

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

August 7, 2001



## 2001 Conference Report

### ALSO:

When God does  
not seem to hear  
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Why not work? p. 16

Vision 2004 calls  
for prayer p. 18



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

August 7, 2001  
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## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

# Blessings from the basics

**I**n the "Confession of Sin" for morning worship, a personal accounting is given to God for our sins of thought, word, and deed. This is followed by "Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy and ask You for Christ's sake, grant us forgiveness of all our sins."

Writing of a sinner under conviction, the Swedish theologian, Carl Rosenius, tells of fleeing to Christ as one being pursued. A few years ago, as I drove down a highway in Western North Dakota, a hawk glided parallel with the car as I passed through a marshy area. Looking ahead, I saw a small bird rise out of the cattails. When it saw the hawk, it made a desperate attempt to outdistance it. The hawk closed quickly and the small bird disappeared in an explosion of feathers as the hawk carried it off. Had that little bird only dived back into the cattails, it would have been safe.

It is impossible for us to rescue ourselves from sin. We must take refuge in Another. The infinite mercy of God has provided in Christ the only refuge for sinners. Our coming to Christ with our sin is even more urgent than that little bird's plight. Our soul is at stake because the penalty for all sin is spiritual death.

As we "meet the monster in us" each day — that sinful nature which constantly opposes God and our own salvation; pray for a sense of urgency like that of the little bird so that you may "flee all sins and suffer the holy will of God to rule in all things," (*Ministerial Acts*: the communion of the sick).

For the sinner who seeks refuge in Christ, comes the glorious discovery that His mercy is infinite. It seems especially common for young people and each of us when beset by sinful habits and the like to conclude that when we've stumbled, God must surely have tired of us and, at last,

closed His heart to us. During such time of discouragement and failure, we hesitate to come to Him, finding it impossible to believe the gospel. We are in danger of giving up entirely on the mercy of God. But it isn't the mercy of God that has run out. It is, once again, our own efforts at self-improvement that have proven futile. Our sinful nature will never improve. It can only be put to death and it is crucified when we come to Christ with our sin. The more quickly we come to God for mercy, the more quickly we will receive pardon and be strengthened in the daily battle to believe.

In a future column, we will consider forgiveness "for Christ's sake," as we look at the Apostle's Creed. More space is needed than remains here, but consider that for Christ's sake, forgiveness of all sins is granted every repentant sinner.

We do not recognize all of our sin. Impure motives, selfish desires and firmly held opinions which clash with the spirit, if not the letter of God's law are often overlooked and even embraced by us. Add to that the vast spiritual knowledge which we still lack as an earthbound child of Adam and we see how impossible it is to comprehend the scope of our sin. As we meditate on such condemning truth, consider the gospel and the glorious truth that Christ has not only looked upon our total sinfulness; He has just as totally covered it with His righteousness.

At times we are so vividly reminded of our sinfulness and complete inability to improve our fallen nature that it frightens us into thinking that God's grace can't cover our sin. As you take refuge in Christ, no sin, no guilt, no condemnation does God hold over you. Christ has borne it all!

—**Pastor Dale A. Mellgren**  
**Mt. Carmel and Trinity Lutheran**  
**McIntosh, Minnesota**

**1**

Now is the time when the commitment to our youth must be multiplied. We must run with perseverance the race marked out for us for the souls of our youth. Please pray by name for the students in your church. Get to know them and the battles they face, and then intercede for them before the Lord.

—*Pastor Kevin Olson*  
AFLC Youth Ministries Director

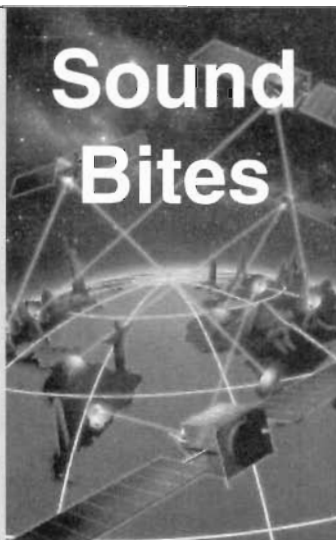
There are vast fields yet to be reached in the United States. The eyes

**4**

of the Lord are looking for more people to join the mission of reaching people for Jesus. May we and others be found faithful.

—*Pastor Allen Monson*  
Chairman of AFLC Home Missions Committee

## Sound Bites

**2**

One of the concerns of the Parish Education Board is to preserve and educate our congregations regarding our AFLC history and heritage.

If we do not know where we have come from, we cannot clearly know where we are going.

—*Marian Christopherson*  
AFLC Parish Education Director

**3**

Too often congregations specialize in catering to contented, spoiled saints and creating a spiritual mutual admiration society, instead of equipping saints for the work of ministry to reach the lost for Christ. There is no time for a maintenance ministry when God calls us to mission!

—*Pastor Robert Lee*  
AFLC President

**5**

As we look back on the past 22 years of ministry at the Association Retreat Center, we can do nothing but stand in awe of God and His workings.

—*Eric Westlake*  
ARC Director

**6**

**We face the temptation to fill our lives with so much stuff that we miss the blessings God wants to give us.**

—*Pastor Stephen Snipstead*  
Kalispell, Montana

# Looking to Jesus at the 2001 AFLC Annual Conference

—Pastor Craig Johnson  
Editor, Lutheran Ambassador

**T**ime was spent "Looking to Jesus" at the 39th Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, June 13 to 17 in Williston, North Dakota. The theme of the conference was drawn from Hebrews 12:1-2 and was addressed at the opening worship service by Pastor Stephen Snipstead of Kalispell, Montana: "Depending on God is an attitude we carry with us. ... Leave room in your life to focus on Jesus."

Significant room was made in the conference schedule for focusing on Jesus. Worship services took place each evening along with two on Sunday morning. Prayer sessions were held each morning. Business sessions were also stopped at various times for



The Williston High School auditorium was the site for the conference sessions.

The two newly elected members to the AFLC Coordinating Committee are James Taylor, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, and Pastor Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, North Dakota.



prayer and seeking the Lord for direction and help. All of this was done under the reminder that the annual conferences of the AFLC are to be viewed as times of spiritual encouragement more than mere business meetings.

The importance of looking to Jesus was stressed by Pastor Robert Lee, president of the AFLC: "Looking to Jesus keeps everything in focus. He sharpens our spiritual eyesight to see the heart and soul of every area of ministry. The AFLC is essentially a spiritual movement, called to build free and living Lutheran congregations rather than a more efficient administration."



Pastor Robert L. Lee visited with Eugene Schmit, a conference visitor from St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church, Salinas, California. The congregation was officially accepted on the AFLC roster at the Coordinating Committee's July 23 meeting. Pastor Herb Hoff serves the 500-plus member congregation which traces its roots through the LCA to one of the old Danish synods. Established in 1880, St. Ansgar's is the home church of Rev. Phil Hooper of Oceanside, California, a recently ordained AFLC pastor.

## Executive officers re-elected, new congregations welcomed

Pastor Lee was re-elected president of the AFLC with over 90 percent on the first ballot. This will be his fourth three-year term as president. He accepted the re-election with words from II Corinthians 2:16 and 3:5: "Who is adequate for these things? ... but our adequacy is from God." "Thank you; please pray for me" was Pastor Lee's request



of the conference. The other executive officers of the AFLC were also re-elected on first ballots. They are: Pastor Elden Nelson of Kandiyohi, Minnesota as vice president and Pastor Brian Davidson of Hopkins, Minnesota as secretary.

Pastor Bruce Dalager of Grand Forks, North Dakota and Jim Taylor of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania were elected to the AFLC Coordinating Committee. This committee, as its chairman, Pastor Kenneth Moland stated, "... serves the AFLC by maintaining a congregational roster and a clergy roster." It "also provides oversight in a number of the common efforts of the AFLC."

During the conference 14 congregations that are new to the AFLC, from 10 different states, were welcomed to the association. (A listing of them appears on page 10.)

#### **Growth at the schools**

The 383 people in attendance at the conference heard reports concerning various aspects of the work of the AFLC. The association's Bible school and seminary, located in the Minneapolis suburb of Plymouth, has experienced much growth in recent years. The need for more classroom and dormitory space was discussed along with possible ways of addressing the need.

The Bible school is anticipating 175 students in attendance this fall. The schools' board of trustees has decided to limit enrollment at that number as that is seen as the maximum number the present campus facilities can serve. Any who apply for admission to the school after 175 are accepted will be placed on a waiting list. This will be the first time in the history of the school this will need to be done. The number of students applying to AFLBS is an increase from an average number of students of 93 through the 1980s to 113 through the 1990s to 140 through the last five years.

The Free Lutheran Seminary is also anticipating its largest first-year class this fall. David Borg, the chairman of the schools' board of trustees, reported that 16 full-time students are expected to be in attendance at the seminary for the fall 2001 semester. Some of the increased numbers are students coming from other nations. In speaking of them, seminary dean, Dr. Francis Monseth declared, "Their presence and participation in the life of our student body strengthens the realization of the universal nature of the Church as well as the urgency of extending the Gospel call to all nations." Dr. Monseth reported to the conference that, in response to the growing number of inter-



**Pastor Elden Nelson, Kandiyohi, Minnesota, has served as the AFLC vice president since 1996.**



**Pastor Richard Ewing of Cornerstone Lutheran Church in Argyle, Wisconsin. His congregation is one of the fourteen new AFLC churches.**



**Pastor Steven Heilmann of Grace Evangelical Lutheran in Morris, Illinois attended his first conference as pastor of one of the fourteen new AFLC congregations. He is pictured with Pastor Jerry Peterson of First Lutheran in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.**



**Pastor Dale Finstrom, Glyndon, Minnesota, led the morning prayer hours.**



**Pictured are: Brent Peterson, Brookings, South Dakota; Matt Olson, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Kermit Nash, Plymouth, Minnesota. Mr. Peterson was elected to the AFLC School's Board of Trustees to complete the term of Emory Flaten. Two other board members, Pastor Rodger Olson and Dr. Dan Mundfrom, were re-elected.**



Bernard Halwass, Calgary, Alberta; Myron Compton, Beulah, North Dakota; Pastor Richard Larson, Fairbury, Nebraska; and Pastor Jon Benson, Upsala, Minnesota were some of the conference tellers.



Karen Hart, Greenbush, Minnesota was a representative of one of several organizations with a booth at the annual conference. She represented KEYS Ministries and is on the board of the organization which seeks to help those individuals who are struggling with homosexuality or lesbianism and want to get out. It also offers help to family members or friends who are affected by someone else's struggle with homosexuality or lesbianism. KEYS Ministries director is Rev. Rodel Eberle at 1-800-972-4316.

## CONFERENCE REPORT

national students, "A 'covenant agreement' has been instituted during the past year to help insure that those internationals who are admitted to our seminary program have the sincere intention of returning to their homelands for ministry."

During the conference the schools' corporation authorized the board of trustees to proceed with the construction of a six-unit seminary housing building. This will go along with a four-unit building that was constructed in 1999. The plan is to offer rent to seminarians at rates significantly lower than rental rates elsewhere in the area around the schools. The rent paid will be used to cover the cost of building and maintaining the unit.

It was announced that the second year of the Ministry Training Institute will begin in the fall, with between 8 to 12 students having expressed an interest in being a part of it. Dr. Norvald Yri, a Bible school professor from Norway, has accepted the call to be co-director of the institute as well as a member of the seminary faculty. Pastor Richard Gunderson, former missionary to Bolivia and Mexico, will serve as the institute's other co-director. MTI will be expanded in the fall to include a youth track program.



AFLBS's Ministry Training Institute co-director, Pastor Richard Gunderson and Dr. Bob Kohl of Brookings, South Dakota.

## Teaching material produced, youth encouraged, financial matters discussed

The AFLC Parish Education Department shared about various materials they are in the process of developing. Lord willing, the revision of another grade level of the Ambassador Sunday School curriculum series will be printed this year. During the past year the Ambassador Bible Study Series was introduced with the first book focusing on I, II, and III John. These works are part of 15 major projects that are at different stages of development within the department.

During the discussion about youth work in the AFLC information about the July 16 to 21 Free Lutheran Youth National Convention in Estes Park, Colorado was shared. Regarding financing of the youth ministries department the conference passed a resolution stating, "... we commend the AFLC Youth Board for becoming independent from the coordinating committee subsidy and taking on the status of a line item ministry to be funded with other ministries from the general budget and designated giving."

Another resolution passed by the conference also dealt with the area of finances. It stated, "Whereas, the AFLC has received a number of bequests from estates, be it resolved, we give thanks to God for these faithful believers and urge the foundation board to prayerfully consider hiring a director of development of God's choosing." This will be a full-time position, serving under the AFLC Foundation.



Tim Berntson, Valley City, North Dakota, Kevin Olson, Eden Prairie, Minnesota, and Charlotte Oswood, the AFLC president's secretary, pause for a discussion before one of the sessions.



Bob and Joyce Eide, Williston, North Dakota, were among the many members of Emmanuel Lutheran who graciously hosted the conference.



The AFLBS Majesty and Ambassador Gospel teams assisted in the vacation Bible school program during the day sessions. Pictured is Mike Knapp, Kandiyohi, Minnesota, who taught 18 fifth and sixth graders in his room on the day the picture was taken.



Micah Sheldon, Ray, North Dakota was one of many local teens helping with the week's VBS activities.

### Missions expansion

It was announced that the Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters (FLAPS) recently purchased a Piper Cherokee Six (PA-32-300) airplane for use in missions aviation. The airplane is larger than previous planes FLAPS has had, being able to take six passengers at a time.

The director of FLAPS, Lavon Bohling, and AFLC World Missions Director Eugene Enderlein, traveled to the African countries of Uganda and Tanzania recently. They reported to the conference on the work God is doing in that part of the world. Large numbers of people have come to the Lord. A pressing need that exists now is in the training of leaders. Many of the pastors of the churches in those countries have had little if any theological training. Some are hoping to come to the Free Lutheran Seminary this fall for training. People were asked to pray for these prospective students as they go through the process of seeking the necessary visas and to also pray for the needed finances to be provided.

In the area of home missions a resolution was passed regarding "congregations who have caught the vision that a 'living congregation' is one that reproduces itself." Thanks was given for those congregations and it was resolved "that every congregation/district consider how they might be involved in the process of 'mothering' new church plants."

During the discussion of evangelism, information was shared on area workshops

that have been put on called "Fishing in the 21st Century." According to AFLC Director of Evangelism, Pastor Jim Rasmussen, "These workshops focus on putting tools in the hands of the laity." Testimonies were shared about blessings that have been received from the workshops that have already been conducted in Illinois and Washington. The hope is to hold these workshops in districts throughout the AFLC.

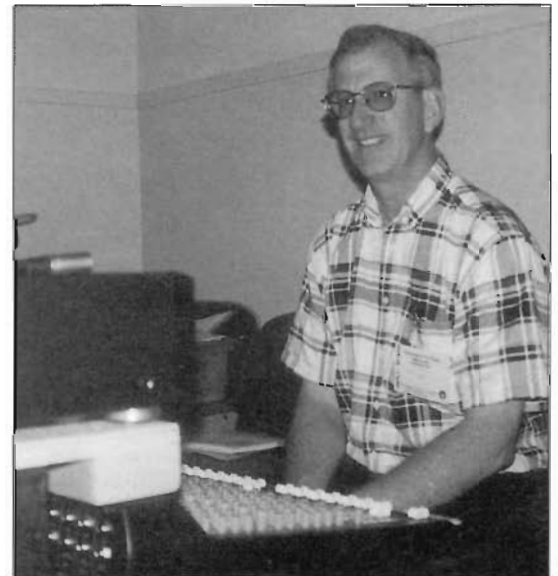
Much thanks were expressed throughout the conference to the host congregation, Emmanuel Free Lutheran of Williston and their pastor Jon Wellumson for all their work in hosting the conference and assisting those in attendance. Plans were announced for the 2002 conference to be held in El Campo, Texas.



Nancy Eder and Patty Stillwell of Williston prepared the snacks for the children in VBS.



Diana David of Faith Lutheran in El Campo, Texas, (center) received some suggestions from some WMF national officers for next year's conference scheduled for El Campo. (L. to R. ) Cheryl Aakre, Marilyn Thoreson, and Tammy Vukonich.



Stuart Vachel, Williston, coordinated the lighting and sound system in the auditorium.



**P**ictured is the Piper Cherokee Six (PA-32-300) plane which was dedicated on June 16, 2001 at the annual conference in Williston, North Dakota. The AFLC Missions Corporation earlier had met and gave support to the Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters to proceed with the purchase of the six-seat, single engine plane. FLAPS, the aviation support arm of home and world missions, will coordinate travel needs with the various AFLC departments as they are presented. The first trip was the week of July 9 and several additional requests have already been received.

FLAPS Director Lavon Bohling and AFLC Home Missions Director Paul Nash initially will be the pilots for the plane which is known as a working airplane with good speed and able to carry a good load. The acquisition of this plane is expected to provide more efficient and productive transportation for trips

## FLAPS plane dedicated



required by AFLC personnel up to approximately 900 air miles.

According to Mr. Bohling, the plane is estimated to have a market value of about \$120,000. The sellers discounted the price to \$95,000 to be paid at the end of five years. FLAPS hopes to raise \$82,000 to place in

the name of the seller in the AFLC Church Extension Fund with a 6% rate. Within five years, it becomes \$95,000 and will have assisted home mission congregations during that time. For more information, contact Lavon Bohling at the FLAPS office — 763-545-5631.



Pastor Rick Long, Arlington, Washington, and Chaplain Mark Benz, of Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Tamba Abel, Campo Grande, Brazil, brought greetings to the conference. Tamba and her husband, Pastor Jonathan Abel are one of three AFLC missionary families serving in Brazil.

# 2002 election results

## President

\* Rev. Robert L. Lee, Minneapolis, MN

## Vice-President

\* Rev. Elden Nelson, Kandiyohi, MN

## Secretary

\* Rev. Brian Davidson, Hopkins, MN

## Coordinating Committee

Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, ND

Mr. James Taylor, Bethel Park, PA

## Board of Publications and Parish Education

\* Rev. Martin Horn, Fosston, MN

## Youth Board

\* Mr. Jeremy Larson, Fargo, ND

## Christian Academic Education Board

Mrs. Linda Fugleberg, Fargo, ND

## Pension Board

\* Rev. Lynn Wilson, Roslyn, ND

## Stewardship Board

Mr. Dave Bjornson, Valley City, ND

## Commission on Evangelism

Rev. Thomas Olson, Cloquet, MN

## Budget Analysis Committee

\* Mr. Robert Knutson, McVille, ND

Mr. Nathan Dalager, Brookings, SD

Mr. Tim Berntson, Valley City, ND  
(one year unexpired term)

\* Incumbent

## Fourteen congregations joined the AFLC last year and three congregations disbanded

### New congregations:

Free Lutheran Church of Ella, Pepin, Wisconsin  
Community of Hope Lutheran Church, Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Morris, Illinois  
Redeemer Free Lutheran Church, Ashton, Illinois  
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Wilson, Wisconsin  
New Hope Lutheran Church, Janesville, Wisconsin  
St. John's Lutheran Church, Ambridge, Pennsylvania  
United Lutheran Church, Laurel, Nebraska  
Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Northwood, North Dakota  
Cornerstone Lutheran Church, Argyle, Wisconsin  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri  
Free Lutheran Fellowship Church, Brownsville, Texas  
Faith Lutheran Church, Durant, Oklahoma  
Hope Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

### Disbanded congregations:

St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Churubusco, Indiana  
St. Matthias Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington  
Faith Lutheran Church, Glens Falls, New York

## 2002 Nominating Committee:

**Eastern ND** Mr. Arnie Berge, Binford, ND

**Western ND – Eastern Montana** Mr. Bruce Wolla, Minot, ND

**South Dakota** Mr. Brent Peterson, Brookings, SD

**Lake Superior** Rev. Thomas Olson, Cloquet, MN

**Northwestern MN** Mr. Tom Fugleberg, Roseau, MN

**North Central MN** Mr. Roger Tollefson, Beltrami, MN

**Southwest Central MN** Mr. Harold Erickson, New York Mills, MN

**Nebraska – Colorado** Mr. Kevin Hoops, Byron, NE

**Minneapolis** Mr. Kermit Nash, Plymouth, MN

**Central Tri-State** Mrs. Bonnie Handsaker, Radcliffe, IA

**Northern Michigan** Rev. Thomas Schierkolk, Eben Junction, MI

**South Central** Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Durant, OK

**Southwestern** Mr. Ken Graham, Camarillo, CA

**Pacific Northwest** Mr. Duane Lindell, Ferndale, WA

**Eastern** Mr. James Taylor, Bethel Park, PA

**Illinois** Mr. Merv Mathison, DeKalb, IL

## 2002 Committees

### Colloquy Committee

Rev. James Molstre, Bethel Park, PA

Rev. Tim Johnson, Fertile, MN

Rev. Terry Olson, Thief River Falls, MN

Rev. Walter Johnson, Shakopee, MN

Rev. Steve Mundfrom, Arlington, SD

### Committee # 1

Rev. Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, MN

Mr. Willis Kettlehut, Deshler, NE

Mr. Quintin Pettigrew, Mankato, MN

Rev. Doug Lutz, Highlands Ranch, CO

Mr. Mark Sivertson, Sioux Falls, SD

### Committee # 2

Rev. Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, SD

Mr. Nathaniel Olson, Fargo, ND

Mrs. Lucy Boyum, Kenyon, MN

Rev. Rick Long, Arlington, WA

Mr. Albin Haugen, Fargo, ND

### Committee # 3

Mrs. Marcia Pavesi, Bethel Park, PA

Rev. Joel Rolf, Valley City, ND

Rev. Tim Johnson, Fertile, MN

Mrs. Anne Erickson, Badger, MN

Rev. Keith Quanbeck, Richfield, MN

### Committee # 4

Rev. Lyle Aadahl, Byron, MN

Mrs. Grace Larson, Buffalo, MN

Mrs. Mary Christenson, Fergus Falls, MN

Rev. Tim Carlson, Wheatland, IA

Mrs. Phyllis Nikunen, Deshler, NE

### Committee # 5

Rev. Craig Benson, Radcliffe, IA

Mr. Roger Tollefson, Beltrami, MN

Pastor Dale Finstrom, Glyndon, MN

Mr. Glenn Espe, Thief River Falls, MN

Rev. Randy Nelson, Newark, IL

## Corporation Elections

### **Schools Corporation: 5-year terms**

Mr. Larry Behne, Lowden, IA  
Mr. Tim Berntson, Valley City, ND  
Mr. Jon Dryburgh, Grand Forks, ND  
Dr. Philip Dyrud, Middle River, MN  
Rev. Earl Korhonen, Cumberland, WI  
Mr. Kermit Nash, Roseville, MN  
Rev. Terry Olson, Thief River Falls, MN  
Rev. Stephen Snipstead, Kalispell, MT  
Mr. Rick Tollefson, Newark, IL  
Mr. Art Wilson, Bethel Park, PA

### **\*ARC Corporation: 5-year terms**

Mr. Ivar Berge, Fargo, ND  
Mr. Dennis Holmquist, Maple Grove, MN  
Rev. James Johnson, Brooklyn Park, MN  
Rev. Mel Meyer, Milford, IL  
Mr. Jason Norlien, Amery, WI  
Rev. Randy Nelson, Newark, IL  
Mr. Jim Ray, Cloquet, MN  
Mr. Roger Timm, Wilson, WI  
Rev. Jonathan Unverzagt, Sparta, WI  
Mr. Ernie Miedema, Valley City, ND

\*The ARC corporation has not yet met. The results are the top ten in the balloting.

### **\*Missions Corporation: 5-year terms**

Mr. Don Berge, Fargo, ND  
Mrs. Delores Berkas, Wallace, SD  
Mrs. Fern Bohling, Golden Valley, MN  
Mr. Robert Dietsche, Osceola, WI  
Rev. Amos Dyrud, Crystal, MN  
Mr. Scott Erickson, Badger, MN  
Rev. Jim Fugleberg, Fargo, ND  
Mr. David Haugen, Fergus Falls, MN  
Rev. Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, SD  
Mr. Halvor Knapp, Kandiyohi, MN  
Rev. Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, MN  
Rev. Allen Monson, Lakeville, MN  
Rev. Stephen Mundfrom, Arlington, SD  
Mrs. Phyllis Nikunen, Deshler, NE  
Mr. Tom Olson, Edinburg, ND  
Rev. Jerry Peterson, Oklahoma City, OK  
Rev. Tom Tuura, St. James, MN  
Mr. Eldwyn Van Bruggen, Valley City, ND  
Mr. John Welch, Grand Forks, ND  
Mr. Jeremy Zeltinger, Jamestown, ND

Mrs. Sylvia Armen, 1-year term

\*Because of a lack of a quorum, the Missions Corporation election results are unofficial until they are endorsed in writing by every member of the corporation.

## Reflecting the Lord's glory

### **Report on the Women's Missionary Federation's annual convention**



**E**mmanuel Free Lutheran in Williston, North Dakota hosted this year's annual convention of the WMF, the AFLC's women's organization. The convention was held on June 13, 2001 at the Williston High School auditorium. About 170 ladies participated in the day focusing on the theme, "Like Mirrors — Reflecting the Lord's Glory."

Barbara Elmquist of Cloquet, Minnesota led the morning Bible

study on the book of Proverbs. The afternoon workshops featured sessions on "Praise and Worship" led by Anne Presteng and Karen Floan; a Bible study on II Corinthians 3:18 (the theme verse) led by Lori Nash; "Evangelism — Friend to Friend" led by Pastor Jim Rasmussen; and "Inner Beauty" led by Priscilla Horn. Jane Rasmussen concluded the workshop sessions with visual signage of upward, outward, downward and inward. The luncheon

speaker was Tamba Abel, missionary in Campo Grande, Brazil. The evening banquet speaker was Eunice Will of Springfield, Missouri.

New national officers are Cheryl Skordahl, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, as president, and Barbara Elmquist, Cloquet, Minnesota, as 2nd vice president. Tammy Vukonich, Amery, Wisconsin, was re-elected as treasurer. The proposed changes to the WMF Constitution did not receive the required two-thirds

## WMF REPORT

majority and therefore failed. Mary Pollestad, 2nd vice president, introduced the first part-time director of the WMF, Faith Nelson. Faith shared from Philippians and extended an invitation for local WMF groups to take advantage of her availability to come, visit and listen to their needs.

The mission festival service was held the next evening during the annual conference. Pastor Jeff Swanson, Newark, Illinois, brought the message.



Pastor Jeff Swanson, Newark, Illinois was the Women's Mission Festival Service speaker on Thursday evening.



Pastor Jim Rasmussen's evangelism workshop.

# Meet the new WMF director

*During the convention's business meeting, Faith Nelson, Kandiyohi, Minnesota was introduced as the first AFLC WMF Director. Following is an interview with Mary Pollestad, a WMF national vice president for the past four years.*

—Solveig Hjermstad

**Were your discussions of this need just recently held or has this been talked and prayed about for a long time?**

It has been two years of seeking, praying and asking the Lord for His will for this position.

**Briefly describe the WMF national officers' purpose in developing this new position.**

As a board, we were burdened with how could we better equip, encourage and unify all of our AFLC women, not just the young but the more mature and wiser women also. How can we help them reach out to the unsaved in their community? How can we better help our missionaries abroad? How can we encourage the struggling women's groups? How do we offer more resources to the women of the local congregations? We asked, "How can we provide even more of a personal touch?"

Many of our missionary wives need encouragement and also many pastors' wives need a listening ear and have prayer requests. These are the things that we talked of in planning and preparing the direction of this office. With all of the above in mind, we pressed on with the vision and asked the Lord for guidance. We needed someone who would be concentrating on the needs of the women.

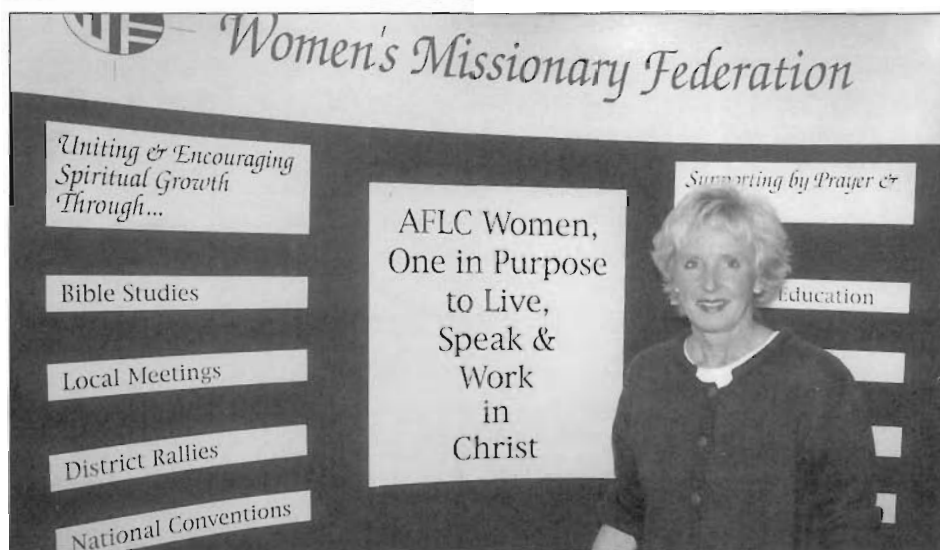
**Judith Wold, Karen Knudsvig, and now Cheryl Aakre have held the office of executive secretary, which involved the development of literature, plus mailings and other office work. How does the director's job description differ and will this affect Cheryl's work?**

Cheryl Aakre's position as executive secretary was re-evaluated and we could not put this position of traveling and reaching out to the women in the congregations into her position. Her workload has greatly increased in proportion to the growth of our AFLC. Cheryl originally accepted her position with the understanding by the WMF Board that she could be part-time and travel would be limited.



AFLC President Robert Lee installed the newly elected WMF officers. Standing L. to R. are: Tammy Vukonich, Cheryl Skordahl, and Barbara Elmquist.





**Faith Nelson**

**Tell us how the board was led to the calling of Faith Nelson to be the first director of the WMF.**

We were united to extend a letter of call to the director as a half-time position. This was a big step of faith. We voted as a board and then proceeded to interview. We began with Faith Nelson as she was concluding her term as president. Faith has a desire to follow Christ. She knows when to move ahead and when God says to stop. She has a great desire to pray for and help the ladies who are deeply struggling and who don't know where to turn. She has a desire to mentor the young. We saw in her a deep interest and love for the women in the AFLC and her desire to serve

the Lord in any way that God would lead. She comes with a strong vision for our women. For this we are very grateful to our heavenly Father.

**How is this position being funded? Will it take away funds designated for AFLC missions and other AFLC ministries?**

As soon as we had extended a call to Faith, the Lord blessed again and we were able to apply for a grant. We received a \$11,000 grant over a two-year period. Prior to interviewing, we went through our budget and set up one for the director. While studying this, we discovered that if we did not receive any other money such as grants, all we

would need from each active WMF is \$13.50 over their monthly contributions. We will fund this office from the general fund of the WMF. No money will be taken from other mission-designated gifts within our WMF.

**How do you see our local WMFs and other women's groups in our congregations benefiting from this office?**

We see that our local and district WMFs will greatly benefit from this office as Faith continues to visit with those who are interested in helping their WMFs grow. We pray too that WMFs would find ways to encourage other groups in their vicinity. Pray for Faith as she travels and pray that the Lord would keep the vision always in front of the members of the board.

Once again the Lord has answered the prayers of many. Over the years boards and others throughout the church have felt this need. He has put someone of His choice into leadership. As Judith Wold and Karen Knudsvig served before, we ask you to pray for Cheryl Aakre and Faith Nelson as they continue with the purpose of the AFLC Women's Missionary Federation.



**Priscilla Horn, Fosston, Minnesota, led one of the four workshops during the WMF Convention on Wednesday, June 13.**



**The Tioga Bell Choir of nearby Tioga, North Dakota, performed during the WMF service on Thursday evening.**



Jennie Solberg, 94, of Tioga, North Dakota, was the oldest attendee at the WMF luncheon. Jennie and her late husband, Iver, attended the organizing conference of the AFLC at Thief River Falls, Minnesota in 1962. She has rarely missed a conference since. There was a time before her husband passed away in 1978, when she could not attend, and in recent years she often traveled with Grace Syverson. "I missed the one in Warm Beach, Washington, and didn't make it last year at the ARC in Osceola, Wisconsin," Jennie said. She continues to drive the twelve or so miles to attend Zion Lutheran in Tioga and sometimes picks up others on the way who need a ride.

## Looking to Jesus — looking forward

**T**he 2001 Annual Conference is already a part of our history, and this issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* will include reports and reflections of the days that we spent together in Williston, North Dakota. I don't recall a conference where the theme ("Looking to Jesus," Hebrews 12:1-2) was followed so closely throughout the services and sessions, and now it's time to look forward as we continue to look to Jesus.

The AFLC looks forward to a growing fellowship. It was exciting to welcome fourteen congregations and ten pastors, as well as four men available for call from our seminary. Other congregations are in the process of considering AFLC affiliation, and pastors are applying for the clergy roster, which suggests that this current wave of growth will continue. An increasing student body in both the seminary and Bible school makes the need for campus expansion even more crucial, and it was encouraging to hear of plans to build more student housing later this year. The conference also gave a green light to possible new mission outreach in Africa, as we were reminded by our world missions director of international opportunities for outreach. Open doors abound, and we look forward to God's supply through His faithful people.

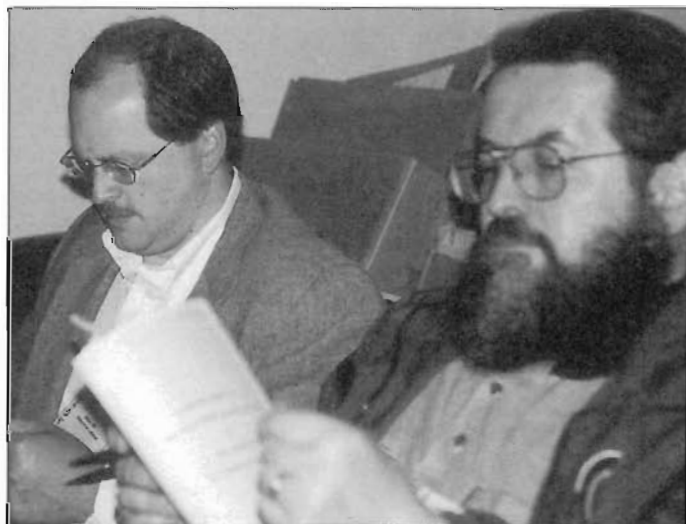
Looking forward, we remember that the year 2002 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AFLC, and our annual conference is scheduled to meet June 12-16 in El Campo, Texas. It will be hosted by the congregation of Faith Lutheran in a fine conference center located across the street from their church. El Campo is less than an hour southwest of Houston, which will make for excellent air travel connections. We look forward to our first conference in the South, and perhaps our first bilingual one since a delegation from Mexico is expected. No invitations for the 2003 or 2004 conferences have yet been extended, but hopefully there are congregations already considering this possibility.

The conference re-elected all of the executive officers, and I am grateful for the strong sense of support that was evidenced by the votes. Looking forward without looking to Jesus is a fearful venture, leading to certain frustration and failure. Looking forward while looking to Jesus is a fantastic adventure. Let's look forward together to what He is going to do.

— Pastor Robert L. Lee



Members of the 2001 Conference Committee #2 (Schools) consulted after one of the sessions.



Pastor Steven Carlson, Dalton, Minnesota, and AFLC Schools' faculty member, Pastor Jerry Holmaas.

# Why don't you answer my prayers, God?

— Chaplain Kerwin Sletto  
Pleasant View Luther Home  
Ottawa, Illinois

**“G**od, I'm sick. I've asked You in prayer that You heal me and nothing seems to get better. Why is it, God, that I'm not getting better? Is it that I don't have enough faith?” We have all felt this or heard someone else express similar thoughts. We are also familiar with Matthew 21:22 where Jesus promises, “All things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

Unanswered questions linger. Why is it that God heals some people while others remain ill? Often we look at ourselves as being the problem when we, in reality, need to be looking to God for strength, patience and faith. Things never get better unless we lift our eyes to the Lord.

I remember a situation in a community where two Christian young people were seriously ill. As a congregation we prayed for both. One child's parents were told that there was only a fifty-percent chance to live and if life remained, it would likely be without any normalcy. One morning this little child woke up and was fine. The other situation never did improve. Why did God choose to heal one and not the other? Only God knows. However, I do know we prayed fervently for each situation and God answered in different ways.

When this happens, we need to continue to depend upon the promises of God. Romans 8:28 is true. God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

We never stop praying. No matter how things turn out, God is the only One Who can help and He is the only One Who can heal. We continue to need His help through this life, in spite of how God may answer. In Matthew 7:7 we are called upon to “Ask, and it shall be given to us.” The Greek language indicates that we need to keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking — and the door shall be opened to us. Perhaps we need to change our prayers to asking God to help us deal with the circumstances that He has placed us in. But the need for prayer continues.

Jeremiah the prophet came to a point in his life where he gave up hope. Lamentations 3 describes his depression with the situation and even indicates a readiness to die. Then dawn came. In verses 21-26, Jeremiah declares, “This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. The Lord's lovingkindness indeed never ceases, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have hope in Him. The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the Lord.”

Yes, there are times when we don't understand why something happens. Why don't we get better? These are honest feelings that we need to share with the Lord and with those whom we trust with our feelings. These feelings are not a lack of faith as long as we turn to the Lord with them. It is only sin when we turn away from God and by our actions tell God that we don't trust Him any longer.

God wants us to be honest with Him even with our questions. God invites us to come to Him in prayer with whatever is upon our hearts. Seek His help and then rest upon His promise to cause all things to work together for good. God wants us to trust His promise of healing in His timing and in His ways. Sometimes God, because He knows what is best for us, heals us on this earth and other times He waits until we arrive in heaven before He heals us. In either way, God is faithful to His promises.

God does what is best. Isaiah 55 reminds us that His ways and thoughts are higher than ours. Philippians 4:19 says, “God is the faithful one who will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Keep praying and keep asking. Keep hoping in the Lord, for in His timing He will heal. Until that time, give God the desires of your heart and trust Him to carry you through. God will bless. He has promised. He is the only sure foundation of hope.



# Let me work for Jesus



— *Pastor John Dennis*  
*Ruthfred Lutheran*  
*Bethel Park, Pennsylvania*

## Encouraging people to serve in a congregation



**H**oly Scripture in Isaiah 5:12 says, “Woe unto them that regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands.” Every person who is baptized into the name of the Triune God has a commission to go forth and to tell the good news of salvation. As we tell that news, we are always doing something for Christ and His Kingdom. Many do not realize that we do not delegate work which we may be able to accomplish on our own. Certainly, we do not all have the same gifts and interests. Each person, however, who lives out his or her baptism, and has made a commitment to Jesus Christ, realizes the joy of working for and of sharing the love of God that is resident in Jesus Christ.

I can speak of my home congregation in Ohio, the church where I did my student internship, and then now over one-half century of working with Ruthfred Lutheran. I have been exposed to a myriad of people who have felt the call of God, and have answered that call by working in the local vineyard. Truly the local congregation is the most beautiful example of the true Kingdom of God. If things go well there, people know all about it.

In Matthew 9:37-38 we are told, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.”

There is no way a committed Christian can avoid such an admonition. His or her reaction must be, “Yes Lord, here I am, send me.”

God has been extremely gracious to our congregation here in Bethel Park. While it is not a good practice to bring one’s own situation into the front of the conversation, I must do that and I ask you to pardon me. In our congregation, most everyone who works with us is a member. Only recently is our one church secretary not a member. Our caretaker is not a member. Otherwise the music people, the helpers are all from our local congregation. When we need more help, we have found that help is only a phone call away. I have had interns from our former seminaries of the ALC that were astounded at the help that we have been able to receive without one bit of effort from people outside our membership.

We have always said, “Where there is commitment to Christ, there is service to Him.”

It must be a very devastating circumstance to need help in a congregation and then have to go outside of the group and pay for it; often not knowing the kind of help one may receive. We have a requirement in our congregation. Whoever works here, including the two who are not members, must believe and trust Jesus Christ

as Lord and Savior and are living a life that reflects Christ as the Way, the Truth and the assurance of life eternal.

We ponder the question: why would a person committed to Jesus Christ and to His Church, not want to work in that church? The answer is simply this — that person has not truly given his or her all to the call of the Spirit of God when He asks us to go and tell.

Some are called to stay and to tell and work locally. Others reach stages in life where they have to change the way they have been serving. We have people in the congregation who tell us that the saddest time of their life was when they no longer had the ambition or the strength to work in the local congregation. An old German proverb says it well: “Arbeit macht das Leben suess.” (Work makes life sweet — or worth living.)

I have seen as many as six meetings going on in this church during the same day. We have Bible study, volunteer work, sewing and craft work, pre-school programs, a health ministry; you name it and it is all done for the love of Jesus Christ. We permit no moneymaking endeavors. We only give; such has been our pattern. Why make something, prepare it, spend money and time, and then buy it back at a bazaar?

The word here is encourage. It is not to cajole or beg or get someone to work out of guilt. What is our biggest and only reason to work and serve? It is the love of Jesus Christ and the doing of His will.

If people are unwilling to work in the local congregation, then they had better return to the day when their vows were taken at the altar, and they made their public declaration of faith in Christ. A lazy Christian is a contradiction. We are all to be busy about our Lord’s work.

The little song, which we learned in our primary class in Sunday school, says:

*“Work for Jesus, little ones,  
He has work for you;  
At your home, at school and play,  
There is work to do ...”*

The refrain was catchy and powerful:

*“Here am I, Lord Jesus,  
Here am I, send me!  
Let me do Thy bidding,  
Let me work for Thee.”*

What a joy it is to work for that Kingdom, and in that Kingdom which alone is forever.



# Vision 2004 calls the AFLC to prayer

**A**t a prayer retreat held at the Association Retreat Center, in January 1997, Vision 2004 began. Ever since then it has been bathed in prayer.

Prayer needs to continue now more than ever before, as we are seeing the need for expansion. At present five young men are on the waiting list at our Bible school. That is five students who may be turned away because of a lack of space. Could that number by the end of August be twenty or more?

Students may be coming to our seminary this fall in record number. Our third-year Ministry Training Institute program will see around 10 students enrolled. There is a need for more faculty and staff. International students are coming to both our Bible school and seminary to be trained and then return to their homelands to spread the gospel. We started out our project with prayer and we must continue in prayer.

We are challenging our AFLC family to pray more diligently over the Vision 2004 expansion ministry. Would there be 3,500 individuals who would be willing to pray daily for the work of our schools and the expansion project? Would you be willing to let our office know of your desire to pray over the next year for our schools? Call our office at 763-

## Record enrollment expected

According to the AFLBS office, 179 students have registered for the fall semester, beginning September 2, 2001. Seven male students are on the waiting list as of the end of July. Ten Ministry Training Institute students are registered filling campus housing. The seminary classroom will be overflowing with at least 25 full-time students. The expected part-time enrollment is 10-15 students.

412-2004 or e-mail us at [vis2004@afllc.org](mailto:vis2004@afllc.org).

Pray specifically regarding the 2.8 million dollars needed to build a student center for more classroom space, cafeteria, library, music area, and offices. The AFLC Schools Corporation has said that 80 % of this amount must be in cash-on-hand before beginning to build. That means roughly 2.4 million dollars. How will God answer? Our God can do anything but fail!

The corporation also directed the board of trustees to prepare, by late September, a plan to cut in half the administrative costs of the Vision

2004 project.

God says in His Word that we have not because we ask not. We are asking you now to pray and begin asking God to move hearts to become involved in giving financially toward this vital, growing ministry. God also challenges us to call upon him in prayer and then He promises that He will do more than answer us, He will show us great and mighty things which we do not know (Jeremiah 33:3). Remember He is in control. He has a plan. Let's be faithful and pray.

— **Pastor Tonnes Pollestad**  
**Director Vision 2004**

## Vision 2004 Financial Statement August 4, 1997 – May 31, 2001

### Receipts

<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Gifts – churches, church groups	308,283.28
Gifts – individuals, businesses	453,031.42
Matching funds – AAL	21,583.00
Matching funds – LB	12,515.00
Grants	54,850.00
Investment return	11,139.48
Legacies – total	512,713.53
Total receipts (excluding loans)	1,374,115.71
Loans – total	467,629.29
Personal Loan	20,000.00
Marquette Bank	447,629.29
Total receipts (including loans)	1,841,745.00

### Expenditures

<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Administrative <i>(Includes teaching, fundraising, oversee of construction, and city approval costs)</i>	311,538.93
Salaries	165,894.36
Benefits	8,648.32
Office	47,755.76
Travel/Promotion	89,240.49
Construction	950,192.91
Welsh Companies	758,820.27
Subcontractors (Seminary housing)	138,569.04
Lampert Architects	12,400.00
Consultants	5,478.95
City of Plymouth	7,969.70
Attorney/Legal fees	26,442.95
Insurance	512.00
Total expenditures (excluding loan repayment)	1,261,731.84
Loan repayment	465,585.16
Marquette Bank	464,385.16
Personal Loan Interest	1,200.00
Total expenditures (including loan repayment)	1,727,317.00
Balance on hand	114,428.00
Dain Account	100,846.65
Cash	13,581.35



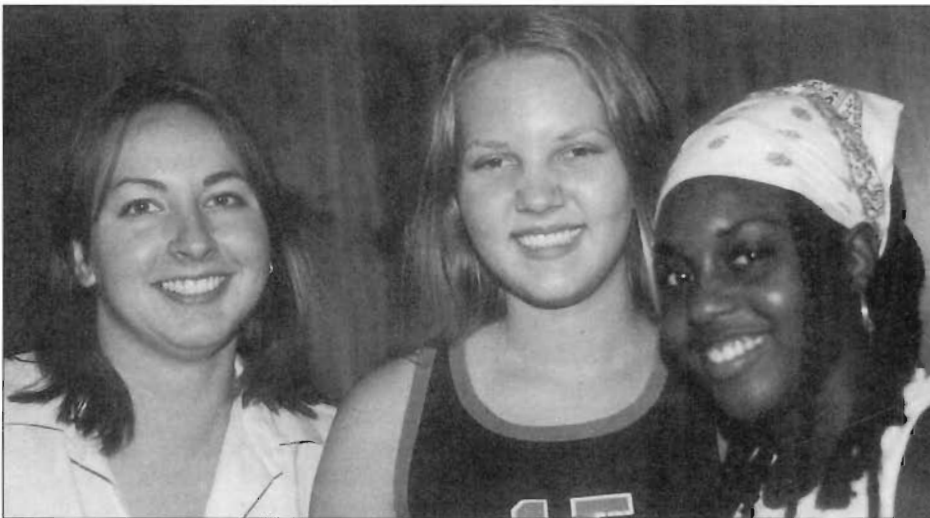
Lay leader Luis Amaral and his family are a vital part of the ministry in Campo Grande, Brazil. Pray for nationals who will assist in the work.



This new church building in Campo Grande continues to be "finished" as funds are available. Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel oversee the many ministries of this congregation.



Pictured is a small group discussion at the ARCA near Curitiba, Brazil. Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel led the youth camp during June 21-24 with the theme, "Dying to Self."



Pictured are three girls from two California home mission congregations who attended the Free Lutheran Youth convention in Estes Park, Colorado during July 16-21. L. to R.: Barbara Dyer from Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran in Palmdale; Sarah J. Schleifer and Briana Wallace of Good Shepherd Lutheran in Camarillo.

**Grand Forks, North Dakota —** Trinity Lutheran Church has "adopted" an international student planning to attend Free Lutheran Theological Seminary this fall. Approximately \$1,500 per student is needed for travel expenses. The seminary has an International Student Fund and congregations and individuals are encouraged to share in this unique mission outreach. For more information, contact Dr. Francis Monseth at 763-544-9501.

**Karen Anderson, New Hope, Minnesota** has resigned as the AFLC World Missions secretary, a position she has held for the last eighteen and a half years. Fourteen years earlier she had been called by then President John Strand to serve as his secretary. Her husband, Andy Anderson, is the AFLC bookkeeper.

**Camarillo, California —** Good Shepherd Lutheran Church recently rented new church office space for their pastor, Rodger Olson. His phone number is 805-384-9243. Good Shepherd is a home mission congregation that began meeting informally about five years ago. Two and a half years ago they began holding services and continue to rent the Camarillo Community Center. They have an average attendance of about 75 people. They are excited to send their first student to AFLBS in the fall.



Savior's Lutheran Church of Lisbon, Portugal is now located in the lower level of this apartment building (left of the street). Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson have begun a children's club outreach in this neighborhood. The Nelson's have a new e-mail address: [pastorluterano@clix.pt](mailto:pastorluterano@clix.pt) See their new homepage with photos at: <http://www.Luther95.com/CLDS-LIPT/nelson/index/html>



July 15, 2001 was Dedication Sunday at Savior's Lutheran in Lisbon. Pastor Artur Villares of Porto came to assist in the dedication of the newly rented facilities and to install Pastor David Nelson as the congregation's pastor. The Nelsons have been working in Lisbon since last December, however they waited on the installation service until the Visa was granted and the new church location was found.

## My cup runneth over

— by Monica Olsen

AFLBS Senior

An excerpt from my journal, recorded May 28-June 19 while working with the English Language Camp in Petrozavodsk, Russia.

*Day twenty-three* — Tuesday, June 19, 2001: I have mixed feelings about completing my journey, my most opportune gift from God. He has shown how perfect His plan is and how His purposes are beyond my imagination. I have zero regrets, a great sense of satisfaction and true fulfillment, a greater understanding of God's perspective, more knowledge about myself, an endless thank-you list, a heart full of blessings, and a cup that runneth over. I am sad to think that this time must end, but God has new ways to stretch, prune and conform me.

Soon after we arrived in Petrozavodsk, the task to teach the children loomed large before me. "How do I teach the truth of John 15 to children who may not be saved, in a language apart from their own?" I begged God. I shouldn't have been surprised when God proved His promise to enable me to do His tasks, in spite of my inadequacy. However, the stunning reality and personal experience of His power and capability through the "futility of my ability" was a blessing I shall never forget.

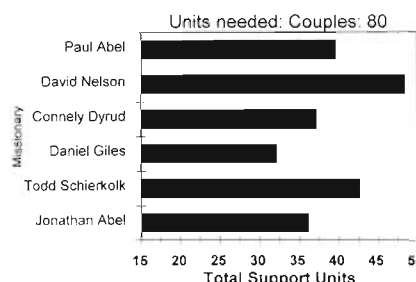
The peaceful feeling of confidence in His leading and new dependence on the Lord for His daily provisions enabled me to grow in my faith.

To say that this experience has changed me would be an understatement. Never before would I have stood so confidently on God's truth of the priceless value of people's hearts compared to all that this world offers, except through this peek into the eternal perspective. It has refreshed my own goals in life: to be molded according to His purposes and will, and to serve Him with all I have. And lastly, what I hope to keep always fresh in my mind is the new feeling of thanksgiving and praise for all that God has abundantly blessed me with.

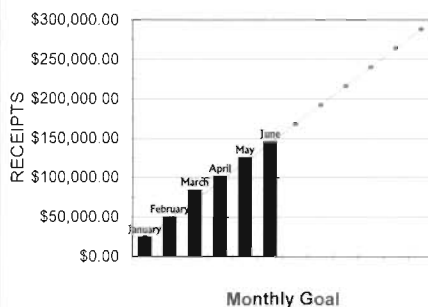


### PERSONAL SUPPORT UNITS

January / June - Goal = 40.0 Units



### JUNE "PS" TOTALS







## Faith Lutheran in Minneapolis celebrates 90 years

Faith Lutheran has been in south Minneapolis, Minnesota on the corner of Pillsbury and 44th for nine decades. The congregation's oldest member, Lillian Peterson is pictured with one of her younger friends, Pastor Ivars Krafts' granddaughter Anna. Several pastors returned for the June 10, 2001 celebration. The special offering for home missions commemorated the church's beginning as a Lutheran Free Church home mission congregation.

According to one of Faith's members, Pastor Chris Oswood, the church began in a Norwegian neighborhood of what were then the outskirts of Minneapolis. It was Pastor Claus Morgan who conducted the first worship service in a chapel at 41st and Pillsbury on October 20, 1909. The church took the name Pillsbury Lutheran Church, but was not incorporated until June 4, 1911.

During its first years the church would attempt and fail to be "English-speaking," and finally agreed with the neighborhood to be "Norwegian" until it could get established in this Minneapolis Norwegian neighborhood. The congregation purchased its current site at 44th and Pillsbury on June 10, 1912. The neighborhood was called "Rosedale," so Pillsbury was dropped and the church became Rosedale Lutheran Church in 1919. Soon it would have Pastor James Rudolph Grønseth who would serve the congregation faith-

fully until his death in 1970. His fluency in both Norwegian and English brought him to radio broadcast ministry in the Norwegian language in the late 1920s on WRHM. The Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company reprinted sermons. Pastor Grønseth continued to nurture the church as the Lutheran Free Church disappeared into the American Lutheran Church in the early 1960s at the same time as the "suburbs" exploded with population leaving the urban core area. Rosedale Lutheran Church saw its membership erode as members migrated to the suburbs.

The congregation affiliated with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations in 1970. Pastor John Strand, the President of the AFLC, served as pastor, assisted by faculty and students from the seminary and Bible school in Plymouth, Minnesota. Pastors Richard Anderson and Richard Bartholomew served their first pastorates at Rosedale until 1979. Then Rosedale and Faith Lutheran Church, located at 3019 17th Avenue South, together called Pastor Ralph Rokke.

Faith Lutheran Church began in 1963, when a group of people with Lutheran Free Church roots, founded an AFLC home mission named the Lutheran Association, Minneapolis, at the Washburn-Richfield YMCA. Pastor Claire Jennings was the first pastor of the renamed con-

gregation, Faith Lutheran Church. The group soon purchased a building in South Minneapolis. The congregation subsequently operated independently and with the International Lutheran Fellowship by the end of the 1960s when Pastor Philip Featherstone began serving. He was followed by Pastor Dennis O'Neil with assistance from Pastor E. Albert Hautamaki. In 1978 when Pastor O'Neil left, Rosedale contacted Faith Lutheran to discuss the possibility of a joint parish.

By 1985 Rosedale Free Lutheran and Faith Free Lutheran merged with Rosedale's building being retained with Faith's name, and the former Faith's assets liquidated. Pastor Rokke continued serving the new merged parish until 1996. Pastor Ivars Krafts became the pastor in 1998, and was joined by Pastor David Johnson who was called as an associate pastor in 1999.



### Youth Board to become independent from the coordinating committee subsidy

The AFLC Youth Board will be taking the status of a line item ministry to be funded with other ministries from the general budget and designated giving. This will take place next year. Currently the youth ministries department is at 30% of the receiving budget for this year.

**Summer Institute of Theology,** Plymouth, Minnesota is being held August 6-10, 2001. The seminary hosts the annual summer studies at the AFLC Schools' campus at Medicine Lake. The theme for the week is "A Heritage to Share." The morning sessions include Pastor Jerry Holmaas teaching "Ecclesiastes" and Dr. Norvald Yri as the instructor for "Romans." The evening classes are "History of the Reformation" with AFLC President Robert Lee and a course on "Pastoral Ministry in Grief and Loss," taught by Chaplains John Rieth and Kerwin Sletto. A six-week course, "Introduction to New Testament Greek," began on July 16, and is taught by Pastors Phil Haugen and Jerry Moan.

**Pastor Jim and Lorene Winter,** formerly of Lake Alma, Sask., have moved to Alberta. Their new address is Box 151, Three Hills, Alberta TOM 2AO and the phone number is 403-443-5110.

**Pastor Tim Skramstad** was installed as the pastor of Living Word Lutheran Church and Academy in Eagan, Minnesota, on July 1, 2001 by AFLC President Robert Lee. The Skramstad's new address is: 4393 Bear Path Trail, Eagan, MN 55122. Phone numbers are: (651) 405-8484 (h) and (651) 456-0249 (o). E-mail is: tkskramstad@juno.com

**KFNW Radio, Fargo, North Dakota,** has promoted Greg Schmitke to operations director. He will oversee promotional outreaches for the station, assist in maintaining links between the station and the community and serve as an on-air program host.

Schmitke earned a certificate in radio and television broadcasting from Brown Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and attended the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. He has worked as a part-time announcer at KFNW since 1999. He lives in Glyndon with his wife, Renate, and three children.

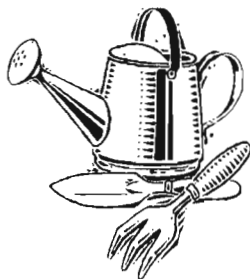
KFNW is a non-commercial Christian station, operating at 1200 AM and 97.9 FM, under the ownership of Northwestern College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

### Volunteer work week scheduled Aug. 20-24 at AFLBS

Campus maintenance staffers, Wayne Floan and Dean Nelson invite carpenters, gardeners, workers and plumbers to joined them in preparing the campus for the record number of students arriving in September. Come, work, and enjoy free lodging, meals, a concert, and a Twins game. Please contact Wayne Floan at (612) 751-3072 or (763) 544-9501.



### We need your help!



**Pastor Vern Baardson, Fargo, North Dakota,** a singing evangelist who has traveled extensively throughout the AFLC, has a new recording entitled, "Gone Fishing." It is available on CD (\$15) and cassette tape (\$10). Order from Vern Baardson Ministries, P.O. Box 9342, Fargo, ND 58106 or on the web at [vernbaardson.com](http://vernbaardson.com). Please add \$2 for shipping and handling.

**Commission on Evangelism** is sponsoring two more "Fishing in the 21st Century" seminars this year. Faith Free Lutheran in Shakopee, Minnesota is hosting one on October 5. On November 3, Christ the King Lutheran in East Grand Forks, Minnesota will host the final one for this year. The seminars are for all people and all ages — high school through adults. For more information contact Pastor Jim Rasmussen at 763-545-5631 or e-mail at [evangelism@aflc.org](mailto:evangelism@aflc.org).

**Bethel Park, Pennsylvania —** Ruthfred Evangelical Lutheran Church conducted a groundbreaking service on June 24, 2001, for the addition to the educational wing of their facility. The congregation is served by Pastors James Molstre and John Dennis.

**Holt, Minnesota —** Emmanuel Lutheran held their last scheduled service on June 24, 2001. The congregation, located eight miles south-east of Middle River, Minnesota, was organized in 1889 as part of the Norwegian-Danish Conference. It became an independent congregation in 1890 until joining the Lutheran Free Church in 1897. Emmanuel was one of the early congregations joining the newly formed AFLC in 1963. Lay pastor Irvin Schmitke conducted the final scheduled worship service in the 100-year-old church building.

**Pastor Michael Peterson,** Alexandria, Minnesota, has accepted the call to serve Ortle Free Lutheran in Ortle, South Dakota. He expects to begin his new ministry at the end of August.

**Peter Ward,** a 2001 graduate of AFLTS, accepted the call to serve Living Word Lutheran in Vernon, British Columbia. The native of Manitoba expects to move his family to Vernon and begin his ministry around the first of September.

**Lay pastor Martin Christensen,** Elbow, Sask., has resigned as pastor of Bethel Lutheran where he has served since 1993. His retirement is expected to be effective in late September, 2001.

# Maybe we should do things differently

**O**ften in our worship services we sing the *Gloria Patri* and the line, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be ...." This is a declaration of the sovereignty and glory of God. It is not intended to be a description of how the church conducts its affairs. Our motto and method of operating is not to be: "As the schedule was, as the program was in the beginning ... forever shall it be."

The president of our association, Pastor Robert Lee, in a recent letter to pastors shared some thoughts about possible changes to consider for future annual conferences. "The schedule should be reconsidered," he states. Our conferences have traditionally started on Wednesday evenings and ended with Sunday worship services. For many years now the attendance at the Saturday sessions has been much lower than on the earlier days. The issues that are discussed on Saturday changes from year to year, but they are regularly of importance and significance. To get a feel for the wishes of the congregations on these issues, a better representation is needed. Possibly a change in schedule would result in people staying for the duration of conference. Pastor Lee asks, "Should the conference be scheduled from Monday night through Friday morning? Should we start on Sunday?"

I do not know the answer to the question, but I believe something should be done. This year on Saturday we were receiving information on new outreach possibilities on the continent of Africa. Considering whether or not and how we should be involved with a new mission field is of great importance. It would have been good to have more of the conference attendees present for the deliberation.

In the area of conference schedule Pastor Lee also mentions that the suggestion has been made to start the evening services earlier than the present 8:00 p.m. A 7:00 or 7:30 p.m. starting time would be much more family-friendly and deserves serious consideration.

In regards to making conference more family-friendly, Pastor Lee mentions another suggestion that has been made. That is to hold a future conference at a place such as Estes Park, Colorado, the site of the Free Lutheran Youth National Conventions. That location and others like it could encourage people to make conference part of a family vacation.

Another possible approach to conference, rather than retreat to the mountains and get away from the things of the world, would be to make a more concen-

trated effort to impact the community in which the conference is held. In his letter Pastor Lee mentions an idea offered once by a member of the evangelism commission that the evening services be evangelistic outreaches to the community.

The Southern Baptists have often used this approach in their conferences. They have met in Las Vegas and Salt Lake City. These locations are not at all places where the group is strong in numbers. They held their conventions in those places, however, in large part for the purpose of encouraging the small congregations there and doing outreach in communities which are full of people who do not know the Lord.

Possibly next year, when the annual conference is held in El Campo, Texas, a location outside of the traditional "core" of the AFLC, some deliberate effort could be made to strive to build up that local congregation and reach people in that community for Jesus while we meet for our conference.

Being more purposeful about incorporating evangelistic outreach into our annual conferences would fit well with our view of the purpose of the conference. It is not first and foremost a business meeting, but a time for spiritual renewal.

"Most churches assiduously avoid new strategies, new information, new ways of looking at things," writes Leonard Sweet. Sometimes out of fear, sometimes out of laziness, we just keep doing things the way they have always been done. We ask, "how has it been done before?" but fail to ask, "how could

it be best done today?" It is important that we learn from the past, but it is also vital that we consider what is the best means for doing the Lord's work today.

The Lord Himself is in the business of doing new things. He tells us, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland" (Isaiah 43:18, 19, NIV). We are to remember what God has done in the past, but at the same time, as the commentator H. C. Leupold said, "Let the grand past be overtopped by the more glorious future. Cultivate hope, not remembrance."

God worked in the past and is also at work today. "His compassions never fail. They are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23, NIV). His Word is always relevant. His love is always fresh and alive. So therefore, let us consider what is the best way today that we can share His love.

—Pastor Craig Johnson

"We ask, 'how has it been done before?' but fail to ask, 'how could it be best done today?'"

## BUILDING THE BASE

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# Whom do you fear?

**P**eople are quite discom-  
forted by statements in  
Scripture like, "The fear  
of the LORD is the begin-  
ning of knowledge ..."

(Proverbs 1:7) or "Praise the LORD!  
How blessed is the man who fears  
the LORD, who greatly delights in  
His commandments" (Psalm 112:1).  
In our modern world we do not like  
to believe in a God that needs to be  
feared. We desire a kinder, gentler  
God; perhaps one of our own design,  
rather than the one true God.

Imagine for a moment those early  
Christians who stood as soon-to-be  
martyrs, in the Colosseum at Rome.  
There they faced the hungry lion's  
mouth. Now that would certainly be  
a time and place for fear. However,  
these men and women did not turn,  
deny their faith, and beg for release.  
Instead of fear of the lion's mouth,  
they had a higher degree of fear for  
the One with whom they would  
eventually have to face in eternity.  
Why did they not fear death in the  
grip of the lion? Because they had a  
real fear of God that drove them to  
give up their lives.

Modern man's problem today is  
that God is not feared enough. In  
some cases, God is not feared at all.  
His Word is left unread, His pre-  
scriptions are unheeded, and His  
plan for our salvation is, in general,  
ignored.

It is not that modern man fears  
nothing at all. There is a cavalcade  
of fears that motivates most modern  
people. The fear of poverty, death,  
unemployment, loneliness, sickness,

embarrassment, humility, and the  
list could go on and on. These things  
certainly do act as the motivations  
behind most of what modern people  
do. If they fear losing their employ-  
ment, they will attempt to behave a  
certain way when at work. If they  
fear sickness, they will attempt to  
get plenty of rest and eat the right  
foods.

Fear can be a great motivation to  
be sure, but is it right to have fear  
that is improperly directed? Is it  
right to use fear as a preserver and  
saver of all that we hold dear? When  
we do this, we are making this emo-  
tion and its objects our prime  
mover, as well as the path to our  
own life preservation. Let me  
remind you that if we try to save  
our lives and preserve them, even  
through acting on our fears, we will  
end up losing all that we have and  
all that we are (Luke 9:24).

You can probably learn quite a  
bit about someone by getting to the  
bottom of what it is that they fear.  
Believe it or not our greatest fears  
are often the centerpoints of our  
lives. People say that, "Love makes  
the world go round." But it is more  
true that, "Fear pushes the world  
around." What fear are you being  
pushed by? What is the impetus  
behind your actions and words?

Fearing God alone is the only  
place where fear becomes rational.  
Outside of this fear all other fear is  
trivial. Solomon once wrote, after  
deeply investigating all of the ways  
and walks of life, "The conclusion,  
when all has been heard, (is:) fear

God and keep His commandments,  
because this (applies to) every per-  
son. For God will bring every act to  
judgment, everything which is hid-  
den, whether it is good or evil"  
(Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Solomon  
understood clearly that the sum of  
all life hinged upon how he was  
related to his Creator. He had an  
understanding that this Creator  
was perfect, holy, immortal, and  
that His judgments about His crea-  
tures would hold sway in the end  
game of history. He also understood  
that he was imperfect, unholy  
according to God's standards, mor-  
tal, and that he would one day face  
an ultimate judgment. What was  
his advice? "Fear God and keep His  
commandments."

When we are talking about fear-  
ing God, we are not talking of hys-  
terical terror. We are merely talk-  
ing about having a proper under-  
standing of what we are, as well as  
a proper understanding of God. Fear  
the Lord your God. Fear Him alone.  
Also, put your trust in the way of  
salvation that He has offered: His  
Son, Jesus. Jesus is the expression  
of God's perfect love, and the Scrip-  
tures tell us plainly that, "perfect  
love casts out all fear" (I John 4:18).  
So even though it is incumbent upon  
us to have a proper fear of the Lord  
as we live each day in life, when we  
stand in Christ at the judgment  
seat, we certainly will have nothing  
to fear in the end.

—Lay Pastor John Kent  
Rancho San Diego Lutheran  
El Cajon, California