

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

September 24, 1996

**Celebrating
100 years
of ministry**



Badger Creek Lutheran, Badger, Minnesota

Union Lake Lutheran, Winger, Minnesota



inside —

**GOD IS
HOLY**
is that
Good news?

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Rest or unrest?

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

— Matthew 11:28-29

In our brief stroll into the garden of God's Word today, I want for us to pluck that beautiful flower of *rest*. Our souls need a quiet, confident rest in Jesus. Cleland B. McAfee wrote, "There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God, A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God."

In the many responsibilities and labors of life, we grow weary in both body and mind. Jesus knows and understands. In Mark 6:31, He invites His bone-weary apostles to "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." We are finite and we need time out for physical and mental rest. In our text, however, I believe that Jesus has a far more important rest in mind. Note what He says: "I will give you rest — ye shall find rest unto your souls."

There is so much unrest in the world. Men everywhere are laboring under the yoke of sin and laden with burdens too heavy to bear. They search the world over attempting to find rest to calm their restless soul and they find none. They search in the wrong places.

Jesus invites, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." Those who reject His invitation are described in Isaiah 57:20-21: "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Jeremiah records a sad commentary on the Israelites. "Thus saith the Lord, 'Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk therein'" (Jeremiah 6:16). Come to Jesus and find rest for your souls. He is the Way.

"There is a sin of restlessness," said D.L. Moody, "and fretfulness in these days which stand like two granite walls against godliness. Contentment is almost necessary to godliness, and godliness is absolutely necessary to contentment. A very restless man will never be a very godly man, and a very godly man will never be a very restless man."

We who are Christians often fail to claim the rest in Jesus we ought. Luke 10 records the conversation between Jesus, Martha and Mary. Our Lord said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things." Oh, how we've been there. Then Jesus continued, "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." Mary had been sitting and listening at Jesus' feet.

How about you? Are you cumbered, worried, restless in soul? Remember Jesus' words and come to Him. Benjamin Franklin said, "He that can take rest is greater than he that can take cities."

Friends, I encourage you to rest in Jesus and rest on Jesus. Rest on the faithfulness of Christ, the fullness of His true Word, and in His wisdom, love, and power. Rest and rejoice.



— Pastor Alvin Grothe
Astoria, Oregon

SOUND BITES



"God is inescapable. There is no place we can hide from Him. Not only does He penetrate every aspect of our lives, but He penetrates it in his majestic holiness."

—R. C. Sproul

"In all its constant stress on the reality of God's personal concern for His people, and on the gentleness, tenderness, sympathy, patience, and yearning compassion that He shows towards them, the Bible never lets us lose sight of His majesty, and His unlimited dominion over all His creatures."

— J. I. Packer

"People who regularly attend religious services have been found to have lower blood pressure, less heart disease, lower rates of depression and generally better health than those who don't attend. ... Praying affects epinephrine and other corticosteroid messengers or 'stress hormones,' leading to lower blood pressure, more relaxed heart rate and respiration and other benefits."

— Time magazine

"We cannot pin our hopes for the future of moral education on the classroom, on legislation, or on the airwaves. No, I believe there are only two institutions that can cultivate moral virtue: the family and the church, those 'communities of memory' to which Robert Bellah refers, where traditions, history, and discipline provide a context for understanding the world. The enduring strength of our society lies in strengthening these two communities."

— Charles Colson

"Formerly, then, holiness was highlighted throughout the Christian church. But how different it is today! To listen to our sermons and to read the books we write for each other, and then to watch the zany, worldly, quarrelsome way we behave as Christian people, you would never imagine that once the highway of holiness was clearly marked out for Bible-believers, so that ministers and people knew what it was and could speak of it with authority and confidence."

— J. I. Packer

"Do you really accept the message that God is head over heels in love with you? I believe that this question is at the core of our ability to mature and grow spiritually. If in our hearts we really don't believe that God loves us just as we are, if we are still tainted by a lie that we can **do** something to make God love us more, we are rejecting the message of the cross."

— Brennan Manning

Like many other children, I made a lot of messes when I was a child. That made it hard for me, and harder for my parents, to visit homes where the people were very particular about keeping things neat. It wasn't fun because I couldn't be myself, which may have been just as well. Since then I have learned not to make messes in other people's homes.

GOD IS HOLY is that Good News?



— Pastor Stephen Mund from
Bethany Lutheran
Sebeka, Minnesota

In just the same way, it is hard for sinners to be comfortable in the presence of a holy God. We cannot be ourselves because a holy God cannot tolerate sinfulness. So how is it that a Christian can love God's holiness and consider His holiness a thing of beauty and goodness?

Let's look at a couple of verses beginning with:

"For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'"

(Isaiah 57:15).

The holy God dwells with the lowly in order to revive their hearts. Revival is a function of God's holiness. What good news this is! Because God is holy He desires to revive us, to stir us up from our complacency, to address our sinfulness, to guide us onward to new spiritual life and wholeness. A holy God will never be content with unholy people. He will seek in many and varied ways to get us out of our sins and into greater fellowship with Him.

Certainly God's greatest means of getting us out of our unholiness and into the holiness He desires for us is Jesus Christ who died for our sins. Because God is holy, He had to find a better solution for our sins than anything we could do. God sent His Son because that was His way of giving us true holiness. Do you realize that the greatest victory holiness has ever had was in the cross of Jesus, where the wickedness and rebellion of Satan and his demons was defeated, and a holy life became possible for us?

In our foolishness we might be tempted to ask God to let us continue to live in sin even after we have believed in Christ and been forgiven. But because God is holy, He will not do such a thing. He will pursue revival in our lives so that we are not content with the sins that He is not content with. This

is God's loving way of dealing with us.

God wants us to be holy because He knows that holiness is the thing that is truly best for us. It was in holiness that we were created. That holiness continues to be His desire for us. So He says to us in I Peter 1:15, "But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior." While this verse often sounds in our ears as condemnation which we richly deserve for our sins, it also shows us what God's loving will for our lives is — **to be holy**.

It would not be good news at all for us if God expected us to be holy in ourselves. But He never has. We are the only ones who have ever expected to be holy in ourselves. God knows, and has always known, that He could only make us holy through Jesus Christ and His shed blood. In Christ we are cleansed of all the impurities of sin and made righteous. In Christ our spirits are renewed to seek holiness instead of sin. In Christ we are always accepted by the Holy One despite our frequent failures. We have no holiness except that which flows out of God's holiness.

Finally, God's holiness is good news for us in that it assures us of His promises.

"My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David."

(Psalm 89:34-35)

The promises of God's covenant to His people endure forever because they flow from His holiness. Similarly in the New Testament, John writes, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). A Christian enjoys the assurance of salvation because a holy God will never ask us to pay again for our sins once we have accepted the atonement of his Son!

Today we can rejoice in the good news that God is holy. He will not be content to leave us in unholiness. He will deal with all unholiness in the power of His cross. He will be faithful to his promises. Praise the Lord! **He is holy.**



How a straight God deals with *crooked people*

We sing the song, "Our God is an awesome God, He reigns from heaven above, With wisdom, power and love ..." Indeed! It sobers us to study the Word's description of God. Our reverence and awe is inspired by the holiness exhibited in all His actions. All that He does is perfect.



— Pastor Lloyd Bjornlie
Fergus Falls, Minnesota

The over-riding characteristic of God's nature is His holiness. When God in His power created the world and all that is in it, He Himself evaluated His work and proclaimed it "very good." And it was good. It stands as a monument to His omnipotence. He is all-powerful.

Holiness seen in Creation

The trillions of heavenly planets circling the universe were placed there by God. Thus, the rising of the sun and the setting thereof can be predicted to the second. In like manner, God's intention for the propagating of the species causes the bird kingdom and animal kingdom and all of creation to seek to mate only their kind. Leopards and humming birds will always reproduce leopards and humming birds! So also will horses and zebras and even sub-species within the family of zebras faithfully reproduce the beautiful stripes characteristic of their kind.

Yes I know creation has suffered from the Fall and many human heartaches have resulted. And yes, why God allowed sin to enter in is something for us to ask our Father when we reach the other side. Our all-knowing God knew some would →

— Larry Hefty
Faith Free Lutheran
Kalispell, Montana.

God's holiness,

Words! Each of us has experienced their power and know the assumptions, thoughts, and emotions they can produce. Words, such as God, father, liberal or gay, carry with them some baggage based on life experiences. Likewise, words used in our church settings, carry many preconceived ideas and unspoken expectations. These words have been forged and molded by our family and social experiences, refined and tailored by our religious and political bias. Generally, our definitions and assumptions are rather harmless. However, if they are not defined accurately, they can hinder us from moving into all that God has

planned. Therefore, in order to “remove the dross” from our definitions, I will attempt to provide a definition to the words which are central to our topic. These definitions are in no way exhaustive, but simply thoughts from my own reading and meditation.

Worship

In many church traditions the understanding of worship is that time on Sunday morning when believers get together and move through a progression of events called a “worship service.” Many people feel that because they have participated in this service, they have worshipped.

STRAIGHT GOD, CROOKED PEOPLE

reject His divine grace, yet He would not deprive those who would believe and receive all that He has prepared for them.

What wisdom and intelligence is evidenced throughout creation! Not only should we be in awe over God's omnipotence and omniscience, but as humankind, we need to let the Holy Spirit reveal His holiness. It is in contrast to His perfection that we stand condemned.

Holiness seen in Judgment

There are those in our day who question eternal punishment, attempting to reason that God's mercy would not allow for anything as unloving as the fulfillment of such Scriptures as: “The soul that sins shall surely die” (Ezekiel 18:20) and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Their humanistic reasoning brings sympathy into the argument. But sympathy has nothing to do with it. The Lord is holy, anything contrary to His perfection compromises His holiness. To use a human illustration, fire and ice are incompatible no matter how lovingly one might attempt to unite the two. Either the fire will consume the ice, or the ice will put out the fire.

The holiness of God is a description of what He is — perfect in all His ways. When God says, “Be ye holy, even as I am holy,” that is a description of God's

requirement for fellowship. Mercy is not a part of God's holiness. Mankind's imperfection is totally incompatible with God. To grant mercy on the basis of God's holiness would be like declaring that two plus two equals five. This is something even God cannot do. Not because He is powerless, but because we are asking God to alter a truth that is already correct. God is holy. All that God can agree to is straight and upright. All that is crooked or bent is unacceptable to Him. “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

Holiness seen in Sacrifice

Therefore, every son of Adam is declared worthy of eternal punishment in hell. All mankind stands condemned. It is necessary for God Himself, as He did on Mt. Moriah for Abraham, to provide for Himself a second Adam — sinless and worthy to take the place of the unfit sacrifices of sinful man. Jesus is that Adam. Jesus alone is worthy. Jesus, alone, is worthy to join the Father — sinless and holy.

Far better is the perfect sacrifice than the futile attempts of sinful mankind to meet the demands of God. Far better to depend upon Jesus for our salvation, than to hope for mercy.



our worship

That, however, may or may not be the case. It is this misinterpretation of worship that has been the frustration and concern of many a pastor. Worship is not something we do only on Sunday morning, but it is to be a lifestyle, permeating and influencing every part of our lives.

Let's look at the Old Testament for a moment. Many of us have labored over the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy because we see them as tedious, legalistic and irrelevant. However, if we view them correctly, we will see the foundation of a beautifully well structured, God-centered society. A religious community and government designed to affect every area of life from worship, the family, marriage, divorce, immigration, welfare, and moral conduct is described. Worship was to be central for the Jews and was clearly evident by the physical placement of the tabernacle and the temple in their midst. These books give us a clear understanding of how our love and devotion for God should affect every aspect of our lives.

Looking a little closer, we see that the simplest definition of worship for the Christian means to "attribute worth." It recognizes the intrinsic value and worthiness of our Creator. It acknowledges His unsearchable greatness and character. The nature of worship is active, not passive, and by its very definition requires a response! The actual Hebrew and Greek words given for "worship" literally mean to "bow down or prostrate one's self." It is a physical expression of honor and humility, a realization of who we are before the Almighty God.

Holiness

Holiness, likewise, carries with it certain assumptions. For many it is easier to describe what holiness isn't. Common "vices" include drinking, dancing, smoking, listening to rock music or going to movies. To others it means "righteous" activities such as praying, singing in the choir or teaching Sunday school.

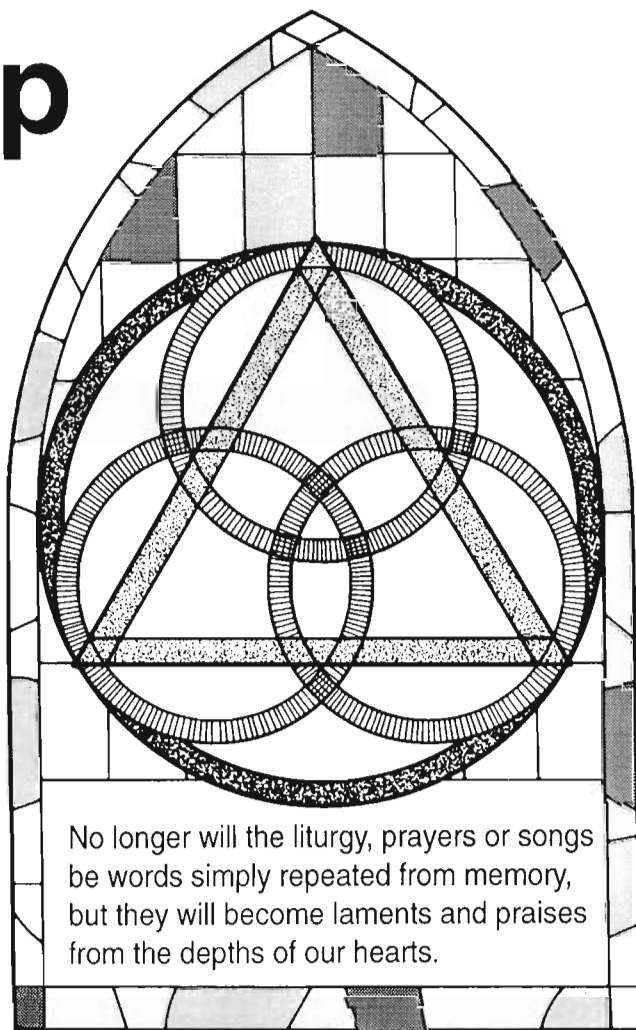
In the Sermon on the Mount and throughout His ministry, Jesus clearly

differentiated between outward actions and heart attitude, with the Scribes and Pharisees often being His object lesson. These religious elite were masters of outward fanfare, but as Jesus said "they were whitewashed tombs with dead men's bones inside" (Matthew 23:27). Holiness is not something we do outwardly, but something we are inwardly.

In relationship to God, Judson Cornwall says "the biblical understanding of holiness includes the broad sphere of dread, terror, awe, reverence, and fear. God is viewed as awesome and terrible and the shades of meaning that the contexts provide speak of majesty, sublimity, augustness and reverence."¹ But how will this affect our worship?

Holiness and Worship

One encounter with God's holiness is found in Exodus 3, when Moses saw the burning bush. (In the Bible fire is often →



Let's teach children the holiness of God

"Do you remember," asked my sister Tamar, "how Dad gathered the family for healing prayer for Olga?" Our baby sister was gravely ill. We moved her little bed by the living room bay window where she could get extra light and warmth from the sun.

I was a toddler at the time and my memories of that incident may be more from photos and stories, but the thought of that living room evokes many memories.

— Mrs. Maria Holt
Hope Free Lutheran
Ishpeming, Michigan

That large bay window had lace curtains partly hiding the old green window shades with "runs" in them which I

deplored. It was the spot where a live tree stood in all its splendor each Christmas. The room was where we gathered before the gift opening to hear the story of Jesus' birth and to sing Christmas carols. The six of us gathered there daily for devotions before going to school. There the upright piano stood ready to be played for piano lessons, family singing, children's choir and adult choir. Into that humble parsonage sitting room, our father invoked the presence of almighty God who mercifully answered the prayer: our baby sister was healed.

Teach it by example



How do we teach our children God's holiness? It's an awesome topic. I asked Pastor Merle and Ardys Knutson and my family, "How have you learned the holiness of God?" Every one pointed to their parents. Their way of life taught us by example each day.

God's holiness was not so much taught as "caught." One remarked, "You have to believe something yourself in order to


HOLINESS AND WORSHIP

synonymous with God's holiness and judgment, denoting cleansing and purifying.) God's presence was unapproachable and the ground nearby was "holy." Holiness in its simplest definition is to be "set apart."

In Isaiah 6:1-7 the prophet saw God clothed in splendor and majesty. Immediately, Isaiah recognized his "smallness" compared to God's "greatness" and his "uncleanness" compared to God's "holiness and purity." Isaiah did not try to justify himself, but called upon God's mercy.

In the New Testament we see Saul on the Damascus road overcome by God's glory. This encounter changed the course of his life, making the good news available to the Gentiles.

When we encounter God's holiness and majesty, we will see ourselves as God sees us and have nowhere to run but to Him. The secrets of our life will be open before Him and our cry will be like that of Isaiah's: "Woe is me ... I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people

of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). The work of the cross will take on new and fresh meaning, and our personal and corporate worship will take flight as our grateful heart soars to meet Him. No longer will the liturgy, prayers or songs be words simply repeated from memory, but they will become laments and praises from the depths of our heart. Let's consecrate ourselves to God and worship the Lord together in the beauty of His holiness! 

'Let Us Be Holy' by Judson Cornwall, pg. 17.

Larry is currently on staff with Youth with a Mission in Montana where he has been for the past 11 years. He is on the Leadership Council of the mission and is the Director of the Performing and Fine Arts Division, and leads international music teams. He is also on the Ad Hoc Committee for the University of the Nations, College of the Arts.

He attended the Lutheran Bible Institute in Seattle in 1972 and '73 and was Founder and President of Shekinah Ministries, a non-profit music ministry from 1977-83.

teach it." No sermon is as profound as the daily life of a Christian parent.

No parent says, "Today I am going to teach the holiness of God!" When one has experienced God's transformation, one becomes aware of God's holiness because the eyes are opened to see our own desperate state of unholiness. When the gospel "hits home," the miracle of holiness begins. All wrapped up in God's holiness is His love. We can't stand all that holiness until we submit to it and accept Jesus when He reaches out to us day by day. Truly amazing is His love — truly a miracle.

Teach it through music



One of the Hope Free Lutheran choir's favorite numbers is *Pure and Holy*. Two of our young members sing:

*Pure and holy I would be
Teach me while your light is clear
Change me while my heart is near
Holy, Holy Lord.*

The adults close in four-part harmony, "Holy, holy, holy Lord."

Great composers and hymns writers contribute so much to our learning about God — from the simple "Jesus Loves Me" to Handel's "Messiah." In our family, music is the easiest and most enjoyable way to bring home the truths of God. My husband and I learned many of the same songs as children. We still love them and enjoy singing them at family gatherings.

As the psalmist wrote, we like to "sing a new song." Listening to Scripture music tapes helps children and adults focus on who our Lord is, what He wants to do and what He has already done. The lyrics from Scripture give strength, peace, joy and a sense of His abiding presence.

The Holy Spirit uses music to speak and teach whenever one takes the time to listen. A practical, fun way to create such a time at church would be to have a series of Scripture and song services using a different attribute of God at each service. The first could be on God's holiness with a related Scripture followed by songs on the same theme. Then another Scripture and more songs. There are enough attributes for one such service a month without exhausting the supply of related Scripture or music.

Teach it through worship



If all we know of God's holiness is by seeing the gospel lived out in a person's life and by the Holy Spirit teaching us through music, our education is incomplete. **We need the experience of worship.**

My husband and I are grateful that in our childhood, worship was taken for granted. There was not discussion about whether we felt like going or whether we preferred doing something else. Psalm 99:9 exhorts us to, "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy."

We, His children, need the spiritual food. We need corporate confession and absolution. We need to partake of His Body and Blood. We also need the fellowship of believers, the time to acknowledge His sovereignty, and the teaching from His Word.

One day, as a pre-teen, I asked Dad if my friends and I could play church in church. He thought we wanted to play in church. We explained to him that we wanted to have our own church service. Then, of course, permission was granted. So we sang lustily, had Scripture and prayer, and I don't remember who had the sermon, but it was a meaningful time of worship. Perhaps it would be good to have our Sunday school children plan a service now and then to use some Sunday morning.

The church of my childhood, Bethany Lutheran in Republic, Michigan, is a sanctuary that by its careful architecture creates an attitude of worship. But, be it our favorite church, a great cathedral or a grass hut, Jesus promises to be where two or three are gathered in His name.

*O God, thou art my God; early
will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee,
my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and
thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy
power and thy glory, so as I have seen
thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lov-
ingkindness is better than life, my lips
shall praise thee.*

— Psalm 63:1-3

By God's grace, let us teach it to our children.



God expects
us to
worship.
He
deserves it.



PEOPLE AND PLACES



Underwood, Minnesota — Tordenskjold Free Lutheran Church celebrated their 125th Anniversary on July 7, 1996. The congregation's pastor, David Skordahl, preached at the morning worship service. During the afternoon anniversary program, AFLC President Robert Lee gave the message. The service included a video presentation titled "Tordenskjold Through the Years." Former pastors Wendell Johnson and Merle Fagerberg brought greetings. Guests came from six states outside of Minnesota. Former member Bertha Kvilvang Arnold, 96, from California and Sylvia Molstre of nearby Fergus Falls, were special guests. Sylvia is the widow of the late Pastor Harry C. Molstre who served the congregation from 1965-69.

The congregation was organized in 1871, and their first synodical connection was with the early Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference. In 1915, they began fellowship with the Lutheran Free Church and in 1963, became a charter member of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. All services were conducted in Norwegian until

1924, when they added some English-speaking services. After 1937, all services were conducted in English.

Tordenskjold is part of the Kvam and Zion-Sarpsborg Lutheran Parish in Dalton, Minnesota. The present membership is 254, and is served by Pastor David Skordahl and David Foss, youth pastor.

Pastor Tim Skramstad, Zumbrota, Minnesota, was the recipient of the Army's Legion of Merit at a ceremony following the Sunday worship services on July 28 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. Presenting the award was Colonel John Jones, 5th Recruiting Brigade Commander, of Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Colonel Jones was assisted by Command Sergeant Major Roger LeTourneau, also of Fort Sam Houston.

Pastor David Johnson, Ortle, South Dakota, is serving as interim pastor of Calvary Lutheran in Wallace, South Dakota, along with his ministry at Ortle Lutheran. Calvary was served by Pastor Ted Berkas until his retirement earlier this summer.

Eldrid Galland Welander, 79, Wadena, Minnesota, passed away at her home on August 10, 1996. Funeral services were held at Zion Lutheran in Wadena on August 13, with Pastors Todd Klemme and Fred Carlson officiating. She was married to Chester Galland from 1936 until his death in 1987. In 1991, she married Clarence Welander. Her survivors include her husband; a son, Pastor Les Galland, Everett, Washington; two daughters, Bethel Erickson, New York Mills, Minnesota, and Marjorie Demsky, Eagan, Minnesota; two step-children, Kenny Welander and Linda Guyatt, both of Oakes, North Dakota.

Mrs. Barb Stueland, Roseau, Minnesota, has resigned from her position on the Board of Publications and Parish Education. She has served on the board since 1989, and was in her second five-year term.

Mr. Clifford Johnson, Esko, Minnesota, has resigned from his position on the Commission on Evangelism where he has served since 1994. **Mr. Gene Quist**, Bloomington, Minnesota, has been appointed to fill that position until an election can be held at the 1997 Annual Conference.

Newark, Illinois — On July 2 and 10, the West Lisbon Lutheran youth group, Heirforce, entertained on several farms two bus loads from Aurora's Wayside Cross' Urban Youth Ministry program. They experienced for the first time life on a farm and even milked cows. Coach Don Davidson led a residential basketball camp and shared the gospel of Jesus Christ. Several youth came to know the Lord as their personal Savior.

Meet two of our Indian national workers



My name is Karunamma Bezzam, and I am a Bible Woman. I come from the village of Komali in Ponur in the Guntur

district of India. I was born August 7, 1947. I studied at school until the sixth grade and at the age of fifteen, I married Asheervadam Bezzam. Because of a fainting illness he left me and married another woman. Many servants of God prayed for me, and by God's grace, after suffering for three years with this illness, I was healed.

From that point on I committed my life to serving God. As I was praying on August 17, 1968, I heard the voice of the Lord say to me, "My daughter, I have set you apart for My service." I neglected to listen. Days later as I was going to work, I had an attack of paralysis. I was afraid, and while I was confined to my bed, once again I heard the voice of the Lord say, "Karuna, do My work."

I invited some pastors to my house and told them what had happened. They told me that I had heard God's call. Since then I have obeyed and devoted my life to the Lord's service. He has healed me of the paralysis.

Since 1983, I have been working with the BFLC (AFLC in India) leading the congregation at Karamchedu. We have a church building and a total of 98 members. By the grace of God our ministry is going well. Please keep us in your prayers.

Curitiba, Brazil — Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson are leading new member classes in both the Bateias and São Braz churches. Sarah meets each Tuesday with one of the young women from the Bateias congregation to help her prepare the ladies' Bible study. Patricia will be able to continue with the lessons when the Nelsons leave Curitiba. Also the Bateias congregation is hosting literacy classes, using the Gospel of Matthew as the primary text.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

I am Pastor Yesupadam Palles Konda. My home village is Noothakhi at Mangalagiri (Mandal) in the Guntur district of India. My wife is Elishamma and we have three children. They are all married and are good believers in Jesus Christ.

Before I was born, my parents did not have a son. They prayed for a baby boy. Out of thankfulness, when I was born, my parents dedicated me for the Lord's service. I studied in school until the 10th grade. After that I went to study and work with Rev. K. Manoharam, who was an evangelist. I was trained under his leadership for ten years. After that I worked as an evangelist for nineteen years.

By the grace of our Lord in the year 1986, I joined with the BFLC. Ever since I have been working with the congregation at Bapatla. My congregation has a total of sixty members, twenty of whom are baptized. Our ministries include Sunday school, youth gatherings, and women's meetings. By the grace of God and through your prayers our ministry is going well.

Pastor Yesupadam is currently receiving one-half unit of monthly support. Karunamma receives a full unit of monthly support, or \$30. You or your church organization can sponsor one of our 30 Indian national workers. You will receive their picture and testimony and will be encouraged to keep in contact with their ministry. Contact the AFLC World Mission office at 3110 East Medicine Lk. Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441 or call (612) 545-5631.

Missionary Paul and Becky Abel and family are living near Amery, Wisconsin, until their return to Brazil after Christmas. Their address is %Lowell Penz, 786 Wapo Lake Dr., Amery, Wisconsin 54001. Phone (715) 268-4590.

Missionary candidate Sonja Dahl

is applying again for her visa at the Brazilian Consulate in Chicago. Sonja said, "It's just one small detail in God's plan. I know His timing is right." She continues to work on deputation and may be contacted at the World Missions office - (612) 545-5631.

Youth Notes

Branson, Missouri — St. Paul's Lutheran Church is seeking a full-time youth worker. For more information contact Pastor Kevin Olson at (612) 545-5631.

Don't miss your fall youth rally

Central Minnesota — October 25-26 at Faith Haven Bible Camp.

Eastern North Dakota — October 17-18 at Grace Lutheran in Valley City.

South Dakota — October 19-20 at the Holiday Inn Centre in Sioux Falls.

Two Minnesota congregations celebrate centennial year

Winger, Minnesota

The Union Lake congregation was organized on January 18, 1896. Rev. S.E. Sorenson was elected chairman of the meeting at the Schoolhouse District No. 114, at which time they named the congregation and chose Pastor Sorenson to be their pastor. He had been holding services for some time in the schoolhouse.

The following year, two acres of land was purchased to be used for a cemetery lot. In March, 1902, a building committee was authorized to buy building materials and construction began that summer.

A used steeple was purchased later and with no small difficulty was moved from a distance to be raised on its new home. A bell had been obtained but was not installed out of fear that the steeple could not support it. The bell was stored and later disappeared. Recently a bell was given as a memorial and is now resonating over the countryside on Sunday mornings. Over the years improvements have been made.

In 1962, when the Lutheran Free Church (LFC) voted to merge with the American Lutheran Church, Union Lake voted to withdraw from the LFC. It became a member of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. For a time Union Lake made up a three-point parish with Dovre and Maple Bay. It is now part of a two-point parish with Dovre and is located west of Winger along County Road 39.

On July 27-28, 1996, Union Lake celebrated its centennial year. It began with a Memorial Service at the Union Lake Cemetery with former Pastor Lloyd Bjornlie speaking, fol-

lowed by a fellowship time at the church. At 9 a.m. on Sunday, a fellowship hour began the day. The Centennial Worship Service followed with former Pastor Roy Johnson giving the message. Former Pastor Lloyd Bjornlie and Interim Gilmore Karavold also participated. After the dinner, former Pastor Bruce Dalager opened the afternoon program with Scripture and prayer. Deacon Bill Du Rose was the master of ceremonies. The afternoon was filled with greetings and special music. Currently, Pastor Harris Van Someren is serving the congregation.

The congregation is thankful to God for sustaining it through the past 100 years. To Him be the praise, honor and glory for all that has been accomplished. They go forward knowing that His sustaining grace will continue as they enter the next century of service to Him.

Badger, Minnesota

Spirits were high as Badger Creek Free Lutheran Church members began their centennial anniversary weekend on August 3-4, 1996. The theme was "Celebrating 100 Years of God's Grace" from Ephesians 1:7-8. Approximately 175-200 people passed through the church doors throughout the festivities.

The Confirmation Banquet on Saturday evening opened the weekend activities. Lay pastor Martin Christensen, Elbow, Saskatchewan, and a former pastor spoke to a large crowd. Many former confirmands shared along with taking a history/confirmation quiz.

On Sunday morning, AFLC President Robert Lee shared from God's Word on the importance of remembering the heritage passed on before us. After the noon dinner, the Anniversary Service concluded the weekend. Son of the



Pictured are special guests at the anniversary weekend including the families of current and former pastors of Badger Creek. Back row, (L. to R.): Pastor Raynard and Erling Huglen, Pastor Alvin Grothe, Susan Nordvall Mellstrom, AFLC President Robert Lee and Pastor Alan Arneson. Front row: Valborg Huglen, Rhoda Huglen, Cordelia Agrimson, Loretta Grothe, Arlene and Pastor Martin Christensen and Lisa Arneson.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

congregation and now retired Pastor Alvin Grothe spoke. Numerous musical selections and greetings were shared.

Other highlights of the weekend were the nearly completed Confirmation Display, the commemoratives and the heirloom table filled with historical items and pictures. Covered wagon rides were offered on Sunday.

It was a great time of seeing God's people come together with a servant spirit. May God be praised as the congregation reaches out to share the love of Jesus Christ and moves into its next one hundred years!

Badger Creek Lutheran was organized on November 26, 1896. Pastor J.L. Bestul was elected chairman of this free congregation without union. Voting members were men, 21 years of age. Among the first items of business was to name the church and to appoint a committee to find a cemetery. The following spring, Badger Creek joined a parish consisting of Emmanuel, Roselund, and Hvidson congregations. In 1898, the congregation met in the Badger Schoolhouse. Later a man

was hired at \$5 a year to keep the schoolhouse clean and warm and have water for any baptism.

In 1906, a lot was purchased for \$125. The following offer from B. Vestness was given, "To build the church complete, to be along and advise how the form for the concrete foundation should be put up, to finish the ceiling and floor, to oil and varnish the ceiling, put two coats of paint on the outside and build the chimney for the sum of \$630." The first annual meeting was held in the new church in December, 1906.

In 1965, the church, now with a basement and furnace, was extensively damaged by fire and an explosion of fumes and dust. Repairs were made and later running water was added. At that time the congregation was one of seven churches in the parish.

In 1987, Badger Creek and Oiland Lutheran began plans to build a parsonage and call their own pastor. In 1992 the church completed a beautiful addition to the church sanctuary and basement. They are served by Pastor Alan Arneson.

Newark, Illinois — West Lisbon Lutheran youth group and congregation experienced the loss of their dear friend, Matt Kinsella, who died as the result of a tragic accident on June 22.

Kasson, Minnesota — For one of their summer meetings, Mt. Sion Lutheran Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) held a baby shower for a crisis pregnancy center in nearby Rochester. A representative from the New Life Home shared about the ministry at the shower. Several area WMFs were invited to participate.

Pastor David Abel, North Royalton, Ohio, returned on August 24, from two weeks of meetings with Evangelism Explosion in São Paulo, Brazil. He also made a brief visit to his former congregation in Vitoria and traveled back to the U.S. with a Brazilian student coming to AFLBS for the 1996-'97 school year.

Aguascalientes, Mexico — The Dan Giles and Todd Schierkolk families are thanking God who answered their prayers for Ernesto and Berta who recently prayed to receive Christ. Pray for their growth in the Lord and for restoration of a broken family relationship. They praise the Lord for a wonderful time with the Partners in Mission Outreach workers who ministered with them in August. The mission team helped prepare the Springs of Living Water Church for the first wedding to held in that building. Missionary Schierkolk said: "We were delighted with the group that came down. They came with such a willing spirit to work and do anything we needed."



Missionaries Barb Schierkolk and Debbie Giles preparing Easter breakfast at Springs of Living Water Church.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Alison Mellgren, 25, McIntosh, Minnesota, is the new dean of women at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School (AFLBS). After graduating from AFLBS in 1991, she was a student at North Dakota State University in Fargo, North Dakota, for two years. During 1994-'95, she served as the youth director at Bethany Lutheran in Astoria, Oregon. Most recently she was employed and living in McIntosh, where her father, Pastor Dale Mellgren, serves Trinity and Mt. Carmel Lutheran.

"Earlier in the summer I sensed God's call to go back to full-time Christian ministry," Alison reported, "so I gave my name to Youth Director, Pastor Kevin Olson. I love to work with young people and enjoyed the experience in Astoria. A short time later, Pastor Jim Johnson asked me to consider the dean of women's position at AFLBS. I know it was the Lord, who really had to tug on me, calling even though I had in mind something else. Now with a week to go before school starts, it looks like I'll have 62 young women moving in and filling this dormitory."

Lutheran Brotherhood IMPACT money received

AFLBS received \$7,760 for the second quarter of 1996, from the Member Matching Gift program. The latest payment matches 85 gifts of \$25 to \$100 made by Lutheran Brotherhood members. Since the program began in 1979, AFLBS has received \$122,676.

Pastor Scott Gray's new address is 3601 Center Point Road NE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402. His phone number is 319-378-4831. He is working for Parsons Technology in the Church Division as a software developer.

Gospel teams conclude summer ministries

Five summer ministry teams from the Association Free Lutheran Bible School traveled safely 37,000 miles. However, last August, a team van was broken into and \$2,000 worth of musical instruments and equipment was stolen. All but \$600 was replaced by insurance. This expense will have to be borne by the students unless assistance is provided. Pray for the team and that the testimony shared in word and life by each team will bear fruit.

Pastor Del Palmer recently began serving Faith Lutheran in Shakopee, Minnesota.

Pastor Harlan Johnson of Newark, Illinois, has accepted the call to St. Paul's Lutheran in Jewell, Iowa. He was with the AALC and is now entering a colloquy program with the AFLC.

Pastor Glen Larson of Erskine, Minnesota, has accepted the call to Living Faith Free Lutheran of Larimore, North Dakota. He was chaplain of Pioneer Home in Erskine and is on the roster of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. He will also be serving Middle Grove Lutheran of Mekinock, North Dakota.

Upsala, Minnesota — Word of Life Lutheran began worshipping in their new facility on July 14, and held their dedication service on September 15, 1996. The congregation, organized in 1988, was a Home Mission church. The building site outside of town had been previously purchased and several years ago the congregation built a parsonage on it. Pastor Jon Benson serves the congregation.

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran of Morris, Illinois will host a revival conference on Friday, October 18 through Sunday, October 20. The theme is "The Kind of Revival We Need." The phone number for the church which is served by Pastor Steve Lombardo is 815-942-1145.

Edinburgh, North Dakota — Grace Free Lutheran will host the Eastern North Dakota District Fall WMF Rally on Saturday, October 5, 1996. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. The theme is "Jesus — Name Above All Names," from Phillippians 2:9. Pastor Harvey Jackson from Hatton will be the morning Bible Study leader and Miss Sonja Dahl, missionary candidate to Brazil, will also share in the afternoon.

Memorial Gifts

July, 1996

Name	Given by	Department
Cornell Peterson and Edwin/Alida Peterson	M/M Bruce Peterson	World Missions
Joseph Flaaen	Valborg Hedman	AFLBS
Owen Fosland and Eldoris Mungold	Kenneth/Mary Nash	Home Missions
Connie Grothe	Pastor/Mrs. L. Dynneson	General Fund
	Luther/Adeline Monson	Home Missions
	Robert/Cathy Maurer	World Missions
Marlys Swanson and Mavis Lofthus	Kathy Knutson	Miriam Home
Sophie Gislason and Clarence Stites	Gordon/Gladys Rugland	AFLBS
Ed Odegard	Pastor/Mrs. Robert Lee	AFLTS
Luther Klug	Lyle/Ellen Fox	AFLBS
Henry Hoel	Wanda Jacobson	Schools
Erling Johnson	Harvey/Myrtle Dyrud	AFLBS
	Debbie Beaman	Home Missions

Is He safe?

In the first book of the Chronicles of Narnia series, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, C. S. Lewis creates a Christ-like character named Aslan. The children are about to meet him, but before doing so they ask some questions.

"Is — is he a man?" asked Lucy.

"Aslan a man?" said Mr. Beaver sternly. 'Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea. Don't you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion — *the* Lion, the great Lion.'

"Ooh!" said Susan, 'I'd thought he was a man. Is he — quite safe. I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.'

"That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver, 'if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly.'

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. '... Who said anything about safe? Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.'

Our old nature at times longs for a God who is safe, understandable, a lot like us and one whose actions we can predict and control. Some succumb to this temptation and the result is God is portrayed as a good, kind, grandfatherly-type of being who lives far away in heaven, visits once in a while, gives out toys and tells nice stories.

That is not the God of the Bible. The true God is holy and almighty. He is unlike any other. He cannot be tamed and ordered around by mere men. He makes knees knock. "He's the King, I tell you."

Thinking about this aspect of the nature of God is disturbing. He isn't safe, but He is set apart. He isn't entirely explainable, but He is exalted and eternal. He isn't predictable as much as He is powerful. He isn't One that we control, but the One who controls the universe and our lives.

Thinking about the holiness of God should "disturb" us into action and change.

The prophet Isaiah "saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted." He heard the cry,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." He was then convicted of his sin, received forgiveness and presented himself for God's service saying, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:1-8, NIV). It all began with a vision of the greatness of God.

In a similar way the prophet Ezekiel saw the incredible "appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezekiel 1:28, NIV). He then received and obeyed the call to go to the people and say, "This is what the Sovereign Lord says" (Ezekiel 3:11, NIV). The obedience came after a vision of God, holy, exalted and above all others.

The main theme of the book of Leviticus is a call to God's people to live lives that are holy and set apart. It is a call based on the fact that the Lord our God is holy (Leviticus 19:2). The call would be meaningless apart from that truth. It is that truth that gives great power and motivation to the call.

Many of us long to see more holiness and obedience to God's Word demonstrated in our lives and the lives of others. We struggle with the reality of failure often seeming to be more prevalent than victory. We wonder

what can be done. We think maybe more instruction on what to do and tips on how to do it is the answer. We try threats and warnings. They work for a time and in a way but the effect is not what we wish for.

Those things have their place but they cannot supersede the first step in growing in holiness, which is growing in our understanding of the holiness of God. Greater victory comes from a greater vision of our victorious Lord. Our faithfulness increases when we grow in our knowledge of His faithfulness. We will live more like the prophets did when we have more of an understanding of the nature of God like the prophets had.

Let us not try to tame God but let us worship and exalt Him. Let us gaze upon Him in His greatness and honor Him in His holiness and, by doing so, be changed by Him in surprising and wonderful ways.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

Let us not try
to tame God
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BUILDING THE BASE

Can I be holy?

It is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." I Peter 1:16

The voice that calls us to holiness is that of a holy God. Exalted above all things and without any limitations in His moral excellence, He strikes fear and awe in the hearts of those who begin to know who He is. (See Isaiah's response in Isaiah 6:5.) Not only does He lack any kind of imperfection; He possesses in an absolute sense everything good and pure as God defines goodness and purity. So He is elevated above all else that exists, vastly superior in every way. As such a God, He calls us to be holy.

At first we might complain about our assignment. If God is above all in moral excellence how can I climb to that height? In addition, since He is infinite in holiness I, limited as I am, cannot fully know what the word holy even involves, and, if I cannot describe it how can I attain it? The holiness called for is beyond my ability to achieve.

The voice that calls us to holiness is that of a providing God. Peter (above) quotes from

the writing of Moses in Leviticus 11:44-45 and 19:2. In that same Old Testament book, in addition to calling for holiness, God reveals how the called-for holiness is to be attained. In 20:8; 21:8,15 and 22:9,16,31 God says, "I am the Lord who makes you holy." God does not expect us to attain the holiness called for through our efforts but promises to provide it freely by His grace. The holy God says, "I make holy." The prophet Isaiah realized this truth and rejoiced, "Thou hast performed for us all our works" (Isaiah 26:12).

Your own holiness will always be lacking. Though you with great sincerity and zeal purpose to be holy, even the best of your works will be stained because of the presence of the incorrigibly wicked old nature that is always with you. You may have tried to be holy through this means but you have failed. The call of the holy God to be holy will never be met through your efforts.

But the way to holiness is not closed. God said of Jesus, "This is my Son with whom I am pleased."

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness. The apostle Paul wrote of Him, "He has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, *holiness* and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30). Jesus has been made our holiness! The holy God is satisfied with the holiness of His Son and because of Him, forgives sin and credits holiness to all who believe in Him.

Holiness is achieved through faith in the Holy One, who came to redeem us. "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers" (Hebrews 2:10). Clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:27) we share His holiness. In God's eyes we are as holy as His Son!

May the strength of that gracious promise motivate you to thank, praise, serve and obey your Lord.



— Pastor Bruce Dalager
Trinity Lutheran
Grand Forks, North Dakota