

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 6, 1984



a look at AFLTS

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Lay Pastor Gustav Nordvall

Thanksgiving

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High" (Ps. 92:1).

Days or periods of thanksgiving have been known in many lands from ancient times. In our land, Pilgrims paid homage to the Lord and lifted prayerful hands for the blessings of the year; divine goodness and harvest's bounty of wild turkeys, vegetables and pumpkins.

It was George Washington who issued the first presidential Thanksgiving proclamation in 1789 in honor of the new Constitution. It was observed on the fourth Thursday of November. Until Abraham Lincoln again set apart the last Thursday for Thanksgiving, 70 years later, many States set their own dates to observe the day. Andrew Jackson named the

first Thursday in December for observance, while Ulysses S. Grant moved it back to the third Thursday of November. Otherwise, Lincoln's choice was accepted for many years. Businessmen in 1939, who wished to create a longer shopping period between Thanksgiving and Christmas, petitioned Franklin D. Roosevelt to move it back one week. He complied, setting the time, the third Thursday. That same year, 1941, Congress rejected both terms "third" and "last" and decreed that Thanksgiving would henceforth be on the fourth Thursday of November. Settled at last.

As we remember the Pilgrims, we are thankful that our own landscape is less severe than when our forefathers found it. The brown leaves have scurried away, flowers are faded, the wild geese call. Corn, wheat and potatoes are gathered in. We give thanks for home and family. We give thanks for our nation which recognizes the blessings of Almighty God and that we the citizens are encouraged to give thanks. As we go on, Thanksgiving can become a way of being.

When the Lord had delivered his people from the Egyptians in the Red Sea, Moses and the Children of Israel had a song service in praise to God. "I will sing unto the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and rider hath He thrown into the sea."

When the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt under Nehemiah, there was a time of dedication. They sought the Levites out of all their places to bring them to Jerusalem to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgiving and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries and

with harp. Even princes of Judah were appointed to give thanks from on top of the wall.

While these two observances were held during and after some momentous experiences, the children of Israel were always exhorted to give thanks to the Lord for all His mercies.

The book of Psalms has a good number of such exhortations. For instance, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, because His mercy endureth forever." The words, "for His mercy endureth forever," are repeated in all 26 verses of Psalm 136.

Then there is the account of how Jesus healed ten lepers one day in a village in Samaria. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back and with a loud voice glorified God. He fell at the feet of Jesus, giving Him thanks. His gratitude was spontaneous. He received from Jesus an added blessing, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee well."

How much thankfulness and appreciation do we feel towards our fellowmen?

Truly it is a good thing to give thanks.

"Come, ye thankful people, come
Raise the song of harvest home:
All is safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin.
God our Maker doth provide
For our wants to be supplied;
Come to God's own temple, come.
Raise the song of harvest home."

(Concordia, 243)

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the forgiven soul – a thankful soul

a sacrifice of thanksgiving



by Pastor Tony Stockman, Cloquet,
Minn.

The greatest blessing that an individual can experience is the salvation of his soul. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ is essential if one is to understand the true meaning of thanksgiving. One can express thankfulness, but it means little if the heart of that individual has never been touched by the mercy of God. A true expression of thanksgiving begins when God has opened one's eyes to his sin and revealed His grace in Christ Jesus. The thanksgiving that issues from a saved soul is a thankfulness that will revive a troubled heart.

The Bible is full of examples of men who have been touched by the grace of God. David, who had sinned against God, when restored, offered up to God sacrifices of thanksgiving. These sacrifices came from a heart that had been crushed but also restored by the mercy of God. David had to be broken before true thanksgiving could be offered to

"The Bible is full of examples of men who had been touched by the grace of God."

God. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). He was delivered from his sin and the wrath of God was lifted from him. He had cause to rejoice because he was now restored in his relationship to God.

Isaiah describes why this type of thanksgiving is reviving to a troubled heart. "I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, for although Thou was angry with me, Thine anger is turned away and Thou dost comfort me" (Isaiah 12:11). God's comforting presence surrounded David and sustained him with a new love for his God. He was with newly cleansed spiritual eyes delivered from the power of sin.

The blind man Jesus healed is a good example of what our attitude should be toward Christ. He had been born blind but when his eyes were opened he wasted no time in praising his Savior. "And he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped Him" (John 9:38). True, a wonderful miracle occurred when he received his sight, but far greater was his receiving of spiritual sight. He had come to believe in Christ as the Son of God and was transformed into a new creation. As a new creation he saw that his number one priority was to worship Christ. A heart that has been revived will humble itself daily at the feet of Jesus. God has promised to give grace to the humble but He is opposed to the proud and self-sufficient. The blind man had learned

to trust in one he had found to be faithful and loving. Jesus was a genuine lover of souls and through His kindness brought souls to repentance.

Indeed, like the blind man, you will never truly worship until your eyes are opened to the Savior. The blind man stumbled about in the darkness, confused and lost. Imagine the fears he must have experienced without the precious guidance of light. A spiritually-blind person is as helpless in understanding and appreciating the Gospel as this blind man. His life is characterized by uncertainty and fear.

The Bible very vividly describes this slavish bondage. "The cords of death encompassed me and the terrors of Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow" (Psalm 116:3). There is no need to be a slave to the fear of death. Jesus has overcome! "And might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Hebrews 2:15).

Jesus has conquered death and has removed the sting of death. A soul who dies in the Lord has found a resting place for his soul. He dies a peaceful death. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones" (Psalm 116:15).

The sacrifices of thanksgiving that we offer to God for salvation are very beneficial to us spiritually. A thankful heart will be stirred to continue serving in adverse situations. We love to be around people who are not negative. These people lift our spirits and encourage us. God says in His Word to offer up "sacrifices of thanksgiving."

"A thankful heart will be stirred to continue serving in adverse situations."

THE MEN IN ROOM 204

by James Lyell Johnson

They used different roads, but all arrived at the same destination at 9 a.m. that Wednesday morning. One by one, each filtered through the door, some carrying brief cases, others carrying backpacks. One held a cup of coffee, another a Bible and pen. Once in, they stood in huddles.

Many had never met before — perhaps they had only heard of each other, perhaps not even that. On the other hand, others had known each other for years. Some were roommates in college. Two attended high school together.

But still, they couldn't have known back then that they would be in room 204 together that Wednesday morning. No, not this group of seminarians. They couldn't have possibly guessed that this day would have left them starting a sobering task together at the same time with a roomful of other seminarians at Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary — primarily because being in that room is not supposed to be something that a man decides for himself. It is supposed to be something that God decides.

They call it a "call." God left them with an unremovable urge to be in the ministry.

And that was the reason these men were there that Wednesday morning at 9 a.m., the opening day of seminary at AFLTS for the 1984-1985 school year. Each had his own path to the seminary, each had his own story.

Francis Monseth, the dean of the seminary, stopped to think of it. "So many various backgrounds," he mused. "From so many different



Dean Francis Monseth and the new student body.

places, so many different situations. But all called to the same calling."

All called to be in room 204.

Robert Lee, an AFLTS instructor, had wished more could have been in the room at 9 a.m. that day. He had wished that people from all around the AFLC could have seen and heard what took place that morning.

"I wish the people of our parishes could sit in on something like this," Lee said. "It's such a high — just to capture a touch of the spirit of these men. These are not men just giving it a try. These are men who are following a calling. These are men who are seeking to be where God wants them to be."

"It does something to remind me," Lee said, "that there's no type, no pattern, no certain mold of a man that comes to seminary. Every story is new."

Indeed.

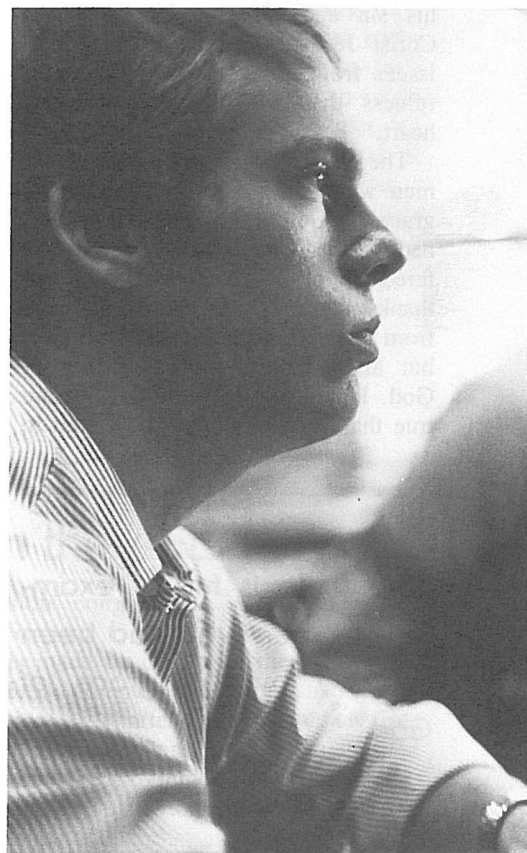
One by one the men stood up to share their stories. One was an AFLC president's son; another was a farm boy from North Dakota. One had been in the AFLC all his life; another hadn't even heard of it until the summer before he registered.

One came from a job as a "director of enabling ministries" within a large Lutheran congregation inside the Twin Cities; another came from Egypt and wants to go back as an evangelist after completing a one-year assignment as a special student.

One felt the call as a college junior in Oregon; another felt the call as a farmer and father of three. "I knew

the right thing to do," he said, "and I wanted to do it" — even if it meant giving up an established farm life and his financial security.

Another was a former college computer student from Grand Forks who couldn't get enough Bible study. He came to AFLBS, despite knowing little about the school, to satisfy the hunger. He left with a heartfelt desire to serve churches.



There were others called as college students, too, like a music major who seemed to lose the desire to teach music and grew in desire to teach Sunday school. As this desire grew, he became uncomfortable with the doctrinal stance of the large Lutheran body to which he belonged and came to AFLTS at the urging of an evangelist from the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement.

Others came from within the AFLC. One, who teaches math at a Christian high school, was the son of an AFLC pastor who heard the "still, small voice of God" during his first year of college, saying, "What about the ministry, Mark?" For the next three years he couldn't put the call out of his mind.

All morning long the stories went on that way: men traveling different roads, but heeding the same call, and somehow arriving at the same destination: AFLTS.

"It encourages me," Rev. Monseth said. "God is definitely answering prayer about calling men into the ministry."

Those men this year include seniors Jim Johnson (Slapneck, Mich.), Todd Klemme (Little Falls, Minn.), Jonathan Strand (Minneapolis, Minn.), and Jeff Swanson (Axtell, Kan.), along with middlers Lynn Kinneberg (Abercrombie, N. Dak.), Randy Moe (Thief River Falls, Minn.), Steve Snipstead (Minneapolis, Minn.), and Tom Tuura (Esko, Minn.), as well as juniors Saad Boktor (Domiatt, Egypt), Craig Johnson (Astoria, Ore.), Jerry Moan (McIntosh, Minn.), Mark Molstre (Dickinson, N. Dak.), Tom Olson (Coon Valley, Wis.), Brian Pearson (Grand Forks, N. Dak.), Keith Quanbeck (McVile, N. Dak.), Jim Rasmussen (McHenry, N. Dak.), Jim Ritter (Stevens Point, Wis.), and Reuben Unseth (Bismarck, N. Dak.).

This year's group as a whole – despite their many different roads to the seminary – holds in common two things that set them apart from every other group of students in the seminary's history: its youth and its Bible school education. The student body is remarkably young: all but one of the seminarians are under 30 years old, and more than half are 25 or younger. Jim Rasmussen stands as the

seminary's oldest student. He is 33.

Beside their youth, this year's group of seminarians stands out in another way also: 12 of the 18 – two-thirds of the students – have attended Bible school at AFLBS, an unprecedented figure in the history of the school.

But still, it wasn't mere figures or ages or even Bible backgrounds that was most striking that Wednesday morning. What stood out most were the testimonies, telling one by one, of God's calling.

"It was good to hear those guys," Keith Quanbeck said afterward. "All called from different backgrounds, different family situations, from so many places. I was really encouraged."

Jim Ritter, a first-year seminarian who worked for Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls during the last four years, said that hearing the stories made him feel privileged to be a part of this Gospel-moving, God-calling process, to see God's Word still going forth. "This is history here," he said. "New chapters are being written."

"It's refreshing to me," senior Jeff Swanson said. "The fellowship, the sharing, it's just really refreshing." He laughed, "Frankly, after preaching all summer, I was getting tired of hearing myself talk. It was good to hear how God was working in others' lives to bring them here."

Swanson, who grew up in a church in a large Lutheran synod, had never even heard of the AFLC until the summer before he came to AFLTS in 1982.

"From the very beginning I've been in love with this place," he said. "I'm so thankful to have found a seminary that holds to God's Word. It's exciting to be back."

It's exciting to be called. From different roads, to one destination: to room 204 at AFLTS.

Yes, we did produce a near perfect Republic, but will they keep it? Or will they, in the enjoyment of plenty, lose the memory of freedom? Material abundance without character is the surest way to destruction.

Thomas Jefferson

(This year over half of our seminary student body consists of men who previously attended the Bible School. We asked one of them, "Why?"

from AFLBS to AFLTS

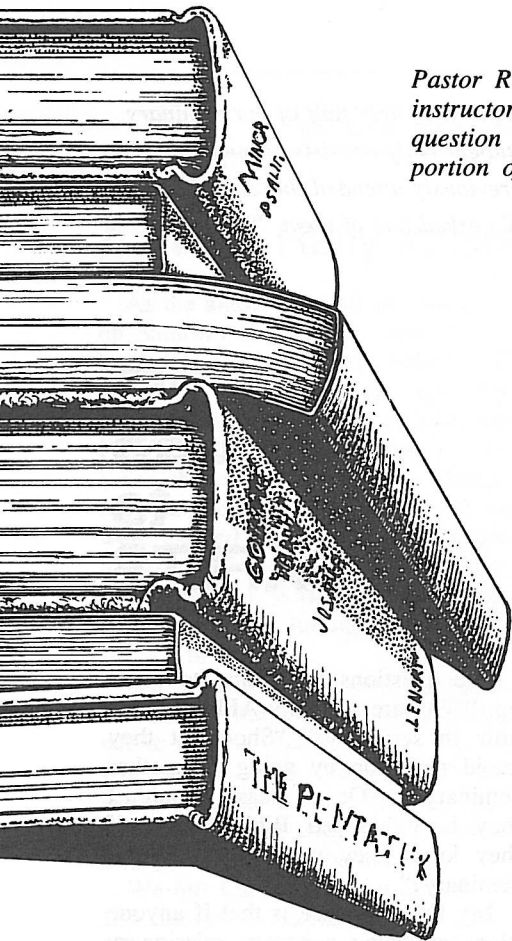
The questions are bound to come up: "Why are so many AFLBS grads now in seminary?" "Shouldn't they avoid repetition by going to another seminary?" "Or at least shouldn't they have skipped Bible School if they knew they were going to our seminary?"

My first response is that if anyone plans on being a pastor, missionary or teacher in the AFLC he should naturally go to AFLTS for his theological training. I looked into several seminaries before deciding on AFLTS. But that was when I was considering teaching religion at the college level. Once I saw God directing me into the AFLC there was no question that our seminary was the one to attend.

The question still remains, "Why go to Bible School first?" The Bible School was not envisioned as a mill to turn out seminarians. In fact, the purposes of the two schools are quite different. And if a person knew he was planning on seminary I'm not sure I would recommend Bible School.

But for me Bible School was just the ticket. It gave me a chance to grow up, to mature in my faith and make decisions about where and what to study in college. Pastor R. Snipstead, in the opening chapel service this year, spoke of Bible School as a place, through the study of God's Word, to find God's will for one's life. And so many young men receive their call to prepare for the

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Pastor Ralph Tjelta, new Old Testament instructor this year, was asked to address the question of why Christians should study this portion of the Scriptures.



WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

"The prophets, who long ago wrote about what God's love would do for you, made a thorough search to learn all about this salvation. They tried to find out whom and what time the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing out when He exactly predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. God told them they were not serving themselves but you in these things. And now the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven, had men, telling you the good news, announce to you these things the angels long to look into" (1 Pet. 1:10-12, Beck Translation).

In his first epistle the Apostle Peter praises God for the gracious salvation which He has provided. Through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he makes the significant statement that the content of the Church's message is that which was ministered to it by the holy prophets of long ago. Here in these verses are reasons why Christians study the Old Testament today.

In the first place, we study the Old Testament because it is the Word of God. Inspired by His Spirit the Old Testament is fact, truth and authority. It is fact in that it contains those truths that belong to this real world and are applicable and reliable both in speaking of things historical and scientific as well as things spiritual. God, who cannot lie, speaks to the

Church today through His inerrant, authoritative Word, that Word which cannot be broken and is the true and only instruction, correction and final say in matters pertaining to faith and life.

Secondly, we study the Old Testament because it is the Word of History. It records the necessary accounts of God's dealings with His creation, His Chosen People, and the heathen people of the world. The accounts contained in this revelation were given as examples, exhorting Christians to renounce all evil lusts (1 Cor. 10:6,11) and encouraging them in living faith (Heb. 11,12).

Lastly, the Old Testament Scriptures are to be studied because they are the Word of Christ. They testify of His birth, His life and ministry, and of His substitutionary suffering and death, together with His glorious resurrection and ascension (Lk. 24:44-46). Because they speak of Jesus the Savior they, along with the New Testament, are the only source of salvation. In them are found eternal life (Jn. 5:39), forgiveness of sins, comfort and strength, correct doctrine, and the proclamation of His name to all nations. No wonder, then, that Jesus Himself declared that His disciples are to believe and obey all that the prophets have spoken (Lk. 24:25).

AFLBS to AFLTS . . .

ministry, have that call renewed, or find their course made clear at AFLBS.

In any case, the time in Bible School is worthwhile. It is oriented to training the layman for Christian living. And we never cease to be layman in that sense. Bible School and Seminary aren't really repetitive, either. Even with the same teacher in the same course the content has changed, as well as the perspective. For example, studying Ephesians with Pastor Philip Haugen in Bible School is quite a bit different from translating the Greek for him in Seminary.

In looking back, I'm sure that God's reasons for Bible School for a seminarian are good, though unique in each situation. And we should never doubt the validity of the time that God takes to train people to serve Him in the ministry.

James Johnson
Senior Seminarian,
Chatham, Mich.

"Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

I Corinthians 10:11

by Pastor Robert L. Lee
Instructor, AFLC Schools



REVIVE US AGAIN

Recent issues of *The Lutheran Ambassador* reminded the readers of many church anniversaries celebrated this past summer. 1984 also marked the 500th birthday anniversary of Ulrich Zwingli, the great Swiss Reformer, and the 200th anniversary of the official beginning of the Methodist Church in America.

But this year also marks another anniversary to remember.

It was 90 years ago, during the summer of 1894, that the Scandinavian communities of the Midwest were stirred by the announcement: "Skrefsrud is coming!"

Who was Lars Skrefsrud? The name probably means little to most readers today, but in 1894 he was known to Christians around the world. One biographer, who had heard both Moody and Spurgeon, declared that neither possessed the preaching power of Skrefsrud. Perhaps the reason that he is forgotten today is that his ministry in America was limited to the Norwegian Lutherans . . . yet he was a man who had mastered 40 languages!

This is not the time to tell the story of his life. It is enough to recall that he was one of God's unlikely servants — son of a drunken father, and who followed the same path during his youth, turned to crime and served a prison sentence for theft. It was as a prisoner that he tasted true freedom. The conviction of sin became a burden too heavy to bear, and he cried to God for mercy. Peace beyond understanding flooded his heart and during his first months as a newborn babe in Christ he memorized the entire New Testament!

The Lord also gave him a desire to declare the good news of salvation to those who had not yet heard, but Skrefsrud's application for missionary service was rejected by a cautious mission board because of his prison record. Eventually he was ac-

cepted by a German mission society and sailed to India where he was instrumental in the beginnings of the Santal Mission. God blessed the work there and the Word bore fruit in the lives of many new believers.

Why did Missionary Skrefsrud come to America? And how did he acquire a world-wide reputation and ministry? The answer is that the need for support increased as the Santal Mission flourished and Skrefsrud was commissioned to travel to Europe and America to publicize the mission's ministry.

But, though he thrilled his hearers with stories from Santalistan, Skrefsrud saw his primary mission to proclaim Law and Gospel. He was convinced that what people needed was "not more enlightenment for the head" but an experience of sin and grace. "When that happens," he declared, "we will not need to doubt that interest in missions will be aroused and grow."

A powerful spiritual awakening swept through Norwegian-American Lutheranism in the 1890s and the man most prominent in sparking that revival was Lars Skrefsrud. The AFLC has deep roots in this awakening, for its greatest impact was among the congregations that later became the Lutheran Free Church, influencing also some of our congregations that stem from the Hauge Synod and the United Church.

What was unique about this revival movement? It can be traced to the Swedish awakening associated with the ministry of the lay evangelist, C.O. Rosenius. His message was "Come as you are!", with the emphasis on free grace and the unconditional Gospel; no one had distinguished between Law and Gospel more clearly since Luther.

The foundation for this awakening had been firmly laid with a zeal for

solid Lutheran orthodoxy. The earlier Haugean awakening had plowed the ground deeply, with an emphasis on repentance and conversion. And now the peace and joy of an unconditional Gospel fell like a gentle rain upon thirsty ground.

Will it happen again in our day? Another Skrefsrud is not necessary, though God may choose again to use one special individual; on other occasions He has chosen to move through many. The individual is not the essential element in revival, but the message . . . lost in sin and liberty in Christ . . . and the fervent prayer of believers that seems to accompany these special times of awakening.

Some readers may be able to recall such seasons of refreshing — not merely a good week of evangelism services, but a moving of God's Spirit that reached beyond the congregation's walls and stirred the whole community. The terms we use for these times are not important; perhaps we have theological problems with "awakening," or dislike the way others have used "revival." Our spiritual forefathers used both of these words, but the main thing is that they experienced them. If you do remember a time of revival, tell others, write about it; God has used such recollections to renew hope in the hearts of His children that it can happen again.

Our days are confused and full of conflict, but they are not too different from the days of Skrefsrud. We still have the same word that he proclaimed and God's will is still that none should perish. "Revive us again!" Do we see the beginnings of a new joy in the unconditional Gospel within our AFLC? Will we experience spiritual awakening yet in our day?

"And begin that work in me." Amen.

friends of the evangelist

A bed, a table, a chair and a lamp. These are the essentials that a man of God who comes for a week of special meetings needs in the place where he stays. Meals will also need to be provided as well. What a privilege to have a man of God as a guest in one's home during this special week in the local church. It is also a great blessing for the guest speaker to find Christian hospitality when he is away from his own home.

The Shunamite woman saw the need and with a genuine willing spirit provided Elisha with a place to stay on his travels. A bed, a table, a chair and a lamp, the basic needs.

One word from experience is that the one item that is often missing is a table or place to write in the room provided for the guest evangelist. This is important so he can have a place to read, meditate, study and write during this week away from home.

A word of caution about meals provided for the guest speaker should also be given. How good it is to see the willing and loving hospitality a hostess shows in the meal or meals provided for the guest speaker during this week. It is important to realize that a man, not doing hard physical labor, can really only handle one large meal a day. Ideally, it would be best for him to have the "big" meal at noon each day he is to speak in the evening. The "other meal," then, whether it is at noon or in the evening, should be a light meal in comparison to the "full dinner" of the

when the
evangelist comes
to your town

"Let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set up a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand, and it shall be, when he comes to us, that he can turn in there" (II Kings 4:10).

other meal of the day. It is important that this caution be observed about offering the guest evangelist too much to eat in one day and make him feel bad if he does not eat everything put before him. The old saying, "who needs enemies when one has friends like that," is too often true. Our bodies can only take so much food in one day and the guest evangelist will very much appreciate the consideration given in this area.

It is so much appreciated to see that genuine Christian hospitality is still very much alive in our congregations. The Lord will add His blessing for all such hospitality shown with the love of Christ. It is inspiring to see that the love of *not* all men has grown cold, as Scripture so clearly tells us will happen in these last days. The willing desire to serve in this way must be tempered with reality and caution especially in the area of meals served to the guest evangelist.

The Evangelism Committee of the AFLC can only say thanks to all who show this genuine Christian hospitality. Let us pray that all things may be done decently and in order so that the kingdom of God will be extended and that many souls will be brought into a living relationship with Jesus Christ through our special evangelistic meetings in local congregations.

Pastor Laurel M. Udden



*Now thank we all our God,
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.*

—Martin Rinkart

Country style

Devotions

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20).

THE SECRET

The curious cow remarked one day
While chewing on a cud of hay . . .
"People are a funny brand —
Our farmer I can't understand.
His corn is wet, the mortgage's due,
But I just never see him blue.
Even though some things go wrong,
Still he whistles out a song."

Then spoke up the wise old cat,
"That man is smart; I'll tip my hat!
I get around . . . and I have found
That people either *smile* or *frown*.
Some tarnish life with discontent,
While other people's days are spent
In counting all the blessings sent.
Happiness is quite an art;
The secret is a grateful heart."

—Doris Stensland
Canton, S. Dak.

editorials

THANKSGIVING

As we gather in our churches on Thanksgiving Day, may our meeting together not be merely a form but a glad act of worship before our God who has blessed us with so many good things.

With the Psalmist let us say, "Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples" (Psalm 96:3). Then we can continue on with the psalmists to tell of His marvelous works. How wonderfully those writers lift us up to adoration and praise. But we must also express thanksgiving in our own words and enumerate those things for which we are grateful.

Let us be a thankful people. By ourselves we cannot provide, yes, we are nothing. But in Him we "live and move and have our being." Praise be to Thee, O God, for Thy goodness to us!

THEY GAVE UP

With the October 15 issue of *The Northwestern Lutheran*, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod gave up trying to be its own printer. From now on it will farm out all its printing jobs to commercial printers. The WELS had been in the printing business for 93 years. The Synod has over 400,000 baptized members but economics of the situation dictated this change.

James P. Schaefer, editor of *The Northwestern Lutheran*, in commenting on the change, notes that the Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (five and half-million together) have discontinued their printing operations.

This all indicates that it is costly to operate a church printing business. In the last several years some thought has been given to the Association having its own printing equipment. In light of the experiences of the WELS, LCA and LC-MS, we probably couldn't make it pay either, unless, being small, you can do some things you can't as a large organization. But the situation doesn't look hopeful.

WHAT KIND OF LIFE?

Abortion was once a "one flight up, second door to the right" kind of affair when it was something to be done on the sly. But since the Supreme Court decision of over a decade ago, it has become so much more common. The statistics are mind-boggling.

It is right that the Association is pro-life and anti-abortion. When life has been created in the mother's womb it shouldn't be ended except in the most unusual circumstances.

Having said that, it should also be said that we must be aware of the fact that many children in the U.S. and Canada (let us confine ourselves to these two countries for now) come into the world unwanted. In some families

(and single parent situations) they are tolerated at best and at worst are actively physically and psychologically abused, sometimes maimed or killed. So the gift of life which most of us and our children enjoy is no joy to some "kids." This world, for them, is literally a "vale of tears." With Job, they ask, "Why was I ever born?"

It is for those who exist tragically that we want to speak. What do we do for them? What can we do? We demand their right to physical life and rightly so, now how can we help them to meaningful life?

The easy answer is "let them get saved." Very true. Lives can be changed, but what do we do for children before that point and afterward? After all, a lot of these little people aren't those who will be sent, much less brought to Sunday School and church. How do we reach out to them and where do we find them? We can stand inside our church walls and preach our sermons and conduct our classes, but are we getting near those who desperately need help?

We can be good neighbors and lead exemplary lives. That will show others what life can really be like. Wonderful. But will that do the job? We don't have all the answers but are trying to think this matter through.

Some problems need the attention of social work. That can be handled through the church or by government. Perhaps few of our congregations support the work of Lutheran Social Services in the various states. Since the merger of 1963 many of us have drifted from participation in LSS. In Minnesota, to be sure, confidence has been lost in LSS because of its program for dealing with sexual problems. So, all in all, AFLC people give little or no support to church programs for aiding troubled lives on a state-wide basis.

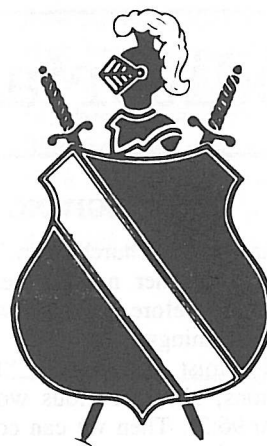
Government methods of helping the unloved and unwanted lack a spiritual base, of course. Social agencies are charged with knowing of the people, including children, who need help, whose lives are blighted and threatened and who probably won't make it unless they get help. Some social work is excellent, some of it is poor. Much depends on who is doing it, but social work is needed.

But we get back to the question: how do we help the unwanted and unloved child (sometimes also the very unlovely)? Oh, the answers are easy: by being caring and loving Christian people in and outside of the church, by supporting the good social works of others (and demanding effective work by those whom we support through taxes and contributions), by giving others a chance and the benefit of the doubt whenever we can, by being supportive and encouraging as we have opportunity, by participating in the teaching ministry of the church, by much prayer for specific individuals and generally. The answers are easy, but the doing, that will take some doing.

We are to be pro-life, and pro-life also in the sense that we help those for whom life is anything but a happy prospect unless someone comes to their aid. ¶

the Lord has provided the Christian's armor

by Pastor Michael Klenner
Pelkie, Mich.



The Christian understands from the Bible that Satan and his hosts are waging war against God and His people. The evil one exercises a tyrannical control over the world, seeking to defeat Christians and manipulating unregenerate men into becoming hostile to the Gospel.

The Apostle Paul describes the Christian walk as one of warfare, a conflict in which the believer is en-

gaged in an intense spiritual battle against a well-organized army of intelligent super-natural creatures. Further, let us remember that our struggle is not against the "flesh and blood" of a human antagonist but against or in opposition to the rulers, the powers, the world forces, the spiritual forces of wickedness; thus our battle is against the schemes of the devil. He, as our opponent, is not

a weak mortal foe but a powerful one.

We read in I Peter 5:8: "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." God, during this age, permits Satan to be our adversary. How close is he, you may ask? Luther wrote: "A Christian should know that he is sitting among devils and that the

Editorials . . .

HOMOSEXUALITY

Association people are among those who believe that homosexuality is a sin. Homosexuality is the abnormal preference of a person of one sex for someone of the same sex. It is something God didn't intend and Scripture condemns.

It is a tragic condition and there is much of mystery about it. Homosexuals must be assured of certain civil rights. They have the right of employment and the guarantee of personal safety. But they are off base when they flaunt their sexual "preference," if you will, or encourage anyone else to such a life-style. Thus, it is wrong for them to band together to proclaim their homosexuality to the world, sponsor "weeks" or "days" to call attention to themselves, etc.

What would we think if all who engaged in sexual acts before marriage or had extra-marital affairs boasted publicly of that and paraded in the streets, or congregated in certain sections of cities? We would call it depravity and carnality of the worst kind. So it is when homosexuals flaunt what they are.

The Bible says, "Do not be deceived: neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9b, 10). Paul wrote to Timothy: "Understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and

disobedient . . . sodomites" (homosexuals) (I Tim. 1:9, 10). In the Old Testament, God spoke through Moses, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman: it is an abomination" (Lev. 18:22). These passages are enough to establish that homosexuality is a sin, not something in which to take pride. It isn't something for the streets but for the closet.

Today we aren't far from the situation which existed in Sodom in the days of Lot and Abraham. The incident described in Genesis 19 is generally held to be a description of a blatant homosexual society. There are American cities where similar events could happen today and may have happened. There is no doubt in our mind that God may visit judgment again on flagrant evil and disregard of His law with some cataclysmic events.

In discussing the sin of homosexuality, or any sin, it is always a blessing to turn once more to I Corinthians 6 and there to read the Apostle's great words where, after cataloging the sins which exclude from the kingdom of God, including homosexuality, he adds (verse 11): "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." The Christians at Corinth had been delivered out of various sins. Every condemnation of sin is accompanied by the invitation to come unto Jesus for salvation from that sin. God's grace and saving power are able to work transformations in all yielded lives. He can make life new. This is the glory of the Gospel.

devil is closer to him than his coat or shirt." Yet, in His infinite love for us our Lord tells us that as we go into battle He has made provision for the victory.

When one enters into battle, it is always advantageous to know something about the enemy and God, in revealing who our enemy is and the might he possesses, tells us that physical weapons will not suffice. We can be effective only as we stand with Christ upon entering into battle. Thus we shall still stand when the battle is over! The Apostle John assures us, in I John 4:4: "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world". The might in our struggle is Christ's but by faith it becomes our strength.

The Apostle Paul, using the figure of a warrior prepared for battle, lists the articles of armor God has provided in His Son, Jesus Christ. However, the individual believer has the responsibility of putting it on. That is, he must consciously appropriate the power the Lord Jesus Christ makes available.

The "day of battle" is the evil day that continually comes when Satan seeks to sift us. How necessary it is to do *all*, to leave nothing undone to contribute to the success of the battle. First, let us gird our loins with *truth*. This belt of truth refers to our sincerity of heart and soul, to not merely desiring victory over sin but truly longing for it. We cannot resist the evil influence of Satan by being dishonest, we must be in and of the truth in Jesus. For the Scriptures tell us the truth in Christ and as He is of the truth He shall make us free and is able to save us. Oh, how we are to hate sin and the tempter who leads one to be of it.

In continuing to dress ourselves with God's complete protective armor, we proceed to put on the *breastplate of righteousness*. The believers' way of life is to desire to rebuff the attacks of Satan by consciously choosing to live a life of obedience and holiness. No righteousness of ourselves shall ever prevail against Satan; it isn't invincible. But being made righteous by God's grace through faith in Christ we are declared not guilty for His sake and are conquerors.

**"... he (the believer)
must consciously
appropriate the power
the Lord Jesus Christ
makes available."**

The forgiving Word of God makes our heart and soul impenetrable by Satan. Further, in service to our Lord our witness and testimony is to win souls for Christ. The devil won't have his way with a godly person!

The Christian also is to have his feet "shod with the *preparation of the Gospel of peace*." With the peace of the Gospel we march against Satan, sharing the Good News with others. We ask ourselves the following questions:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?" (Psalm 27:1).

"If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31).

And God gives His answer of assurance in Joshua 1:5: "I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you."

**"Every believer should
know that God has
made provision for his
victory over Satan."**

The "shield of faith" is necessary, Paul tells us, for it constitutes faith in God as our Father, in Christ as our Redeemer and the Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier. This faith is to be, as Luther says, "a living, active, energetic thing." We remain strong, however, in faith only through daily prayer, Bible study and spiritual activity. Yes, faith is the victory!

In I Thessalonians 5:8, we are told to put on "a helmet, the *hope of salvation*." Our assurance of salvation comes from God – faith in Christ delivers us from the world, the flesh and the devil. We are a redeemed people passing from death to life, thus we can be Christians, the kind of persons Satan cannot control.

To complete our armor an offensive and defensive weapon is given, the "*sword of the Spirit*" which is "the *Word of God*." As Jesus was tempted in the wilderness He rebuked the devil with the written Word of God. The believer, too, can set Satan to flight by heeding God's Word and proclaiming its truth. Yes, in accordance with Matthew 4:4: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

The Word of God is a sword because it lays bare the wiles of the devil. And the sword of the Spirit is mighty because He is its Author and makes us effectual to defeat our enemies. The Bible is our blessed weapon.

Our armor is divine armor because God provides each part. Therefore, we need not despair because of the devil and his power. We have the Word of God, the indwelling Holy Spirit and a living Savior. James tells us in James 4:7: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

Every believer should know that God has made provision for his victory over Satan.

We are reminded of the words of a hymn:

"Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on
before!"

Yes, we are soldiers of the cross and thanks be to God for the victory which begins and ends in our Lord Jesus Christ!

world missions

A WMF Rally in Brazil

As the alarm went off at 4:00 a.m. on Saturday the 30th of June, it was hard to get up on this rather cold morning. But that was the day marked for, what you would call, our Fall WMF Rally. Ladies from our interior churches had arrived in Campo Mourao the afternoon before and all were excited about that day because it was the first time for such a rally. As a national WMF, we have only met once a year during Annual Conference in January.

Our chartered bus was waiting to take us to our church in Londrina, where national pastor Cleodo and his wife Ivone serve. Along with the ladies went our Bible School students and five of our church men. More than 30 of us filled the bus.

We left Campo Mourao at about 6 and arrived in Londrina before 10. Upon our arrival Dona Maria Rosa, president of the Londrina WMF, was waiting for us with hot coffee and bread. After that little "pick-me-up" we got back on the bus to do some sightseeing around the city.

At noon we were taken over to one of the church member's homes for a very delicious barbecue.

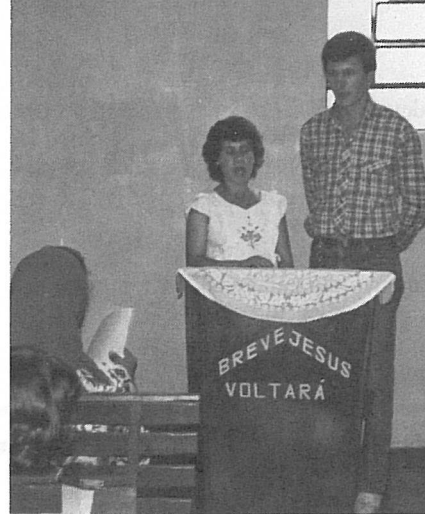
Our rally meeting started at 3 in the afternoon and the church was full, with standing room only. Each of the WMFs represented had a part in the program, whether in song, tes-

timonies, Bible readings or meditations.

For the closing, the Bible School students put on a puppet show for the many children who attended with their mothers. Of course, the adults also enjoyed watching the puppets and hearing the story of the man who prepared a feast and invited his friends to come, but each one had an excuse not to, so he sent his servants out to invite everybody so that the house might be filled.

Two people were celebrating birthdays, so afterward we had cake and many tasty goodies.

The day came to an end much too fast and it was hard to get everybody back in the bus at 6:30 for our return trip. We finally arrived in Campo Mourao by 10.



Pastor Cleodo and wife Ivone sang.

We had a very full and long day, but one that we will not forget for a long time.

Mrs. Connely (Carolyn) Dyrud

Missionary John H. Abel, on furlough, has returned to Brazil to participate in a two months' evangelism program. His wife Ruby continues at her mother's home in Hitterdal, Minn.



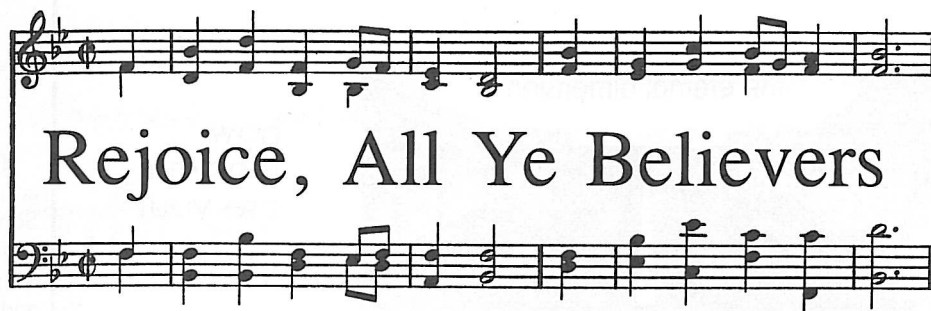
Rev. and Mrs. George Knapp assist in the puppet show.



The church in Londrina.



Group of ladies at the rally in Londrina.



Concordia, No. 113
Tune: In Heaven Is Joy (Norwegian Folk-Tune)

Laurentius Laurentii, 1700
Tr. Sarah Findlater, 1854

This beautiful Advent hymn comes from the peak of the spiritual revival called the Pietistic School and is judged the best of the pietist Laurentius Laurentii, cantor and director of music in the Lutheran cathedral at Bremen, who wrote about 150 hymns based on the Gospels for the Sundays and festivals of the church year. This hymn was written for the 25th Sunday after Trinity and has as its foundation Matthew 25:1-13, the parable of the ten women who with their lamps go to meet the Bridegroom.

(Spiritual revivals in the Christian Church have always been accompanied by an outburst of song. This was true of the Reformation, the birth of the Lutheran Church, and it was also true of the pietistic movement. The pietistic revival had its birth in Germany, and it quickly spread to other Lutheran countries, particularly the Scandinavian countries, and its influence continues to this day. We are a product of that movement, which was a protest to the complacency and dead orthodoxy which had overtaken the church after the pestilence and the Thirty Years War.)

The hymn proclaims this fundamental truth: believers do not fear His final coming. The somber seriousness of the Judgment – the apprehension and trepidation of that awful, awesome event are displaced by God's peace and the joyful anticipation of being with Christ.

This hymn, as with scores of others from the Reformation and Pietistic period, has been translated into so many languages that it's in common use all over the world. For this we are grateful to some brilliant British women, namely Sarah Borthwick Findlater, her sister Jane Borthwick, and Catherine Winkworth. The Borthwick sisters collaborated in four volumes entitled *Hymns from the Land of Luther* which contained a large number of German hymns, including this one. Jane and Sarah were born in Scotland. Sarah, who became the wife of a Scot minister, Erick John Findlater, pastor of the Free Church of Scotland, gave us this excellent translation.

It's not an easy task to take a hymn which was rhymed and metered in a given language and translate, rhyme and meter it in another language while retaining the poet's quality and intent. A translator with such skill deserves nearly as much credit as the original author.

Other hymns by Laurentii:
433 In Heaven Above.

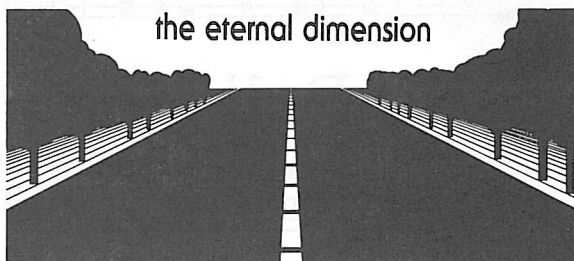
—Don Rodvold

- 1) Rejoice, all ye believers,
And let your lights appear!
The evening is advancing,
And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising,
And soon He draweth nigh.
Up, watch, and pray, and
wrestle,
At midnight comes the cry!
- 2) The watchers on the mountain
Proclaim the Bridegroom near;
Go meet Him as He cometh,
With hallelujahs clear.
The marriage feast is waiting,
The gates wide open stand;
Up, up, ye heirs of glory,
The Bridegroom is at hand!
- 3) Ye saints, who here in patience
Your cross and suff'rings bore,
Shall live and reign forever,
Where sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory
The Lamb ye shall behold,
In triumph cast before Him
Your diadems of gold!
- 4) Our Hope and Expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, Thou Sun so longed for,
O'er this benighted sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted,
We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption,
That brings us unto Thee!

The Greatest Gift

Among all the gifts with
which God enriches our lives
and which ought to call forth
our thanksgiving, His
redeeming, forgiving love
ranks first.

Felix Kretzschmar



the eternal dimension

how
thankful
are you?

November is our national month of thanksgiving. Are you thankful? Are you aware that you are a creature with continual need and that your continuing existence is evidence that your need is being met? Where does the supply come from, and do you regularly express thankfulness to the one who supplies your need?

Thankfulness is not automatic, nor does everyone practice it. Yet it is a most obvious obligation, and beautiful wherever it is practiced. When we give our children something for which they fail to say "Thank you," we say "You're welcome." This quickly reminds them that they failed to say "Thank you." Do you need many reminders to say "Thank you" to God?

There is a good lesson in the Bible on thankfulness, and the ease with which it is overlooked. Ten men came to Jesus with the same need. They all had incurable leprosy, and they all asked Jesus to heal them. Jesus sent them away to the local priest to show him they had been healed. It was while they were on their way that the healing came. This was a crucial moment for these ten men. Would they express thanks or would they be like so many of us who receive so much and give thanks so little? Of the ten men, only one took note of his healing as something for which he should be thankful enough to make it known. The Bible says he turned back to give thanks and glorify God. It also says that Jesus recalled that ten men were healed, and He wondered where the other nine might be.

You are one who has received gifts from God in the past year. Are you aware of how much you have received? Have you been sensitive to God's goodness to you? Have you, at any time, turned back from His good gifts to you to tell Him you are thankful?

We are told that we Americans are materialists. We are accumulators of things. Somehow, it may be the more we get the more we want. If what we get should determine how much we give thanks, we should be among the most thankful people in the world. Yet, sometimes our selfishness shows rather prominently. How about you? After all, life must be lived personally, and thanksgiving to God can only come out of personal appreciation. The one leper did not allow the insensitive attitude of the nine keep him from giving thanks. Neither should you.

It is our prayer that you will be a person sensitive enough about God's goodness that you will turn to Him and give thanks, even though others may not. A thankful heart is evidence of a tender heart. It is the tender heart which God can teach other important lessons. That's why we think it is so important that you give thanks to the Lord for all His goodness to you in the past year. We urge you this Thanksgiving season to count your blessings, and give thanks. You may be pleasantly surprised what it does for your home, and for your heart. *This Thanksgiving season, don't forget to let God know that you are really thankful.*

— Pastor Emerson Anderson
Cleveland, O.

All-Boards'

The AFLC All-Boards' Workshop convened at 9 a.m., on Tuesday, Sept. 25 at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis. President R. Snipstead greeted the Board members and called upon Pastor Leslie Galand, vice-president, who read II Timothy 3:16, 17 and shared a devotional message.

Sessions during the course of the day focused on the financial needs of the Association, increasing our effectiveness as a church body and stewardship promotion. These things were discussed through a variety of means. Pastor Snipstead's objective presentation, small group discussions and a panel discussion were among them.

Welcome to Tucson

We praise the Lord for the climate He has blessed us with here in Tucson, Ariz. Yet since many of us are transplanted Mid-westerners we sincerely empathize with you in the tundra.

That is why we here at Living Faith Lutheran Church of Tucson invite you to enjoy mild, sunny weather this winter and still be at home in an AFLC congregation. In fact, we would enjoy seeing you so much that if you give us proper notice we will do our best to secure motel or apartment accommodations for you.

We welcome you to enjoy our warm fellowship.

Pastor Terry S. Wold
6000 S. Cardinal Ave.
Tucson, Ariz. 85746
(H) (602) 883-2312
(O) (602) 883-8778

New congregations in the AFLC

Received to the roster of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations at the Sept. 25 meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee were:

Escanaba Lutheran Church,
Escanaba, Mich.

Unity Lutheran Church,
Massapequa, N.Y.

Escanaba Lutheran is a Home Mis-

sion congregation served by Rev. Richard Gunderson. Unity Lutheran is made up of former members of an LCA congregation. Unity had reception of charter members, their first confirmation and installation of their pastor, Earl Henley, on Nov. 4. Pastor Francis Monseth conducted the installation.

Workshop

Although the number of dollars given this year is greater than in past years, we are still running behind. It becomes obvious that if we are to continue the various ministries God has given to us we must stand behind them and not expect someone else to supply the dollars to pay for salaries, maintenance, facilities, founding new churches, etc. In view of the fact that we have been lagging behind our budget for the last several years, the question was asked, "Are we top heavy?" If we are moving faster than what we are able to handle, then the people of the AFLC need to be at the annual conference and vote down budget increases.

Out of the panel discussion came some good things. The panel, moderated by Pastor Robert L. Lee, consisted of Pastors Michael Brandt, Amery, Wis., and Ralph Rokke, Minneapolis, Minn., and Mr. Clifford Johnson, Esko, Minn., and Mr. Arlo Kneeland, Summit, S. Dak. After introducing several stewardship programs, the panel discussed the matter of giving to the Lord. Some of the statements that characterized the discussion were: 1) Stewardship works from the inside out. It's an aspect of maturity in the congregation, as well as the individual. 2) Giving needs to be motivated by a deep compulsion to see the kingdom of God advance. The conclusion, in my evaluation of the panel and of God's Word, is that revival is the answer.

*Pastor Larry Haagenson
Newfalden, Minn.*

New pastors on Clergy Roster

New pastors received to the AFLC clergy roster are:

Rev. Harvey Jackson, now serving Hope Lutheran Church, Ishpeming, Mich.

Rev. David Barnhart, serving Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls, Minneapolis, Minn. (LCA).

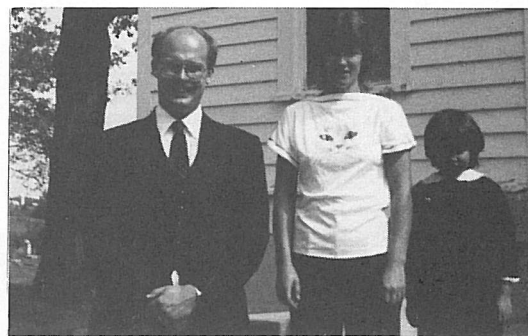
Rev. Earl Henley, Massapequa, N.Y.

All three pastors come from the clergy roster of the Lutheran Church in America.

news of the churches

Cumberland, Wis.

Mrs. Scott Bellefeuille and daughter Angela, shown here, were received into membership in Section Ten Lutheran Church, rural Cumberland, Wis., on Sept. 9. Following the service a fellowship dinner was served in honor of the new members and also in appreciation of Student Pastor Todd Klemme, also shown, and his wife Marriam, for their year of serving the church.



Personalities

Mr. Brian Davidson, recent graduate of Free Lutheran Seminary, has been called as an assistant pastor at Amery Lutheran Church, Amery, Wis., and to work in Mustard Seed Academy there. He will be ordained next Sunday, Nov. 11.

The address of **Rev. and Mrs. Forrest Swenson**, presently without call, is route 2, Roseau, Minn., although they will be away for at least part of the winter.

Pulpit, Baptismal Font Available

A pulpit and baptismal font are available without cost from Amery Lutheran Church, Amery, Wis. They may be seen there or inquiry can be made by calling 715-268-2589.

Rev. Terry Olson, Fargo, N. Dak., was the speaker at a series of meetings at Trinity Lutheran Church, Grand Forks, N. Dak., Oct. 7-10. His theme was "Living together with Jesus."

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O LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH AND SEA



O Lord of heaven and earth and sea,
To Thee all praise and glory be,
How shall we show our love to Thee
Who givest all?

The golden sunshine, vernal air,
Sweet flowers and fruit, Thy love
declare;
Where harvests ripen, Thou art
there
Who givest all.

For peaceful homes and healthful
days,
For all the blessings earth displays,
We owe Thee thankfulness and
praise
Who givest all.

Thou didst not spare Thine only Son,
But gav'st Him for a world undone,
And freely with that Blessed One
Thou givest all.

For souls redeemed, for sins
forgiven,
For means of grace and hopes of
heaven,
Father, what can to Thee be given
Who givest all?

To Thee, from Whom we all derive
Our life, our gifts, our power to
give;
O may we ever with Thee live
Who givest all.

Christopher Wordsworth
(from The Hymnal-Augustana)

