

# The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

November 28, 1995

*An  
attitude  
of  
gratitude*



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 28, 1995  
Volume 33, Number 15



The magazine of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. (612) 545-5631

Editor: Rev. Craig Johnson  
Assistant to the Editor: Solveig Hjermstad  
Editorial Board: Rev. John Mundfrom, Oryen Benrud.

## CONTENTS

That for which I am thankful	p. 3
An elderly man's reasons for thanksgiving	p. 4
Others scoff, we still have hope	p. 6
Reason to hope	p. 8

**The Lutheran Ambassador**  
(USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413)  
is published every three weeks except monthly in June and July (16 issues per year) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

**For editorial inquiries and information:**  
The Lutheran Ambassador, Box 423, Faith, SD 57626; (605) 967-2381; fax (605) 967-2382. E-Mail Craig JN @ aol. com.

**For subscription changes and information:** *The Lutheran Ambassador*, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. (612) 545-5631.

### Subscriptions rates:

- \$15.00 a year, Group Rate, U. S.
- \$16.00 a year, Individual, U. S.
- \$18.00 a year, International

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

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

## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

### Empowered to pray

*This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*  
John 15:12-13

I have days when I feel like giving up the practice of prayer. Maybe the circumstances have not changed or even worsened that I have prayed about. Maybe I am just worn out, or I allow a selfish spirit to creep into my prayer closet. On those days I make some hot tea and pour it into my prayer mug, and I remember a special man named Maurice who forever changed my attitude about prayer.

I met Maurice in 1982 while I was attending Lutheran Bible Institute in the Seattle area. During my weekly ministry experience at a shelter in Seattle for the homeless, I began to visit with him, mostly listening and occasionally I would share Scripture with him. I wondered if I was making any progress.

One night Maurice told me he had finally found a job. He said to me, "I want to give you a present." I protested, "No Maurice, you don't have to give me anything." He kept insisting, and finally he pulled out this beautiful mug, the color of Indian summer, with a handle big enough for me to fit my entire hand through.

I said, "Maurice, you don't have a job, you don't have a home, you don't have any money. How could you buy me this mug?" He looked at me, and said, "I went down to the blood

bank, and sold some blood, so I could buy you this present." I reached out and grabbed it with both hands, and pulled it close to my heart. It is the most precious gift anyone has ever given me.

Dear friends, when you feel like giving up in prayer, remember Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. That dark day He was stripped and nailed to the wood. The soldiers gambled for His last bit of clothes. All He had left to give was His blood, and he shed it so willingly.

I Peter 1:18-19 tells us we were not redeemed with silver or gold, "but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." If you have truly been redeemed, how in the world could you ever think about not praying? The most natural response to such a gift as this is to pray more and not less.

*God, forgive us for failing in prayer and allowing a spirit of selfishness to come into our prayer closet and chase us out. Remind us of Christ's blood, so willingly and lovingly shed for our sins and for our salvation. Empower us to persevere in prayer, day by day, moment by moment, until we are called home to be with You. Amen.*



— by Rev. Joel  
Lohafer  
Triumph  
Lutheran  
Ferndale,  
Washington



*hanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. II Corinthians 9:15*

*Be thankful unto Him and bless His name. Psalm 100:4*

**A**s Thanksgiving season surrounds us, I'm not so absorbed in getting ready as in giving thanks to God for all He's given to me.

### **His grace and presence.**

God is, and so am I, because of Him. I'm now in a wheelchair permanently after struggling with life-long diabetes. Even so, He has given me the gift of *contentment*. Whatever circumstances I am placed in, He is lovingly there as my provider, protector, director, stronghold and friend. He will never lead me where His grace cannot keep me.

Philippians 4:6-7 reminds me, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." He has given me the peace to use what I have, and not to dwell on what I don't have.


## **That for which I am thankful**

The "don't haves" seem to carry such an unnecessary burden of despair, bitterness, anger, resentment and complaints that become as eye shades cutting off all surrounding beauty or as earmuffs shutting out all spoken love, concern and even prayer and encouragement.

Jesus has given me the means to use what I have. A good leg and arm muscles can propel a wheelchair much further than excuses. A smile and thank you sweeten the day. (A smile takes heart power, not necessarily brain power — or attitude versus intellect.) Family, church, community and even strangers provide for needs as the Lord directs them.

### **He has given me triumph over trials.**

Each of us confront trials or frustrations, great or small, and often daily. Some seem overwhelming. During those times especially I claim the promise that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Without Him I can do nothing (John 15:5b). When I give all of myself to Him, I'm His responsibility. The benefits are enormous and eternal.

Have you with thankfulness acknowledged your blessings and benefits from God to God? It's an action called prayer and it comes from the heart. 

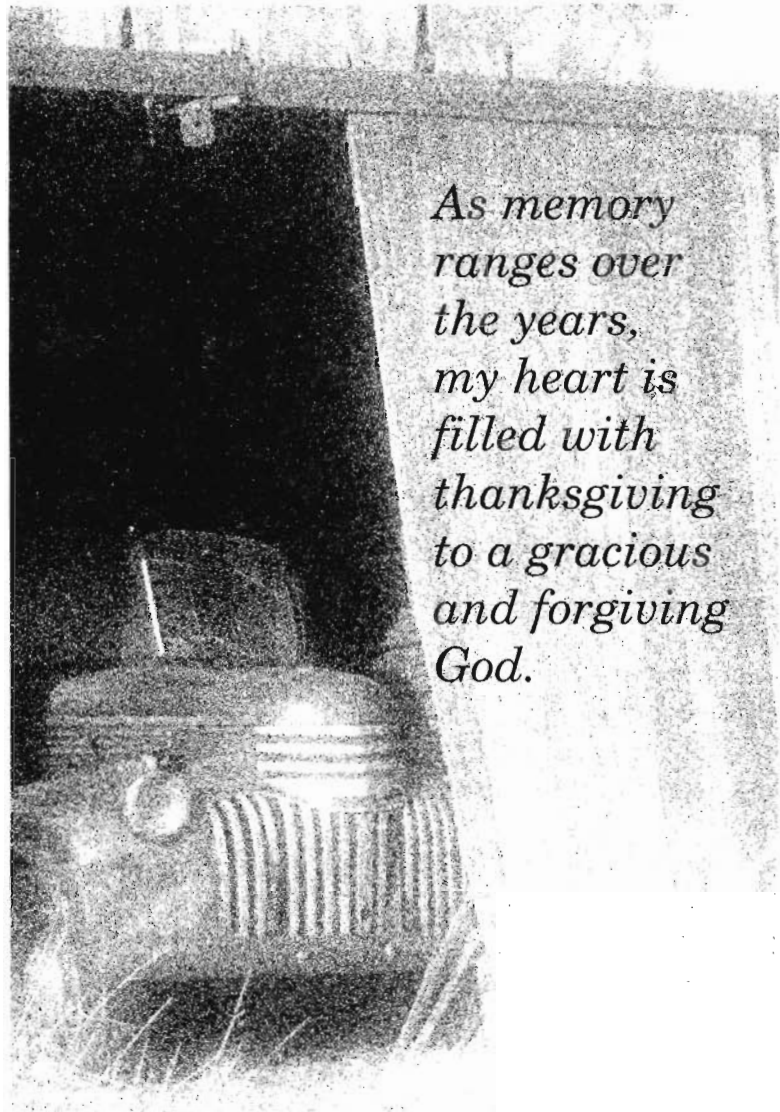
— Mrs. Linda Odegard  
Beaver Creek and Norman Lutheran  
Tioga, North Dakota

*Just after writing this article, the author was hospitalized at Bismarck, ND. Pray for her and her husband, Rev. Stephen Odegard.*

# An elderly man's reasons for

**O**n some bright sunny late afternoons in Colorado, I like to take my cane and go for a walk down the street where we live in our cozy home. Having had my afternoon nap, it is a joy to head for the outdoors with my face to the wonder of God's creation — now snow-covered Pike's Peak. While I stoop to guard my feet so as not to trip on some uneven sidewalk, I hump along with my cane rejoicing in the beauty of the scene and thankful to still be out at 90 years.

What can a man so old and decrepit be thankful for? As memory ranges over the years, my heart is filled with thanksgiving to a gracious and forgiving God.



*As memory  
ranges over  
the years,  
my heart is  
filled with  
thanksgiving  
to a gracious  
and forgiving  
God.*

First, the memories of a happy youth on a southern Wisconsin farm flood my mind. Then it was on to college at St. Olaf in the Depression years of the 1920s.

In my sophomore year, a mischievous junior friend persuaded me at last, (I was always shy around girls) to double-date with him. Mine was an Iowa girl, as shy as I was, who eventually became my first wife. Engaged in time, we dreamed of the future in Christian ministry.

I finished at St. Olaf and went on to three years at Luther Seminary, still timid and hesitant about thinking of being a pastor. But she encouraged me while she finished at St. Olaf and went a year to LBI in Minneapolis, followed by a year at home on her parents' Iowa farm. That was when we waited for our first call — scarce in those days.

Finally in late summer a letter of call arrived from a parish in drought-ridden Kansas and renewed our hope. We hurried the final plans to get married in the parlor of her Iowa home. We were married on a hot August evening and left in my '28 Chevrolet I had bought for \$125. After my ordination in Perry, Wisconsin, on September 4, 1932, we filled the car with our belongings and headed to our first parish in Kansas which we had never seen.

We found a little white country church with a bungalow beside it. But we were told we must go right on to a circuit convention in Norway, Kansas, which was in session 165 miles west.

Returning from the convention, we had Dr. Aasgaard, the president of the church, along so he could install me as the pastor of Upper Wolf Lutheran Church that evening. My wife opened the parsonage door to usher Dr. Aasgaard in and gasped. She immediately began to apologize to Dr. Aasgaard for in the living room in a huge heap in all their wrapping, was our wedding gift — a bedroom and dining room set which had arrived in our absence from Des Moines.

"Never you mind," Dr. Aasgaard said, "You go get us some supper, and we will take care of this." Whereupon he pulled out a big jackknife from his pocket and began to strip the wrappings off and set-

# thanksgiving

ting up the furniture, as happy as a schoolboy on a picnic.

Six happy years went by and then tragedy struck with the birth of our second son. My wife, seemingly in the bloom of health, suffered a blood clot in the aorta and died after giving birth. The doctor, helpless in those days, grieved and I was stunned, left alone with two small boys — the one just nine days old.

Lonely days followed but I kept my boys with the help of housekeepers.

Two years later I accepted a call to a 3-point parish at Hatton, North Dakota. I succeeded an elderly pastor who had served them for 35 years in the Norwegian language. Now they wanted to change to English.

One day I visited Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota and had lunch with some faculty members. I spotted a nurse who had started teaching in the new nursing course at the college. In June, 1942, Alice and I were married.

After six and a half years of “ice-breaking” toil following the former pastor’s 35 years, I threw a letter of call on my desk and said, “By no means!” But the Lord made it imperative and we shipped our belongings by rail and took the train ourselves in the dead of winter. We arrived at our new home on January 1, 1947 in Camrose, Alberta. It seemed crazy.

After teaching several confirmation classes, folks began to tell me that I belonged as a teacher in a school. They saw an aptitude for teaching that I did not realize I had.

For two years I taught the Bible classes at the then Camrose Lutheran College besides serving Camrose Lutheran and Parkland Lutheran, a rural church. The old church began to fill as the oil fields opened and the congregation felt it needed a full-time pastor.

We moved to Outlook, Saskatchewan where I served as president, business manager, Bible teacher, radio minister and field representative for our church’s school. By now God had added two daughters to our family.

In January 1956, I began 16 years of teaching at the Minneapolis LBI, later changed to Golden Valley Lutheran Col-


lege. It was a troubled time at the school with the liberal theology invading the school. Battles raged and I was dubbed the “old conservative,” not being able to accept the new liberalism.

My health began to be affected and my doctor advised me to resign as teacher in 1972. Our home was near Trinity Lutheran of Minnehaha Falls and I became their visitation pastor until 1980.

Our children are doing well and my wife and I are alone in our little home. My older son was taken from us by cancer at 47 years while serving as a Salvation Army captain at Haines, Alaska. His body lies there in the shadow of two mighty pines in the local cemetery.

Now 15 years into retirement in Colorado Springs, I stand gazing into the sunset of life. It has been 63 years since ordination; up hill and down, in sunshine and shadow. God has been good — good reason for an old father and mother to be thankful.

I invite all who are Christ’s to take heart and rejoice with thanksgiving even in these times when the world seems to be sinking into the darkness of the end times and the anti-Christ. We press toward the hope that is set before us in the Word of God, trusting the Lord Jesus will call us and ours to “Come up hither” on that glorious day described in I Thesalonians 4:13ff:

*But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede them who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Jesus himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.* 

— Rev. Kermitt C. Grundahl  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

“It has been  
63 years  
since  
ordination;  
up hill  
and down,  
in sunshine  
and shadow.”



*Know this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."*

II Peter 3:3-4

**W**ho would have known for sure that Jesus would not have come again during this past year? He may come next year. We need to be ready!

We see around us a growing trend of indifference toward the need for repentance of sin and receiving new life in Christ. People are walking in darkness and living in despair.

It is wonderful to have Christian fellowship. We enter together this new year in the Church calendar that begins with the first Sunday in Advent. We will walk together, worship together and enjoy Jesus together.

Yet, we will spend much of our time among people who will not profess with us faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact they may just wait for the opportunity to make fun of the Christian life and walk! That we must expect and be ready to respond in a way that lets them know we belong to the Lord Jesus who loves them and has given His life for them. The sooner they see that in our lives, the sooner

## Others scoff,

they will realize that any scoffing they may give, is really toward Him and not toward us. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our friends in the world all loved Jesus? Yet, since they don't, we have a mission field!

These words about "scoffers" were not placed there to steer us away from the people outside the faith, but it is boldly speaking to us concerning the need of the people who scoff. They ridicule the message they hear and the very person they need to receive.

The song lyrics, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through" has a lot of truth to it. However, if the Christian does not prepare for and involve himself in sharing Jesus Christ, who will? The real challenge for the Christian is not to avoid the individual or group who would make fun of his faith, but to love that person who needs to know the love of Jesus.

# Some thankful young people

— Katrin Winklemann  
Calvary Lutheran  
Fosston, Minnesota

**B**eing a senior at Fosston High School, I have a lot to be thankful for. My family is the best that I could have and my youth group is very supportive.

Both of my parents are Christians and have always been there for me no matter how busy they are. They are probably the main reason why my faith in God is so strong. My sister Dulcie is very important to me in that she keeps me in line sometimes, even though she is two years younger than I am. She, too, is a Christian and we help each other when we're in trouble or need help to understand something.

My youth group and Pastor Johnson are the best I could possibly ask for. Although the Calvary youth group isn't very large (about 10-15 come each Wednesday night), when they all start talking at once it's hard to hear yourself think — still, some of my best friends are in the group. It's really nice to have a youth group that is so closely knit together. During our Bible study, we can talk about anything related to the subject and you don't feel embarrassed.

The most important keys to our youth group are its leaders, Richard and Lynette Miller. They have played a part in just about everyone's life that has been in our youth group. Pastor Johnson is my favorite pastor in the world. He loves and cares about everyone. My only prayer is that my youth group will be able to stay together and never fall apart.

Of course, the most important person in my life is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my life and my inspiration. Without Him, my life would not be complete. God sent His only Son to die for all sinners, especially me. When He died, His blood cleaned my heart from all sin. Jesus is there to help me when things aren't going right. When I don't want to talk to anyone else, I turn to Him for guidance through prayer and reading the Bible.

# we still hope

This tremendous portion in II Peter presents these truths to us: 1) the closer we come to Christ's return, the greater should be our joy in speaking of it; 2) we need to permit God's Spirit to make real Romans 8:6: "To be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." and 3) we can have the great



assurance that just as God created the world and all that there is, He knows exactly what the future holds! Praise His name!

As we consider these truths, let us be mindful of the fact that our witness is not of ourselves, but of Him, our Lord Jesus! Oh that people would see Jesus in you and me and see the truth of what it means to be anticipating His coming.

Pack your suitcase — no, won't need it. Buy your ticket — no, Jesus paid the price already. Accept that. Find a new job — no, there just might be someone at the job who will receive your witness and accept Christ. Rejoice in the Lord and let the scoffer know that personal possessions and passions are not fulfilling. The promise of Christ's coming is always current. What the Christian has to share is far greater than any life purpose or prospect of this world!



— Rev. Harvey L. Jackson  
Zoar Lutheran  
Hatton, North Dakota

*From a thank you note from Gunita Vindedze, the first Free Lutheran Youth Convention attendee from the former Soviet Union. Gunita, 21, lives in Bulduri, Latvia. With an offering of more than \$1,500, the national convention paid for Gunita's entire expense to attend the event last July in Estes Park, Colorado.*

I am so thankful to the AFLC Youth Convention for supporting my coming to Colorado. I was so glad to see the land of my brothers and sisters in Christ who live on the other side of the world.

I want you all to know how much this trip has given me. I have never felt so safe being in a country for the first time, among people I have never seen before. I have never experienced so much love and trust among Christians.

The main thing I learned in Colorado was knowing who I am in God's sight. I am His precious child whom he loves with amazingly awesome love. In Colorado I felt God's love all around me. And I will never forget it. Whenever I see mountains, I remember the mountains of Colorado, and they remind me of that feeling of security wherever I go. God has kept His promise of Joshua 1:9.

Returning to Latvia, I will share His love everywhere. By God's grace, he will let me do it, like He helped me at the convention on Tuesday night. I shared my testimony that night before all 1,100 people. Do you know that before that time, I had never testified before anybody about my faith in Jesus Christ? I think God played a little joke on me, letting me do it in the U.S.A. for the first time before 1,100 people.

It was a real blessing for me to gain so many more brothers and sisters in Christ.



*"Have I not  
commanded you?  
Be strong and  
courageous!  
Do not tremble  
or be dismayed,  
for the Lord  
your God  
is with you  
wherever  
you go."*

Joshua 1:9

— Gunita Vindedze  
Viduspr. 32  
Bulduri, LV-2010  
LATVIA

# Reason to hope



**W**ebster defines hope as, "Desire accompanied by expectation," and again as "a person or thing on which one may base some hope." As Christian believers we have a desire accompanied by expectation based on a person, God, and things — God's Word and Christ's complete work of atonement.

We come into the presence of God convicted of sin knowing that each of us has sinned and come short of His glory, yet confident in the words, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

Many of us are burdened with the spiritual and emotional needs of others. We hear Jesus say, "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give

you rest" (Matthew 11:28). When we become disturbed about situations and conditions around us, let us bring these concerns to God in prayer. "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16b).

We experience much which troubles us. What can we do about it? Let us remember the words, "Ask and you shall receive" (Matthew 7:7). John wrote, "If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey His commands and do what pleases Him" (I John 3:21-22).

The hope of our nation rests in those who truly hope in God and rest on His promises, and pray as the Scriptures direct. Let us pray for ourselves as believers even as Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers. Pray that we may be strengthened with power through the Spirit in our inner beings; that we may know God's love that surpasses knowledge and be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:16-19).

Paul, when writing to Timothy, urged that prayer, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone including those in authority. Why? So we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. Let us not grow weary. We must challenge ourselves. Have I prayed for the leaders of minorities? cult leaders? law enforcement officers? school leaders? gang leaders? and many more. When Christians answer, "yes," to these questions, then they have a hope that things will change for the better. Paul said, "This is good and pleases God, our Savior" (I Timothy 2:3).

Let us rejoice in hope. In this life, both physical and spiritual, and in the life to come.

As we look ahead we see beyond this life. Let us hope in the words of Jesus, "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself" (John 14:2b-3). And again He speaks in the closing chapter of Revelation, "Behold, I am coming soon."

May God through His grace and mercy give us strength to continue to be assured in hope that, "all will work for good for those who love Him" (Romans 8:28). May we so love Him.



— Rev. Alvin Magnuson  
Slim Buttes Lutheran  
Reva, South Dakota



The first Advent was a time of waiting for the promised Messiah. We celebrate once again the fulfillment of that promise. ...

The second Advent (is the waiting) when the trumpet shall sound, and Jesus returns. The world wasn't ready for the first coming of Jesus. Most of the world is not ready for His second coming either. ... Are you ready?

— Rev. Dave Skordahl  
Dalton, Minnesota

*Parish News and Views, 1993*

## We Lutherans

We Lutherans are always going against the flow. When some folks go to church they pray for forgiveness in case they have sinned. We pray because we have no doubts about it. Others are benedicted with wishes for God's blessing, we hear words that confirm that He is indeed blessing us. In the world things are either one way or the other. People are either lost or saved; good or bad. We Lutherans find ourselves different. We believe we are sinners both deserving condemnation and also saved.

Having been stripped of any pretensions that there is something that attracts God's grace, we are ready to accept the truth that we are both worthy of eternal death and at the same time blessed with eternal life.

We are not filled with despair and hopelessness, but we rejoice in the full realization that we have no partial salvation. Just as all are completely lost in sin, so are all believers completely justified by faith.

Happy Christians do not look within for that "something special" in which they can take pride. They find it more than enough to glory in the cross of Christ, the tool that shed the blood of redemption. Praise God we are not either lost or found, but we are both lost and have been found by His grace.

— Rev. Fred Faughn  
Christ Lutheran  
Savannah, Georgia

## 1996 Lutheran Ambassador Schedule

Date of Issue	Editor's Deadline	Special Emphasis
<b>January 9</b>	<b>December 1</b>	<b>Evangelism</b>
<b>January 30</b>	<b>December 22</b>	<b>AFLBS &amp; AFLTS</b>
February 27	January 19	Lent
<b>March 19</b>	<b>February 9</b>	<b>Easter</b>
April 9	March 1	Entertainment
<b>April 30</b>	<b>March 22</b>	<b>Pre-Conference</b>
May 21	April 12	Race Relations
<b>June 11</b>	<b>May 3</b>	<b>Children &amp; Youth</b>
July 2	May 24	Technology
<b>August 6</b>	<b>June 28</b>	<b>Conference</b>
		<b>Review</b>
<b>August 27</b>	<b>July 19</b>	<b>Sunday School</b>
September 24	August 16	Holiness of God
<b>October 15</b>	<b>September 6</b>	<b>Missions — Home &amp; World</b>
		Reformation
November 5	September 27	<b>Thanksgiving &amp; Advent</b>
<b>November 26</b>	<b>October 18</b>	<b>Christmas</b>
<b>December 17</b>	<b>November 8</b>	

(Bold is for the 24 page issues.)

## Lost and found

I once was lost  
but now I'm found  
because of His wonderful grace  
and precious love that abounds.

He took me in  
right from the start.  
He cleansed my sins  
and washed clean my heart.

I'm as happy as one can be  
now that I have been given a brand new start.  
He has promised in His Word,  
we shall never part.

You can have this wonderful joy  
of His precious gift.  
What is it that you really want?

Life or death you have the decision.  
Why don't you do like I did  
and get on the eternal life mission.

— Andrew Olson  
Rochester, Minnesota  
submitted by Rev. Gerald Mundfrom

# Making time for Christmas joy

**F**or some people this is too early to start preparing for Christmas. For others it is already too late to get everything done that they think needs to be done. Now is a perfect time to stop a minute and think about what we really want for Christmas.

A Christmas that did not leave me so exhausted that I couldn't enjoy it, is something I would like. I want a Christmas where I have time to contemplate Christ and what this season means. I want a home where friends and family can come and feel the warmth of this special season. I want to entertain in such a way that I can sit with my guests and enjoy warm fellowship.

As we head into this season we are encouraged to do more, decorate more, and participate more. It is easy to slip into filling our days as if the joy of Christmas depended on our busyness.

Maybe we should be encouraged to slow down and eliminate those things that cause undue stress and exhaustion, and then organize the time we have left to be efficient.

The following is a list to help you get organized:

1. First of all, commit this time to the Lord and tell Him how you feel. Ask Him to help you to be efficient with your time.

2. If you do heavy house cleaning for Christmas (washing carpets, washing walls, cleaning the oven, etc.) do it before Thanksgiving so you only have light cleaning to do in December.

3. Make a list of all the things you think you need to do and then eliminate as many "things" as you can, but still have the feeling you want at Christmas.

4. Sit down for a family meeting and make a list of all the

things they want done for Christmas. Then divide the list up according to their abilities. Let your children participate. It helps their self-esteem and sense of responsibility.

5. Divide your list of gifts to buy or make by the number of weeks left before Christmas (not counting the last week). Then you will know how many gifts you will need to buy or make each week. (Now is not the time to start your quilts!) The goal is to spread out all the gifts so you don't have any gifts to do the last week before Christmas. That last week will fill up all by itself with last minute things.

6. Get a calendar out with large squares and start writing all the major events you have to go to. Then write all the things from your first list and your family list on the calendar. Spread out your projects so no one week is too overloaded. Avoid scheduling during the week of Christmas. Wouldn't it be fun to be able to sit, relax, and read the Christmas story with your family, or go sledding that last week?

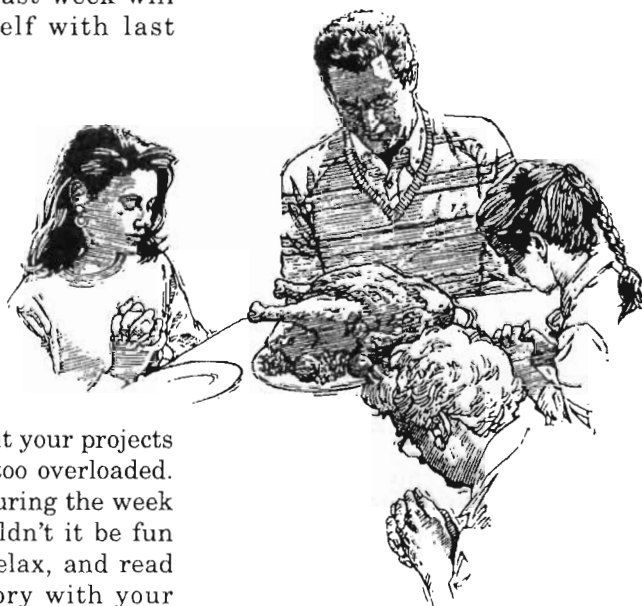
Spread out your baking. Start with the cookies that freeze well. I am going to do my Swedish meatballs, Norwegian meatballs, and turkey ahead of time. I know, I know! Someone is laughing at me, but wouldn't it be nice to have Christmas dinner and not spend those three hours in the kitchen afterwards cleaning up the wreckage of that bird! If all goes well, I will freeze my Swedish meatballs and the Nor-

wegian meatballs are done in a cornstarch gravy, so I will freeze them in their broth and just make the gravy the day I need them.

The turkey can be baked two days in advance and cut up and placed on a foil-lined cookie sheet (save the skin to put over the top so it won't dry out too fast and seal it with lots of foil).

You have to work within your comfort level, but check your list again and see what you can do ahead of time. Make your Christmas more relaxed.

7. If you don't have large blocks of time for decorating or projects, try breaking them up into ten-minute projects. For example, take one box of Christmas decorations out at a time and



while waiting for the water to boil or while the baby is napping, take one thing out of the box and place it in your decor.

Christmas with its message of hope and joy is worth celebrating in a big way. As you get organized with your preparations, don't leave out the joy! You are creating memories for your family that will last a lifetime.

— Ardene Thompson  
Bethel Free Lutheran  
Culbertson, Montana

## HOME MISSIONS

### Praise and prayer

**Charter Sundays** — Our Redeemer Lutheran in Superior, Wisconsin held their Charter Sunday on November 5, 1995. One week later, Abiding Word Lutheran in Melbourne, Florida, held their Charter Sunday. Rev. John and Ruby Abel are back in Melbourne to work with Rev. David Barnhart in the work. The Lutheran Church of Hope in Loveland, Colorado, is making plans for their Charter Sunday.

**Rev. Paul Nash**, Home Missions Director recently visited Faith Lutheran in Glen Falls, New York. This new AFLC congregation is served by Rev. Daniel Uzupan who was recently approved for the AFLC Fellowship Clergy Roster. During November 17-19, Pastor Nash spoke at Zion Lutheran in Silverhill, Alabama.

**Willmar, Minnesota** — Maranatha Free Lutheran has begun canvassing the community one Saturday a month. Fifteen members turned out the first Saturday this fall to kick-off this new outreach ministry.

**Calling a pastor** — Pray for Christ Lutheran in Wichita Falls, Texas; Shepherd of the Valley Free Lutheran in Palmdale, California, and Christ Lutheran in Devil's Lake (as a parish with Trinity in Minnewauken) as they seek to call a pastor.

**Larry Walker**, Melbourne, Florida, has accepted the position of administrative assistant to Home Missions Director Paul Nash and will begin work at the AFLC headquarters' office in November. Mr. Walker's home church is Hauge Lutheran in Kenyon, Minnesota, and he has been the chairman of the young Abiding Word Lutheran Church in Melbourne. Due to the resignation of Pam Lung, there has been a re-organization in the business

## OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

### An egg in the offering

**A**nd a cup of rice, too. Together with a few small coins and paper currency. This is what our World Missions director and I saw in the offering baskets that were passed among the members of a congregation with whom we worshipped last winter during our trip to India. It was the most unusual collection I had ever seen, and the total would seem pitifully small when measured against the full offering plates in most of our churches every Sunday.

The measure of our offerings, however, is not what we see in the plates but what God sees in the hearts. "For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord" (II Corinthians 8:3). The believers who contributed the egg or the rice may well have been reaching beyond their ability in order to support God's work in their midst. He knows, and that's what really matters most.

The Thanksgiving Season offers a good opportunity for us to measure our many material

blessings and to remember that the Lord gives us more than what we need so that we might share with those who are in need — like the believers in India who only have an egg or a cup of rice to share. God has entrusted many vital ministries to the AFLC, which are dependent on the prayerful support of His people. Too often, though, we see budgets and goals, but He would have us see beyond them to the souls who might be reached for Christ and nurtured in the faith through our gifts.

Only a few weeks remain until the close of our fiscal year. As you give thanks to God for His goodness during the past months, please ask Him what He would have you do through AFLC ministries in the month to come. We are grateful for the generous response recently to the financial needs of World Missions, and encourage you to remember all areas of our common endeavors, according to ability ... and beyond!

— Rev. Robert L. Lee

### AAL honors new congregations

Six Association of Free Lutheran Congregations celebrating their first anniversary this past year have received a special \$1,000 grant for Aid Association for Lutherans. A total of 78 Lutheran congregations were awarded these grants through

and secretarial staff. The decision was made to hire an administrative assistant for home missions rather than a secretary. Karen Anderson, a long-time staff member will now work for the world missions department as well as be the AFLC receptionist.

AAL's Milestone program. The funds are to be used for a special purpose that will support the ministry of a young congregation. The program is AAL's way of acknowledging the effort and commitment required in establishing a new church.

The congregations receiving the grant money were: Lutheran Church of Hope, Loveland, Colorado; Faith Lutheran, Bellville, Texas; Prince of Peace, Beulah, North Dakota; Maranatha, Willmar, Minnesota; Hosanna, Cumberland, Wisconsin, and Our Redeemer, Superior, Wisconsin.

## Single parent families

There are many reasons for single-parent families. Divorce and separation are among the reasons. Whatever the reason, we who claim to follow Jesus should attempt to minister to these folks by bringing them the gospel. This article will try to offer information on the concerns of single-parent families. I believe their concerns are identical to the concerns of two-parent families!

One study indicates that 85% of the single parents are mothers and 15% are fathers. The number of single parents is growing fast!

It is clear that all single-parent families do not operate in the same way. In "at risk" families more is done in a hedonistic way, whether by children or by the parent. This could also be applied to homes where there are two parents when both parents strike out to live selfishly. Such leads to "at risk" behavior.

The biggest factor which produces "at risk" behavior is when children are left alone without adult supervision. The movies titled *Home Alone* perhaps are not too far from the truth! Single parents must work to support their families, thus they leave their children to fend for themselves.

Another factor in producing "at risk" children in single families is over-exposure to television. This same study indicates children are watching more than three hours a day. Some music also produces "at risk" behavior.

Alcohol also plays a significant role. Alcohol is a number one factor in producing problems in any family, affecting children as well as their parents, single or married. Every pastor has heard those painful stories.

The major influence or asset in all family structures was the fam-

ily themselves. Where there was parental and family support, the problems were less and less. Parental communication and monitoring are chief factors in producing children who are less at risk or not at risk.

Conversations where instruction was given on values and behavior are factors. Also, monitoring children in their various activities is important. "Where are you going? What are you going to do? Who will you be with? What time will you be back? Did you get your assignment done? Is your confirmation work complete and the memory work done? Would you recite to me? ..." These questions are done not to make the children angry but to instruct and monitor them so they fulfill their responsibilities.

Next to parental influence is the influence of significant others. These "adult guarantors" or mentors point toward the future and re-enforce what parents are doing. Here is where youth-oriented pastors, Bible study leaders, youth directors, Sunday school teachers, camp counselors can help.

Peer influence is much less in homes where the family unit functions in the above ways. A loyalty to the family is produced. The influence of the church is quite high, especially when the church is a truly caring place.

"At risk" behavior can be seen in all families. We dare not single out single-parent families! There are single-parent families doing a great job in rearing children.

The most significant influence is the Lord Jesus Christ! One thing which is hard to understand is how parents think they can raise their children without any kind of a commitment to Jesus themselves. They bring their chil-

## AFLC youth board hires youth director

Kevin Olson, Shakopee, Minnesota has accepted the call to be the AFLC's new full-time youth director. He will graduate from AFLTS in December, 1995 and will begin his duties on January 1, 1996. While attending seminary, he has been youth worker at Faith Lutheran in Shakopee and King of Glory Lutheran in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Mr. Olson replaces part-time youth director, Rev. Dennis Gray who has served in that position for ten years and Mr. Bob Halvorson, the associate youth director. Mr. Halvorson resigned from that position last July to dedicate full-time energies to his youth group at Emmaus Lutheran in Bloomington, Minnesota.

The January 9, 1996 issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, will give a complete introduction to Kevin Olson.

### Elbow, Saskatchewan —

Twenty-six Bethel Lutheran youth gathered at the Elbow Bible Camp on October 13 for recreation, fellowship and refreshments. The last weekend of October the group attended the Franklin Graham Crusade in Saskatoon.

dren to church Sunday after Sunday, never attending themselves. In my opinion, they are raising "at risk" families. They will reap what they sow.

The impact truly born again parents have on their children is invaluable. Faith and love for the Lord Jesus Christ is so important. When our families place Jesus Christ first, we are going to see results. The church itself is powerless in the face of parents who neglect the spiritual side of their

**Wheatland, Iowa** — Christian Free Lutheran youth hosted the Illinois District fall rally on September 30-October 1. Eighty-eight people registered along with Pastor Mike Pelkie, the guest speaker. Up to a dozen teens gather at 7:30 A.M. for daily devotions at Christian Free Lutheran which is across the street from the local high school.

**Faith, South Dakota** — Bethel youth hosted over 50 young people and parents for an afternoon of roller skating followed by supper and a film on the Return of Christ. The teens came from Slim Buttes Lutheran, Reva and Grace Baptist, Bison.

## Free Lutheran youth to print new edition of songbook

Rev. Tim Carlson, Wheatland, Iowa has been commissioned by the Free Lutheran Youth to produce a new edition of *Scripture and Chorus Songbook*. Pastor Carlson welcomes your suggestions as to what would be best to be included in the new edition. Please make your comments as soon as possible as the plan is to get the book reprinted in the spring of 1996. The new edition is expected to include slides and overhead transparencies. Contact Pastor Carlson at: PO Box 337, Wheatland, IA 52777 or call 319-374-1002.

families. I know that problems exist in Christian families, but for those who are truly committed to Jesus, those problems are less.

In such families, children will learn the biblical standards which will make them winners. May the Lord lead all of our families. No parent, pastor, youth worker, or any significant adult can be a substitute for Jesus.

— Rev. Dennis Gray  
AFLC Youth Director  
Greenbush, Minnesota

## Giving through your will

This is the second in a series of articles related to how we as individuals may support the new Association of Free Lutheran Congregations Foundation (hereinafter referred to as the *Foundation*) continue its ministries. This article deals with gifting through wills.

A will is an instrument that allows you to direct the distribution of your assets, determine who administers your assets, name guardians for your children and identify that which you valued during your lifetime.

One of those "life values" may be your local church and/or the Foundation. The most common way that people leave assets to churches or charities at their death is by making charitable gifts in their wills.

There are three basic ways to leave assets to your church and/or the Foundation at death. They are:

**1. Fixed amount.** A specific bequest in a will would read, "I hereby devise to the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations Foundation the sum of \$5,000." This is the most common type of a bequest, but not always the best. As your estate appreciates or depreciates, a bequest of a specific amount may become a much smaller or a much greater part of your estate than you originally intended.

**2. Percentage amount.** The second form of bequest is to leave a percentage of the estate to charities. For instance, a bequest based on percentage would read, "I hereby devise to the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations and my local church in

equal shares ten percent of my residuary estate." The residuary estate is the amount that remains after debts and expenses of administration, legacies, and devises have been satisfied.

**3. Residuary clause.** The third form is to leave the entire residuary estate to charities. Such a bequest would read, "I leave the entire residuary of my estate to the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations Foundation and my local congregation in equal shares."

Although the preceding only furnishes examples of outright bequests, your bequests may provide direction for their use. For example, your fixed, percentage or residuary bequest may direct that it be used for specific ministries, schools or missions.

Remembering your church and the Foundation with either a cash bequest or percentage of your residuary leaves a message to your children or heirs about your values. If the church has been important to you during your life it should be important at death. A tithe at death has very little impact on your heirs. For example, if you have a \$100,000 estate and three children, each child would receive \$33,333.33 per child. However, if you left ten percent to the church, each child would receive \$30,000. The difference is not going to change their lives. What may change their lives is your reminder to them of your values.

— David Johnson  
Hagerty, Johnson,  
Albrightson & Beitz, P.A.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

### AFLC Foundation Trustees

Coordinating Committee — Rev. Les Galland and Mr. Richard Rasmussen.  
Missions Corporation — Mr. Robert Christian and Mr. Ken Williams.  
Schools Corporation — Mr. James Rolf and Rev. Mark Molstre.  
ARC Corporation — Mr. Cliff Seldal and Rev. Tonnes Pollestad.



## WORLD MISSIONS



Rev. David and Janet Abel, Tamara, Robert, Melissa and Jonathan.

### Missionary David Abel family to return to the United States

The World Missions Committee announces the retirement of Pastor and Mrs. David Abel from AFLC mission work in Brazil. The World Missions Committee and the Abel family have jointly concurred in this matter due to family considerations and financial needs. The Abels anticipate returning to the U.S. approximately December 18, 1995. Pastor David Abel is open for a call to a U.S. parish ministry.

The World Missions Committee sincerely expresses their gratitude to the Lord for His faithfulness and to the Abel family for their 17 years of ministry in Brazil.



**Rev. Jim and Lorene Winter** have completed their interim pastorate at the McVile, North Dakota parish and are awaiting their Canadian visas to return to Brazil. The AFLC-Canada is providing support for the Winters. Please pray for them during this difficult waiting time.

### Polish wedding has international

"Bind us together, Lord, bind us together ..." sung as one in Polish, Czech and English was an unforgettable experience. It was part of the festive reception celebrating the marriage of our son, Pastor Timothy Hinrichs and Renata Cieslar in Bielsko-Biala, Poland on October 7, 1995.

Earlier in the day, the wedding was a mixture of cultural traditions. We were welcomed as we arrived at the 200-year-old Savior's Lutheran church by festive hymns played by a brass ensemble from Trinec in the Czech Republic, where Tim serves as a missionary under the auspices of East European Missions Network. In Polish tradition, the wedding guests car-



ried bouquets to present to the bride at the end of the services. They lined the center aisle as the wedding party entered the church, with the bride and groom kneeling at the front of the church to receive

## Deputation work continues for Jonathan Abel family and Sonja Dahl



Pictured is missionary candidate Sonja Dahl with national WMF President Dee Berkas at a fall WMF rally. Sonja has begun deputation work in anticipation of receiving the call from AFLC World Missions for work in Camp Mourão, Brazil. Contact her through the World Missions office or at: 270 Center St., Apt. A, Winona, MN 55987, phone 507-453-0889.



Rev. Jonathan and Tamba Abel, April and Thomas continue on deputation to raise their unit support. The status of their support after nine months this year is 6 units/\$3600 shy of what is needed. The Abels returned for their first furlough last spring from a term spent in the Vitoria area of Brazil. They hope to return as soon as adequate support is confirmed. They are pictured here during their recent tour through the West Coast and the Dakotas. Contact them through the World Missions office or at their home address: P.O. Box 97, Hitterdal, MN 56552, phone 218-962-3458.

## flavor

the blessings of their parents. The service was conducted by Bishop Jan Szarek of the Polish Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rev. Don Richman, Director of EEMN and Rev. David Hinrichs, Ortonville, Minnesota, the groom's father.

The sermon, delivered by Bishop Szarek and translated into English, pointed out the symbolic nature of this particular marriage — the fruit of 10 years of contact and mutual encouragement between the Lutheran Churches of Silesia and the United States. His text was Jeremiah 32:39, "I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me, for their own sake and the good of their children after them."

The reception followed and included a feast of three complete meals and two programs. Because of the diversity of the group, the time of introductions and sharing was a precious witness to God's goodness in three languages. Among the guests were fourteen pastors representing four countries, including Rev. Don and Mary Greven, who are on sabbatical in Budapest, Hungary. The most vivid memory of the evening is that of the best man, Rev. Kenny White, an impressively large black pastor from inner-city Minneapolis, singing "Oh, He Touched Me" from his big heart to the amazement of the predominantly East European group.

God's graciousness abounded that day; in bringing Tim and Renata together in marriage, in blessing their ministry together

in Eastern Europe, and in the Christian fellowship which so beautifully crossed the cultural and language barriers. Bind us together, Lord!

Pastor Tim and Renata Hinrichs are now at home in Cesky Tesin. They are both studying the Czech language and are teaching English in Polish Tesin. They are involved in the ministry of the Lutheran church in Trinec, Czech Republic. Pray for them as they seek God's will in the establishment of a Bible school in the Silesian Lutheran Church. Their address is:

c/o Srubar  
Hrabinska 21B/7  
Cesky Tesin 73701  
Czech Republic

— Mrs. Claire Rene Hinrichs  
Ortonville, Minnesota

## MORE WORLD MISSIONS

**Doug and Carolee Linder** of the Bethany Fellowship Mission School, Minneapolis, Minnesota, departed the end of October to begin a year's commitment to work with Missionary Connely Dyrud at the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão, Brazil. Her parents are missionaries in Brazil with Bethany Fellowship and are familiar with the AFLC ministries in Campo Mourão.

**D. Luther Sastry**, a leader of the Bible Faith Lutheran Church in India, arrived on the AFLTS campus on October 29, 1995 where he will study at the seminary through May 1996. He is a graduate of Union Biblical Seminary in Pune, Maharashtra, India. According to World Missions Director, Gene Enderlein, "Through these months in the U.S., it is hoped that the relationship between the AFLC and the BFLC will be cemented."



Want to finish well  
the marathon of the  
Christian life?

Ask God for a tender  
heart toward Him  
and His word and to  
make you sensitive  
to sin.

Commit yourself to  
spiritual growth.  
Consider studying at  
AFLBS

For more information, write to us at:  
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55441  
or call 612-544-9501

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Facing an impossible situation

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3)

Amos raises the question and apparently the answer is left to us. We all meet up with those with whom we are not in agreement, even in Christian fellowship. When that is the case, let us examine ourselves if we be in the faith and the intended love of Jesus.

There is a possibility of being of such mind and temperament that "We bite and devour one another and be destroyed by each other." Do I speak disdainfully of a blood-bought brother of our association with whom I have walked in sweet, loving fellowship and now have a conflicting view? Do I now as a Pharisee set him at naught? Then I know nothing of Calvary love. Then also I am in violation of the scriptural injunction to,

"In humility consider others better than oneself" (Philippians 2:3). Is there possibly the thought of being superior to another? "If anyone thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing" (Galatians 6:3).

From Thomas A Kempis: "Endeavor to be patient, forbearing with the defeats and infirmities of others of what sort soever they be: for that thyself has many failings which must be borne with by others. If thou canst not make thyself such a one as thou wouldst, how wilt thou be able to have another to thy liking."

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? The answer: Yes they can, if Jesus is in the middle between them.

— *Pastor Ray S. Persson*  
Astoria, Oregon

### Grant money received

AFLBS has received \$600 from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS programs. This third quarter payment covers 6 gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members. Since beginning in 1979, IMPACT matching gift program has given AFLBS \$185,541.

The Bible School has also been awarded \$10,000 in grants from Aid Association for Lutherans. The school will use \$6,500 to provide financial aid to 23 students. A \$3,500 grant will be used for student recruitment.

**Correction:** The picture of the four seminary juniors on p. 1 of the November 7, 1995 Ambassador, should be identified as follows: (L. to R.) Ivars Krafts, David Johnson, Gary Haug and Jason Holt. Two new students will be joining the seminarians for the 2nd semester. They are: Pastor David Hesje, Frontier, Saskatchewan and Mr. Mark Skogerboe, East Grand Forks, Minnesota.

## Seminary inter-term scheduled for January 2-26

The Free Lutheran Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota is planning their annual inter-term around the theme, "Equipping for Effective Ministry." Rev. Richard Anderson, Lakeville, Minnesota will lead the first session, a "Pastors' Leadership Management Seminar," from January 2-12. Home Missions Director, Rev. Paul Nash will conduct the second session during January 22-26 on "Planting and Growing Congregations — the Biblical Model." Both sessions are three-hour long in the mornings only. AFLC pastors and laity, please inquire regarding tuition and auditing fees. Contact the seminary at: 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd. Minneapolis, MN 55441 or call 612-544-9501 or fax 612-545-6404.

## AFLBS choir preparing for Norway

The Concert Choir from AFLBS is in the midst of planning a concert tour of Norway from May 20 — June 10, 1996.

Norway has a rich spiritual heritage. The influence of pietism, prayer and revival movements within the state church over the past 300 years are still strong. That is the good news! The bad news is that although 90% are members of the Church of Norway, only 15-20% would claim to be committed, and Sunday church attendance represents only 3% of the population.

Out of revival and persecution have come many voluntary organizations within the church. These agencies, prayer houses and fellowships have been the source of good in Christian schools, theological education and foreign missions. We as a choir hope to be an encouragement to these organizations and also to witness to many

who do not know Jesus.

AFLBS Dean Don Greven is presently ministering in Hungary, but plans to travel with the choir in Norway and be the speaker each evening for our concerts.

**Our choir needs your prayers.** Pray that the Lord directs us to the best concert locations throughout Norway. Pray for the finances of the students. Each student needs to raise \$2,000 in order to minister in Norway for three weeks.

If you would like to help support one of our students financially, we know that would be a real blessing. Checks can be written out to AFLBS, Student Accounts, attention Wendy Greven, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. Please specify who the check is for and that it is for the **Norway Choir Tour.**

— Jerry Nelson  
AFLBS Music Director



Mr. Jerry Nelson, AFLBS choir director.



Eric Rasmussen, Park River, North Dakota.

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

**Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck**, Northome, Minnesota, has resigned as pastor of Hope and Bethesda Lutheran Parish where he has served since 1990, in order to accept the call from Bethel Lutheran in Minot, North Dakota. He expects to begin his new ministry on February 1, 1996.

**Silverhill, Alabama** — Zion Lutheran held a Praise Service on November 19, 1995. Home Missions Director Paul Nash was the guest speaker welcoming the congregation to the AFLC. The congregation voted earlier this year to join the AFLC and recently completed proceedings to retain its property.

**Rev. Philip and Hazelle Featherstone**, Pukwana, South Dakota, moved November 1st to their new home across the street from the Association Retreat Center. Their new address is 311 235th St., Osceola, WI 54020 and phone, 715-294-3906.

**Pam (Halverson) Lung**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, has resigned as the assistant to the bookkeeper and part-time missions secretary. She has worked at the AFLC headquarters' office for the past five years and is awaiting the arrival of her first child.

**Pastor Dale Finstrom**, Glynndon, Minnesota, left the end of October for the Czech Republic where he held evangelistic meetings. This is Pastor Finstrom's second trip to Eastern Europe.

**Morris, Illinois** — Bethlehem Lutheran's Mission Committee held their annual Kringla Sale this fall. Aid Association for Lutherans matched funds and the money was sent to AFLC Home and World Missions plus some local ministries. The mission committee sponsors several activities during the year encouraging the congregation in missions. Pictured are six of the ladies at the sale during the Grundy County Corn Festival celebration.



**Elbow, Saskatchewan** — Pictured are those who attended the Second Annual Pastors' Retreat and Seminar at Elbow Lutheran Bible Camp during September 11-15, 1995. Rev. Phil Haugen, Culbertson, Montana was the guest teacher again this year and taught from the book of Romans. Twenty-three registered, including lay people and three guest pastors.

**Pipestone, Minnesota** — Christ the King Lutheran is hosting the South Dakota District Couples Retreat on January 12-13, 1996. For more information, call the church at 507-825-5958.

**Norway, Illinois** — Dave Mathre led volunteers from area churches in finishing building the new Discipleship Lodge at the Cup of Cold Water Center in Norway. The facility will be used by organizations such as the Fox Valley School of Ministry and area churches for a variety of functions and retreats.

**Rev. James Molstre**, Zumbrota, Minnesota, has resigned as pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran where he has served since 1993, in order to accept the call as co-pastor of Ruthfred Lutheran in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania. He expects to begin his new ministry on February 1, 1996.

**Rev. John Dennis**, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, was placed on the AFLC's Clergy Roster at the October meeting of the Coordinating Committee. He has served Ruthfred Lutheran in Bethel Park since 1950.





**Camrose, Alberta** — Solid Rock Free Lutheran began a new organization of various groups and ministries this fall. The three-year-old congregation now has a group for seniors and singles and a new practical ministries group. They continue to have a Cell Group and the weekly Prayer Meeting.

## Drop continues in U.S. Lutheran membership AFLC is an exception reports paper

Maintaining a trend that began about 20 years ago, mem-

**Jesse and Agnes Dale**, Newark, Illinois, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on October 16, 1995.

bership in U.S. Lutheran church bodies continues its slow decline. Baptized membership totals reported by each of the three largest denominations for 1994 show net losses.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which includes about 60% of U.S. Lutherans, numbered 5,199,048 at year's end. That was a decline of 12,752 or 0.24% during the year.

The second largest body, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, with 30% of the U.S. total, reported 2,604,037 for 1994. Its loss was 2,333 baptized members, or 0.1%.

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which has about 5% of U.S. Lutherans, finished 1994 with 416,174 members. Its total was 1,960 (0.47%) less than at the end of 1993.

Largest of the remaining Lutheran church bodies, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, reported a total of 31,474 baptized members for 1994. That was a gain of 3,005 since the end of 1992 (AFLC gathers membership data only every second year). The two-year increase for AFLC was 10.6%

Asked to comment on the growth of the Plymouth (MN)-based group, AFLC President Robert Lee said he felt "a combination of factors" was responsible. "Some of our growth is from new mission starts. Some of it results from already-established congregations that are coming to us from other Lutheran bodies."

Number of congregations reported by the four bodies (1994): ELCA 10,973; LCMS 5,991; WELS 1,235; AFLC 234.

Figures for the several smaller Lutheran bodies were not reported to Metro Lutheran.

— from *Metro Lutheran*,  
November 1995

### AFLC memorial gifts October 1995

In memory of	Given by	Department
Lyle Olson	M/M Robert Hegland	AFLBS
Emma Knudsvig	Vrenda Bengtson	AFLBS Building Fund
	Inger, Edna, Helney Ohnstad	World Missions
	Julian, Elain Nygaard	World Missions
Gerald Broden	M/M Oliver Moen	Home Missions
	Maple Bay Lutheran	Home Missions
Paul Flaten	Vernon, Lois Bengtson	Parish Ed. Book Fund
	Rev. Amos, Ovidie Dyrud	Connely Dyrud Support
	M/M Wayne Floan	AFLBS Building Fund
Darren Bengtson	Vrenda Bengtson	AFLBS Building Fund
Hulda Jensen	M/M Percy Strand	AFLBS
Lorraine Sand	Valborg Hedman	AFLBS
Jerry Young	Russell, Borghild Walvatne	World Missions
Harriet Westlin	Gertie Johnson	World Mission
Willard Olson	Rev. Raynard Huglen	Home Missions
Her parents	Ella Rekedal	AFLTS
Anna Kuebler	Fern Wittmayer	World Missions

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences — January 1 - October 31, 1995

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN OCTOBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$268,591.00	\$18,347.21	\$166,391.98	62
Seminary . . . . .	163,200.00	6,907.78	87,118.55	53
Bible School . . . . .	244,800.00	7,912.55	110,801.61	45
Home Missions. . . . .	335,040.00	20,699.69	192,597.40	57
World Missions. . . . .	359,927.00	45,169.32	251,227.83	70
Capital Investment . . .	35,425.00	1,193.84	15,982.40	45
Parish Education . . . .	67,868.00	3,775.74	38,545.95	57
Church Extension . . . .	10,000.00	1,838.25	10,564.69	1.06
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,484,851.00</b>	<b>\$105,844.38</b>	<b>\$873,230.41</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>TOTALS 1994 . . . . .</b>	<b>1,422,890.00</b>	<b>70,385.48</b>	<b>874,903.06</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Goal 83%</b>				

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

**Vernon, British Columbia** — Living Word Lutheran is enjoying their new church building. The congregation was organized in 1988 and is served by Rev. Gerald Gettis. Throughout the summer and fall many volunteers from the congregation worked on the construction project.

**Adam Lee, Minneapolis, Minnesota**, left for southwest South Korea the first of November, 1995 where he begins a one-year teaching contract at Chon Vuk National University. Adam, the son of AFLC President Robert and Gloria Lee, is an English instructor.

**Brad Nelson, Kandiyohi, Minnesota**, AFLBS, '94, has graduated from Tentmakers Ministries and has begun serving as the youth worker at his home congregation, Maranatha Free Lutheran in Willmar, Minnesota.

**Dickinson, North Dakota** — Our Saviour's Lutheran will host the Western North Dakota-Eastern Montana District Mid-Winter Bible Conference during February 2-4, 1996. The theme is *Sow to the Spirit — Reap from the Spirit* from Galatians 6:6-10. The morning Bible teacher is Rev. Les Johnson, Lake Alma, Saskatchewan, and AFLC President Robert Lee is the evening speaker. For lodging and other information, contact Our Saviour's at 614 11th St. E., Dickinson, ND 58601 or call 701-227-1652.

**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma** — First Lutheran has begun a major restoration project on the exterior of the church building due to recent generous donations and pledges. The downtown Oklahoma City church was built in 1912.

**Rev. Walter Johnson, Shakopee, Minnesota**, is now the interim pastor at Abiding Savior Lutheran in North Royalton, Ohio, a southern suburb of Cleveland.

**Chamberlain, South Dakota** — St. Olaf Lutheran celebrated its 75th anniversary on Sunday, October 29. AFLC President Robert Lee was the guest speaker. St. Olaf is with Pukwana Lutheran, Pukwana, South Dakota, to make up a parish served by Rev. Wes Johanson.



**Pickereel Lake Bible Camp** — The South Dakota District camp continues to undergo improvements. On November 4, Jim Keller of Wallace led a work day to add partitions and bathrooms to the new dorm. Pictured are Pastors Ted Berkas and Ray Klug building benches at last summer's camp.



**Greenbush, Minnesota** — On September 17, 1995, Roseau County celebrated centennial Sunday. United Free Lutheran commemorated the event with a church service and picnic at Pelan Pioneer Chapel. The building once was the worship place for Pauli Lutheran Church which merged with United in 1973. Mrs. Lucy Wishow gave horse-drawn wagon rides to the Sunday school children.

**Rev. Gerald Mundfrom, Osceola, Wisconsin**, was recently placed on the "Clergy Serving in a Special Ministry" list by the AFLC Coordinating Committee. Pastor Mundfrom's ministry is Mercy and Truth Publishers, through which he distributes sermons, books and pamphlets along with his speaking tours.

Pastor Mundfrom's first book that he authored is, *My Experience with Clinical Depression*. Dr. Paul W. Sletten, in his review of the book, wrote, "In this brief text the author describes in detail the painstaking efforts to deal with the restlessness and dejection of acute clinical depression. He ... continually returns to the spiritual basis for his eventual victory, a victory which he clearly attributes to God. As a practicing physician for the last fifteen years and having dealt with many depressed patients, I can recommend this book strongly to anyone who themselves have struggled with depression or whose loved ones struggle with mental illness." Mercy and Truth Publishers are at 312 235th St., Osceola, WI 54020-5943; 715-294-2052.

# We Swiftly Tamed Each New Frontier

1. We swiftly tamed each new frontier  
across the land and to the moon;  
but frontier thrust has changed its face,  
concern for life confronts us, now.  
God wakes the day with lively grace,  
our hearts awake to healing love.
2. The land provides our needs and wants,  
our culture beats with lively pulse;  
but daily cares consume our minds,  
we pray for God's unfailing care.  
God wakes the day with lively grace,  
our hearts awake to healing love.
3. The past refines our future hope,  
while future dreams re-carve our past;  
we pray for God's redeeming love,  
our face toward day, toward hope and joy.  
God wakes the day with lively grace,  
our hearts awake to healing love.

TUNE: LBW #294. Melita. 88,88,88.

Alternate: GREAT GOD, OUR SOURCE, LBW #466

TEXT: Copyright Roger Lauren Tappert 1972

Revised: 31 Jan 1988

H122



## Salvation Army leader says Christians must "Stand in the Gap"

As the United States federal government begins to talk seriously about cutting back its commitment to social services, many are looking to private sector organizations to meet the needs of America's poorest citizens. General Paul A. Rader, the first American-born leader of the Salvation Army, the world's largest independent social service organi-

zation, sees opportunities ahead.

"It will be more exciting if the government is willing to support that affirmation," Rader said of the government claim that private agencies can do the job more efficiently. "We're grateful for that awareness that the government can't do the job alone. There are many things the government can do, things legislation

can achieve and tax dollars can accomplish, but there are a lot of things that can't be done by government."

For Rader and the Army that he leads, the people affected by cutbacks in Washington aren't just statistics — they're real people. Still, Rader isn't ready to condemn federal cutbacks. "Those are complex political decisions and I would be unwise to pass judgment on whether it's appropriate to cut back a program," he noted. "I'm not sure that unlimited dollars to spend is going to solve the problem. Throwing money at problems is not always the answer, and I acknowledge that."

Rader added, "At the same time, in those situations, the public has an opportunity to be challenged to pick up the tab and stand in the gap and keep these programs going, because they're worthwhile and they're changing lives and they deserve the support of the public."

What makes the Salvation Army's social outreach effective is a spiritual dimension lacking in government programs, said Rader. "We have to have people who are motivated by the love of God, who are in touch with the dynamics of the saving gospel of Christ to change human lives, who are willing to make themselves available to God and to people to reach out and to touch others, who would be willing to inconvenience themselves, who would be willing to put themselves on the line and assert themselves into the situation, and be a representative of Christ to people."

(The above stories used with the permission of the EP News Service)

**The Beijing womens conference** — Dr. James Dobson, founder and president of Focus on the Family, is calling on Congress to hold oversight hearings "to uncover the truth about Beijing" in the aftermath of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women that recently concluded in China.

"According to our observers, the delegates from the United States, Canada, and the European union lived up to the expectations," writes Dr. Dobson. "They focused on redesigning the family, reordering the way males and females interrelate, promoting 'reproductive rights for women,' distributing condoms and safe-sex nonsense to kids, propagating 'homosexual and lesbian right,' weakening parental authority, undermining 'patriarchal' religious teachings and spreading feminist ideology to every nation on earth."

"The deck was clearly stacked," writes Dr. Dobson. "Millions of American women — especially homemakers and those with conservative Christian convictions — had no official government representation in China."

**The Cemetery of the Holy Innocents** — A St. Paul hillside was home to 4,000 white crosses on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1. The display, called "The Cemetery of the Holy Innocents," was erected by Pro-Life Action Ministries in an effort to illustrate the number of lives lost each day in the U.S. to legalized abortion. "The point was to show the impact of what's going on in our country," explained Brian Gibson, executive director of the organization.

The display wasn't a protest so much as an opportunity for prayerful reflection, said Gibson. "The idea was to give everyone that we could the opportunity to come and pray and see the impact of what's going on with abortion in our country on a daily basis." More than 500 people came to pray at the site, according to organizers. "We encouraged people to go among the crosses, pick one out, and give the baby it symbolized a name," said Gibson. "The idea was that you don't go to a cemetery unless you know somebody, and since the babies being killed by abortion are nameless, you can name them in your heart and pray for them. It was very dramatic and powerful to watch people and their expressions as they soaked it all in."

### Thankful, even though it smells

**W**hen I was growing up in Astoria, Oregon a certain odor was often quite noticeable throughout the town. Many people did not find this odor to be particularly pleasant. Others, like myself, who were part of a commercial fisherman's family, were glad for the odor because it meant the fish canneries were operating and fishermen were making money.

The same smell, the same situation can be a cause for thanksgiving for some and despair or disgust for others.

Paul was in prison because he told people about Jesus. While he was in there, some on the outside were preaching Christ "out of envy and rivalry" and "selfish ambition" with the intention of stirring up trouble for him. The situation certainly did not appear to be a cause for celebration.

Paul did not excuse the wrong and sinful motives. He saw beyond the surface, however, and took note of what was really going on. He wrote: "But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached.

And because of this I rejoice" (Philippians 1:18, NIV).

Most people would have looked at what was going on and said, "It stinks." Imprisoning people because they are Christians, preaching for selfish reasons, that does stink whenever it is done. That is not the only aroma in the air, however.

Paul saw what God was doing. The gospel of Christ was being proclaimed. Souls were being saved. Lives were being transformed. Reasons for rejoicing and giving thanks were all around him.

Often in our lives the surface sights and smells are not extremely pleasant. The trials can be tough. The days can be difficult. Life at times can take on a nasty odor.

Let us, by the grace of God, rejoice in what exists beyond those smells. "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him" (II Corinthians 2:14,15, NIV).

We find much around us that stinks, but we still have reason for giving thanks. We can look to Christ and find in Him the beautiful fragrance of salvation and life.

### Getting dirty

**I**t was a rainy day and a muddy field: a great day for playing football. One of the kids in the game I was watching had a white as a wedding dress uniform. He obviously had not played much. On a day like that, the ones who really played, really got dirty.

If we are going to truly be taking part in this game of life, we are going to get dirty. I am not talking about the dirt of sin. We must come to Christ and ask Him to wash that filth away by the blood of the cross. We then seek His help in keeping that garbage out of our lives.

Another kind of dirt also exists. This is the terrible messes caused by sin. The pain, the heartache, the confusion is all around us. It is unavoidable — and yet, sometimes we try. We attempt to "stay clean" and not let any of that ugly stuff get on us.

During this time of the Church year called Advent we remember the wonderful hope that Jesus is coming again. We long for His return and all the tremendous things that will come because of that. We note, however, that the elimination of pain and problems is something that will come, not something we can create right now.

Loving people with the love of Christ and getting involved in their lives can be messy business. It is part of the game. It is not something to avoid. We rest in the assurance, however, that "our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18, NIV).

Trouble comes but we still play the game with enthusiasm because we know one day soon the trouble will be no more.

### Taking note of service

**M**issionaries David and Janet Abel and their family will soon be returning to the United States after a number of years of faithful service in Brazil. Hordes of media will not greet their arrival. A brass band will probably not trumpet their return. But God will take note, just as He is aware of the work that has been done, the gospel that has been spread, the souls that have been saved and the believers who have been strengthened. He has promised that "your labor in the Lord

is not in vain" (I Corinthians 15:58, NIV).

Our AFLC also takes note of service that has been rendered. The Abels have represented the Lord and our part of His Church well. We have much reason to give thanks for the gift they have been and will continue to be to us and the way God has used them. "We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 1:3, NIV).





Arise, my heart, and sing the praise  
Of Him who saved and keeps me all my days.  
My Father, how can e'er this feeble frame  
Give praise enough unto Thy Holy Name?

My all-sufficient Christ, to Thee  
Be praise and glory for eternity!  
Dear Master, Take my humble, heartfelt praise,  
Cleanse, mold and use me all my days!

— Irene Archibald  
from *The View from Calvary*,  
Fosston, Minnesota 11-95

## BUILDING THE BASE

### The blessed hope

*We wait for the blessed hope —  
the glorious appearing of our  
great God and Savior, Jesus  
Christ.* Titus 2:13

**T**he blessed hope is that burning desire in the hearts of all believers; the stirring of our spirits with longing for the return of Jesus and the final fulfillment of all God's promises. There are many interpretations of how this will come about, but all look forward to His coming. The return of Christ is essential to our faith, without it our faith is unfulfilled, even spurious. Let us look at some things that will be fulfilled when Jesus returns.

First is the **resurrection** of the dead. Paul said, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men" (I Corinthians 15:19). When we speak of the resurrection we refer to our bodies. Our souls have been with the Lord since the moment of death. Those in heaven with the Lord will receive new bodies. Those still living will have their bodies changed. Our new bodies will be like Jesus' own resurrection body — a spiritual body designed for heaven. And these bodies will never grow old or sick but be eternally perfect and incorruptible.

Unbelievers will also be raised

from their graves with new bodies. Their bodies, however, are designed for eternal destruction and punishment in the unquenchable fires of hell.

With the resurrection will come **justice**; final, full and complete justice. From God's own mouth: "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed" (Acts 17:31). In the end no one will get away with anything. All will be brought to light. Every sin will be accounted for.

Now punishment for every sin has already fallen upon Jesus. All who have received Jesus into their hearts will be judged *Not Guilty* because they have accepted the sacrifice Jesus has made for their sins and they are marked with the indwelling Holy Spirit. All who have rejected the Holy Spirit's efforts to bring them to faith in Christ, have rejected His sacrifice on their behalf, and therefore must pay the full penalty for sin themselves. This penalty is eternal punishment, along with the devil and his angels in the lake of fire.

Finally, we look to His coming to bring us to our **eternal home**. Jesus has promised, "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a

place for you. And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (John 14:3).

Heaven is much more than we can imagine. We think of heaven on the basis of what is not there — sin, sickness, sorrow, death and pain. Or we compare the glories of heaven, (which are beyond anything on earth), with the most precious things we know — streets of gold, walls and gates of gems. One thing is certain: Heaven will be a place where there will be no more longing. We will be filled. And the reason for our fulfillment will be the perfect intimacy we will have with God. We will see Him face to face and we will know perfect peace and communion with him. We will have the realization of our blessed hope. And we will at last be HOME.

*He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.* Revelation 22:20



— Rev.  
Don Voorhees  
St. Peder's  
Lutheran  
Dannebrog,  
Nebraska