

THE LUTHERAN 

NOVEMBER 2006

AMBASSADOR

Good Of wonders

WHAT ARE YOU
THANKFUL FOR?
HAVE YOU TOLD
GOD ABOUT
IT LATELY? THIS
THANKSGIVING,
REMEMBER THE

ONE WHO GAVE
YOU PURPOSE
AND DESIRES A
RELATIONSHIP
WITH YOU.

saying anything

BY FAYLIN MYHRE

Has anyone ever told you, “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all”? I know I’ve heard it from my parents, a teacher and even a good friend. I, in turn, have used that phrase with my own children, a Sunday school class, and a friend or two, as well. This advice is not just a wise rule to follow if you want to “make friends and influence people,” something I did not realize when I was younger. This instruction actually contains scriptural wisdom. In childhood I memorized it like this: “Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth but that which is good for edification” (Ephesians 4:29). The NIV puts it this way: “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Often my tongue is burning with a sharp retort, a brilliant comeback or hurtful words. James 3:6 tells us, “The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.” We see the destruction wrought by fire on forests, fields and homes; the small muscle called your tongue is capable of such total devastation.

James also tells us in verse 8, “No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” Poison kills, and very often so does my tongue. I kill enthusiasm, confidence, joy, relationships,

and maybe even new faith. There seems to be no hope in this verse, no place for victory here. But I believe we can have victory. Just as we practice an instrument, typing, or cooking, we can and need to discipline ourselves and our tongues. We can make a deliberate choice to not say anything. We can also make an effort to find something that will build rather than tear down. Such positive reinforcement is not in my nature and may not be in yours, either. I need to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in me and seek to be a giver of God’s grace.

Find your Bible and look up Colossians 3:16 and Philippians 4:8. Maybe you have them memorized. If not I would encourage you to write them out and work on committing them to memory. God’s Word shows us how to overcome evil with good. First, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” We can memorize, study, meditate and search the Scriptures. Second, fill your mind and heart with what is true (His Word), noble (God Himself), right (His precepts), pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Scripture says that as a man thinks in his heart, so he is. Let’s fill our hearts with the good things of God so that when we open our mouths, our tongues bring healing, edification and joy to the ears of both men and God.

Myhre is a member of Bethany Free Lutheran, Wahpeton, N.D.



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Editor Pastor Craig Johnson
craigj@teleport.com

Managing Editor Ruth Gunderson
ruthg@aflc.org

Editorial Board Oryen Benrud
Pastor Jerry Moan
Pastor James L. Johnson

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soundbites <<

To be sure, God provides daily bread, even to the wicked, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that God may make us aware of his gifts and enable us to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

— Martin Luther
“Small Catechism”

Oh, how much reason do you therefore have to be joyful and confident, you who want to have Christ and who have taken Him as your Shepherd. What good cause you have to follow Christ with good cheer over hill and valley under the gentle shepherd-staff of His Gospel!

— C.F.W. Walther
“The Word of His Grace”

A believer can often become discouraged when he sees how weak his Christianity is, and how poorly he is able to live as a witness for Jesus in everyday living. But in such a crisis it is not a matter of looking forward to some kind of “new” experience, which somehow with one stroke shall change the whole situation. No, he should rather look at what he already has and possesses by trusting in Jesus.

— Carl F. Wisloff
“I Know in Whom I Believe”

It is not only blessed to give thanks; it is also of vital importance to our prayer life in general. ... It is no doubt right to begin our prayers with thanksgiving.

— O. Hallesby
“Prayer”



all that God is

BY MANDA HEGSETH

I have always been a sucker for the stars. I cannot help myself. If the sky is black, and the night is clear, I find myself gazing up uncontrollably. Wondering. Pondering. Thinking about life and about God. Even as I write this, I am staring up, captivated and unable to unlock my wonder of God and His creation. With the rattling and hum of each car driving by and the flickering of green, yellow and red stoplights, I am caught staring at the sky.

I grew up on a farm in Fergus Falls, Minn., that I still call my home. Whenever I voyage back to home sweet home, I lose myself in the brightness of those stars. In amazement, I stare up thinking, “It is as if God lit these stars just for me.” They are brighter and more magnificent than anything we ever see in Minneapolis. There are more stars than black, and I lay on the grass and just gaze. I remember days as a child when I would sneak out of the house and just sit for hours to stare at the stars. While some kids were sneaking out for foolish reasons, I was sneaking out to see the sky! I would talk to God like we were old friends, sitting in the pitch dark with only the

stars as my light.

Now that I am in Minneapolis and going to college, viewing the stars becomes rarer and rarer. My life is busier, and to tell my grammar syntax teacher that I didn’t do my homework because I was gazing at the stars wouldn’t be wise. I have deadlines, schedules, homework and work all demanding my attention and my nights. But each time I have a chance to see the stars, I stop. It’s not so much the stars that captivate me anymore, but it is what they represent.

They remind me of how masterfully, intricately involved God is in my life every day. How He cares about the millions of lilies in the fields, but He cares for me even more. How all the stars represent only a fraction of the times He thinks of me each day. They remind me of how small I am in the big scheme of things, but how vital I am in the body of Christ and this world. They remind me that



just as He has each star named and placed, He has each of the hairs on my head numbered. They remind me of how big and infinite God is — having power to make these gigantic planets and stars — yet His favorite creation is me, a mere human. As I stare up at the vast dome of sparkling stars, it reminds me that His ways are so much higher than mine, and His love is such that He made the stars to shine extra pretty just for me. One look is all it takes, and I am lost in this realization and His beauty.

As we approach this Thanksgiving season, I am thankful for the stars and how He has used their pure beauty to teach me of His character. But more than that, I am thankful for the loving parents He has given me, for their wisdom has only made me want to pursue God more. I am thankful for the pastors and teachers He has brought to my life who have encouraged me, spurred me on and dared me to seek God in new ways. I am thankful when things are going

smooth, and life is running as planned. But I am just as grateful, if not more, when trials loom and I am brought to my knees in desperation. I am thankful for the tender little surprises God throws on me from day to day, like testing my faith or bringing someone to me to talk to about Jesus. I am thankful for all He has provided, for all He has given, and for all His hands have poured into my life. And more than anything I could be thankful for this Thanksgiving season, I am thankful for my relationship with Him, for it's not His giving hands I have fallen in love with, but His person.

So tonight, when you are almost ready to go to bed, dare to do something different: go outside and gaze at the stars. Dare to imagine all that God is and find your heart overflowing with awe and thanksgiving. He will meet you there.

Hegseth is a member of Calvary Free Lutheran, Fergus Falls, Minn.

created purpose

BY JAY & JODI MARKUM



When Jodi and I did a Bible word search for “thanks,” we found 170 verses. “Where do we start?” we pondered.

We decided to share our personal “thanksgiving” story. It’s not a spectacular story — but God usually works in quiet ways. Desiring the miraculous, we often fail to thank Him for the subtle, whispered graces that can only be seen as we come to know Him more each day.

CREATED WITH PURPOSE

I Peter 4:10 (NIV) says, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others ...”

Jodi and I have been given gifts and talents which we use in service to our Lord through a full-time music ministry called Two for Life. In 2004, we took a leap of faith and turned our part-time service into our life’s work. Truly feeling God called us into this ministry, we decided not to go into it halfheartedly on our own terms. We chose to prayerfully surrender every aspect of it to God.

SUSTAINED FOR A PURPOSE

God first spoke to us through I Corinthians 9:17-18 (NLT): “If I were doing this of my own free will, then I would deserve payment ...

What then is my pay? It is the satisfaction I get from preaching the good news without expense to anyone ...” Taking that to heart, we decided never to charge a fee for our concerts and worship services — we would trust God to provide for us. And through the generosity of His people and by other divine means, Jodi and I have been able to live without a regular income for nearly three years!

Another instruction came through Romans 13:8 (NAS): “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another.” So we sold our big house and moved into a modest home in a trailer park, allowing us to become debt free. What a blessing! We are now free to go wherever and whenever God calls us. Our service to the Lord isn’t restricted by jobs we must keep in order to pay debts.

SENT FOR A PURPOSE

In Mark 16:15 Jesus instructed, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.” Obeying this call has enabled us to travel throughout the U.S., Canada, and Eastern Europe, as well as to touch lives worldwide as World Vision artist associates. Making nearly 100 appearances annually, we’ve been invited into most Christian denominations as well as nursing homes, penitentiaries, homeless shelters, county fairs, youth camps and more. We’re

able to take the good news of Jesus Christ to people of all ages, walks of life, and levels of spiritual maturity.

THANKS FOR ...

By now you’re wondering what this has to do with Thanksgiving. Remember, this isn’t a spectacular story. Nor is it the customary thankfulness to God for our lists of daily blessings, though we’re certainly thankful for those. Rather, this Thanksgiving we’re going to focus and express our gratitude to God for our created purpose: to worship Him and to be used as His vehicle in bringing people into His Kingdom!

Thanks and praise to God who has made Himself known to us and with whom we have a personal relationship. Thanks to Him for leading us to recognize how He has gifted us to serve in His work on earth. And, most of all, thanks and praise to our Lord for showing us how to live as followers of Christ!

What gifts and talents has God given you? Are you using them for Him? Do you take time to use them? Or, pressured by society’s standards, are you putting God on the back burner? It’s never too late to make a drastic, life altering change. God’s blessings overflow when we completely, passionately, and purposefully surrender every aspect of our lives to Him. Our marriage and family relationships have gone from good to terrific. Our relationship with our Savior has intensified. We see His hand at work all the time. God has allowed our ministry to touch many people for Christ. Trusting and relying on Him to work out details of our ministry has been peaceful and sure.

Jesus warned, “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Matthew 15:8 NIV). This Thanksgiving, purposefully get down on your knees with a repentant heart. Ask God to mold your life, making you aware of His purpose for you. Then allow Him to take over the details.

This Thanksgiving, Lord, help us see our purpose in You. Give us courage to go against the world and to live intimately with you. We know our behavior proves what we believe. Help us live out our beliefs so that those who don’t know Jesus see in us something so wonderful they’ll want to know the reason for the hope and joy we have. May our lives always reflect You to be King of kings and Lord of lords, the one and only way to salvation. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your love for us. Amen.

Jay Marcum and his wife, Jodi, are members of Abiding Savior Free Lutheran in Sioux Falls, SD. For more about their ministry, Two For Life, go to www.twoforlife.com.



The Lord's Supper

BY PASTOR GARY JORGENSEN

On the last night of His life Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. After the Passover meal was consumed, Jesus held up bread and wine and offered them to the disciples to eat. He declared of the bread, "It is my body," and of the wine, "This is my blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:26-28). There is disagreement among Christian denominations about what Jesus meant when He made those claims and about why we should continue to practice observing the Lord's Supper. How do Lutherans understand Jesus' words, and why should we participate in this ritual?

Luther defined the Lord's Supper as "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and the wine, given unto us Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ Himself" (Small Catechism, pg. 20).

Can we confidently believe that in eating and drinking the bread and wine of communion, we are receiving the *true* body and blood of our Lord Jesus? Yes.

Why? Because Jesus said it was so.

Some would argue that Jesus stood bodily before His disciples and held out common bread and wine to them. He simply couldn't have meant His words to be taken literally.

Remember the historical context. Paul, as he teaches about the Lord's Supper in I Corinthians 11:23-29, reminds us that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper "on the night he was betrayed." This was the last night of Jesus' life. It was the last opportunity He had to be with His disciples. These last hours were precious to the Savior and of a value to the disciples, which they would only come to recognize after Easter and Pentecost. Jesus would not use His final hours partying or in levity. Nor would He choose to speak to the men He loved so deeply in riddles or symbolism. This was a time for straight talk and unambiguous teaching. Jesus didn't say that the bread and wine symbolized or represented His body and blood, but that His body and blood were truly present in the earthly elements.

How could Jesus stand bodily before His disciples and yet claim to truly be present in the bread and wine? He is God in human flesh. He is omnipotent. He is omniscient. He is omnipresent. While we may not be able to fully comprehend Jesus' being physically present before the disciples and, at the same time, truly present in the earthly elements of the Lord's Supper, we can fully and confidently accept His statement because it is the Son of God who makes the claim. He would not mislead us, nor is anything

too difficult for God.

Are the earthly elements changed to become only the body and blood of Jesus? No. The Apostle Paul gives us clarification in I Corinthians 10:15-16: "I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" Paul teaches that there is a "participation" or "communion" of the earthly elements and the divine presence of Christ. So as we eat and drink common bread and wine, we receive the true body and blood of our Savior. We experience the reality of *Emmanuel*, God with us, in a most impressive and personal way. Jesus comes to us personally in the Lord's Supper!

Jesus instructed His disciples to repeat this meal throughout their lives and, in doing so, they should remember Him. Our participation is a memorial of the finished work of Jesus in our place. Through His suffering and death, He paid for our redemption. We recall and celebrate this great truth when we receive the Lord's Supper.

But there is much more than memorial in this meal. Jesus ties the Lord's Supper to the New Covenant, the gospel. In Matthew 26:28, Jesus declares that it is all "for the forgiveness of sins." The Lord's Supper is a sacrament. It is a means of grace. Participation in the Lord's Supper brings forgiveness and spiritual renewal to us.

Further proof that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament, a means of grace, is provided by Paul in I Corinthians 11:27-29: "Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."

No mere memorial would have such a serious warning attached to it. We are clearly admonished before coming to the Lord's Supper that we must recognize it for what it is, a true means of grace. We must come to the Lord's table humbly confessing our sin and should gratefully receive and celebrate what is offered in the sacrament — all by faith alone.

Jorgenson is pastor of Christ the King Lutheran, East Grand Forks, Minn. For further resources on this topic, turn to page 17.



Attitude adjustment

Thanks in all circumstances

Memories of Hurricane Katrina are fading fast, except on the Gulf Coast. It will take years to recover. We have heard much about what wasn't done or what could have been done to deal with the catastrophe. Some have talked about church and religious good works, but seldom do we really hear about the love of God. We are left with an image of how bad things were for people affected by the storm, with barely a suggestion that we remember God or give thanks.

Just a few dozen miles from where Katrina struck in Alabama, Silverhill was hit peripherally by the storm. Damage was not pronounced where we live and worship. Because of failure in our communications infrastructure, we had no idea of the extent of devastation to the west of us until days after the event. We had "refugees" from Mississippi and Louisiana, but no storm specifics, except from the TV with its spotty coverage. In the midst of everything, there are true stories of faith and thankfulness.

Zion's council met a week or so after Katrina, when the picture of destruction in the region was clearer, to discuss ways to help. Following the teaching of Galatians 6:10 — "Let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" — we surveyed our congregation for the names of specific households we knew were impacted by the storm. With the help of AFLC and non-AFLC churches, we began a six-month project of sending money to households in need in Mississippi and Louisiana. We soon got cards and letters of thanks. What was remarkable was that we began getting thank you notes from people we had not sent any money to. Some of those in need were sharing our gift with others. They were thankful to get any help at all, and they were sharing from what little they had. Thankfulness and generosity was taking place because of Zion's meager gifts.

God's Word is clear that our attitude is to be one of thankfulness. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). The Greek word for "thanks" in this verse is the same Greek word we sometimes use for communion — "Eucharist" or "the thanksgiving."

In communion we think of Jesus and His love for us in dying on the cross. Yet, the cross was a sad and tragic episode, necessary to obtain our salvation through Christ's sacrificial death. It reminds us that thankfulness can come from tragedy. In retrospect, that is what happened for many in Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.

Soon before going to the cross Jesus said in John 13: 34-35, "Love one another; as I have loved you ... By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Love is to be the marker of those who follow the Lord Jesus.

Here we are at Thanksgiving time. It is a year after Katrina. We are called to be thankful people. You know who are most thankful? It's those who have seen the love of Christ, that *agape* love, in His people. We can be thankful for one another because we see Christ's love in those who are caring in this world. It doesn't take a hurricane for God's love to show, but you and I can surely see it when it is shown, even among the hurting hurricane survivors. In the end, it is God's love, regardless of circumstance, that keeps us in thankfulness. May we all be thankful because of the Lord's love we see in His people this Thanksgiving.

Johnson is pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Silverhill, Ala.



music a gift from God

BY PASTOR TOM OLSON

One of my treasured books is “A Compend of Luther’s Theology” by Hugh Thomson Kerr (Westminster Press, 1943). I got this book from my grandmother’s pastor, the Rev. Luverne Nelson, who used it in his studies at Augsburg Seminary in 1945. It contains many quotes from Martin Luther about music and the arts that have given me much to think about. Let’s reflect on a few.

Luther treasured the use of music and the arts in worship

“I am not of the opinion that all arts are to be cast down and destroyed on account of the Gospel, as some fanatics protest; on the other hand I would gladly see all arts, especially music, in the service of Him who has given and created them,” wrote Luther (*Spiritual Hymnal Booklet*, “Works of Martin Luther,” Vol. VI).

The radical reformers wanted to eliminate organs, statues, carvings, paintings, stained glass, candles and the like from public worship. Many groups today forbid instruments or objects of art in the church. Luther and John Calvin fought to keep the arts in worship. They argued that the arts were blessed by the example of their use in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple. The forbidden part is to bow down and worship an object of art as a god. The arts are to reinforce our worship of the invisible, one true God.

Luther promoted the study of music next to theology

“Music is a noble gift of God, next to theology. I would not change my little knowledge of music for a great deal,” said Luther (“Conversations with Luther”).

Luther knew the power and value of music. Music instructs as well as edifies. Music that people can sing to and is theologically solid can impact the church and society in an unrivaled manner. I remember Pastor Robert Lee (AFLC president) telling us in seminary that during

the Reformation Luther’s hymns proclaimed the gospel in areas where evangelical preaching was forbidden. Luther’s critics despised the power his hymns had to preach the gospel. They were unstoppable.

At a recent Illinois district pastors’ meeting, Pastor Jeff Swanson was showing me some new choruses and praise songs that had powerful Christ-centered words. I was glad to see his concern for quality worship songs. As we sort through the old hymns and new choruses, it is very important for us to make certain that the text is solid and the tune is usable. Some old hymns and new choruses have poor texts and music. Some are excellent. The theological impact of music in worship cannot be emphasized enough. Luther would agree that it is a wise pastor who uses music well, which brings me to my next point.

Luther wanted pastors to have an excellent music education

“I always loved music; whoso has skill in this art, is of a good temperament, fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools; a schoolmaster ought to have skill in music, or I would not regard him; neither should we ordain young men as preachers, unless they have been well exercised in music,” wrote Luther (“Table Talk”).

Luther composed hymns that the people of his day could sing well. That is why they spread rapidly among the common people. A pastor recently told me about choosing some hymns with excellent words and difficult tunes. The impact in worship was very negative as the congregation struggled to sing a “great hymn” they didn’t know. This happens time and again when pastors don’t know the hymns or don’t use them in the appropriate way. Luther would say that weak musical training is to be blamed.

I would imagine that pastors in Luther’s day got a much more rigorous music education than modern ones do.

(Continued on page 14)



There are many of my favorite hymns that I don't use in worship because the congregation or our musicians cannot do them well. Using them will actually cause people to despise them. This is the opposite effect of Luther's use of music. I try to use such hymns with the choir, a soloist or as a unison reading. Those same hymns can be used with power when the right musicians and congregation choose them.

A hymnal cannot always cater to the lowest common denominator. That is why Luther insisted that pastors be trained in music. If a pastor is not so trained he must work closely with trained musicians who can help him make wise choices.

Luther made certain that music, and all arts, be used in the context of true spiritual life

"The Christian Church on earth has no greater power or work than ... prayer ... the evil spirit knows well, and therefore he does all that he can to prevent such prayer. Gleefully he lets us go on building churches ... making music, reading, singing This does not grieve [the evil one], nay, he helps us do it, that we may consider such things the very best, and think that thereby we have done our whole duty. But in the meanwhile this common, effectual and fruitful prayer perishes and its omission is unnoticed because of such display, in this he has what he seeks," wrote Luther (*Treatise on Good Works*, "Works of Martin Luther," Vol. I).

As much as Luther loved music and the arts, he did not blindly support them. He knew that even the devil could use the elements of worship to prevent us from the higher work of corporate prayer. Luther realized that even the worship of God could become an idol. I am afraid that has happened all too often in both liturgical and contemporary settings. Luther reminds us that no amount of worship music can replace the prayer meeting. We all would do well to consider how much of our worship is dedicated to music in comparison to prayer.

Luther used music to encourage himself

"Music is a fair and glorious gift of God. I would not for the world forego my humble share of music. Singers are never sorrowful, but are merry, and smile through their troubles in song. Music makes people kinder, gentler, more staid and reasonable," said Luther ("Ambassador Hymnal").

There is no doubt in my mind that Martin Luther coped with the stress of his calling by picking up his lute and singing cheerful and encouraging songs. I also make use of hymns and songs when the weight of the ministry gets overbearing. We all would do well to follow Luther's example by keeping music alive as a joyful part of our daily home life.

Olson is pastor of Faith Lutheran, Mineral Point, Wis. For further resources on this topic, turn to page 17.



something old something new

Our AFLC represents a unique blending of the old and the new, and my travels in August certainly strengthened that impression for me. I was honored to officiate at two dedication services, which clearly illustrates this fortunate union.



Pastor Robert Lee

Fox River Lutheran Church, Norway, Ill., is the oldest Norwegian Lutheran congregation in America, tracing its ancestry to the ministry of pioneer preacher Elling Eielsen in 1839. For most of its history, pastors were shared with neighboring parishes. In 1979, the congregation called Pastor Maynard Halvorson, who was semi-retired, to serve there alone. Ten years later the congregation took another step of faith by calling its first full-time pastor, Mel Meyer.

The growth of Fox River Lutheran continued and accelerated under the ministry of current Pastor Kevin Garner, and it was evident that the church building, constructed in 1859-1861, was no longer adequate. Property was purchased north of the village of Norway, near the junction of US 52 and Illinois 71, and a spacious new church home was dedicated on August 13. Facing the future with confidence in God and His Word, this historic congregation is moving forward joyfully and meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

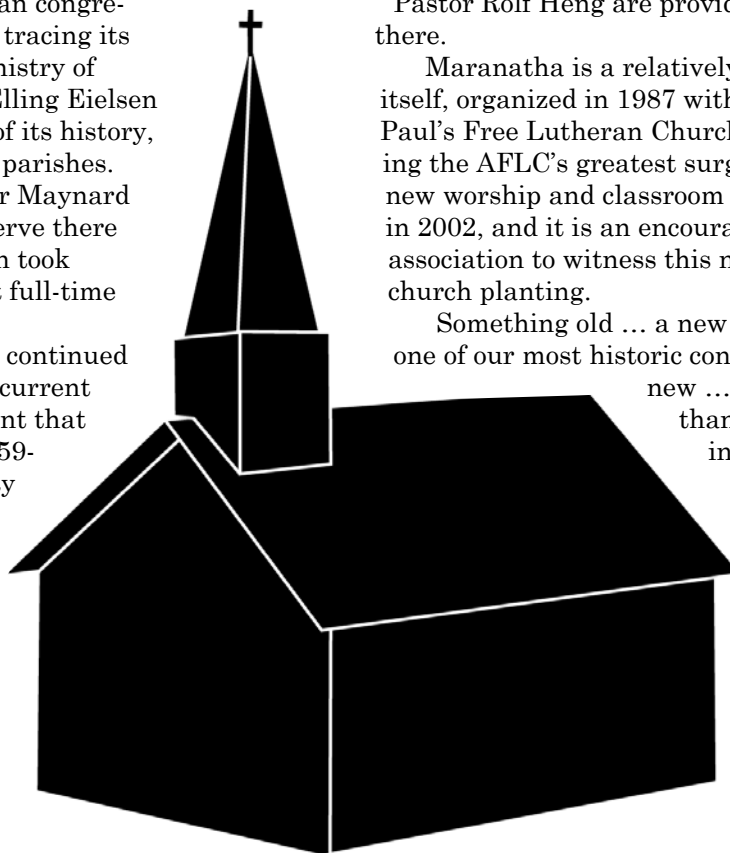
A service on August 6 represented something new, indeed, at the dedication of a church home of a

satellite congregation planted by Maranatha Free Lutheran Church, Glyndon, Minn. For more than a year, a steady stream of worshippers have been coming from the town of Ulen, nearly 40 miles northeast of Glyndon, and a Bible study fellowship was meeting there weekly. A request for Sunday services in Ulen was prayerfully made to Maranatha. In an answer to prayer, a commercial building was offered and extensively remodeled. Pastor Dale Finstrom, Pastor Curt Frankhauser, and Pastor Rolf Heng are providing pastoral service there.

Maranatha is a relatively new congregation itself, organized in 1987 with the assistance of St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church, Fargo, N.D., during the AFLC's greatest surge of growth. A fine new worship and classroom facility was dedicated in 2002, and it is an encouragement to our entire association to witness this new wave of a vision for church planting.

Something old ... a new chapter in the life of one of our most historic congregations. Something

new ... a congregation younger than 20 years old multiplying its ministry through a satellite outreach. This is a face of the AFLC, an expanding fusion of conviction and commitment, of old and new, of roots and wings, seeking to reach our generation for the Lord Jesus Christ.



God knows

BY PASTOR TODD SCHIERKOLK

As I looked in my rearview mirror, I was a little perplexed. I had just dropped off a group of FLY team members and sent them off on the right-hand side of the road in order to pray and leave gospel pamphlets from our church in a neighborhood in which we have a Kid's Club. The left-hand side of the road, where they were walking, was a different neighborhood. As I watched them begin to go house-to-house in that different neighborhood, I thought to myself, "Well, maybe God knows there is someone over there who is open to the gospel." Two weeks later we met her.

My high school Sunday school class was headed downstairs to the entrance by the front door where we meet. As I set my chair up next to the door of our building's public bathroom, I saw a girl sitting down on the low window ledge of the store across the street. Our church is close to the town market, and people often pass by on Sundays, which is market day, so I didn't think anything of seeing a girl who looked like she was waiting for someone. Our class had been going for about 10 minutes when I noticed two of the three kids with me look up over my shoulder. My back was to the door so I didn't see her until one of my students signaled me to turn around and look. There at the door was a girl of about 15 years of age. As I got up to go see what she needed, I noticed that she was trembling. I asked her if she'd like to come in and she nodded yes. In my heart I was thinking, "Oh, you don't have to afraid." She's been back three or four times since then, but we haven't seen her now for more than a month. We continue to pray for Nadia. Please pray for her with us.

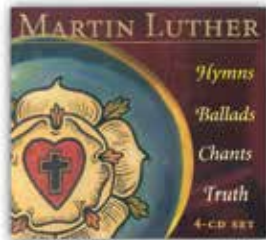


Pastor Todd and Barb Schierkolk work as AFLC missionaries in Jerez, Zacatecas, Mexico.

resources

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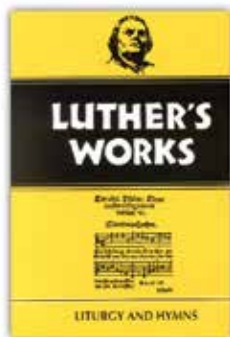
Luther & Music



Martin Luther

HYMNS, BALLADS, CHANTS, TRUTH

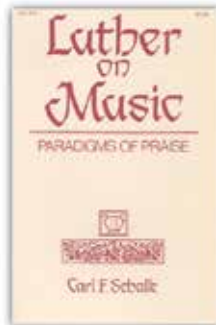
This monumental recording project presents for the first time a complete recording of all hymns, ballads, and chants composed or authored by Martin Luther. The four-CD set provides numerous vocal and instrumental settings with English texts and historic narrative quoting Luther. Includes 64-page booklet. \$36



Luther's Works

VOLUME 53 (LITURGY AND HYMNS)

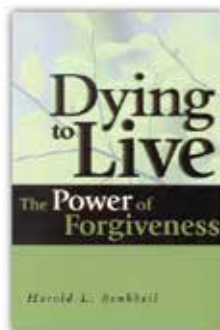
Contains all of Luther's chants and hymns in modern English with music and historical background plus all of his liturgical writings, including public worship, orders of service for baptism, private confession, and marriage, collects and other prayers. \$30



Luther on Music

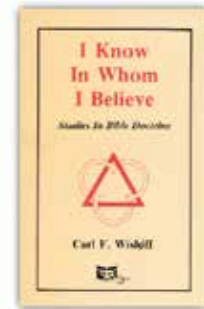
Luther emphasized the importance of music in the congregation and contributed much to present-day worship. This booklet by Carl F. Schalk explains the influence of music on Luther and Luther's five paradigms of praise. \$6.30

The Lord's Supper



Dying to Live

What does the incarnation — the Word made flesh — mean for modern people? How do simple water, bread, wine, and human words work in sinful lives to make people over into new creatures? Explore these questions in this conversational book by Harold L. Senkbeil and tackle the whys and hows of Christianity in a readable manner for both new Christians and longtime believers. \$12.75



I Know in Whom I Believe

This doctrinal summary of the foundation of faith and the contents of faith includes clear teaching by Carl F. Wisløff about the Lord's Supper in the section on "The Means of Grace and the Congregation." \$3.50



This Faith Is Mine

Encourage teens and adults to be strengthened in their faith through these devotional reflections by R. Z. Meyer on Luther's Small Catechism, including several pages focusing on the Lord's Supper. \$8

Other resources that teach about the Lord's Supper:

- Luther's Small Catechism Explained
- Luther's Catechism in Illustration Study Guide
- Luther's Large Catechism with Study Questions
- The Augsburg Confession: Its Meaning for Our Day

Chapel remodeling project under way

Pipe organ to be installed, chancel area enlarged

AFLC Schools has recently been gifted with a large pipe organ for installation and use in the campus chapel. Through the generosity of Pastor James Adix, Marion, Iowa, the 2,000-pipe organ has been brought to the chapel and is ready for installation. The Wicks 4511 pipe organ, valued at \$450,000, will replace the former Kilgen organ, which served the campus for many years but recently has been in need of major repair and restoration. The installation process of the new organ is expected to take eight to ten months. Luther "Si" Melby from Dalton, Minn., has been asked to install the organ. An organ company technician will serve in an advisory capacity.

Included in the chapel project is the refinishing of all the pews in the chapel and the enlarging of the chancel area for regular chapel services, concerts, graduation services as well as the annual January missions conference and the fall revival conference. The removal of the seminary's former main classroom adjacent to the sanctuary has added greatly to the seating capacity. It is hoped that the AFLC annual conference could be held in this facility in years to come.

The gift of beautiful handcrafted oak chancel fur-

niture built by AFLC Pastor Richard Ewing of Mineral Point, Wis., a little over a year ago was the impetus for establishing a committee to begin discussing renovations to the chapel. The chancel furniture includes a large pulpit with John 1:14 in raised lettering ("The Word became flesh and dwelt among us ... full of grace and truth"). A large altar with a black Brazilian marble top has an inscription which is repeated across the sides and front, "This is My Body, This is My Blood." The lectern includes the names "Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Savior" on its three sides. The baptismal font has the words, "Grace, Restoration, Forgiveness, and Salvation." These wonderful gifts are a tremendous blessing to all who share in worship services on the campus.

With the costs for the organ installation and the enlarging and restoration of the entire chapel area projected to be between \$125,000 and \$150,000, a special chapel fund has been set up so that congregations and individuals who may desire to have a part in this project can designate their gifts accordingly. The campus committee overseeing this work includes Marian Christopherson, Jerry Nelson, Wayne and Karen Floan, Pastor Robert Lee, Pastor Joel Rolf and Dr. Francis Monseth. Gifts for this project can be designated as follows: AFLC Schools Chapel Fund, 3120 East Medicine Lake Boulevard, Plymouth, MN 55441.

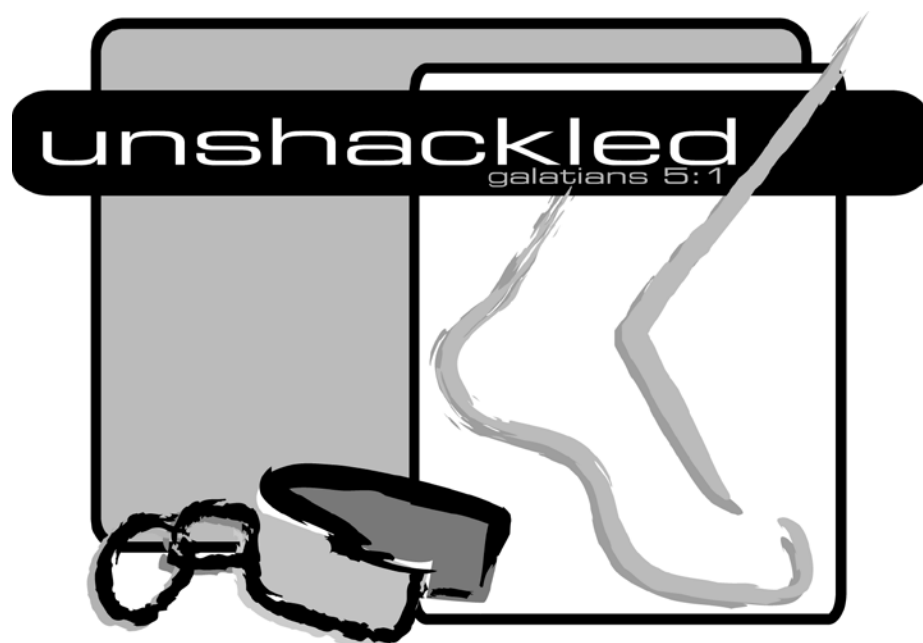
— Dr. Francis Monseth
AFLTS dean

Register now for FLY 2007

Forms now available

Registration forms are now available for the Free Lutheran Youth Convention. Scheduled for July 2-7, 2007, at the YMCA of the Rockies Camp in Estes Park, Colo., the FLY convention will feature the theme, "Unshackled," from Galatians 5:1.

Special speakers for the convention include author Monty Christensen, talk radio host Todd Friel, and David Witt and Mujahid El Masih from Voice of the Martyrs. Speaking to the men will be Pastor John Kent, and speaking to the women will be youth workers Michelle Satren, Betsy O'Neil and Karisa Finstrom. Pastor Jim Johnson will speak at the closing service. Bible study leaders include Pastor Tom Brock and Pastor Peter Franz.



Registration will cost \$325 per student, \$200 for counselor/staff, and \$75 for children. Completed registration forms, with a \$100 deposit, are due by Feb. 1, 2007. Prices will rise by \$50 after Feb. 1. For a downloadable brochure, registration form or counselor application, visit www.aflc.org/youth.



Work continues on the third and final seminary housing unit, a four-plex located between Heritage Hall and the newest four-plex (shown in the background). The project, which began in September, is slated for completion yet this winter.



Members of Ebenezer Lutheran, Humboldt, Tenn., dedicated a newly built sanctuary during their Sept. 24 service.

Pastor Brian Pearson was installed Sept. 17 as pastor of Cornerstone Christian Church, Riverview, Fla., a new Home Mission congregation. Pastor Paul Nash, AFLC Home Missions director, officiated at the service.

Pastor Richard Sliper was installed Sept. 17 as pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Pipestone, Minn., by Pastor David Skordahl, former pastor of the congregation. Sliper has been received on the Fellowship Roster of the AFLC, coming from the ELCA through colloquy with the Coordinating Committee.

Pastor Ron Pulscher, Bagley, Minn., has accepted a call to serve the two-point parish of Pukwana Lutheran, Pukwana, S.D., and St. Olaf Free Lutheran, Chamberlain, S.D.

The 2007 **Youth Workers Retreat** has been scheduled for Jan. 12-14 at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis.

Business manager hired at headquarters

Cory Buck has been hired for the business manager position at the AFLC headquarters and will start on or before Dec. 1. In the full-time position, Buck will oversee the book-keeping office, as well as work for the General Fund finances, keep track of building upkeep and work with other AFLC departments.

Buck currently works as business manager at AFLC Schools. A job opening for this position, which reports to the deans of AFLBS and AFLTS, has been listed on the AFLBS web site. A qualified applicant must have experience in accounting, administration, financial reporting, and campus life and promotion. For more information about the position, and to view a job description, visit www.flbs.org or call the school's office at (763) 544-9501.

BY PASTOR LLOYD QUANBECK

Open door



It is apparent from reading the end of I Corinthians and the first part of II Corinthians that the apostle Paul had some explaining to do. He was explaining to the church at Corinth why it was that he had changed his plans for a return visit to them. There were various reasons, but one of them he describes in this way: “A wide door of effective service has opened to me” (I Corinthians 16:9).

Paul had earlier made plans to visit Corinth by a certain time on his third missionary journey, but the book of Acts (19:9-10) tells us that he ended up staying and teaching in Ephesus for two years, with a very significant impact. “All who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks” (vs. 10).

As members of the AFLC Youth Board, we probably have some explaining to do to the many congregations and youth groups of the AFLC. Our plans, too, are changing from what they would have been a year ago. You may have heard that our director of Youth Ministries, Pastor Kevin Olson, will be leaving that position to begin a work under World Missions. Kevin will be concluding his work with Youth Ministries following the national FLY Convention next July. The task before him will be that of starting a distance learning center, which will help in the training of men for ministry in at least two countries in Africa, possibly India, and others.

Our AFLC has been blessed to have Kevin serve as director for more than 11 years, and our board is certainly sad to see him go. Yet we cannot help but rejoice with Kevin that a wide door of effective service has opened

to him. We are not surprised, as we have seen missions on his heart for some time.

That heart passion grew significantly through the nine-month sabbatical leave he and his family took to teach in 2004-2005 at Waama Bible School in Tanzania.

It is with thankfulness to God that we will commend Kevin to this new work. God richly blessed us throughout the AFLC through Kevin’s dedicated service. In these years we have seen several aspects of youth work grow significantly. Kevin has been a stabilizing force in the planning of five FLY conventions in Estes Park, Colo. He has taught at and/or aided in the planning of six youth leadership conferences. The annual youth workers retreats at the ARC were his idea. He has loved hanging out with and encouraging youth workers in any way he could. Youth mission trips have expanded greatly in these last years, as well, with more than 60 youths exposed to cross-cultural ministry through short-term trips this summer.

Kevin would be quick to point out that all glory goes to the Lord Jesus for any good that has come from his ministry, and that a host of volunteers have served in every above-mentioned ministry. And he is right. We praise the Lord for what He has been doing in recent years in the hearts of young people throughout the congregations of the AFLC. And we also thank the Lord for His willing servant, Kevin Olson. May God richly bless him as he finishes this next year with Youth Ministry and as he begins to serve Him in this new open door. We also need your prayer support as we seek to call a new director for Youth Ministries.

Quanbeck is a member of the AFLC Youth Board.

Christ's servants

BY MOLLY WIESEN



“... so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:4-5).



Fall resources packets for 2007

Fall is upon us again. For the WMF this means that the 2007 Fall Resource Packets will be sent out soon, as well as the 2007 Bible studies that have been ordered. This year the material has an emphasis on generations. God's Word encourages us to teach our children and our children's children. This packet contains information encouraging us to teach and minister to all generations through various programs, books and a skit. It also includes information about our missionaries and how we can encourage them. The prayer calendar is included, which lists the projects that the WMF will be focusing on to support this year. So when you receive the packet, take the time to go through the material, share it with your pastors, their wives and WMF officers. Decide what you would like to use this year, make copies, and keep the rest for future reference.

The national officers of the WMF are very thankful for the faithful women we meet at our national WMF days, as well as at district WMF events. They are a testimony to the working of the Holy Spirit in our church body. They are ...

- Hands that make a casserole, dress a child for Sunday school, touch the shoulder of a teenager needing encouragement, pack a box for a missionary family ...
- Arms that bring her child to the baptismal font, hug a senior citizen at the nursing home, and support her husband ...
- A heart that shows the compassion of Christ in service to others ...
- Eyes that read the Bible and see the needs of others ...
- Ears that hear the Word of God and the prayer request of a friend ...
- A mouth that prays for her family, pastor, and the world around her ...
- A mind that plans, prepares, and leads as a WMF officer, a Sunday school teacher, or a Bible study leader ...
- Feet that take the casserole to a sick neighbor and leave guiding footprints to church for her children to follow ...

The duties, roles, and responsibilities of a woman in our AFLC are many and varied. Thanksgiving is a time to remember the work that God is accomplishing through the women who serve in the WMF throughout the country. Whether she is serving as an officer of the WMF, a Sunday school teacher, a worker in the kitchen, or as a praying wife/mother/friend, each woman has a vital part in building up the body of Christ.

As we celebrate this time of thanksgiving, may the Lord be praised for blessing our congregations with women who are serving Him.

Wiesen is the second vice president of the National WMF

AFLC Memorials

► September

AFLBS

KateLynn Larson
Junel Pelke
Dienne Andrews
Clara Nelson
Hazel Holland
Rita Stauffer

AFLT5

KateLynn Larson
Evangelism
Barbara Gerdeen
Dr. Phil Dyrud

General Fund

Barbara Gerdeen

Home Missions

Owen Myhre
Ann Mathistad
Ruth Helm

Miriam Infant Home

Jane Nystrom

Parish Education

KateLynn Larson
Barbara Gerdeen
Ruth Johnson

Vision

Myrtle Smith
Raymond Anderson

WMF

Betty Filbrandt
Esther Anderson
Comart Peterson

World Missions

Roy Kveen
Roy & Mildred Finstad
Dorothy Kluck
Hazel Holland

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1- Sept. 30, 2006

FUND	TOTAL (Subsidy)	REC'D IN SEPT.	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$325,700	\$24,437	\$243,194	75
Youth Ministries	57,949	2,889	46,089	80
Evangelism	98,330	4,785	66,368	67
Parish Education	96,477	10,782	65,455	68
Seminary	189,224	12,507	139,584	74
Bible School	296,257	20,309	242,114	82
Home Missions	293,287	22,433	193,768	66
World Missions	260,933	20,601	176,095	67
Personal Support	376,641	48,649	328,988	87
TOTALS	\$1,944,798	\$167,392	\$1,501,656	75
TOTALS 2005	\$1,860,474	\$170,101	\$1,449,452	78

Goal 75%

These are the Annual Conference-approved budgets but do not reflect all the financial needs of the departments. Contact the individual departments for further information.

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Avg. copies each issue during
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Copies September 2006 issue:
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/s/ Ellis L. Bloomfield, Printer

be teachable

LUTHER AND PAUL SET EXAMPLES OF SEEKING TRUTH

Three young ladies came to Christian author and speaker Steve Farrar with a question: “We hope to be married some day. We were wondering what you would advise us to look for in a future husband.” Farrar responded, “Look for someone who is teachable.” He stressed how someone who is teachable will grow and learn and work at being a better husband and father.

I have prayed for students at our AFLC schools and youths in our congregation to be teachable. What Farrar said encouraged me to include more in that prayer. Grandparents and parents, husbands and wives, teachers and leaders, and myself — we all need to be teachable.



Pastor Craig Johnson

Martin Luther was teachable, and it led to the Protestant Reformation. It would have been easy for Luther to have a closed mind. He was a priest and had earned his doctorate. He was a professor of biblical studies. He could have concluded he already knew all he needed to know. But he didn't do that. While he was teaching he was also learning. The Holy Spirit worked through the Word

of God and taught him the truth about how someone becomes right with God. The Lord revealed to him that “the righteous will live by faith” (Romans 1:17, NIV).

Luther kept studying the Word and God shaped his mind and actions through that Word. In *Table Talk*, he wrote, “Though I am a great doctor, I haven't yet progressed beyond the instruction of children in the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.” He then described how, as he was teaching his children biblical truths, he was studying and learning along with them.

People who are teachable are willing to let God change them. Because he was teachable, Luther changed from trusting in his own works and keeping the rituals of the church to trusting in the finished work of Christ.

Those who are teachable are good listeners. They don't claim to have all the answers. They are humble. They admit they're not always right, and they are willing to consider what others have to say. They recognize they are as clay and God is the potter (Isaiah 45:9). They want God to mold them as He sees fit. They are convinced the Bible is the Word of God and Jesus is the way of salvation, but they're

not always convinced they are understanding everything correctly.

In James 3:1 it says, “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” We should be quick to be students and slow to offer ourselves up as teachers who can instruct all the others around us.

The apostle Paul knew he needed to learn and grow. He spoke of his goal of becoming like Christ, but as he reflected on that goal he wrote, “Not that I have already obtained all this or have already been made perfect” (Philippians 3:12). He didn't view himself as having arrived. He was just part way on the journey.

When pro sports teams draft players, the leadership will talk about a player's potential. They look for one who can take instruction from a coach. They don't necessarily draft the player who is the best right now, but more the one who can get better in the future.

A person who thinks they're as spiritually wise as they could ever be, as close to God as they could ever be, has as strong a prayer life as they could ever have, is in a dangerous position. “So, if you think you are standing firm be careful that you don't fall” (I Corinthians 10:12).

When kids are going through growing spurts, their parents will often buy clothes that might be a little too big right now in order to leave room for growth. In our walk with the Lord there's always room to grow, and thankfully the Lord is always willing to teach.

Because he was teachable, Luther changed from trusting in his own works and keeping the rituals of the church to trusting in the finished work of Christ.

building the base

strong & steadfast

BY PASTOR JASON HOLT

What is your desire for each Christian in your family? What is your heart's cry for each Christian in your local congregation? How about each one in your community or in the world?

I think of this line of questions when I think of the New Testament church. Its members were grateful for the gospel's ministry. They knew Jesus was Lord. What did they focus on?

I was reading recently in Ephesians 3:14-21. If you would like to set down this article and read it, then please do! It is God's Word. It is powerful! This article [please forgive me *Lutheran Ambassador* staff!] is just an article. It is a forgiven sinner's response to God's Word.

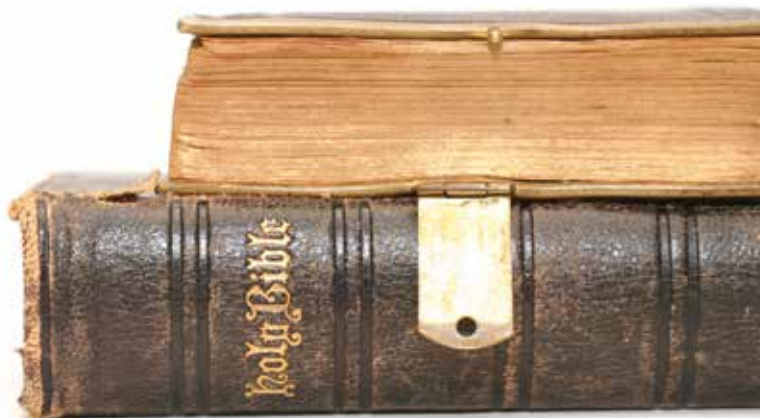
Paul expresses here his heartfelt prayer for the local congregation at Ephesus. His prayer is grounded in the powerful work of God in their lives. What are the core actions that Paul prays for? What does He desire to see in these Christians above all else?

Two actions are prayed for out of God's glorious riches: a strong faith and a steadfast faith (v. 16-17).

A STRONG FAITH

Paul's cry before the Lord is that the believers at Ephesus would have a strong inner faith. This quality of faith has its roots in the gospel. A strong faith is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

This passage draws attention to our inner person. The Bible indicates that the believer will be tempted to waiver on what is crucial. We cannot go off what a person thinks about faith. We must not rely primarily on a respected Christian's conclusion. Our faith must be rooted



and established in God's love and God's Word. He comes in a mighty way to convict of sin and to renew one's heart, which builds a mighty faith.

A STEADFAST FAITH

The second action that Paul asks the Lord to do is to have Jesus dwell in their hearts. "Huh?" you may respond. "Why would the Spirit inspire him to do that?"

Good question! We know that Paul is writing to the saints — "the faithful in Christ Jesus" (1:1). The apostle knows his audience and the Spirit knows all. The prayer communicates a desire for Jesus to dwell — to make his home or really live — in the believer's heart.

This thought recognizes the value of a lasting and enduring faith. It is a steadfast faith that impacts others for the Kingdom of God. Jesus told us, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me" (John 15:4, NASB).

STRONG AND STEADFAST

It appears that the combination — strong and steadfast — is the focus for the New Testament believer. We can give thanks to the Lord for both qualities of faith, which are soul-saving and life-changing. As we seek to make disciples of all nations, we can cling to Jesus, who works in our hearts a strong, steadfast faith for His glory!

Holt serves Calvary Free Lutheran, Fergus Falls, Minn.