao Gabriel da Palha. I come from a Roman Catholic family background and my father was very devout. I have eight brothers and sisters. In 1977, when I was 13, I went to live with my aunt. I was still living with her in 1979, when I received the sad news that my father had died. I moved back home and stayed until 1981 when I went to live with relatives in Vitoria. I started working in 1984 and worked at various jobs until 1987. I then decided to move back home to be near my family, but I only stayed two months before moving back to Vitoria to work.

Today I know that all that happened in my life was planned by God. On Oct. 18, 1987, when I was living with a cousin, we received an invitation to a commemoration. I thought we were going to a wedding, so when I found out it was a church service I almost didn't go because I felt I wasn't dressed properly to enter God's house. But as it was, I ended up going. During the service something really caught my attention and that was the unity of the believers. This was what brought me back to the evening service. I started

becoming interested in the church activities, especially in the evangelistic crusade that was to begin. On Wednesday, the 21st of October, I went to church and there I made my first step towards Christ by raising my hand. I then went forward and someone shared with me about the wonderful gift of eternal life that the Lord Jesus gives us. I felt that my life needed to change. I didn't have the wonderful peace that Christ gives, so I confirmed my decision with a prayer, asking Jesus to enter my life. Since then Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior of my life.

I serve a real and marvelous God. Last year I thought about coming to the Bible School to study. Pastor David Abel (my pastor) had talked to me

about that possibility. I started praying about it, but at the time it didn't work out. I had already decided not to come when Pastor Carlos Eduardo counseled me to come. I kept saying that if it was the will of God I'd come, but at the same I had reached the decision not to come. But God continued speaking to me. I didn't have anything to hold me back from coming. God used people to encourage me and now I thank God for having provided for me to come.

This year I want to dedicate my time and perfect the talents God has given me. He has been doing this and continues to do so. I want to develop my work with children and I pray that God will continue to use me. If God calls me to continue working in a church or to study the second year of Bible School, I am ready to do so.

When I leave here to go back to Vitoria, only God knows what I will do. I plan on studying magisterio (elementary ed.) and work with children. I ask you to pray with me that God may be revealing His will for my life. The Lord is who guides and watches over me. Phil. 4:13: "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me."

Margarida is attending the Lar Parana Lutheran Church this school year and is helping out with a neighborhood Sunday School on Sunday afternoons. Her home church is Vitoria Lutheran.



Margarida Pelissari

from a pastor's study

PATHWAYS

One winter day, my son and I flew over an area that I often hunted when we lived on the Iron Range of Minnesota. As I looked down, I was amazed at how the network of pathways in the forest stood out in sharp relief. Most of these paths were made by animals as they formed habits of travel from feeding and watering areas to resting and sleeping areas. Other avenues were made by men in quest of pulpwood, saw logs and firewood. In the Boundary Waters Canoe Area wilderness there are pathways called portages between lakes and around dangerous "white water" on the rivers.

Ps. 8:8 speaks of pathways through the seas that fish use. Our Creator has given fish such as eels, which hatch in the Caribbean, the capacity to use these pathways to wend their way to the very streams that their parents grew up in. At adulthood they return on these same pathways to the place of their birth to start the next generation. The most famous pathway of all is mentioned in Ps. 77:19, 20, when God led His people through the parted waters of the Red Sea to safety. Ps. 136:15 teaches us that this same pathway became a watery grave to Pharaoh and his army when he, in arrogance and unbelief, thought he could utilize the provision of the Lord for his own gain.

A path is also the regular methods by which one lives his life or shows his character. This definition is used of both God and man. Solomon, in

Proverbs 2, teaches that there are two paths by which we can walk. There are the paths of justice (vs. 1-12) and the paths of darkness (vs. 13-19), which result in eternal loss. The ways of God are the paths of life; they are the old paths where we find rest for our souls (Jer. 6:16a). Paul teaches us that the incidents of the Old Testament were written for our instruction (I Cor. 10:6). The rest of Jer. 6 records the sad result of rejection by an unwilling heart. "We will not walk in it" (v. 16b). Neither would they listen.

For the past few years I have been deer hunting in the area of my youth. I have searched for the old pathways that I used when walking along the Kettle River, only to find them overgrown with brush and blocked with downed trees. I mentioned this to a more recent resident of the area. He could not understand why anyone would want to walk along the river in the first place. What he did not know is that the river has not changed. The good fishing holes are still there, the heavy deer trails still cross in the same areas. Those neglected pathways lead to good fishing and hunting but are now unknown to the current residents. It would take a lot of time and hard work to restore those old paths.

Heb. 12 tells about the discipline of the Lord in our lives. It is vital for us to accept that discipline which will result in time and effort in restoration of a godly life. Vs. 12-15 tells us why we are to do this. "Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God: lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled..." (NKJV).

When I take people into the BWCA, I need to know the area that we are going into as well as being alert to any dangers that could bring harm to those in my care. In order for us to be alert to

—by Pastor Henry Johansen
Willmar, Minn.

the spiritual dangers of those for whom we are responsible, God has given us an ancient principle to follow, in Is. 58:6-12, "Is not this the fast which I chose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, and undo the bands of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and to bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call and the Lord will answer you; you will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, and if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness, and your gloom will become like midday. And the Lord will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring whose waters do not fail. And those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will raise up the age old foundations; and you will be called the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of the paths (margin reading) in which to dwell" (NASB).

David recorded his assurance in Ps. 16:11, "Thou will make known to me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever" (NASB). This same assurance can be ours as well, through living faith in the One who came in David's line, our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He prepared the path to the Father (Jn. 14:6) by His sinless life, His passion and death, His resurrection and ascension to the Father's right hand. As we enter Lent, it is a good time to turn to Him, for some to turn from a dead faith to a living, vibrant relationship in full assurance of salvation in Christ. For others, to a much closer walk with Him.

SCRAPBOOK ISSUE

The past few years we have put out a "scrapbook" issue of the *Ambassador* each year. It has been an attempt to stay away from longer articles and to catch up in a small way on items that accumulate and somehow haven't made it into print up to that point. This year there's an added reason to clear out some things — so that the new editor (Oct. 1) can start out with as clean a slate as possible.

Speaking of clearing or cleaning out things, we are reminded of this desk upon which this is being written, and upon which most of our writing has been done since 1963. Over the course of a year a good deal of material piles up on it. The stacks just get higher and higher. We don't have many rules here, but one of our "musts" in getting ready for Christmas each year is to clear most of the accumulation off the desk before Christmas Eve. Into boxes and bags it goes and it is put out of sight for sorting, filing and disposal at a later date.

Then over the holidays and into January we enjoy the satisfaction of an uncluttered desk. But slowly and surely an accumulation begins building again. It is definitely perceptible on this late January day.

After a cold, cold spell in December, January has been much warmer than normal for northwestern Minnesota. There is very little snow, something that is true over much of the Upper Midwest, a situation that may have changed by the time you read this. Significant moisture is needed for the next growing season in whatever form, snow or rain.

It is Bible conference season, too. A number of conferences are being held throughout the AFLC. Good programs have been arranged. Try to attend the one nearest you. You won't be sorry.

This isn't a true scrapbook issue after all. There are too many current items which must get in now. But we trust you will be blessed also by the scrapbook items we have been able to include.

ARTICLE II

The congregation consists of believers who, by using the means of grace and the spiritual gifts as directed by the Word of God, seek salvation and eternal blessedness for themselves and for their fellow men" (*Fundamental Principles* of the AFLC).

Georg Sverdrup wrote: "That first congregation in Jerusalem was both the whole Christian church and it was the only local congregation. That day the one was neither larger nor wider in extent than the other."

As local groups of believers came into being in other communities, they, too, were the church and in totality they were the church. And the local church was the basic unit ("the right form of the kingdom of God on earth").

The ideal is that the organized congregation on earth is made up only of believers in God through Christ. Early in Christian history at a place called (Syrian) Antioch, the followers of Jesus Christ were given the name "Christians." That might have been done in derision or as a put down. Even if that was the case, it came to be a name gladly and humbly (and proudly) worn. In our day so much misunderstanding has arisen as to what a Christian is that people have taken to modifying the word Christian by adding adjectives for better description, such as Bible-believing, born again, true, sincere, personal, etc. One could long for the time when simply saying a person was a Christian (a believer in and follower of Christ) was enough.

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The *Fundamental Principles* are a major factor in making the AFLC unique among Lutheran bodies.

These principles were first drawn up when the Lutheran Free Church came into being in 1897. On Saturday, Oct. 27, 1962, the present AFLC was born when the following resolution was adopted: "Resolved that we as a conference continue the Association of Independent Congregations under the Lutheran Free Church *Guiding Principles*."

Critics of the AFLC would say that we have only these principles and therefore do not have a constitution. We need only consult Webster's Dictionary to answer that. The definition of the word "constitution" is as follows: "the fundamental laws or *principles* that normally govern the operation of a state or association; a document recording such laws and principles." Examining our *Fundamental Principles* and

Rules for Work, we find that the above definition fits them exactly.

So it is not for the lack of a constitution that we say that the AFLC is not a "synod." It is rather the content of these principles that sets us apart in such a unique way.

What is it about these principles that is so different?

First of all, they assure the absolute autonomy of the local congregation. That was the goal back in the 1890s when they were formulated. The central idea in the lives and work of the two men who were instrumental in bringing the Lutheran Free Church into existence in 1897 was: "A living and free congregation." Along with that they emphasized "A pastoral training adapted to the Christian congregation."

Their emphasis was that the congregation is the central idea. That is stated in the very first principle, "According to the Word of God, the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth." It was clearly stated that the

EDITORIALS

How are new members added to the congregation? Certainly, for infants and young children through Baptism. As to adults, it is interesting to note some things Sverdrup said on the subject.

"It is the Lord's command that we are to 'compel them to come in,' and it is, therefore, not our responsibility to investigate whether those who enter are wearing the wedding garment. The Lord Himself will examine them in His own time" (*The Heritage of Faith*, Augsburg Publishing House: Writings of Georg Sverdrup translated by Melvin A. Helland.).

And, "We insist therefore, that the congregation must be gathered by the means of God's Word. The invitation, persuasion, and compulsion of the Word are the only means to be used to bring people into the congregation. If God's Spirit can move a man to seek membership in a congregation, then he is a real addition even if he has not yet attained peace with God in faith. Unless he is so moved, he is a liability to the congregation" (Sverdrup: Helland).

Balanced against those two statements is also this word by Sverdrup: "We must be aware of the fact that every congregation is God's church. Every congregation has been bought by the blood of Christ; every congregation is one of the seven lampstands seen by John in his vision. Each of them must be a manifestation of the body of Christ in the world. We know that we cannot discern the heart; undoubtedly many will enter who do not wear the wedding garment. Nevertheless, to gather a congregation is not simply a matter of inscribing names in a book. To join a congregation is to say, 'From now on I shall be a witness for Jesus Christ. He bought me with His blood'" (Sverdrup: Helland).

The somewhat contrasting statements by Sverdrup reveal the tension felt by pastors, boards of deacons and congrega-

tions themselves in receiving new members. Assuredly no one wants to look upon the acceptance of new members as "simply a matter of inscribing names in a book."

More will be said about the spiritual state of a congregation in regard to later Articles, chiefly Article No. 4.

The members of a congregation are to use the means of grace, that is, the Word of God and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Constitutions of local churches lay great stress on the importance of the Word and Sacraments in the life of the fellowship. The Bible is God's Word to the church. It is that which points out the way to God and gives directions for the pilgrim walk. Baptism is the Sacrament of a new birth. The Lord's Supper is the oft repeated Sacrament which strengthens and encourages the believer along the road.

Then there are the spiritual gifts. They are listed in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, to name the best known places. Sverdrup says, "Each believer has his spiritual gift (gift of grace) and is responsible for using it for the building up of the Body of Christ" (the church).

Article 4 says that the believers use the means of grace and spiritual gifts for their salvation and eternal blessedness, as well as for others. The latter can refer to some who may be in the congregation and also to people to the ends of the earth. When believers seek their own salvation they are pressing on to the final salvation or goal, which is attained only at death (or the return of Christ) when they are removed from sin's presence. As long as they are in this life they walk in danger, as the old hymn puts it. Hence, it is necessary for believers, for Christians, to buoy one another up and give aid for the daily struggles of life. How good if this support can come through one's own congregation.

PRESIDENT

congregation in its outward form is not pure in the sense that it does not contain hypocrites and such who are not truly God's children. "It is therefore the sacred obligation of the congregation to purify itself by the quickening preaching of the Word of God, by earnest admonition and exhortation, and by expelling the openly sinful and perverse" (Principle No. 4).

The freedom of the local congregation continues to be one of the greatest strengths of the *Fundamental Principles*. It is a part of the very nature of the congregation to be free. How clearly that is stated in Principles 5, 10 and 11. Here we have these statements: "The congregation directs its own affairs, subject to the Word and Spirit of God, and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical authority above itself." "Domination by a majority of congregations over a minority is to be rejected." "Agencies found desirable for conducting the joint activities of congregations, such as conferences, committees, officers, etc., cannot in a Lutheran Free Church impose any obligations or restrictions, exert any compulsions, or lay any burden upon the individual congregation,

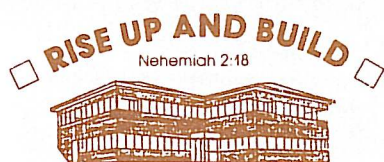
but have the right only to make recommendations to, and requests of, congregations and individuals.

The freedom spoken of was more than liberty from ecclesiastical forms, customs and ideas inherited from the State Church of Norway. It was also a freedom from the bondage of sin, and a willingness to act in a manner pleasing to God and in conformity with His will. A congregation cannot be truly free, except the Son of God make it free.

The emphasis on the freedom of the congregation was the result of intense study of the Scriptures by men who struggled to build the church of Christ as they thought it ought to be built. This freedom is precious to us and one that we must continue to defend.

But freedom is not license. The leaders of the old LFC taught, as we also teach today, that there is no true liberty apart from a corresponding consciousness of responsibility.

Principles 6, 7, 8 and 12 deal with that sense of responsibility. They state that congregations have an obligation to work with other congregations for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, at home and abroad. That means that we



NOW IS THE TIME

When is it time to build? Ecc. 3:1 and 3:3 address this question: "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: (3b) a time to break down, and a time to build up." The decision to build has been made by our last conference.

Quite naturally, there are questions raised. "Is now the proper time?" "Should we not first make sure that our budgets are met?" "Is there truly a real need for an Administration Building?" "Will this building serve the AFLC or will it serve Headquarters only?" And, the questions seem to never end!

It is the strong conviction of our Co-ordinating Committee and our

Finance Committee that if we wait for the perfect, opportune time, the ideal will never come! Our financial situation insofar as budget being met has always been very tight — and usually short.

As for need, it is urgent. The proposed Administration Building will serve the needs of all the ministries of our AFLC. In varying degrees ranging from acute to not so acute, working efficiency is difficult to attain. As one who is working here for the first time — and only temporarily — I am impressed at the patience of every employee who must cope with this space limitation.

Truly, this new building is a necessary service to all the AFLC!! Please pray, that all of us would share in the vision to "RISE UP AND BUILD."

Clifford E. Johnson

Laborers in His kingdom

God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." All along the history of redemption He has been using human agents to help Him in extending and establishing His kingdom in the world. Note some of His "chosen vessels:" Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, the prophets and evangelists, the church fathers, the reformers, the ministers of the Gospel, the Aarons and Hurs who have upheld their hands. Thus, we are all "laborers together with God."

L. S. Keyser

Letter to the editor

AMAZED

When I read in your November 14th issue your editorial "Precious Name" I was amazed.

Have you been faced by a catastrophic condition suddenly, that gave no time for intellectual reflection?

I like to believe that our president is too well-bred that profanity would linger in his subconscious. Nor would I judge him to be.

Would he not address himself to Him from whom he expects his strength?

Otto Dingeldein

Cape Girardeau, Mo.

(Our editorial stands.—Ed.)

need to be in prayerful consideration of the task and opportunities given to the AFLC in ministry. May we continue to study and practice the principles which we claim as our heritage. May the Spirit of God direct us in our obedience to His will as we live our daily lives as Christian stewards.

—*Pastor Richard Snipstead*

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences – February 1 - January 31, 1990

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN JANUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund	\$ 169,600.00	\$ 36,219.96	\$188,681.63	1.11
Schools - (AFLTS)..	128,237.00	17,980.87	101,180.05	79
(AFLBS)..	187,650.00	30,397.24	142,524.03	76
Home Missions.	397,564.00	61,239.67	274,425.72	69
World Missions.	325,730.00	62,478.83	301,061.33	92
Capital Investment ..	30,000.00	4,376.00	25,011.73	83
Parish Education	69,500.00	11,786.22	40,215.10	58
TOTALS	\$ 1,308,281.00	\$224,478.79	\$1,073,099.59	82
1988 - 1989	\$ 1,057,504.00	\$187,098.17	\$1,014,732.17	96

*Goal 100%

The Lord begins as a suppliant asking of us all that we possess, in order that as we surrender everything to Him He may present Himself to our hearts as the possessor and giver of the boundless riches of His glory.

F. Hammarsten

Meet the 1990 AFLTS graduates

Milton S. Flores



Hometown: Leon, Gto., Mexico.
Son of Rev. and Mrs. Samuel R. Flores.
Home Congregation: Gethsemane Lutheran Church,
Celaya, Mexico.
Graduate of the Univ. of Guanajuato, Mexico
Special Interests: reading, drawing, music.

Personal Testimony:

"For God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid,
for the Lord my God is my strength and my song" (Is. 12:2).

God gave me the gift of life in a loving Christian home,
whose parents loved, believed and served Him in the Chris-
tian ministry. They also instructed their children in the fear
of the Lord. I thank God for that and for keeping me and
giving me the assurance of salvation particularly through my
Sunday School and confirmation training while living in a
very Catholic country. As a teenager, my mom's sudden
death helped me face the reality of my personal relationship
with God, the need of a personal Savior, and to live accord-
ing to His will. Through the years God helped me receive a
Master's Degree in Education and to experience different
activities in areas I never expected, working as an officer in
public administration and teaching in high school. I thank
God for His merciful grace, His patience and care until this
day. I thank God for my family, for my home congregation
and for my country.

Seminary Experience:

Though I was involved in church activity since my early
youth, I had no opportunity to start seminary. Then the
opportunity came from the AFLC, but I was unwilling to
come because I enjoyed my job. But I had no peace in my
heart until God gave me the desire to attend AFLTS. Now I
thank God for this time of my life here at the seminary. God
is faithful! It has been years of spiritual blessings through
the solid and Biblical teaching, Phil. 1:6. My internship at
Triumph Lutheran Church in Nogales, Arizona, under the
supervision of Pastor Ted Kennedy was the highlight of my
training. Now I am looking forward to the future and I know
that God will continue His work also in Mexico, where God
has called me to serve Him. All is in His hands, Rom. 15:30.

Harry N. Gimberg



Hometown: Belmond, Iowa.
Son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Harry N. Gimberg.
Married to Janeen A. Galland.
Home Congregation: King of Glory Lutheran, Eden Prairie,
Minnesota, Leslie Galland, pastor.
Graduated from Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa.
Special Interests: hiking, reading, and gardening.

Personal Testimony:

I was baptized into the Christian faith at Trinity Lutheran
Church in Rhinebeck, New York. My home was a Christian
one where the Word of God was considered inspired and
inerrant. After the death of my parents I came to live with
my mother's sister and her husband, Arthur and Mary Trager
in Belmond, Iowa. Their godly example and firm commit-
ment to the Word of God proved to be the tool our Lord used
to bring me to personal saving faith in Christ. My aunt and
uncle are now my parents and their love for Christ and me
has had a profound impact. During my years at college the
call into full-time ministry was confirmed in my heart. The
Lord used II Timothy 4:1-5 to direct me into the ministry.
Through prayer and the encouragement of my folks and my
home congregation in Iowa, St. Olaf Lutheran, I came to
AFLTS.

Seminary Experience:

These years spent at seminary have rounded me as a
Christian. Godly teachers whose lives and teaching are firm-
ly based in the Word has proved to be a blessing and encour-
agement. My internship under Pastor David Molstre in
Fargo, North Dakota, and Glyndon, Minnesota, was a
tremendous opportunity to grow in my Christian faith. The
added blessing of Janeen made 1989 a highlight. We pray as
a couple that God will use our lives to bring honor and glory
to His Name.

Richard P. Larson



Hometown: Clarissa, Minnesota.

Married to Deanna Ninette Jaeger of Cottonwood, Minnesota.
Children: David James, 9, John Robert, 7, Rachel Elizabeth, 5 months.

Home Congregation: Immanuel Lutheran Church, Clarissa.
Graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.

Special interests: sports, travel, outdoors, people.

Personal Testimony:

God has been very gracious to me. He began His work when I was baptized. He worked as my parents trained me according to the Word of God. God made me realize that I was a sinner and needed to confess my need of His Son in my life. He did this through the preaching of the Word at an L.E.M. Midwinter Conference and I went forward when the invitation was given. The birth of our first child was another event that God used to call me to a greater commitment to Him and to His service. Through many deaths God showed me that only His Word and people's souls are eternal. By His grace He has called me to serve Him and minister His Word.

Seminary Experience:

God has been so good to us while in seminary. He has provided for all our needs. Being able to sit under the teaching of His Word on a full-time basis has been great. Many opportunities to preach and teach the Word have been made available during my seminary days and it is great to see the Word at work in the hearts and lives of people.

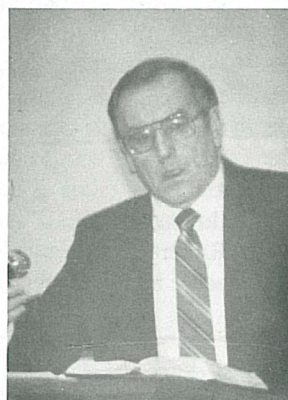
My year of internship was spent at St. Paul's Lutheran in Cloquet, Minnesota. Pastor Michael Brandt supervised my training and the year was excellent. I had many opportunities to share the Word with those who had particular needs. It was so encouraging to see the Word at work. God provided us with a daughter as we completed internship and the new life is a great joy. God is so good.

God has blessed us abundantly during the past four years while a part of AFLTS. My family and I are looking forward to the completion of seminary and then, by His grace, an opportunity to serve Him in an AFLC congregation.

Missions Conference held



Missionaries Carol and George Knapp.



Evening speaker, Rev. Don Richman.

On February 4 - 7, the AFLC Missions Conference was held on the Schools' campus. "Compelled By The King's Command" was the theme. Featured speakers were: Rev. Don Richman, Rev. Ted Kennedy, Mr. Gene Nurkka and Rev. George Knapp.

One student commented, "This conference meant more to me as it continued. It created in me a desire to truly live for Jesus."

West Coast District Bible Conference and WMF Rally

The West Coast annual Bible Conference will be held Mar. 2-4 at Elim Lutheran Church, Lake Stevens, Wash., Richard Gunderson, pastor. Guest speaker for the conference will be Dr. Francis W. Monseth, dean, Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary.

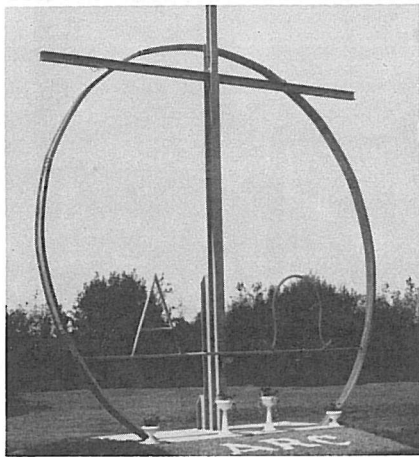
Prior to the conference, on Mar. 2, the District Women's Missionary Federation spring rally will be held, beginning at 9:30 a.m., also at Elim Lutheran.

District people should watch for local announcements.

OMISSION

The Letter to the Editor, "The New Service Bulletin," in the Jan. 23 issue was written by Pastor Joel T. Lohafer, Bruce, S. Dak. His name was inadvertently omitted as the sender. We are sorry.

The ARC Family Life Circle



(The following should have been included in the Jan. 23 issue. It was inadvertently omitted. The picture of the Circle is repeated here.)

FAMILY CAMP — Grandpas, grandmas, uncles, aunts, dads, moms, teenagers, children, toddlers, babies: worshipping, praying, eating together, this is what Family Camp is all about. However, last year's Family Camp was a special camp as we celebrated the tenth year of the ARC's ministry.

To celebrate this special event, a service was held at 11 Saturday morning to dedicate the ARC Family Life Circle. This sculpture was built by the ARC staff. It consists of a circle 33 feet in circumference, a cross 45 feet high, with a cross bar 30 feet wide. The lower portion of the circle includes the sign for the Alpha and Omega. It is set into a cement base and includes a marble plaque which reads, "In recognition of the grace of God in providing for this facility. Dedicated on this tenth anniversary of the ARC, 1989."

All the materials for the sculpture came from the dismantled radar towers at the ARC.

We asked for suggestions from the campers for a name for the sculpture. Of the names submitted, "ARC Family Life Circle" was chosen.

The dedication service included two hymns, "To God Be the Glory" and "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" by the campers. Pastor John Rieth, ARC Board member, was the service leader. Cliff Seldal, chairman of the Board,

led in Scripture and prayer. A men's trio sang "According to Thy Loving Kindness." Testimonies were shared by Rick Rasmussen and Lucille Thundercloud. Dr. Francis Monseth gave the meditation, based on I Samuel 7:12 and dedicated the ARC Family Life Circle. The dedication service included the following:

"The cross and the circle we dedicate today is placed at the entrance for all to know that the price of redemption has been paid for the whole world (the circle). The never-ending God (also the circle) is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega (the A and the Ω), which is really the ministry of the ARC."

The service concluded with the Camp Choir singing "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" and closing prayer by Allen Anderson, ARC Board member.

It isn't too early to be making plans to attend one of the Family Camps at the ARC this summer. The first camp is July 1-7 with Pastors Philip Haugen and Peter Franz as the main faculty. In the second week, Aug. 5-11, Pastors Robert L. Lee and Robert Rieth will serve in that capacity. Register now.

— *Corr.*

Tour dates changed

The dates for the tour to Scandinavia and Oberammergau, Germany, led by Pastor and Mrs. Laurel Udden have been changed. The tour will begin on July 11, not May 23 as first announced.

For further information on the tour, leaving July 11, please contact Pastor or Mrs. Udden at 9324 Northwood Parkway, Minneapolis, Minn. 55427 (612-544-9778). Pastor Udden may also be reached at times at his church office, 544-0657.

WANTED:

Copies of the old *Lutheran Hymnary* (black music edition). Please contact Helmar Lutheran Church, Newark, Illinois 60541.

TEACHERS WANTED

Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy, an AFLC school with grades Kindergarten - 8th, is accepting applications for teaching positions for 1990-91. Degreed teachers for either elementary or middle school grades are encouraged to write to Mrs. Eugene Enderlein at 6300 Walker St., St. Louis Park, Minn. 55416.

Personalities

The new address for Pastor Robert L. Lee is 11951 Helmar Road, Newark, Ill. 60541.

Rev. Russell Tessman has resigned as pastor of the Northome, Minn., parish (Hope and Bethesda), to accept a call to an ELCA parish in Iowa. His name has been removed from the AFLC clergy roster at his request.

Rev. Richard Thompson, Morris, Ill., has resigned from the pastoral staff of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, which will continue to be served by Rev. John Skeie. Pastor Thompson is on the clergy roster of the American Association of Lutheran Churches.

The new address of Rev. David Hinrichs is 1711 26th St., Everett, Wash. 98201. He is serving Calvary Lutheran Church.

Rev. Dennis O'Neil, pastor of the Shevlin, Minn., parish (Landstad, Sell Lake and Trinity) since 1979, has resigned in order to pursue further education. The interim pastor at Shevlin is Rev. Wm. Goodman, Bemidji, Minn.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

Rev. Richard Long, Chillicothe, Ill., has been accepted on the Clergy Roster of the AFLC by the Co-ordinating Committee.

Dr. Paul Zietlow, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Milford, Ill., has been accepted on the Fellowship Roster of the AFLC by the Co-ordinating Committee.

1990 Annual Conference information

From June 13 to 17, 1990, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations will come together for their 28th Annual Annual Conference under our theme, "*Partnership in the Gospel*." Our biblical focus is centered on Philippians 1:3-5, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now."

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 he or she held membership.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Wallace

Arthur L. (Art) Wasland, 71, Dec. 28, Calvary.

WASHINGTON

Everett

Clarence Mayer, 91, Jan. 14, Calvary

Mrs. Clarence (Olga) Mayer, 82, Jan. 16, Calvary.

This year the annual convention will be held in Bloomington, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis. We have selected the Days Inn Hotel in Bloomington to be the site of this convention. A large, air-conditioned conference room will be used for our business meetings. We have secured a conference room rate of just \$40.00 per night at the Days Inn. The convenience of being able to stay right at the Days Inn in their beautiful rooms with the conference in the same building will allow you to eat, sleep, relax in the indoor pool, and take in the annual conference without having to drive around the Cities. However, to make sure you won't feel cooped up in one building, we've planned for our evening of worship at a second site.

Our evening worship services will be held at the Kennedy Senior High

School Auditorium, just a short distance from the hotel. This 900-seat air-conditioned auditorium will be ideal for us to come and listen to God's Word, sing praise to His name, and be challenged to become partners in the Gospel.

These accommodations will provide an ideal environment for our conference. We invite you to come and be a part of what God is doing through the AFLC. We must stress that it is very important that you pre-register. In the past, it has not been crucial, but because these accommodations are also used by business travelers, we need your reservation in advance to assure a place for you. Begin planning now to join us in the Twin Cities at the Days Inn Hotel of Bloomington.

*The Emmaus Lutheran
Host Conference Committee*

June 13 - 17, 1990

Days Inn, Bloomington, Minn.

8401 Cedar Ave. S.

(612) 854-8400

MRS. ROY WARWICK

Mrs. Roy (Beverly) Warwick, wife of the AFLC pastor, passed away on Jan. 16 at St. Luke's Midland Regional Medical Center in Aberdeen, S. Dak. She was 55.

Born at Audubon, Minn., to Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Sjule, she moved to Bottineau, N. Dak., as a child. She graduated from Hillcrest Lutheran Academy, Fergus Falls, Minn., and was also a graduate of St. Luke's School of Nursing in Fargo, N. Dak.

Beverly Sjule and Roy Warwick were married Sept. 12, 1959, in Brooklyn, N. Y. They served parishes at Floral Park, N. Y., Moorhead, Minn., Antler, N. Dak., and Aberdeen.

Mrs. Warwick is survived by her husband; two sons, Bruce and Brian, Aberdeen; two daughters, Elizabeth, Aberdeen, and Melody, Branson, Mo.;

Safe in the arms of Jesus

Nicholas Luke Myhre was born Sept. 8, 1989, and died Dec. 27. Death was caused by Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

He is survived by his parents, Earl and Vicki Myhre of Rt. 1, Wahpeton, N. Dak. 58075 and by his grandparents, Maurice and Florence Myhre, Abercrombie, N. Dak., and Harlan and Rita Rajdl, Villard, Minn.

Burial was in Bethany Lutheran Cemetery of rural Abercrombie.

two brothers; two sisters; and one grandson.

Her funeral was conducted at First United Methodist Church in Aberdeen with Rev. Eldon Reich officiating.

Blessed be her memory.

A letter from the parents

Our dear little Nicholas,

We want you to know we loved you so very much.

You touched the hearts of everyone who saw you.

We'll never forget your smile or laugh.

We wish we could have watched you crawl, walk and talk and we wonder what you would have been as a grown man, but we thank God for the time you were able to spend with us. You brought us much pride and joy.

We'll never forget you, Son. You have a special place in our hearts. God has chosen a different plan for you. He has taken you to His Home — a safe place.
Mommy and Daddy

Shine Just Where You Are

Don't waste your time in longing
For bright, impossible things;
Don't sit supinely yearning
For the swiftness of angel wings;
Don't spurn to be a rushlight
Because you are not a star,
But brighten some bit of darkness
By shining just where you are.

There is need of the tiniest candle
As well as the garish sun;
The humblest deed is ennobled
When it is worthily done;
You may never be called to brighten
The darkest regions afar,
So fill, for the day, your mission
By shining just where you are.

— *Selected*

