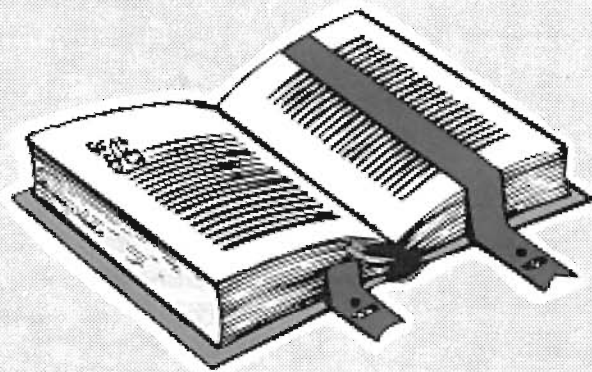


The Lutheran **AMBASSADOR**

November 2, 1999



**They
are
not just
idle words
for you —
they are your life.**

— Deuteronomy 32:47

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 2, 1999
Volume 37, Number 14



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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

What is required?

In Micah 6:6 the prophet asks the question, "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?" He goes on to list some of the things that he would consider as possibilities: burnt offerings, a yearling calf, thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil, or even his firstborn. Would any of these or even all of these make God glad? Would they in any way make compensation for sin? Would such sacrifice meet God's requirements for our coming to Him for salvation and for fellowship? Indeed not; we know from Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God — not because of works."

Yes, we do know the truth, but still we often find ourselves trying to meet some kind of requirement that we feel would qualify us for God's mercy. It is so easy to be busy doing, feeling that we somehow need to work our way into the Kingdom of God. Sometimes I am overwhelmed with the idea that I have not done enough, that I haven't performed well enough or that I am not qualified for tasks I face. Satan usually speaks up at that point and agrees with and enforces my feelings of inadequacy. As I listen, doubt and discouragement begins to fill my mind. The natural thing to do is to try harder. Perhaps longer hours of service, greater sacrifice, or adding to my tithe will cause God to be

glad. Maybe then He will look upon me with mercy and favor. In desperation I cry out "O God, how can I please you." Across the waters of needless striving and desperation which separate me from Him comes that familiar and merciful voice. He says, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). "Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

As we travel life's road with Him the requirements are that simple. They are the same for all mankind. Our abilities and accomplishments do not count. It is He that has the credentials. It is He that makes us worthy. It is He that directs our path in this life, and will lead us safely into the home He has prepared. Without His presence my striving is useless. Find joy today in walking with Him, following His direction, obeying His voice, realizing His blessing and then with Paul in I Corinthians 15:57 say,

"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."



— **Pastor Elden Nelson**
Maranatha Lutheran
Willmar, Minnesota

sound bites

Let us teach Hindus, Buddhists, and Mohammendans that there is only One Holy Book from

1 the East that can be a refuge in the fearful hour when they shall go alone into the invisible world. It is the Holy Book which proclaims the true and trustworthy message that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

—Max Muller

We believe, teach and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only

4 rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged. ... Other writings of ancient and modern teachers, whatever their names, should not be put on a par with Holy Scripture. Every single one of them should be subordinated to the Scripture.

—Formula of Concord

6

Our faith in Christ does not free us from works but from false opinions concerning works, that is, from the foolish presumption that justification is acquired by works.

— Martin Luther

2

Cursed be that love and unity for whose sake the Word of God must be put at stake.

—Martin Luther

The Bible is the Christian congregation's only authority in everything having to do with Christian faith and

3 conduct. The word of these inspired men of God in Scripture is God's own Word. We do not encounter thoughts in the Bible which invite us to discussion; we encounter a divine message before which we must bow.

—Carl F. Wisloff

A Christian has no need of any work or law in order to be saved since through faith he is free from every law and does everything out of pure liberty and freely.

5

— Martin Luther

— Chaplain Mark Benz
Walter Reed Army Medical Center
Washington, D.C.



God desires for us to understand the power of His Word and then to make it

known to others. He wants us to fully comprehend the impact of His Word in our lives. This comes about from being in an intimate relationship with him. Oh, how great the joy is of knowing God in such a way, enjoying His presence and the power of His Word. He has patiently waited from the beginning of time for us to be in this kind of relationship and have this kind of understanding.

Making the Word of God understandable

His Word has more power than any weapon or force. God simply spoke the words and the physical world came into existence. God formed us in His image and then

breathed life to our bodies. It was Jesus' words that brought the dead Lazarus up to his feet, walking and ready to eat something. Yes, the Word of God has the power to transform our lives from a life of sin and dead works to a life of faith; pleasing God and resting completely on the work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us go and discover afresh the power of the Word, allowing the Spirit of God to reveal the truths anew. He can work in us the motivation and ability to make the Word come to life in our lives for others to see, hear and feel.

The Spirit of God moved the prophets of old to write down the words and we have the privilege to read and ponder them. Other prophets performed mighty signs and wonders as the Spirit led them to speak. Fire came down from heaven to Mount Carmel demonstrating whose word was the most powerful. A foreign army general came to understand the authority of God's Word when his leprous skin became fresh and new.

The words, "the just shall live by faith," brought life, joy and peace to the soul of a man, who earnestly and honestly sought God's forgiveness. His understanding of these words became the catalyst for the great Reformation of the Body of Christ. May the Spirit of God move us to come alongside the champion of the Reformation of 1517, Martin Luther, and declare with him, "Here I stand," and live a life sold out to the living God.

As Martin Luther grew in his understanding of God's grace and truth, he exercised the gifts of grace that God gave him, making the Word available and understandable to those around him. He wrote the catechisms, translated the Bible into a common language, wrote letters of counsel, proclaimed the simple truth of the gospel with clarity and conviction, wrote new hymns with current melodies, and opened his home to others. Luther had a burning desire to share with the world around him what God had done for him and what God was doing in him. The fire inside him would not and could not be quenched. The Word was alive and continually renewing his mind, his heart and his soul, giving him more insights, and more strength to do what God gave him to do.

God still transforms His people today. We are God's workmanship, understanding the grace of God that saved us by the faith which God gave us. Those of us who have heard the gospel and been converted by the Spirit of God, let us with fervent hearts go and do as the saints before us have done.

The more I understand who God is and how He works through the power of His Word in me;

the more I am able to make the Word understandable to others.

The more I realize that my flesh, by itself, can do nothing;

the more I make the Word understandable.

The more I grasp that the Spirit is the One who gives life and that the Word of God is spirit and life;

the more I make the Word understandable.

God's Words are the most important food we can eat; and eat we should. So, stop the temple of God (your body) occasionally, and take a drink from the rivers of living water that spring forth inside you as you meditate on the Word. Stop and eat the bread of life that gives real substance and stamina far beyond a Whopper or a taco salad. Moreover, let the Word of God come alive and be active in your mental processing so it can do a check on the thoughts, feelings and intentions of your heart. As you do this, you will make the Word of God understandable to yourself, to those around you, and above all bring glory to God!



Yes, there's time!

— Bob Halvorson
Emmaus Lutheran Church
Bloomington, Minnesota

Work, spouse's schedule, kid's activities, and the routine day-to-day activities of paying the bills, cooking, mowing the lawn and washing clothes fill our daily planner. Sometimes the one thing that is pushed aside is daily Bible reading. After several failed attempts to begin a new Bible reading plan, frustration can set in. We realize the importance of daily Bible reading but can't seem to make it work with our busy schedule.

If this describes your life, maybe the following can help.

Find a time that works for you.

Perhaps mornings are difficult. You have tried to have a daily Bible reading time soon after waking up and find yourself dozing off or simply not being able to concentrate so early in the morning. Try a shorter devotional in the morning and an extended Bible reading some time later in the day. How about lunch hour or after the children have been tucked into bed? God has made all of us different and a time that works great for someone else may not be the best time for you. But do find a time that works!

Listen to the Bible on tape.

Do you spend extensive time on the

road? Buy the Bible on tape and listen to it while you are traveling. What a great way to utilize the time you spend in your car or truck by soaking up God's Word on tape. It'll change your whole attitude toward rush hour traffic or long trips!

Read a chapter to your kids each night.

Many parents read books to their children at night just before they go to sleep. Why not close off your reading time by reading one chapter of the Bible each night? This can be of tremendous value. You are benefiting from the daily nourishment of reading the Bible. Your kids are benefiting by hearing God's Word while seeing their father read God's Word. If your children are older, you might take a minute or two to discuss the chapter.

Life can be very busy with good things. I always remember the advice my father-in-law gives, "Don't let the good things in life crowd out the best things in life." One of the most important things in life is to spend time in daily Bible reading.

May each of us pray with the psalmist, "Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11).



Walking according to the Word

— Ben Hagenbuch
Faith Lutheran
Ottawa, Illinois

“When we meditate on God’s Word and believe it as truth, good works happen.”

What does it mean to be a people of the Word? What should we value, believe and do? The Lord has given us His Word to lead us to Him. He has preserved it without error so that we may tap into His truth.

Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” God’s Word has thoroughly equipped us for every good work. We should value it as our source of spiritual life.

God’s Word plays an important role in the life of a Christian. We would not know the way of salvation without the leading of the Word. At the same time, it is impossible to be a person of the Word without being saved. We need that personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:12 says, “They (the Gentiles) are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.” Those who are not saved are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God.

Once we have that personal relationship with Jesus Christ we can understand the Word. Romans 8:1-2 says, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” Once we are saved the Word no longer condemns us. It now becomes our guide to holy living. What a wonderful promise in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

We cannot get guidance from a book we don’t read. Psalm 1:1-2 says, “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.” How we need our daily devotions and our local church where we hear the Word preached! And there is more than that. There isn’t a practical way to read and study the Bible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so how do we meditate on the Word day and night? We memorize it so we can take it with us wherever we go.

Everything in God’s Word is truth. Some-

times it is hard for me to accept that fact. For example, in the book of Joshua, God commanded Joshua and the Israelites to kill thousands of people who were living in the Promised Land. How can God be a loving God and command His people to kill? God is loving and just. I trust that He was right in what He had the Israelites do, however, I don’t fully understand it.

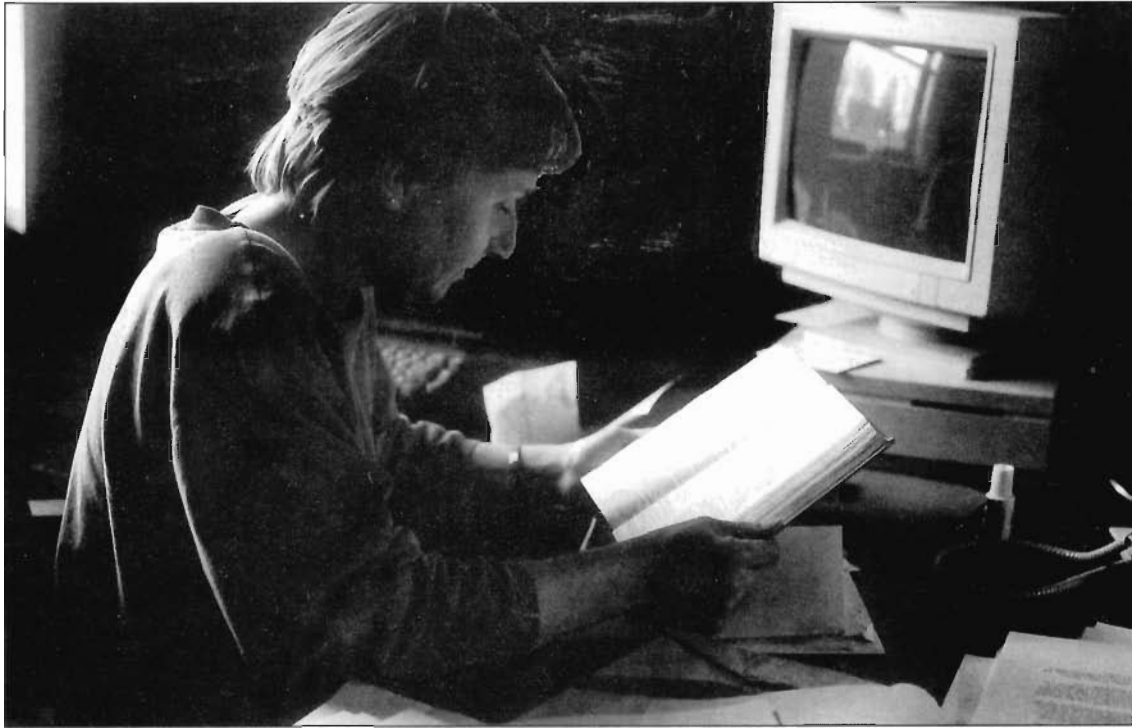
Another difficulty for me is that I don’t agree with the decisions that many government leaders have made. Yet Romans 13:1 says, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” Sometimes I don’t understand how these leaders could be established by God. They don’t make God-honoring decisions. The Bible tells me that He can use them for His glory to accomplish His purposes. There are mysteries in the Word that don’t make sense to my reason but I believe it anyway because it is the Word of God.

In Romans 6:1 Paul wrote, “What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?” Meditation on the Word and believing it is truth must be lived out in our lives. James writes that faith unaccompanied by action is dead. This does not mean that we can somehow earn our way into heaven by our works. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.” James simply means that good works spring up out of a living faith. When we meditate on God’s Word and believe it as truth, good works happen. Psalm 119:11 reminds us, “I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” Out of gratitude for God’s grace, we should obey His Word and strive to live a holy life.

The Bible does have answers for all of life. It is a lamp to guide our way. Paul speaks of his journey in Philippians 3:14: “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Let us do the same.

(The author is a 1999 AFLBS graduate and is a student at Northwestern College in Roseville, Minnesota.)





Holy Bible, Book Divine

— John Burton, Sr.
AMBASSADOR HYMNAL, No. 268

*Holy Bible, Book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine:
Mine to tell me whence I came,
Mine to teach me what I am;*

*Mine to chide me when I rove,
Mine to show a Savior's love;
Mine thou art to guide and guard,
Mine to punish or reward;*

*Mine to comfort in distress —
Suffering in this wilderness;
Mine to show, by living faith,
Man can triumph over death;*

*Mine to tell of joys to come
And the rebel sinner's doom:
O thou holy Book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine.*

— Willma Wissner
Ruthfred Lutheran
Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

God's Word is mine!

*God's Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever
Through life it guides our way
In death it is our stay
Throughout all generations*

W

When Martin Luther wrote these words, he had spent a lifetime searching Scripture for the key to our salvation. On finding it, he worked to translate the Latin Vulgate into the language of the common people, thus presenting us with the means by which we all could have the inheritance — the legacy — the gift of God's Word at our fingertips at any time. What a wonderful inheritance! What a tremendous gift the Lord has left us. It's everything we need for life and death, for comfort, for guidance, for instruction, for hope!

Lutherans are known as a people of the Word, because we turn to God's Word for the answers to all our questions: about this world, how it came to be, why we were created, how we are to live, the Source of our salvation, and our hope for the future. The nature of man is to question, test, seek answers, and finally to prove to ourselves what we can believe, trust and rely on. The Word of God will stand this test, for as we seek joy, face sorrow, need guidance, look for comfort, we find it all in God's Word. Somehow passages we have long known give us answers to questions and doubts just at the moment of our need. Certainly God speaks to us through His Word whenever we seek it. Thank God for providing this understanding just when we need it!

Coming to faith is a different experience for each of us. We hear testimonies of sudden conversions — a time and a place when a man meets and acknowledges the Lord as His Savior. Perhaps he has searched the Scriptures and has found the answer, or he may have been confronted by a friend, a

missionary, or a pastor with the good news. My experience has been different, for I don't remember a time when the Lord was not a real presence in my life. Baptized as an infant, reared by devout parents, and in a solid congregation of believers, I was blessed by the Holy Spirit to know and understand early that I was a child of God cleansed from my sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. I remember faithfully reading God's Word and asking many questions. Thankfully I had parents who patiently and lovingly explained the Scriptures. I have always had the joy of knowing God's Word. His message was always for me and for me to share.

I like to think of the action of God's Word in my life as a stream of water. It began as a small stream bubbling up from a spring. It became a small run which sparkled in the sunlight. As it grew, it encountered eddies, whirlpools, and rocks, but it held fast until it became a deep and navigable river. Finally, it flows toward the great ocean to become a part of the great host praising the Lord.

Paul's words to Timothy (II Timothy 4:14-15) have been words of guidance and confirmation for me. "Continue in what you have learned and become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known

the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

My life has been a long and busy one. I have been a wife, mother, career person, Sunday school teacher, women's and youth worker, choir member, and best of all, a believer. Essentially my life has been lived in the sunshine of God's love, but when the clouds are dark, the storms seem overwhelming, my Bible provides words of strength and comfort and assurance. After the children left home and my retirement from work was at hand, I developed arthritis

"Somehow passages we have long known give us answers to questions and doubts just at the moment of our need."



Justified by faith

— *Pastor Robert L. Lee*

I stand in a courtroom before the judge, in whose authority rests the power of life and death over me. All of the evidence has been presented, the witnesses have been heard, and there is no question about the outcome of the trial. I am guilty.

The judge announces the verdict, and the courtroom is stunned. "Not guilty," the judge declares. The penalty has already been paid by another who took my place, and I am free.

This is justification. It is a forensic or courtroom term, meaning to be declared righteous for the sake of Christ who paid the full penalty of the law and met all of its requirements. The justified sinner is now regarded as if he had never sinned at all. Our catechism defines it as follows: "justification is the gracious act of God whereby He for Christ's sake acquits a repentant and believing sinner of his sin and guilt and looks upon him in Christ as if he never sinned."

Justification does not mean that I have personally become righteous or holy. It is not something that takes place in me, but it is the judicial act of God. It is the establishment of a new relationship, a new standing before God as one with whom He is well pleased for the sake of His Son. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). To say that it is by faith is to confess that nothing in my hands I bring, simply to His cross I cling.

This is the good news of the gospel! Those who know it best still seem hungering and thirsting to hear that we are saved by "grace through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). We constantly need to be reminded of this central teaching, because our souls' health depends on it, as well as the health of our congregations. Gospel becomes law when left to our own reasoning, because this is what we understand by nature. Grace can only be comprehended by the revelation of God's Word.

Our priceless Reformation heritage of justification by faith will continue to be attacked by those who do not seem to really understand it or those for whom it will always be an offense. There are those who seek to convince others that the Reformation was unnecessary or a mistake, and agreements have been reached by people who should know better that the old truths simply have to be restated since we all believe the same thing anyway. The challenges are great, but the need is greater. May the liberating message of the gospel ring from our pulpits and be reflected in our lives. For the sake of Christ and the Kingdom.

and lupus, and the disabling pain of these diseases. At a time when I had so many plans for my remaining years, I was seated in a chair, unable to care for myself. There were tears of hopelessness, fears of rejection, questions of "why me?," despair because I had so much to accomplish yet, and now it all seemed impossible.

"I will never leave you nor forsake you ... Come unto me, you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 11:28). Slowly these words, and others came to mind and gradually my spirit quieted, and I possessed the certainty that God was with me and could use me even as I was. The pain and stiffness have subsided some, but more

importantly I have the assurance that God blesses me and will use me for His purposes.

The opening lines of Psalm 27 have been a favorite of mine, for they are words of assurance, of trust in the power and presence of God. "The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid?" Verse four has long been a prayer of my life: "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to seek the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple."

God's Word is our great heritage. May we be open to receive it.



Special teen ministry begins in Brazil

The Lord has opened a new work for the AFLC in Brazil in working with teenage kids from the ages of 12 to 18. The mayor's office in Campo Mourão, Brazil asked AFLC-Brazil Pastor Oseias Camara if he would be willing to take on the administration of a "rehabilitation farm" just outside of Campo Mourão. After much prayer it was felt that the Lord was opening this door for a reason and the answer "yes" was given to take on this new ministry. The Bible school students from Campo Mourão work with the kids during the day and study at night.

Since the work began six of the kids and one of the fathers have come to know the Lord. The home has over 70 kids, both boys and girls. They are on the farm because they have either run away from home, committed some minor crime or are on the streets much of the time with nothing to do. They come in two shifts in the morning and afternoon. They take care of a very large garden and are learning skills

such as working with wood, cooking, baking and making craft items. All of the kids when they are not working on the farm are to be studying in public school. During the night they should be back in their homes.

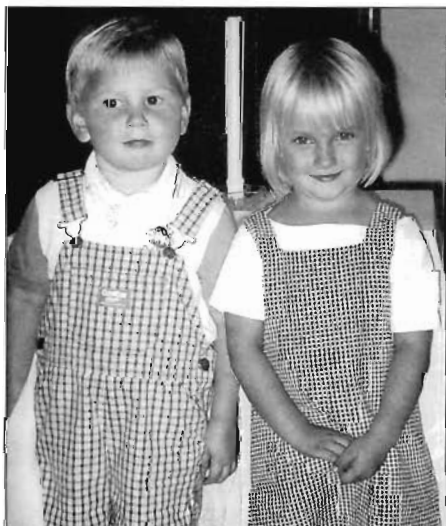
Missionary Connely Dyrud asks that this new ministry be remem-

bered in prayer. "This is a wonderful open door and a giant step of faith for us. But this ministry also comes with a lot of responsibility in helping to shape these young lives, as we know that the Lord has a plan for them, to give them hope for a new future."



The Women's Missionary Federation national officers met at The ARC during the AFLC All Boards meeting on September 28. Pictured are Faith Nelson, Marilyn Thoreson, Cheryl Aakre, Lola Lindell and (front seated) Tammy Vukonich. Not pictured: Mary Pollestad. Tammy Vukonich is the new WMF treasurer. Her address is: 1180 30th Ave., Amery, WI 54001.

Cradle Roll: a WMF ministry helping parents rear children to know and love Jesus



Brady Swanson and Katie Guetter at a recent cradle roll graduation at Our Savior's Lutheran in Argyle, Minnesota,



Fall WMF Rallies have once again been hosted by congregations in districts around the country. Pictured is Pastor Lynn Wilson of Roslyn, South Dakota leading the Bible study at the South Dakota District Rally at Grace Lutheran in Bruce. Also pictured are some of the hostesses of the Northern Michigan District Rally at Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran in Ishpeming. They focused on entering the year 2000 with the verse from Isaiah 41:13, "For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, 'Do not fear; I will help you.'"



AFLC Seminary releasing new magazine

The first issue of *The Servant Pastor*, is scheduled to be out early this month. Free Lutheran Seminary Dean Francis Monseth reports that the newsletter, a first for the seminary, will feature brief biographies of current students, book reviews, a sermon, campus news, an alumni page, and an expanded explanation of the AFLC emphasis on pastors who are servants. AFLBS dean James L. Johnson is editor.

With plans to send the first issue to *The Lutheran Ambassador* subscribers, the seminary hopes better to inform AFLC friends of its needs and progress. A page on the new campus housing will also be featured.

Copies will also be sent to each AFLC congregation.

If individuals outside of *The Lutheran Ambassador* subscription list would like to join the *The Servant Pastor* mailing list, please contact Free Lutheran Seminary secretary Michele Deubner at 612-544-9501, between 1 and 5 p.m. central standard time.

AFLBS Conqueror basketball season underway

On November 12 and 13, AFLBS men's and women's basketball teams begin their season at tournaments in Nebraska. The men participate in the Grace College Tournament in Omaha and the women travel to Norfolk for the Nebraska Christian Tournament.

Coach Wade Mobley's men's team has 18 games or tournaments on their schedule before the March 9-11, 2000 NBCCA National Tourney in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Mark Johnson, AFLBS Dean of Students is coaching the women's team through their 16-game schedule before the Tulsa tournament. Home games for the AFLBS Conquerors are held at the Mounds View Community Center or at the Riley Gym on the campus of Northwestern College in Roseville.



Vision 2004 update — Pictured is the nearly completed fourplex for seminary housing located across the driveway from the AFLC headquarters building. The townhomes were paid for with grant money and other gifts in the amount of \$360,000. Additional costs to prepare the land have set the stage for a second unit which can be built when the money comes in. Seminary families are planning to move into these units this month, paying \$450-\$500 per month rent. Similar units in Plymouth cost about twice as much. Most of the rent will go toward providing seminary scholarships. Phase two of the Vision 2004 Project is the AFLBS Student Center. Floor plans for this building have been completed. Project Director Tonnes Pollestad continues to visit throughout the AFLC presenting the Vision 2004 Project and its needs. Contact him at 612-412-2004 or e-mail vis2004@afcl.org.

Matching Gift Programs

Aid Association for Lutheran (AAL) recently presented \$200 to AFLBS through the AAL Member Gift-Matching Program through contributions made during the first quarter of 1999. Any annual gifts of \$25-\$100 made by an AAL member to a participating Lutheran school are matched dollar-for-dollar by AAL. The program began in 1998.

Since the beginning of the IMPACT gift program for Lutheran Brotherhood in 1979, \$151,931 has been received by the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. Recently the Bible school received \$1,635 from Lutheran Brotherhood through the Member Matching Gift program. The latest payment matches 19 gifts from LB members made during the second quarter of 1999.

Kelly Nelson, a 1997 AFLBS graduate, began on November 1, 1999 to serve as the Bible school's receptionist/office manager. Her home congregation is Maranatha Free Lutheran in Glyndon, Minnesota.

Campus calendar

Plymouth, Minnesota — Medicine Lake Lutheran Church is hosting their Fall Harvest Festival (formerly Life in Christ Crusade) during November 7 to 10. Pastor Jeff Swanson of Helmar, Illinois is the guest speaker. Medicine Lake Lutheran is the local congregation on the AFLC Schools' campus.

Parents' Day is scheduled for December 4 for AFLBS students. The annual Christmas Concerts will be held on Sunday, December 5 during afternoon and evening times.

Third-year missions training program

Mission Training Institute is slated to start in the fall of 2000. Students will study on the AFLBS campus during the fall, and spend the spring in Brazil, Eastern Europe or Alaska.

For more information:
3120 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55441
612-544-9501

Bob Halvorson, Otsego, Minnesota has rejoined the staff at Emmaus Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minnesota. He returned as their youth director on October 1, after about two years of operating his own business. He had previously served as Emmaus' youth director for 11 years.

Pleasanton, Texas — Good Shepherd Lutheran is enjoying their beautifully remodeled sanctuary. The congregation has developed an effective outreach ministry called "Kid's Mission Fellowship" and is willing to share their program with others. For more information call the church office at 830-281-3009. Texas "snowbirds" are always welcome. Pleasanton is just off of Interstate 37, south of San Antonio.

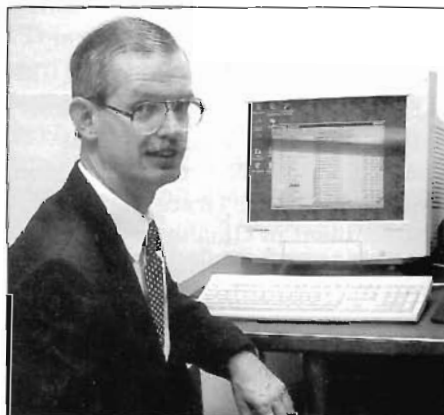


Pastor Walter and Marilyn Johnson, Shakopee, Minnesota, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 11 at the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wisconsin. Amery Free Lutheran ladies hosted the event along with the Johnson's four sons and their families.

Two congregations to have new facilities

Osseo, Minnesota — Solid Rock Lutheran purchased the New Life Church in Anoka and will move into their new facilities this winter. The ten-year-old congregation has been renting school facilities in Osseo. Their new church home will be about six miles away in Anoka — very accessible off Highway 10 and the 7th Street exit. Their new church seats about 150 in the sanctuary. Pastor Jim Johnson said, "We saw a lot of answers to prayer. We're excited to see what God has in store for our congregation as we move into our own church building."

Beltrami, Minnesota — Resurrection Free Lutheran is building an approximately 3,400 square foot addition to their seven-year-old sanctuary. The addition includes eight new Sunday school rooms to accommodate their growing congregation. Phase two of their building project includes a 4,200 square foot new sanctuary. Beltrami is a small community located about 60 miles north of the Fargo-Moorhead area, in the heart of the Red River Valley. Pastor Tim Johnson serves the congregation.



Pastor Brian Davidson, is working at the AFLC headquarters as the Information Services Supervisor. He started on September 20 and has been working with the computers. He expects to continue into the new year. He travels to Faith Lutheran in Ottawa, Illinois on weekends where he is their interim pastor. His address is 49 S. 8th Ave., Hopkins, MN 55343; phone 612-933-1921.

New from Parish Education For Adults:

The Book of Concord edited by Theodore G. Tappert
Confessional writings of the Lutheran Church.

By Faith Alone by Martin Luther
Freshly translated from the original German into today's English, these daily devotional readings are taken from Luther's writings between 1513-46 and point readers to the Bible and a deeper understanding of faith.

Luther Legacy (video)

Tells why and how the Reformation and the role of Martin Luther impact Christian faith and life today. Includes leader's guide for four 15-minute video segments. Appropriate for youth and adults, and helpful as a supplement for confirmation classes.

The Lutheran Confessions by J. T. Mueller

Booklet of brief history and simple explanations of the creeds adopted by Lutherans as witnesses of divine truth. Includes information on the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, Luther's Catechism, Augsburg Confession, Smalcald Articles, and Formula of Concord.

Reformation resources For Children:

A Boy Meets Luther
by A. G. Joelsson

Participate in the daily adventures and experiences of Sven and the Pine Hill family as they learn the important teachings of Luther's "little book." Recommended for family devotions or story time in Sunday school.

The Adventures of Martin Luther
by Carolyn Bergt

Beautifully illustrated story that shows children how Luther helped us understand God's Word and that we are saved by God's loving grace alone. Ages 5 to 7.

Martin! God Loves You (video)

Follow the life of Martin Luther and his wonderful discovery of love freely given in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Recommended for grades 1 to 8.

Additional books and resources by and about Luther and the Reformation are available from AFLC Parish Education at 612-545-5631.

FOR YOUTH



The grass withers and the flowers fade

We see grass withering and flowers falling all around us this time of the year. It reminds us of how we pass from one season to the next and how over time things change. Not everything changes, though!

The title comes from a verse in Isaiah. "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever" (40:8). A similar truth is expressed in Malachi 3:6: "I, the Lord, do not change." And James 1:17 tells us, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

The fact that God and His Word do not change is very reassuring. We need something stable to hold onto when all around us things are moving and shaking. People are trying to rattle men and women of faith by changing the truth for lies, saying evil is good and good is evil, declaring that there are many ways to God — you just need to find the one that works for you. The world we live in is often very mixed up and constantly changing. So hold onto the one thing that does not change. Hold onto the Word of the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come!

— **Paul Kneeland**
Youth pastor

Kalispell, Montana
taken from the *Stillwater Lutheran*
Church News, 10/99



The ARC — changing to better serve



Pictured is the Tabitha building at The Association Retreat Center which is being renovated to become a 16-room hotel-like facility. Completion of the project is expected by next June when the ARC hosts the AFLC annual conference.



Across the street from Tabitha, is the newly completed gymnasium.



The ARC recently moved this house from a nearby town to its new foundation at the ARC. The house was donated and the ARC is bearing the cost of moving and making preparation for occupancy. The first residents will be missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk and family, on furlough from Mexico.

John Johnson Horn, 86, of Whitefish, Montana, passed away on September 30, 1999. He was born on March 20, 1913 in Norway to Mikkell and Hanna Johnson. After becoming an orphan at age 5, he was raised by his uncle and aunt, Hans Kristian and Karo Horntvedt. He graduated from agricultural college in Norway then moved to Kalispell, Montana, in 1934. He married Ruth Lee on June 30, 1940 and together they farmed in the Kalispell area for many years.

John was a member of Stillwater Lutheran from the time he moved to Kalispell. He served many years as a deacon, helped in two building projects and was a constant source of prayer. He was one of the leaders in the church who encouraged the congregation to join the AFLC in 1964. His current pastor, Tim Bartholomew wrote, "As much as any man I have known, John

lived by the principles of God's Word and was a devoted servant. ... His decisions and unceasing prayers over the years have helped shape Stillwater Church into what it is today. ... He has prayed for revival in the church. I wonder who God will raise up to fill his leadership spot." He often attended the AFLC annual conferences.

He traveled to China with Youth With a Mission. He and Ruth visited Mexico on four separate occasions to build and witness for Christ. They returned to Norway often. He considered it a great privilege to be able to witness for the Lord in so many countries.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Synvia Ruth Horn; son Karl Eric Horn; grandson Kenneth Horn Jr.; and granddaughter Cindy Lee Horn. He is survived by his wife Ruth; six children, Mike, Karen, Kenneth, Randall, Christine, and Martin; 17 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. The funeral service was held on October 3, with John's son, Pastor Martin Horn, Fosston, Minnesota, officiating.

Blessed be his memory.

Pastor Phil Rokke, Newfolden, Minnesota, is serving as interim pastor of Westaker and Bethania Lutheran Parish. He continues to serve Hegland Lutheran in nearby Strandquist.

Pastor Michael Burke, Ishpeming, Michigan was accepted on the AFLC Clergy Roster at the coordinating committee's September meeting.

Dora Starkenburg Wilson, 81, Lincoln, Nebraska, passed away on October 6, 1999. After serving as a registered nurse in WWII, she and her husband, Rev Woodrow Wilson, lived in Clark, South Dakota and Albion and Geneva, Nebraska, where he served Lutheran churches. She was preceded in death by one daughter, Nancy, and is survived by her husband and four children; Tristi, Tracy, Warren and Rev. Lynn Wilson of Roslyn, South Dakota.

Blessed be her memory.

Third Annual AFLC Chaplains Retreat held

Eleven AFLC military and institutional chaplains met at the ARC during September 30 to October 2. The theme for the sessions was, "There's an Appointed Time for Everything," from Ecclesiastes 3:14. The retreat was underwritten by an AAL block grant. Continuing chaplaincy education credits were received for the chaplains by the Association of Professional Chaplains.

Pastor Rodney Stueland, Roseau, Minnesota, has resigned as pastor of Norland and Roseau Free Lutheran Parish where he has served since 1995. His future plans are indefinite.

AFLC Memorial gifts

Department given to...

In memory of...

AFLBS

*Emil Peterson
Lester Pelirt
Leroy Road
Sharon Brown
Elois Clinton
Evelyn Hove
Raymond Jensen
Erling Hoseth
Kendra Bakken
Myron Smedshammer
Rachel Fixen
Elna Bridley
Minnie Loff Luckason
James M. Thompson
Inger Ohnstad*

World Missions

*Emil Peterson
Inger Ohnstad
Roberta Gartley
Cara Paulson*

Home Missions

*Rosie Johnson
Evelyn Grabow
Duane Kalbo*

AFLTS

Rose Bach

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (9 months) – January 1 — September 30, 1999

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$234,385.00	\$19,049.34	186,509.93	80
Seminary	110,296.00	9,491.05	90,484.13	82
Bible School	147,674.00	12,525.88	113,205.52	77
Home Missions.	238,152.00	18,840.49	154,197.44	65
World Missions.	190,909.00	20,779.19	108,596.36	57
Capital Investment	14,065.00	495.25	4,738.19	34
Parish Education	56,854.00	5,274.69	46,891.74	82
Church Extension	21,051.00	3,872.02	15,476.84	74
TOTALS	\$1,013,386.00	90,326.91	720,100.15	71
TOTALS 1997	1,278,758.00	104,073.30	862,972.57	67

Goal 75%

The Evangelism Department received \$2,894.27 in September.

God provides the people needed

It was a memorial service for a distant relative who lived in a different state. The little contact I had with her over the years didn't provide me with a lot of reason to be encouraged about where she stood with the Lord. A neighbor had been asked to read Scripture at the service. Before she did, she shared about how she had the chance the last couple years to spend a lot of time with Betty. She said Betty had received Jesus as her Lord and Savior. It was great to hear that and a reminder to me of how God raises up people to meet needs and serve Him.

God put someone next door to Betty to be a faithful witness for Him. He had a job to be done, and He raised up a worker to do it. I didn't know what was going on, but God did. I could pray, but other than that I didn't have the chance for much direct involvement. The Lord was involved, however, working out His plan and providing the person to do His work.

During a period in his life when he wasn't walking with the Lord, my brother told me about a friend he had made on his fishing boat. He told me, "You'd really like this guy." I figured out from the conversation that this guy was a Christian who had been sharing the good news of Jesus with my brother. It encouraged me to be reminded that it wasn't just me who was interested in seeing my brother come to know the Lord. God was at work, bringing people into his life, reminding him of the love of Jesus.

When challenges are to be faced and work is to be done, God raises up workers to take on the task. When truth was being distorted and the gospel was not being faithfully proclaimed, God raised up Martin Luther to be His courageous and bold witness. God provided the man for the moment.

At times we credit Luther as being the one who brought about the Protestant Reformation. He certainly serves as a great role model and we give thanks for what he did. Let us remember, though, that God brought about the Reformation. Luther was the instrument the Lord raised up. To God belongs the glory.

In the Old Testament we read of Esther, after becoming queen, being told by Mordecai of the peril her people faced. He urged her to go into the king's

presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people. This was a dangerous thing she was being asked to do and it could result in her losing her life. Mordecai told her, however, "If you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14, NIV).

The Lord had placed Esther in that position because He had a job for her to do. Even if she failed, God would not fail to care for His people. "Relief and deliverance ... will arise from another place." She was not irreplaceable. None of us are. God can get His work done without any of us. But God had put her in that place, at that time, for a purpose. It was her privilege and responsibility to seek and carry out that purpose.

Are you seeking to find the reason you are where you are right now? Are you asking God, "What is my purpose in life?"

God says, "I know the plans I have for you" (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV). He wants to use you to meet a need. He desires to work through you to touch a life. He has raised you up for a reason.

We each have responsibilities and in keeping them we must be faithful. At the same time, it is relaxing to

know we are not in charge of everything. Even if we are faithful we will still see many unmet needs around us. We pray about them and leave them in God's hands. We do what we are called to do. We trust God to take care of the things that need to be done that we can't do. That friend or relative who doesn't know the Lord and we are separated from by many miles — we witness when and as we can, and pray for God to raise up faithful witnesses to be a part of their life. At the same time, as we think about the neighbors around us, let us consider, maybe we are called to be the answer to a distant relative's prayer?

Luther did not expect to be raised up by God to lead such a massive reformation of the church. He was just being faithful to follow the calling God had given him. As he was faithful, incredible things happened. Great things can happen today as well as we are faithful in the places in which God has put us.

— *Pastor Craig Johnson*

**"God raises
up people
to meet
needs and
serve Him."**

SOMETHING TO SHARE

More than flowers

Not long ago a woman from our congregation died unexpectedly. She was particularly remembered for the lavish flower gardens which graced her yard. At her funeral service a neighbor woman appeared stunned as she related her thoughts to me. Frequently she had walked past the flowery yard. Often she would stop and chat with the woman about her flowers. She admired the beauty of the meticulously kept yard, asked how to care for certain plant species, and remarked on the artful arrangement of the blooms. They had enjoyed many such conversations. Now, with grief over the loss, she repeated to me, "Who would have known? Who would have known? If I had known, I would have gotten around to more important things than flowers."

Her regret has been experienced by most of us. How easy it is to cherish the temporal and neglect the eternal. Our tongues effortlessly wiggle about the weather, fashion, sports or current events, but how difficult it is to formulate sensible, clear conversation about the living Christ. It is critical to discipline our tongue, to instruct it, and bridle it, and steer it in the direction of a

clear, creative, verbal witness.

We **ready** our tongue. Every Christian needs to learn a basic presentation of the gospel message. The abundance of tools, tracts, and methods available leaves us without an excuse. It is possible to find a simple presentation that fits with our personality, and drill ourselves often in its use. Peter instructs us in motive, method, and manner: "In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (I Peter 3:15).

We must **personalize** our lips' message. Our presentation may be spoken as cold facts, or it could be the sharing of our own "home-made" experience which comes from the heart in a genuine, personable way. Jesus asked loving questions and told meaningful stories. Indeed, even flowers may be the springboard which allows the testimony to be personal and keeps it blossoming and joyfully fresh within us.

We must **open** our mouths. My "visual aide" testimony may be crystal clear and relevant, and memorable, but if I don't open my mouth and speak, what is there to distinguish my life-witness from

that of a zealous cult member, or a self-righteous Pharisee? Without clear, audible words that point out Christ, the most perfect silent-witness will exalt only me, the bush; not Jesus, the Rose of Sharon.

It is urgent that our mouths be open and ready and personable. We must quit waiting for the perfect opportunity. (Just last week I missed one.) A wise Proverb reminds us that, "The tongue has the power of life and death" (18:21), and I want mine to count for life! It could be tomorrow that we may have to say, "Who would have known?"

"Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise. And apply your mind to My knowledge. For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, that they may be ready on your lips" (Proverbs 22:17-18).



— Jeannie Brandt
*Abiding Savior Lutheran
Sioux Falls, South Dakota*