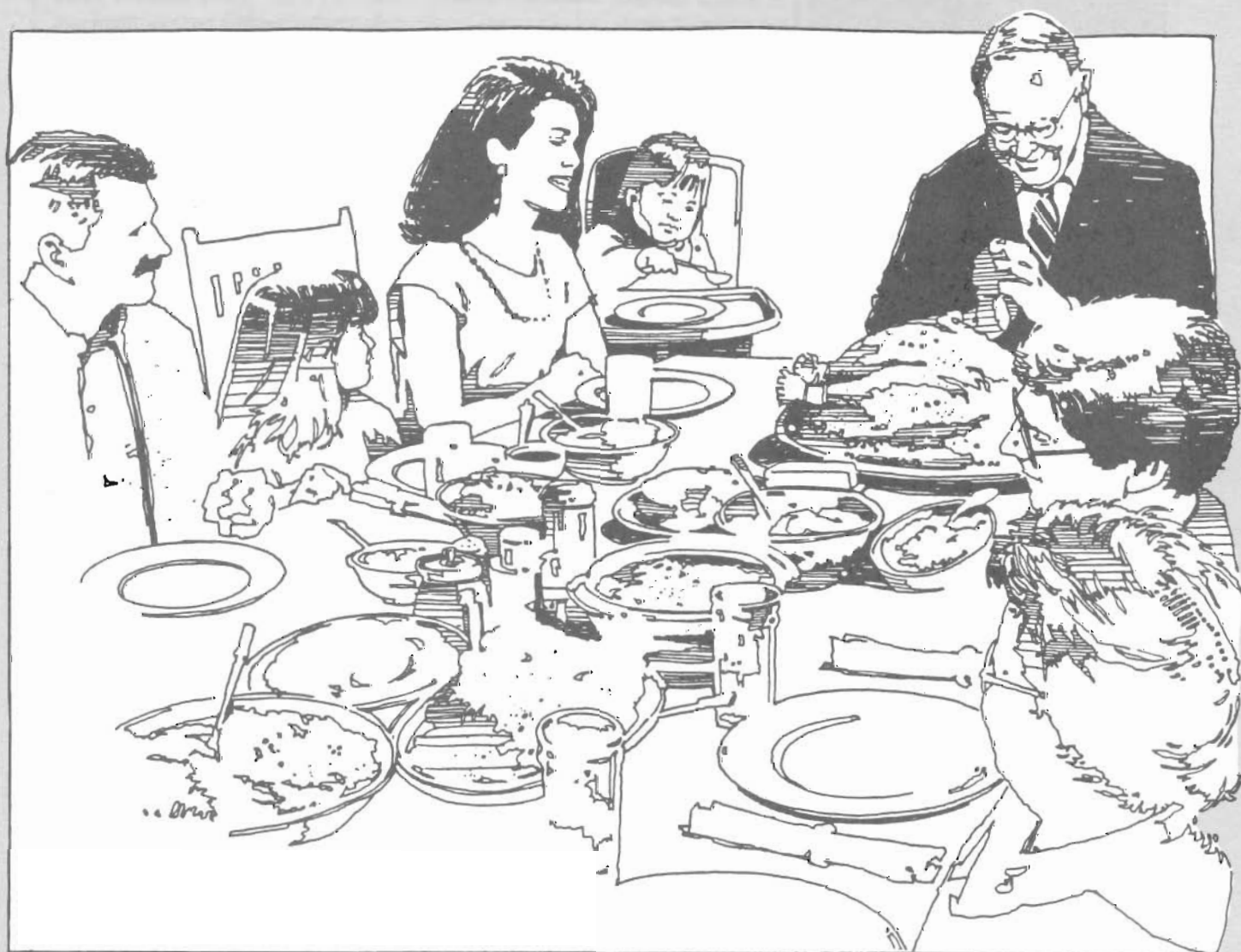


# Thanks to God



THE LUTHERAN  
AMBASSADOR

November 23, 1993



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 23, 1993 • Vol. 31, No. 22

## THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

is published biweekly (except for the second issue of July and the second issue of August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

## CONTENTS

He Is Worthy	p. 3
Thank We All Our God Now?	p. 4
A Mother's Praise	p. 5
Through the Furnace of Flooding	p. 6
A Missionary Thanksgiving in Mexico	p. 8

Subscriptions: \$15.00 year, U. S.  
\$18.00 year, International

Write to:

*The Lutheran Ambassador*  
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Send all communications concerning this magazine to: Solveig Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor, Box 423, Faith, South Dakota 57626. Phone (605) 967-2381. Fax (605) 967-2382.

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota, and additional mailing office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Ambassador*, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

Rev. Craig Johnson, Editor  
Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor

Editorial Board:

Rev. Wendell Johnson, Chairman  
Dr. Francis Monsteth, Secretary  
Mr. Robert Knutson

## Stability

Once heard the story of a college professor who was called into the office of the college president. Before the appointed date the professor fretted about the purpose of the invitation. He thought maybe his work was not acceptable. Maybe he had aroused disfavor on the part of some students or parents. He knew that there were cut backs in the budget and maybe he was about to lose his job.

The day arrived and the professor stood before the president. He wasted no time in getting to the point. Addressing the teacher, the president said: "You have been faithful in your responsibilities to your classes, you have had many of your writings published in journals and you have been loyal to your school. But..."

It was the "but" that the professor was worried about.

"But," the president said: "You have not changed any questions or answers to one of your tests in the last ten years."

"No, sir," the professor said, "The answers have never changed but the questions have always been worded differently."

In the opening verses of the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Hebrews, there is counsel on many subjects including, brotherly love, hospitality to strangers, prisoners, marriage and money. Almost two thousand years after those words were written we continue to ask many questions about those same subjects and others similar to them. Even though the questions may be worded differently for each passing generation the answer to our questions remains the same.

Following those unchanging answers to our changing questions, we read: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

One of my boys traveled with a Christian music group for a while and during that time one of the songs he wrote was based on the gospel chorus, "Give me that old time religion, it's good enough for me." I was happy to have him sing that the old time religion was good enough for him.

## Light on the Way

But the old time religion is not selling too well on the market today. It seems that we are a people obsessed with the latest fads. Our clothes and hair styles must fit in with the latest fashions. Somebody might think we are way out-of-date if we do not fit in. Our home must have the latest gadgets or people will think we belong to another generation. We talk about the hottest entertainment and sports heroes to appear "with it." Even in our faith and worship we keep our eyes on the latest fads as we watch what is happening in the "super" churches around the nation. Many would steer us towards pep rallies on Sunday morning rather than toward worshipping an awesome God. An often quoted Lutheran pastor tells us that people are not interested anymore in terms like "redemption and justification and sanctification."

In the midst of all this, our Lord Jesus says: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Thank you, Lord for something secure and stable. Yes, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever," Hebrews 4:12 reminds us that His Word is "living and active" even today!

There is no moss of antiquity growing on that truth from the Lord. His presence is always as fresh as a new spring morning.

With changing times, changing questions and fads coming and going, how important it is to cling desperately to the same answer for security. This Thanksgiving, may we join with the psalmist in saying "O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for his steadfast love endures forever" (Psalm 136:1).



— by Rev.  
Walter Johnson

# HE IS WORTHY

When I think of the things for which I will give thanks, I am made to think of the One to whom I will give thanks. Many people who have no knowledge of God say that they will be thankful, but to whom will they give thanks? To be thankful **for** without being thankful **to** is an exercise in self-gratification. Such an exercise deludes the "thankful" one into imagining that he is thankful when he has in fact given thanks to no one. To be thankful implies that there is one to whom thanks is given. Since God is the giver of every good and perfect gift, He alone is worthy of thanks. And since everything that He gives has its root in His character of grace and mercy, it is imperative that we be thankful **for** Him and not only **to** Him or for the things He gives. So I will be thankful for the One to Whom thanks must be given.

I am thankful for God's Word, the Bible. If it were not for the fact that God has revealed Himself through His Word, I could not know Him. Neither could I know myself. I would imagine that since I can keep society's laws fairly well that I am also able to be acceptable to God through my efforts. But the spotlight of God's Law shines upon me and condemns my actions, my words, and my thoughts. What a wretched man I am! This realization comes to me because God, through His Word, graciously exposes my sinfulness.

His Word does not leave me in this miserable condition, however. It tells me that God justifies the ungodly, that He has wiped my sins away like a cloud. He has laid all my wretchedness on Jesus and credits to me all the merits of the perfect Son of God. By the gracious working of His Spirit He has led me to believe this Word of God and in that faith I have new life. Through the power of God's Word life has come to my dead soul.

The Word gives power to the work to which I have been called. I have no power or eloquence or wisdom by which I can bring life to spiritually dead souls. Rather there is weakness, fear, and trembling. But the Gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe. It contains its own dynamic power by which sinners are brought to repentance and faith. It can be proclaimed with the assurance that it will accomplish what God desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it. God alone knows what that purpose is, whether it is to harden an impenitent heart or bring faith to a contrite heart.

It is not my place to determine or even to know what that purpose is in each individual case. Occasionally God allows me to see positive fruits of the preaching of His Word. More often, though, the results are hidden from my eyes, for God knows how prone I am to become proud and sin or to despair and dishonor God. I am thankful that the Word accomplishes God's purposes. Eternity will reveal the results.

Thank God for the Christian Church, the Communion of Saints. Each believer has been adopted into a family in which each cares for the other. The care within that family is concerned not only with the needs of this life. It is focused primarily on my eternal welfare. Nowhere else will I find friends who pray for me in my need, who encourage me in seeking the glory of God, or who have the grace to forgive me and lift me up when I fall. The small part of this Christian Church in which I experience fellowship is a source of blessing to me. I thank God for the congregation He has provided in which I and my family can experience His grace.



—Rev. Bruce Dalager  
AFLC Secretary  
Grand Forks, North Dakota

To be thankful implies that  
there is one to whom thanks is given.

*Devastation. Famine. Plague, Atrocities. Death. These are just a few of the words that describe the horror that war inflicts upon a people and nation. When these scourges come, how does a child of God respond? Or better yet, how should a child of God respond?*



## Thank We All Our God Now?

The prophet Habakkuk faced just such an issue in his life. God had revealed to Habakkuk that he was raising up the Chaldeans to judge His people for their sins (1:5-6, 12) and that these fierce, warlike people would sweep through Judah and wreck havoc on every side (3:16-17). As God's servant, Habakkuk faced that grim reality. He responded with a song of triumphant hope: "yet (in spite of the devastation at hand) I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation" (3:18).

Habakkuk's response of praise is not unique, for throughout the centuries of human history God's people have often been singers of joy in the darkest circumstances. One such man was Martin Rinkart who pastored in his home city of Eilenburg, Saxony from 1617 until his death in 1649. His ministry spanned one of the longest and most bitter of religious conflicts, namely, the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648).

Because walls protected the city of Eilenburg, refugees seeking to escape from the raping, pillage and slaughter let loose by the upheavals of the war, fled there from the surrounding areas. The city quickly became overcrowded and unsanitary; and typhoid, the plague, and starvation ravaged the helpless and frightened people. Food was so scarce at times that many people were reduced to eating the carcasses of dogs and cats. In addition, foreign armies sacked the city three times, adding to the misery and despair of the people. Throughout the course of the war some 8,000 people in Eilenburg died from disease and starvation.



— Dr. Craig Jennings  
AFLC Schools  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The worst year was 1637 when Pastor Rinkart often preached two or three mass funerals each day, sometimes burying 40-50 people. In May of that year, he buried his own wife, and although he himself became seriously ill, he survived and recovered. All told, in 1637 Rinkart officiated at the funerals of 4,500 people — an average of about 12 burials per day.

It was in the midst of this terrible Thirty Years' War, however, that Pastor Rinkart composed the most famous of his 66 hymns — "Now Thank We All Our God." This hymn, originally intended to be used as a table prayer before meals, has gone on to become one of the best loved and most widely used hymns of all time.

*Now thank we all our God with heart and  
hands and voices,*

*Who wondrous things hath done, in whom  
His world rejoices;*

*Who, from our mothers' arms, hath blessed  
us on our way*

*With countless gifts of love, and still is ours  
today.*

In stanza one, the hymn writer calls us to give ourselves fully in praise to God — **our** God — not only because of what He has done, but also because of what He is to us. As Rinkart reminds us, He "still is ours **today**." In other words, God's countless blessings not only reach back to the very beginnings of life, but they also continue in all their fullness right up to the present moment. Whatever we may lack, whatever hardships may come, whatever our circumstances in life, nothing can separate us from the love of God, nothing can tear away from us the gracious gift of Himself.

O may this bounteous God, through all our life be near us,

With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;

And keep us in His grace, and guide us when perplexed,

And free us from all ills in this world and the next.

In stanza two praise becomes petition. We pray that "this bounteous God" (whose blessings we have just extolled in stanza one) may continue from now to eternity to shower us with His good gifts and grace us with His continued presence.

All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,

The Son, and Him who reigns with them in highest heaven;

The one eternal God, whom earth and heav'n adore;

For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

Stanza three fittingly rounds out the hymn with that ancient Trinitarian doxology, the "Gloria Patri." This final majestic outburst of praise and thanks and worship lifts our focus from the temporary ills of this life and turns our attention to the God of eternity.

Like Habakkuk who lived some 2,250 years earlier, Martin Rinkart could offer genuine, heartfelt thanks in everything — even in the midst of dark and despairing days. This Thanksgiving season can you do the same?

## A Mother's Praise

As I sit rocking our two-and-a-half-month-old daughter, Hannah, I realize that as a new mother, I have much to be thankful for. (We also have a son, Josiah, who is 21-months-old.)

I am thankful first of all for a Christian husband. It is so wonderful to be able to work together to raise our family. We have daily devotions together. Josiah is learning to fold his hands and pray. We go shopping for groceries. We take rides in the country and go on vacations. So many things we do together.



This Thanksgiving time I am also thankful for all the modern conveniences I have. We live in a lovely, comfortable home. Every morning I wake up and turn on the lights and have hot water to wash my face. Many people in other countries do not have these things that we are so used to. When I was on the mission field in West Africa we lived in a cement house and did not have hot running water or electricity. That was fine for me then, but often I think what a blessing it is to have these things now while raising the children.

I am especially thankful for the two children God has given to us. They grow up so quickly and I know that I must enjoy and use each day that I have with them to the fullest. It is truly an answer to prayer to have these two children. When I was getting to be 35 years old and still single I thought I would probably never even get married let alone have two children! God is so good and gives the best in His time.

When Mary thought of God's goodness to her she spoke the words in Luke 1:46-49: "My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me — holy is his name."

I want to give thanks to the Lord as Mary did. He is my personal Savior and has done wondrous things for me whereof I am glad.

— by Sharon Olson  
Cumberland, Wisconsin



# Through the Furnace of Flooding

The crack of thunder was deafening, but our children barely flinched. They had grown so accustomed to the sound of the loud booms which previously sent them scurrying for security to their parents' bedroom. Now it was only the parents who flew around the house closing windows to shut out the blowing rain. The carpets below had become damp within seconds.

Thunderstorms in central Iowa in the summer of 1993 were no longer considered cozy or even a bit exciting. We dreaded the sound of another approaching storm. The heavy rains caused the earth to be beyond the point of saturation.

As was our custom, we ran to the basement to check for moisture. The moisture we discovered was in the form of running water pouring through the seam where the north wall and floor met. We tried to suck up the water with the wet-vac but quickly realized it was impossible to keep up with the flow. By morning the entire floor was under water. We were one of the fortunate ones.

What is a wet basement carpet when entire homes are under water? What is the cost of losing a few rows of garden produce when entire fields are under water turning blacker as each day goes by?

This summer all eyes turned to our normally peaceful state of Iowa. We were on the nightly news. The president of the United States visited nearby Des Moines. We suddenly became the topic of conversation around the nation. We might have loved the wonderful recognition for our quiet state had the circumstances been pleasant. However, there is not one Iowan who would want to experience again the devastation of floods and the corresponding national exposure on the news.

How does a Christian respond to such an onslaught of the elements over which one has no control? The foremost question in the minds of the peo-

ple of St. Paul's Lutheran in Jewell seemed to be: "What is God trying to teach us?"

Brian and Reuben Sansgaard, a father/son team and owners of the Sansgaard Seed Farms, Inc., lost 20% of their crops, but they felt very fortunate compared to their neighbors. "Last year was so good that most farmers got

times when I had other things on my mind, it didn't seem to bother me. I wondered if God was angry with me." Roger continued to say that the hardest thing was to watch his son working day after day in the hole they had dug for their new building only to watch it fill up with water and turn to mud again and again before they could lay



double crops. With this year it will probably average out. We have never had a complete crop failure in this area. The Lord surely takes care of us!"

Not only has the flood affected the pocketbooks of all those involved, it affects the emotions as well. "I covered every emotion this summer," said Roger Syverson, a member of St. Paul's who farms less than a mile from the church. "I was at times angry and depressed. It seemed hopeless. Then at

the concrete. "We have really learned to be patient!" he said.

The third area that seems to have been directly affected by the flood has been the prayer lives of the Christians. Gordon Hove, president of St. Paul's, estimated that 20% of our local county received flood damage. "There has been lots of praying for the rain to stop, and sadly there are probably lots of people mad at God. But God sends rain according to His will, and we

**How does a Christian respond to such an onslaught of the elements over which one has no control?**

## Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Day has become almost meaningless in America. Many years ago it was considered one of the greatest holy days in the year, not only because of the turkey with all the trimmings, but first the

church service was a mighty long sermon; and in those days most sermons were preached by men whose hearts were overflowing with praise to God for revivals, salvation of souls, young and old; sometimes whole families were saved. This came before the Thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, which provided the needed things for the body.

Today the note of thanksgiving and praise to God has almost disappeared. People partake of good food to excess and still go away grum-

# Let's Keep It

bling. Many churches (even fundamental churches) do not have a Thanksgiving service anymore; the day has become a carnal feast day. Our churches become like the one in Sardis: "Thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3;1)?

Brethren, let us not be dragged into the whirlpool of unthankfulness. Let us keep the day with praise and thanksgiving for all spiritual and material gifts, "Praising my Savior all the day long."

Unsaved friend, I plead with you; ask Jesus right now to come into your heart and life and home, then you will have your first great Thanksgiving Day.

—by Rev. Johas Helland, 1894-1979  
(reprinted from The Christian Fellowship Banner.)

don't have much say in it! There haven't been any suicides in our area due to the flooding, and I'm thankful for that. It's a good sign."

Isaiah 48:10b says: "I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." Another prophet declared: "And they will seek my face; in their misery they

will earnestly seek me" (Hosea 5:15b). In a very powerful and effective way, God seems to be calling us to look to Him and trust Him to provide for us monetarily, emotionally and spiritually.

"Meanwhile, we can't lose our sense of humor," reminded Gordon. "One night I looked out on my field

and counted eight ponds. That night we got five inches of rain and what do you know?" he chuckled, "The next morning I looked out and instead of eight ponds, I saw only one; a very big one!"

—by Hope Unverzagt  
Jewell, Iowa



Rev. Jonathan Unverzagt stands in a nine foot hole made by water pouring over the highway.



David and Leah Hove enjoy a little recreation down Olsen Avenue which is nearly a mile behind St. Paul's Church.

# A Missionary Thanksgiving in Mexico

**A**s I write this, October is drawing to a close. Many of you are living where the air is now crisp and cold, and some of you have had snow already. I envy you! Although it does cool down here in the early winter, I miss the nippy autumn of the Upper Midwest. We don't even need to put on sweaters in the evening yet. I suppose some of you are envying us right now!

There is one thing we have in common this time of year, and that's Thanksgiving. How we appreciate this very American holiday! Perhaps we appreciate it all the more because we live in a foreign country, and have a few opportunities to remember who we are and from whom we have come. It's easy for missionary children to grow up without a clear sense of identity. Celebrating Thanksgiving together is one opportunity of reinforcing for our children something of our American heritage.

It's not always easy to celebrate being Americans when one lives in another country. After several years the holidays and customs of the host country become even more familiar than one's own. Here there are no school programs about the pilgrims, no paper turkeys made in class and proudly displayed on the refrigerator, and no Thanksgiving services at church. We have to become a little bit inventive!

The first thing we do is attempt to create an atmosphere in our home appropriate to the season. Sometime in October we unpack the barrel marked "Autumn" and proceed to usher in the fall. Out come the colorful ears of Indian corn, the paper mache pumpkin, the dried leaves, and the cornucopia. I even hang fall motif curtains! Our daughter, Ingrid, told us

## India Mission News

There are several Hindus accepting Jesus as their personal Savior. Recently a Hindu brother and sister were baptized at Pothukatla AFLC congregation (pictured to the right). Pictured below is a Sunday School at Bapatla congregation. It is because of God's grace and of your generosity that we are able to continue. The gospel is going on well in India.

— D. Martin Luther  
Indian church leader



recently that she didn't realize until our furlough year that autumn came naturally — she always thought it came only by our design!

We probably travel further to the store to bring food for the Thanksgiving meal than any of you do! Sometime in early November we have a visa renewal border trip, so we buy our turkey in Texas. (A 10-12 pound turkey would cost us \$40 here.) Then there are fresh cranberries, cans of cranberry sauce, pumpkin, and mince-

meat to buy and bring back to Mexico. We knew one missionary in Ecuador who found 26 cans of cranberry sauce stashed away when she was packing to move! She had carefully shipped cans down to Ecuador after every furlough, but it was so precious she could never bring herself to use it. I can understand that. We're thankful that we live close enough to the U.S.A. to be able to cook a traditional Thanksgiving dinner each year.

Although we miss our families,



The Giles family.



## An AFLC Prayer Shield

Please remember me in prayer. "Oh yes, I will." This conversation takes place many times in the course of Christian life and fellowship, yet one wonders on the basis of personal experience how often the good intentions fail to bear fruit. In order to encourage faithful intercession for our church body and its leadership, AFLC-2000 has assigned the highest priority to creating a **prayer shield** of 2000 believers.

Our firm conviction, based on the Word of God, is that it makes a difference when we pray. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Philippian church said he believed that deliverance would come "through your prayers" and the Spirit's provision (1:19). He expressed the same conviction in his Epistle to Philemon: "I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you" (v.22); and in his second letter to the Corinthians: "you also join in helping us through your prayers" (1:11).

The AFLC **prayer shield** commitment calls for us to designate one day each week when we will offer special intercession for our church family. There are some who pray daily for the association, and hopefully this will continue. The purpose of asking for a definite day and commitment is to increase the number of those who pray, provide them with basic structure and instruction, and create a channel for communication when urgent needs arise ... like the prayer circles in many of our congregations.

It would be wonderful if the AFLC would be "debt-free in '93" or before the next annual conference. But far more profitable is the possibility that 2000 or more friends will be upholding the work in faithful intercessory prayer!

"Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Romans 15:30).



Rev. Robert L. Lee

*Join in helping us  
through your prayers.*



especially at holiday time, Thanksgiving Day has become a happy tradition for us in Mexico. Because no one has family nearby, the missionary community bands together and no one is left alone. Last year we were 25 people for dinner, but this year we're planning a quiet day with just two or three families. Each family brings a traditional dish that means the most to them; the host family roasts the turkey, and we have a wonderful feast. Before we eat we pass out the American hymnals and sing every verse of every Thanksgiving hymn in print. It's a wonderful time of praise, and keeps our focus for the day on God. After dinner and cleanup we light the candles, bring out all the pies, and watch the first Christmas movie of the season.

God has richly blessed us on the mission field with health, happiness, rich family life, and good friends. Thanksgiving day has become our opportunity to celebrate the life God has given us — and yes, to give Him thanks.

— by Debbie Giles  
Aguascalientes, Mexico

## Mini Youth Manual

Part II

**A**s you seek to plan your youth meetings, you will also want to plan good business meetings. Business meetings are important and they can be exciting! You can involve all of the youth in the meetings and it encourages each teen to "own" their own ministry as a part of your local Free Lutheran Youth group!

At the national Youth Convention in 1993, our national youth organization changed its name. We are now called Free Lutheran Youth. Just how this translates for use in your local congregation or district is up to you. Many congregations will continue to use the previous name of Luther League.

The name change is good. Sometimes it is wise to change the name since some do not follow the older, traditional guidelines of youth work. Some will create a name like "Sold Out" as did Bob Halvorson's youth at Emmaus in Bloomington, Minnesota. Personally, I like to see individual groups use names which are their very own. It would be interesting to hear the names various congregations are currently using.

"Leadership Helps for Youth Groups" has been printed by our AFLC Youth Ministries department. This is available by writing the youth office in Minneapolis for a cost of \$5. Your group will want to have a copy of this practical manual. On page 5, for example, you will find a list of job descriptions for each officer. This gives your teens an idea of what their office asks. We prefer using the term opportunities, not jobs, for your elected offices. Youth advisors or pastors, you may want to visit with each officer individually to discuss the opportunity for ministry and get the students' input.

The president or program chairperson is to lead all business meetings. Elect them just as you elect officers in

the congregation. This gives youth a sense of what it is like to be involved and prepares them for leadership positions later on in the church. Generally, the youth will make the right choices! Explain everything carefully. They will respond positively.

In some congregations, adults will vote for the youth officers at the annual meeting. I recommend that the youth alone do the voting. Then they will "own" their program and ministry and the decisions will be theirs.

It is good to consider youth as hav-

ing a ministry now; a ministry to other youth and adults in the congregation and community. Christian youth are the church of today, not tomorrow! Christian youth are developing leaders for today, not just for tomorrow.

If the president is absent, have the vice president take over. This will not be a problem if the business meetings are planned by the entire group of officers along with the advisors. Following Robert's Rules of Order is appropriate for all meetings.

Lively business meetings require

### Join us for worship and fellowship

# AFLC

#### Alabama:

Salem Lutheran Church, 2130 Lee Road 250, Salem, AL 36874  
Pastor Tim Hurley — (205) 480-9466  
Sunday worship, 11 a.m. EST

#### Arizona:

Body of Christ Lutheran Church, Reynolds Elementary, Stella and Prudence, Tucson, AZ 85746  
Pastor David Nelson — (602) 745-3762  
Sunday worship, 9 a.m.

Living Faith Lutheran Church, 6000 South Cardinal, Tucson, AZ 85746  
Pastor David Nelson — (602) 745-3762  
Sunday worship, 10:45 a.m.

Triumph Lutheran Church, 429-2E Patagonia Road, Nogales, AZ 85621  
Pastor Ted Kennedy Jr. — (602) 287-5318  
Sunday worship, 11 a.m.

#### Arkansas:

St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Route 8, Box 145A, Mountain Home, AR 72643  
Pastor, Mr. William Nyland

#### California:

First Lutheran Church, 380 Arneill Road, Camarillo, CA 93010  
Pastor Walter Johnson — (805) 388-2684  
Sunday worship, 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Neighborhood Bible Church, 4607 Mission Avenue, Oceanside, CA 92057  
Pastor Orville Hiepler — (619) 731-0980  
Sunday worship, 10:15 a.m.

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, 2271F Palmdale Drive ##-39, Palmdale, CA 93550  
Pastor David Molstre, (805) 265-0104  
Sunday worship, 10:30 a.m.

Shepherd's Church of the Valley, Washington Avenue next to the post office, Murrieta, CA 92362  
Pastor Terry Wold — (909) 672-4624  
Sunday worship, 9:30 a.m.

preparation. The officers ahead of time should carefully select the agenda. All youth present should be given the opportunity to speak their ideas and concerns.

This is a basic guideline for your business meetings:

1. Devotions and prayer — usually led by Devotional Life Chairperson.
2. Minutes read by the secretary.
3. Treasurer's report read by the treasurer.
4. Setting of the agenda.

5. Old business.

6. New business and closing prayer.

Encourage an open prayer time where all youth who wish may pray.

Teach your teens to move, second and vote on items of business. Discussion comes after an item is moved on. However, some of these things depend on the kind of meeting you choose to have.

Adults will continue to play a significant role in the youth group. While they do not "run" things, they will

challenge the students to live for the Lord Jesus Christ, to live moral lives, and to become interested in having a ministry among other students and adults. Pastors should take a vital interest in youth ministry!

Sad to say most youth ministry remains at the instructional level. We need to challenge our youth to become men and women of prayer. Challenge them into ministry. In due time, they will become a vital part of the total ministry of the local congregation.

I believe that if a revival is to come to this nation, Christian youth will need to be doing ministry. Soon we will see information on SYATP. This is a continuation of "See You At The Pole," which occurred last September. Thousands of students across the U.S. joined together for prayer at the flag poles of their local schools. Now "See You At The Party" is a television/video event scheduled for March 5, 1994. Thousands of Christian youth will invite unsaved youth to their homes where the Trinity Broadcasting System will broadcast. For more information, write your Youth Ministries Director.

May God bless our Free Lutheran Youth, advisors, youth directors, Sunday School teachers and pastors!

— Rev. Dennis Gray  
Youth Ministries Director

## Congregations in the Sunbelt

### Georgia:

Christ Lutheran Church, 316 Tibet Avenue, Savannah, GA 31419  
Pastor Paul Jecklin — (912) 925-3968  
Sunday worship, 11 a.m.

### Missouri:

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 2756 Blackman Road, Springfield, MO 65809  
Pastor Vincent Will — (417) 881-1020  
Sunday worship, 11 a.m.

### Oklahoma:

First Lutheran Church, 1300 North Robinson, Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
Pastor Gerald Peterson — (405) 946-0626  
Sunday worship, 10:55 a.m.

### Texas:

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, 700 South Austin, Tulia, TX 79088  
Pastor Joseph Schultz — (806) 995-3341  
Sunday worship, 10:45 a.m.

Christ Lutheran Church, Route 6, 4300 FM 1954, Wichita Falls, TX 76301  
Pastor Paul Nash — (817) 766-6757  
Sunday worship, 10 am.

Crown of Life Lutheran Church, 14007 Crescent Drive, Tomball, TX 77375  
(Houston area)  
Pastor Gordon Waterman — (713) 351-8001

Faith Lutheran Church, 300 South Border Avenue, Weslaco, TX 78596  
Pastor Norman Dornquast — (210) 968-2342  
Sunday worship, 10:45 a.m.

Faith Lutheran Church, 2103 North Mechanic, P.O. Box 1644,  
El Campo, TX 77437  
Pastor Clyde Grier — (409) 543-1843  
Sunday worship, 9 a.m.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Route 1, Box 5K, Pleasanton, TX 78064  
Pastoral, vacancy  
Sunday worship, 10:45 a.m.

**I**ndividual direct contact with God's Word is the principal means of Christian growth... The Bible is the book we live by. Bible reading is the means by which we learn and keep fresh in our minds, the ideas that mold our lives. Our lives are the product of our thoughts. To live right, we need to think right.

— Haley's Bible Handbook, p. 806

**Have you  
thought about  
getting an AFLBS I.D.?**

**Be marked  
as one who  
knows and  
lives Christ as  
Lord.**

**Picture yourself  
at the world's  
largest Lutheran  
Bible School.**



**AFLBS  
3110 E. Medicine LK. Blvd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55441  
(612) 544-9501**

## **BUILDERS FELLOWSHIP**

Building a  
membership of  
1000 con-  
cerned AFLC  
friends who  
make a faith  
commitment of  
\$17 per month  
for a five year  
period.



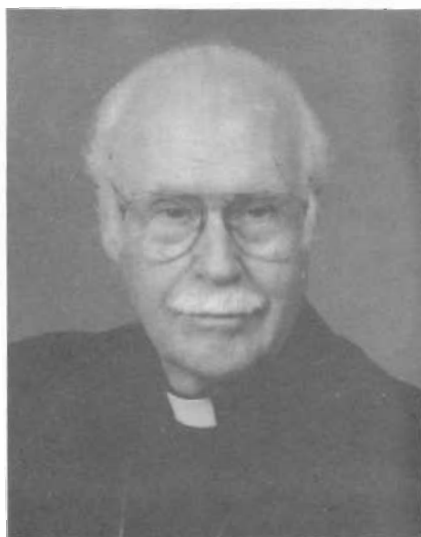
Investing gifts in  
the Church Exten-  
sion Fund and  
generating inter-  
est money for  
Home Missions.

**Join us in building congregations which proclaim Christ in a needy America.**

**AFLC HOME MISSIONS  
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55441  
(612) 545-5631**



# New Chaplains' Ministry Structure Created



Dr. Howard B. Franzen.

**D**r. Howard B. Franzen, Hastings, Nebraska, has been appointed the first institutional chaplaincy administrator under a new AFLC ministry structure submitted recently to the Co-ordinating Committee for approval.

Called the Department for Chaplaincy Ministry, the framework will include three divisions: military, institutional and campus. Each division, which will eventually have a separate administrator, is responsible for all chaplains in this area of ministry, as well as for recruitment of pastors interested in chaplaincy training. The administrator will also assist chaplains-in-training with educational and job placement concerns, and serve as a contact between the chaplain and the administrative department of his place of ministry.

The Department for Chaplaincy Ministry is intended to be a vital link between the chaplains and the entire AFLC, and will be responsible for annual reports to the Co-ordinating Committee, who will present them to the conference each year. This is a new venture for our churches, since the only area currently considered as a distinct ministry is the military chaplaincy, which the World Mission Department includes as a special outreach.

"Chaplaincy ministry is a honorable calling," Dr. Franzen stated, who is convinced that pastors who sense a leading to this area of service need to be encouraged to do so. His experience as a parish pastor, as well as a military and institutional chaplain, make him a valuable resource in establishing this new structure for the AFLC and ministering to the pastors who are a part of it.

The department stands ready to assist our fellowship in recruitment, training, job placement and support for chaplains in active ministry. Dr. Franzen's address is 1018 West 5th Street, Hastings, NE 68901; phone (402) 463-1900.

## 1993 Annual Reports are Available

1993 Annual AFLC Reports are available by contacting the AFLC office. The reports are \$7, including postage.

## AFLC Fiscal Year to Change

The 1993 Annual Conference voted to change the AFLC fiscal year to begin with the calendar year, instead of February 1. This takes effect on January 1, 1994, which means that the current fiscal year will be only 11 months long, ending on December 31, 1993.

Since a significant amount of support for AFLC ministries is usually received during the month of January, all congregations and individual contributors are reminded to send your gifts by the end of December if they are to be credited to the current year's budgetary needs.

Thank you for your commitment to the Lord's work through the AFLC.

There are two ways of being rich. One is to have all you want, and the other is to be satisfied with what you have.

— from *FOCUS*, First Lutheran, Camarillo, CA

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences - February 1 - October 31, 1993

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN OCTOBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$261,657.00	\$13,567.52	\$150,547.18	63
Seminary . . . . .	148,620.00	4,032.58	60,484.41	44
Bible School . . . . .	214,230.00	6,403.86	87,327.78	44
Home Missions . . . . .	292,593.00	19,928.64	165,845.19	62
World Missions . . . . .	310,000.00	23,606.35	229,942.34	81
Capital Investment . . . . .	50,300.00	968.13	18,918.49	41
Parish Education . . . . .	53,147.00	9,200.64	44,208.20	81
ARC . . . . .	13,200.00	683.43	4,749.20	39
Chrisn. Acad. Ed. Bd. . . . .	4,000.00	83.81	928.89	25
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,347,747.00</b>	<b>\$78,474.96</b>	<b>\$762,951.48</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>1992 - 1993 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,631,326.00</b>	<b>\$106,494.77</b>	<b>\$781,354.96</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Goal 82 %</b>				



**Rev. Allen Monson**, Dickenson, North Dakota, has resigned as pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in order to accept a call from Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church, Lakeville, Minnesota. Pastor Monson, who began serving the Dickenson congregation in 1986, is currently chairman of the Home Mission Committee.

**Rev. Dennis Brostrom**, Bruce, South Dakota, has resigned as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in order to accept a call to an ELCA congregation in northern Minnesota. Rev. Brostrom has served the congregation in Bruce since 1991, and is on the AFLC Fellowship Roster for the clergy.

**Eugene, Oregon** — Spencer Creek Lutheran Church celebrated their ninetieth anniversary on September 25-26.

**Gordon Joel**, Elbow, Saskatchewan, passed away on August 5. Funeral services were held on August 10, at Bethel Lutheran Church in Elbow. Born on June 11, 1912, Gordon was a brother of the late Leone Snipstead.

**Rev. John P. Strand**, Remer, Minnesota, is continuing his chemotherapy treatments at a nearby hospital. He is doing well and he and his wife, Milly, expect to leave for their winter home in Arizona in early December. Rev. Strand served as the first AFLC president from 1962-78.

**Pickerel Lake Bible Camp** in eastern South Dakota held their annual association meeting on October 18, in Wallace. A fund drive was opened to build a \$30,000 addition which would house 56 girls. Building will not begin until 75% of the funds are in hand. Jim Keller of Wallace is chairman.

**Pastor Martin Christensen**, Elbow Saskatchewan, was the guest evangelist at Faith Free Lutheran Church in Lake Alma, Saskatchewan, during October 31-November 3.

The phone number for *Ambassador* Editor Rev. Craig Johnson is (503) 687-8643; the FAX number is (503) 683-8496.

## Illinois Church Chooses AFLC Affiliation



**S**t. Olaf Lutheran Church, 1233 Douglas Road, Montgomery, Illinois, voted on October 24 by a 75% majority to affiliate with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC), joining the growing number of conservative Lutheran congregations in the Fox River Valley area that have withdrawn from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for a new denominational home.

This action was the climax of a process that began with the retirement last year of the congregation's pastor, Rev. Robert Kasperson, and accelerated during the attempt to call a new pastor who would represent their evangelical heritage and commitment to the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.

The final vote to leave the ELCA, which was approved by over a 90% margin on August 29, meant that St.

Olaf needed to choose a new affiliation. Contacts with other Lutheran groups had been initiated last spring by the congregation's study committee, which led to a consensus that the AFLC was natural choice because of its conservative positions on Holy Scripture and evangelical practice, as well as a long standing relationship with other churches in the area who had previously voted for the same affiliation.

Organized in 1888 as the Aurora Norwegian Danish Lutheran Congregation, St. Olaf took a major leap of faith in the late 1950s when a large tract of land on the border of Aurora and Montgomery was purchased for transplanting the church from its downtown neighborhood location. A new sanctuary was dedicated in 1970, and a classroom and office unit added in 1990, providing the 540 member congregation with lovely and spacious facilities as it reaches out to serve one of the fastest growing areas in the state.

Commenting on the fact that the decision to affiliate with the AFLC came only days after the controversial ELCA study statement on human sexuality was released, one spokesman of the congregation stated that he breathed "a sigh of relief" that they no longer have to defend such positions, and looks forward to working together in a fellowship where St. Olaf Lutheran Church will finally feel at home.

**Mr. Art Hanger**, Calgary, Alberta, a member of the Canadian AFLC Coordinating Committee, was recently elected to serve as a member of Parliament in the Canadian House of Commons. He is a member of Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Calgary.

**Ortley, South Dakota** — Ortley Free Lutheran Church held a special service on November 7 during which Rev. Todd Olson, Pipestone, Minnesota, spoke and showed slides on the mission work in Estonia.

## A BIG DECISION

My hometown has been in the news a lot lately but not in a positive way. The County District Attorney is facing a number of serious criminal charges. My family has known her for years. She is an intelligent young lady, from a well respected family. At a fairly young age, she was elected district attorney. Now she is facing a career in ruins and the possibility of time in jail. How could this have happened?

The story is rather complex and yet to be fully disclosed. One fact, however, that most everyone is agreed upon is that her troubles began when she became romantically involved with the wrong type of guy. He had been on the bad side of the law and soon her life was headed in a downhill direction.

Few things can ruin a person quicker than marrying someone who God doesn't want them to marry. In the last chapters of the book of Ezra we see a description of the distress that came upon God's people because they married outside of the will of the Lord. So much trouble could have and should have been avoided.

To those of you who are single, I encourage you to be careful. Being single is much better than being married to the wrong person. Do not simply follow the leading of other people or your emotions. Wait for the leading of God.

To those of you who are married, I encourage you to pray for those who are single, but do not simply pray that we would get married. Pray that we would follow God's will. Pray that we would not make a potentially disastrous mistake. Pray that we would follow the wisdom of Proverbs 3:5, 6 to: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

My heart goes out to the many who are suffering deeply because they have gotten involved in relationships outside of God's desires for them. As we ponder what often looks like a confusing future, how good it is to know that the Lord says He has plans for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). Let's wait upon God and trust in His wonderful plans.

## I AM THANKFUL

If someone comes to you on Thanksgiving Day and asks, "Why are you thankful?" what will you say? My list in no way contains all the answers I could give. It is only a beginning, just as God has only begun to show us the depths of His goodness and love.

I give thanks to God for good memories. Some will be missing from our family's holiday dinner table. Their time on this earth has come to an end. I am thankful for the time I had with them and that I can remember them with fondness.

I am thankful for forgetfulness. God forgives and even forgets my sins. The devil tries to remind me of them but God helps me to focus on what He has done in paying the penalty in full for all of those sins.

I am thankful for the congregation God lets me be a part of. If I was not their pastor, I would still want to worship and serve God with them. They are an encouraging and enjoyable group.

I am thankful for parents and grandparents who wanted the generations to follow them to be taught the Word of God. They did not treat the Bible as just another book. Knowing Jesus and His Word was important to them and it became important to me.

I am thankful for friends. Each one is unique. They encourage me; they challenge me; they care about me; they make me laugh; they make me think. I thank God for the way He has made each one of them and the way He uses them in my life.

I am thankful for young people and kids. They can try your patience and confuse you to no end. They also add joy to life beyond what words can describe.

I am thankful for pastors and teachers who did not just tell me to be thankful. They told me the wonderful reasons why I can be thankful. They told me about Jesus who loves me and gave His life so that I have life. "Thank be to God for His indescribable gift!" (II Corinthians 9:15).

## Healing is God's answer

**E**vangelism is a gift given to the church in order that God's will to bring healing to our person, our family, our household of faith, our community, our nation and our world, can actually be realized even in this generation. Healing is entirely dependent upon our relationships. First and foremost is our relationship with God and then comes our horizontal relationships to all those around us.

Every relationship must be built according to the Word and obedience to its consistent principles. In particular we must conform with the prescription God laid down in II Chronicles 7:14.

God never changes and neither does man's sinful condition.

What we sow is what we will reap. It is sad that the world must suffer because we, as God's people, have ignored God's recipe for healing and thus have not only set up ourselves but the whole world for judgment. God's people hold the key to healing and blessing and to the salvation of the lost. It is wonderful we still have the opportunity to follow the way of repentance and obedience.

The early church grew at a rapid pace and the book of Acts indicates to us it was because the world saw the great love and concern God's people had for one another. Their relationships, horizontal and vertical, were in good order which in turn freed the power of God, through the preaching of the Word, in their midst.

Today we hear that people do not respond to the preaching of the Word as they did in the past. But why? Has God or His Word changed? Is the gospel no longer the power of God unto salvation? No, the reason is to be found elsewhere and it is quite simple. The people in the world will not respond until people in the congregations have made things right with God and with one another.

Scripture is clear that when this is right, then as David puts it in Psalm 51:13: "Will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted

unto thee." No shortcuts and no amount of church programming or gimmicks will make any difference. You may add to church numbers and congregational activity but only God's way will add names to the Lamb's Book of Life. To be blunt, with a few exceptions, it is the Christian community that is effectively blocking the world's view of Jesus Christ. He is the power of the gospel and He sent us the Holy Spirit to enforce that power. The Holy Spirit is offended by sin and thus the power promised us is short circuited. Unforgiven sin blocks our view of Jesus. Unforgiven sin, I believe, is rooted in an unforgiving spirit. The Lord's Prayer makes this crystal clear. "Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." In the parable Jesus told in Matthew 18:23-35, the lesson is unavoidable. An unforgiving spirit cancels the grace relationship with our Lord.

Have you ever seen a time like this when saints:

- are so touchy and seek their own good at the expense of others?
- have so much difficulty coming under God-given authority?
- cannot confess their faults because it won't be kept confidential?
- cannot get along even in their own congregations?
- are church hoppers for personal reasons only?
- talk so much about the authority of the Word while showing little submission to that Word?
- rely so heavily on gimmicks and programming?

— have itching ears?

— expect to be served rather than serve?

— have little commitment except to their own agendas?

The list could undoubtedly go on but it is enough to outline our need for repentance and healing. It is not too late! It may be more costly than in days past because I believe God has begun to do what He promised His people in Isaiah 5:1-7. This is talking about the vineyard which was the house of Israel but now is the Christian Church. The Lord said He found wild grapes instead of the tame He had planted and cultivated (KJV). Therefore in verse 5, He says He will take away the hedge and wall of protection (the protecting laws and attitudes of our nation) and make it a wasteland (a spiritual desert). Many have been in it for years. There will be briars and thorns (painful social sins and consequences). He says, "I will command the clouds not to rain on it." The Word will not be empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring faith, new life and healing.

All this can be turned about, however, when God's people respond to His prescription in II Chronicles 7:14, and to the messenger (evangel) which God, when they seek His face, will send them. If we want God's healing then may Psalm 139:23-24 be our prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Amen.

— *Pastor Gene R. Sundby*