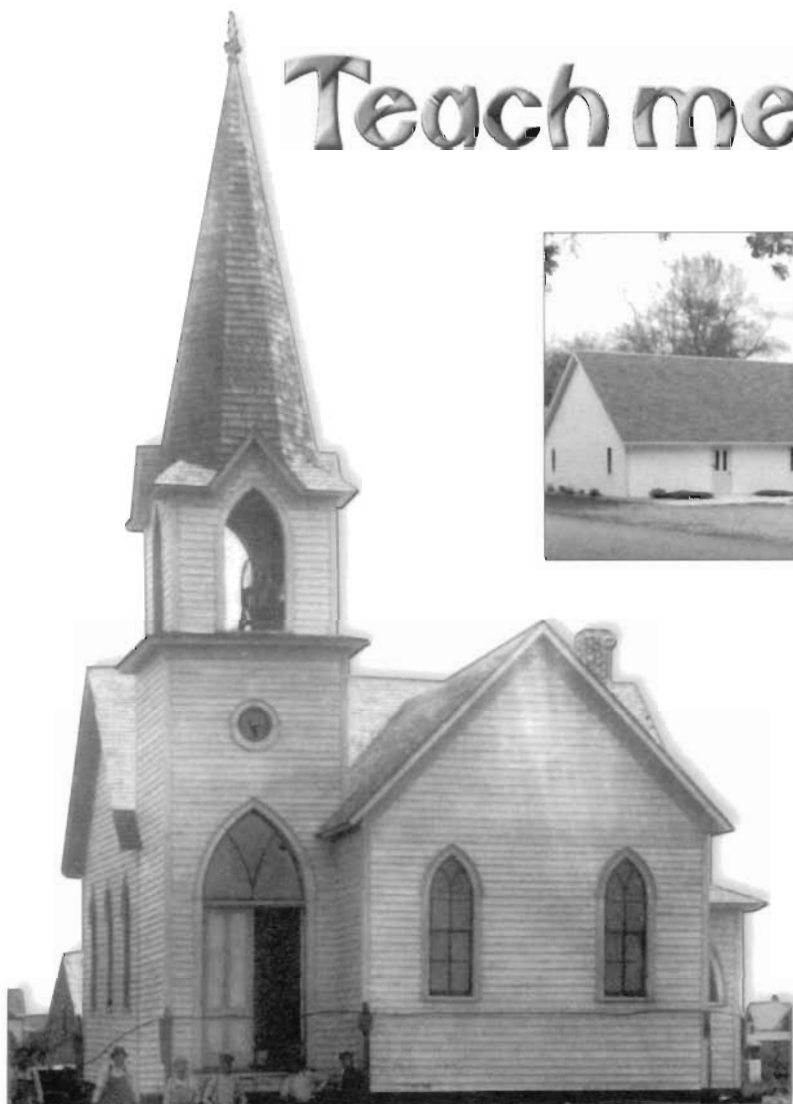


# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

September 25, 2001

Teach me ... Thy ways  
O Lord



## A centennial year 18

Bethany Free Lutheran, Binford, N.D.,  
(above and left) and Calvary Lutheran,  
Everett, Wash., (below) celebrate 100 years.



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How your congregation  
can reach even these.

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

September 25, 2001  
Volume 39, Number 12



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## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

### Blessings from the basics

**T**he confession of sin for morning worship includes the petition "by Your Holy Spirit increase in us ... true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Normally, when we consider obedience to God's Word, we think first of the Ten Commandments, which we study at length during confirmation. Also, we think of other commandments, such as the Great Commission, which calls the church to make disciples of all nations. These and all other commandments of God are in view as this petition is made.

We dare not compare our conduct to that of other professing Christians and think that we are, then, sufficiently obedient to God's Word. The model for the Christian is perfection, according to God, and He has revealed this to us in His Holy law and in His Son. If we strive for less, we sin. True obedience to God's Word includes the continued striving for perfection and honest confession of all in us that isn't.

There is another aspect to this obedience to God's Word. Members of the multitude that followed Jesus asked Him: "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God" (John 6:28). Based solely on what has been previously written, we might expect Jesus to say: "Honor God above all, be good to your neighbor and then go out as a missionary to a foreign land." But Jesus answers otherwise: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (John 6:29).

Obedience to the Word of God includes the gospel. We are not to settle for any type of makeshift

gospel but only for that which leaves us trusting in Christ alone for our righteousness before God.

We hear much about the Ten Commandments being removed from schools and courtrooms, yet we hear little about the pure gospel being removed from churches. Both are equally dangerous, for without the correct application of both law and gospel, God is dishonored and souls are left to perish.

Should we accept and teach a gospel that includes the efforts of man as righteousness, we invite God's curse rather than His blessing. "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

If we rely on our prayers, our tears or our "going forward" at an altar call as being deserving of God's favor, we lose sight of our total depravity as sinners and attempt to substitute our righteousness in place of Christ's.

Our preaching and teaching of the gospel must be as clear and precise as is possible by the grace of God. The utter sinfulness of man must be seen in stark contrast to the holiness of Christ. A true knowledge of the gospel leaves us looking to Jesus' obedience and sacrifice alone, as our hope of righteousness before God.

The gospel is God's great message of grace for sinners. We are responsible to deliver it just as He has given it and trust Him to use it according to His purposes.



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

**1**

Fewer than 10 percent of all born again Christians possess a biblical worldview that informs their thinking and behavior.

— *George Barna*

## Sound Bites

**2**

As big as he is, our God is also intensely personal. He is intimately concerned with the condition of our hearts.

— *Nancy Beach*

**3**

The most costly sins I have committed came at a time when I briefly suspended my reverence for God. In such a moment I quietly (and insanely) concluded that God didn't care and most likely wouldn't intervene were I to risk the violation of one of His commandments.

— *Gordon MacDonald*

**4**

**Children have more need of models than of critics.**

— *Joseph Joubert*

**5**

The Lord brings about spiritual growth sometimes in ways that are frightening to us. Though it is difficult to understand, one may be brought down to nothingness. There is suffering and the feeling of weakness. But in this process Christ increases in us.

— *Carl Rosenius*

**6**

Communication with children may be simple, but it is not easy. That's why skilled communicators concentrate on mastering the basics: listening, time, affection, respect. Good basics are more than enough for excellent communication.

— *Dr. Ray Guarendi*

# From the beginning



## The value and purpose of having opening time for Sunday school

**W**hen asked to write this article, I will confess that I had never really pondered on the value and purpose of opening time. It is something that is just done before every Sunday school session in our church, but why?

The mission statement of our church is "Building Followers of Jesus Christ." This should be the purpose of all Christian churches; therefore, the purpose of opening time is assisting in building followers of Jesus Christ. All that is done aims for that goal. It may be accomplished with an opening song, opening prayer time, Bible stories, flannel graph presentations, underlining of biblical truths, offering, mission emphasis, and singing and learning praises through music.

Sharing the Christian heritage with our children is a special opportunity and challenge for each of us. Satan is always on the prowl, seeking ways to entice these children away from the Lord. The challenge of the

Christian Church is to reinforce biblical truths and the love and grace of God and His Son, Jesus.

Prayer time consists of a short opening

prayer asking for God's guidance and presence throughout the class and worship times. Students and teachers are asked for specific prayer requests. Many prayers went up this past year for Aaron Johnson of Stanley, N.D. (son of Pastor Rodney and Candace Johnson). We kept the kids informed of Aaron's progress. This was also a means of emphasizing to children the

importance of remembering others in their prayers and concerns.

The Bible stories or flannel graphs are often based on the season of the year. For some of the Bible stories, we learn music that goes along with the story, which helps the students remember what has been taught. This past year we studied and memorized Psalm 23 and later presented that in church at a worship service.

Special offerings are taken each month for a mission project in addition to the regular Sunday morning offering, which is taken during the opening time. Missionary families are often emphasized, and the children make special pictures and cards in class that are sent to different missionaries (this is in conjunction with the WMF projects of our

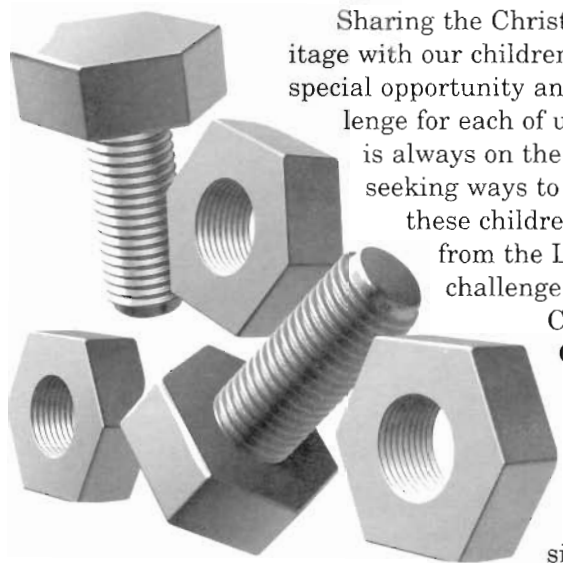
church). Children need to learn about these missionaries and their service to their Lord and Savior and the sacrifices that are made by these missionaries when they serve so far away from home.

Music is a very important part of our opening time. The children sing at wor-

---

**'Remind them that their best friend is Jesus and that the love and grace of God will never fail and will always be there.'**

---



# ... On

ship services several times throughout the year, and this is the time to learn these songs. Hymns are learned and studied, as well as choruses and other children's Christian songs. It is so important to learn hymns and their origin and the meaning of the stanzas. Many children attend public school, and they are not allowed to learn the beautiful Christmas carols and other music with a spiritual theme. Hymns are not too difficult for children to learn. I remember a 4-year-old girl named Hannah who knew every stanza of "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus." She is now about 16 years old, but she still probably remembers the words. Music is one of the greatest gifts our God has given us, and what a privilege to worship and praise Him with music and song inspired by Him. Memorization of Scripture and music can never be taken away from us.

Be encouraged. Continue teaching children to be missionaries and disciples wherever they are. Remind them that their best friend is Jesus and that the love and grace of God will never fail and will always be there. Teach them that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God from cover to cover.

One of my favorite choruses, which the children and adults of our church have been taught, is: "Let the Lord have His way, in your life every day, there's no rest, there's no peace, until the Lord has His way. Place your life in His hand, rest secure in his plan, let the Lord, let the Lord have His way."

— **Marion Anderson**  
**Bethel Lutheran**  
**Minot, N.D.**



# One man's mission

**I**n the late 1700s, one Englishman sought to overcome poverty, crime and a lack of morals with one program: Sunday school.

Robert Raikes, who lived from 1735 to 1811, is commonly credited with the foundation of Sunday school, a program first meant to get ragamuffin bands of unruly children off of the streets of Gloucester on Sundays — the only day of the week these poor children had off from work.

Raikes knew the parents of the poor children were "totally abandoned themselves, having no idea of instilling into the minds of their children principles to which they themselves were entire strangers."

Raikes strove to teach the children how to read. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., four teachers gave reading lessons. After a break for lunch, the children would go to catechism class until 5:30 p.m.

As the publisher of the *Gloucester Journal*, Raikes not only had his own means to promote the schools and gather public support through editorials, he also was able to publish, import and distribute primers, readers, spelling books, catechisms and copies of Scripture.

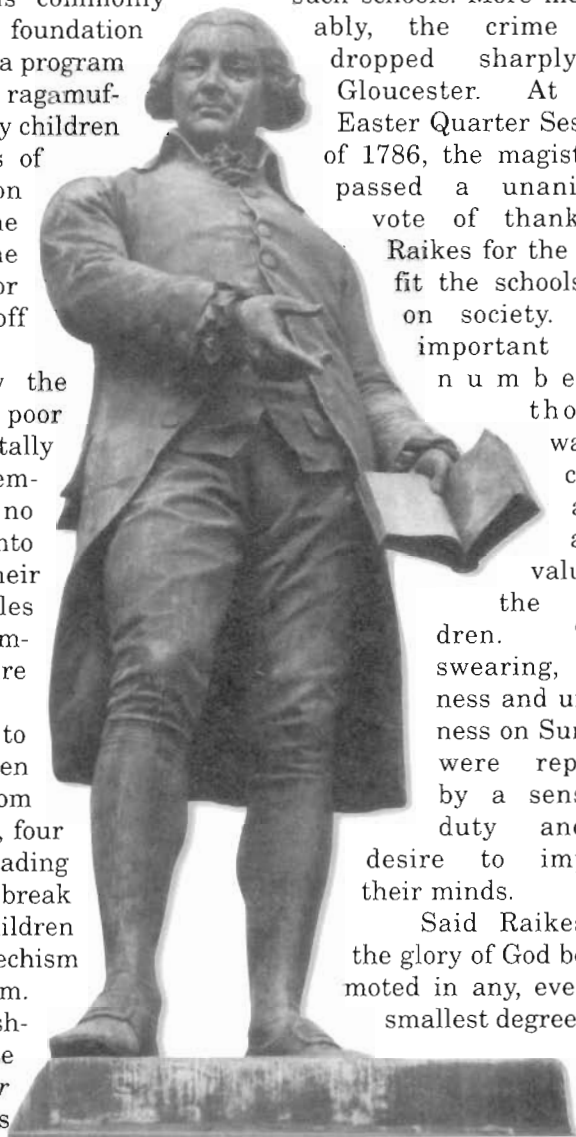
By 1785, a non-denomination-

al and national organization called the Sunday School Society had been formed in London.

The results were astounding. By 1851, three quarters of working class children were attending such schools. More measurably, the crime rate dropped sharply in Gloucester. At the Easter Quarter Sessions of 1786, the magistrates passed a unanimous vote of thanks to Raikes for the benefit the schools had on society. More important than numbers, though, was the character and values of the children. Their swearing, rudeness and unruliness on Sundays were replaced by a sense of duty and a desire to improve their minds.

Said Raikes: "If the glory of God be promoted in any, even the smallest degree, society

must reap some benefit. If the good seed be sown in the mind at an early period of human life though it shows itself not again for many years, it may please God, at some future period, to cause it to spring up, and to bring forth a plentiful harvest."





# *An exceptional child*



## **How your church can reach even these**

**E**veryone is born with special gifts or talents given to them by our Creator. One gift I have always admired in people is the gift of patience. After I became a mother, I especially admired the gift of patience, which I noticed in other mothers with many young children at their feet. I tried to emulate that virtue as I saw it in these women, and I felt like I was making progress. That is, until our second child grew into his toddler years.

We noticed early on that there was some-

thing different about Aidan. We couldn't quite put our fingers on it. Aidan had a sweet disposition, yet there were differences between him and other children his age, and they increasingly became apparent.

By age 4, Aidan had been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and was involved in a social and communication early childhood education program in our local school district. While in preschool, the physical education teacher pointed out the physical delays that Aidan was still having compared to the other children his age; so we sought a

medical diagnosis. After weeks of testing, it was determined that Aidan had Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD). When we learned of the eventual fatal outcome of the children with this disease, it cut through our hearts like a knife. We also learned that a small percentage of the boys who are struck with DMD have mild mental retardation, and our Aidan fell into this small percentage.

We couldn't help but wonder why God chose to give us a child like Aidan. Was he trying to teach us to appreciate all the little moments that we have together? Was God trying to teach us to love each other unconditionally, even if we can't always understand each other? Was God trying to teach us patience? Was God answering a prayer for patience that we had been praying most of our Christian lives? We think all these things are true, and we know He has so much

more to teach us.

Since our son did not learn tasks and concepts in a typical way, like our older daughter did, we had to change the way we instructed Aidan. Simple repetition always seemed to work well, and it fit in well with his autism traits, which he still exhibits. But how could we teach abstract concepts? How could we teach Aidan the concepts of good and bad, of caring and patience, and how could we ever possibly teach him about the love of Jesus?

It's difficult to sometimes think outside of my "bubble" of problems and difficulties with Aidan. But when I do, I wonder about other families who have children with other disabili-

ties. How do other parents teach their children biblical truths, and how can our body of believers deal with these special needs? There are countless disabilities that we have in our world today. Does our church have a way to respond to these needs? What can we do to reach out and minister to these special people?

Our local church has never had a specific special needs program. However, I am grateful that the members of our church have outreach capabilities, but they probably are not even aware of it. The first, and most crucial part of outreach is to literally reach out with open arms. We need to be accepted.

Hugs, hellos and smiles go a long way in letting all people know they are cared for and loved, and I witness that every Sunday morning when we come together to worship.

I'm sure it's not true of every special needs child, but in Aidan's situation, he responds very well to music. In every AFLC church that I've ever attended, music has always played an important role. God blessed us with a gift when he gave us music. The music in church, the hymn singing, the simple songs we learn in Sunday school and VBS and the praise songs we sing and hum to in the car are often a calming influence during times of bad behavior.

"Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor," says I Corinthians 12:22-23. As we pray about ways we can reach out to the

special needs individuals in our church and community, let's remember to have open arms, lots of patience and a song in our hearts and on our lips. God has placed these exceptional people in our lives for a reason.

As for me, I continue to depend on Him for patience. Thankfully, God's mercies are new every morning.

— *Kristi Jacobson*  
*Our Saviour's Lutheran*  
*Zumbrota, Minn.*



# *Good things come in* **Small packages**

**T**hey say, "Good things come in small packages." This is most certainly true on Thursday afternoons during the school year as good things happen when 25 to 30 small "packages" come through the doors of New Luther Valley Lutheran Church, where the All-Stars Kids' Club has developed into an exciting and ideal ministry for a congregation that sought to operate with the smallest staff and an even smaller budget. The effectiveness of the ministry is marked by the fact that two-thirds of those children come from families outside of the congregation.

## **Congregations**

While many rural churches focus today on why they cannot have a children's ministry, we began by focusing on why we could and should have one.

First, we recognized the fact that at that time we had six children in our church who were of school age.

Second, we recognized the Lord's ability to bless what little we might seem to have. We often tend to be like the disciples who looked at the seven loaves of bread and few fish and wondered, "How can we feed so many with so little?" And we forget what happened when those loaves and fish were placed in the Lord's hand.

Third, we recognized the important assets or strengths found within our congregation. They included:

**Relationships:** People in a small community know one another, care about one another and trust one another. When larger churches set up small groups, they are imi-

tating something that has occurred quite naturally in the small church and rural community. Over time, contacts with families outside of the church have been developed and maintained, opening the door to an invitation to Kids' Club. One of the day-care providers in our town also "provides" parents with information regarding Kids' Club because she knows one of the Kids' Club teachers.

**Involvement:** Obviously, we cannot afford a children's pastor or a parish education director. But we have an excellent "staff" that begins with the prayer group that sets time aside each week to specifically focus on the Kids' Club. Our staff includes teens who assist with the crafts and general discipline of the group. The Ladies Aid volunteers bring in the weekly snacks and straighten up the kitchen. They also donate materials for crafts as needs are made known. We have three or four faithful teachers and members

who continuously express an interest in and appreciation for the program.

**Flexibility:** A smaller church can "go with the flow" and tends to function more informally. We have discovered how quickly we can change plans to accommodate a crisis in the community, in the school or even in a family. We have even found ourselves adapting the schedule when a child has to leave early but didn't want to miss the Bible story or special craft.

## **Resources**

During the months of July and August, the church mailbox is flooded with catalogs and brochures promoting a vast array of materials for children's ministry. Many of the programs offer "glitter and glam" — but

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**'We have  
discovered how  
quickly we can  
change plans to  
accommodate  
a crisis ...'**

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not without a price. But we have discovered that, again, good things come in small packages. Huge boxes dropped off by UPS at the door of the church did not live up to our expectations and did not offer “more bang for the buck.” This year, our anticipated budget is only \$150, for which the greater part will be spent on music and Kool-Aid. Contrary to marketing ploys, young people crave what comes in a small package — that which comes from the heart of an adult when expressing personal interest in them as people and as individuals. Through establishing personal friendship with these children, we seek to help them develop a long-term relationship with Jesus Christ. Time and attention have proven to be the most invaluable of all resources.

## Children

When considering establishing a children’s ministry, we need to keep Christ’s words before us: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the king-

dom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Matthew 19:14) What a joy it is when one of the children hears the message of salvation and expresses the desire to receive Jesus into his or her heart. What a joy it is when another child affirms the fact that Jesus is the Lord of his or her life.

Furthermore, we know that one of the more effective ways of reaching adults is through their children’s love. One adult from outside of our congregation faithfully arrives a half-hour early each Thursday to help set up for Kids’ Club because the ministry has meant so much to his own son. The yearly finale to our Kids’ Club ministry reaches a number of parents, grandparents and others.

Children are less inhibited than adults in inviting others to a church event. (When was the last time you invited someone to come with you to a church program?) On the last day of

Kids’ Club, we suddenly found a deputy sheriff and a distraught woman standing in our church foyer. Apparently, her two young children had failed to come home at the anticipated time. The deputy and woman (who we later discovered are also husband and wife) had begun a search of the town and noticed the children’s bikes in front of the church. The two had decided to attend Kids’ Club after other classmates had invited them.

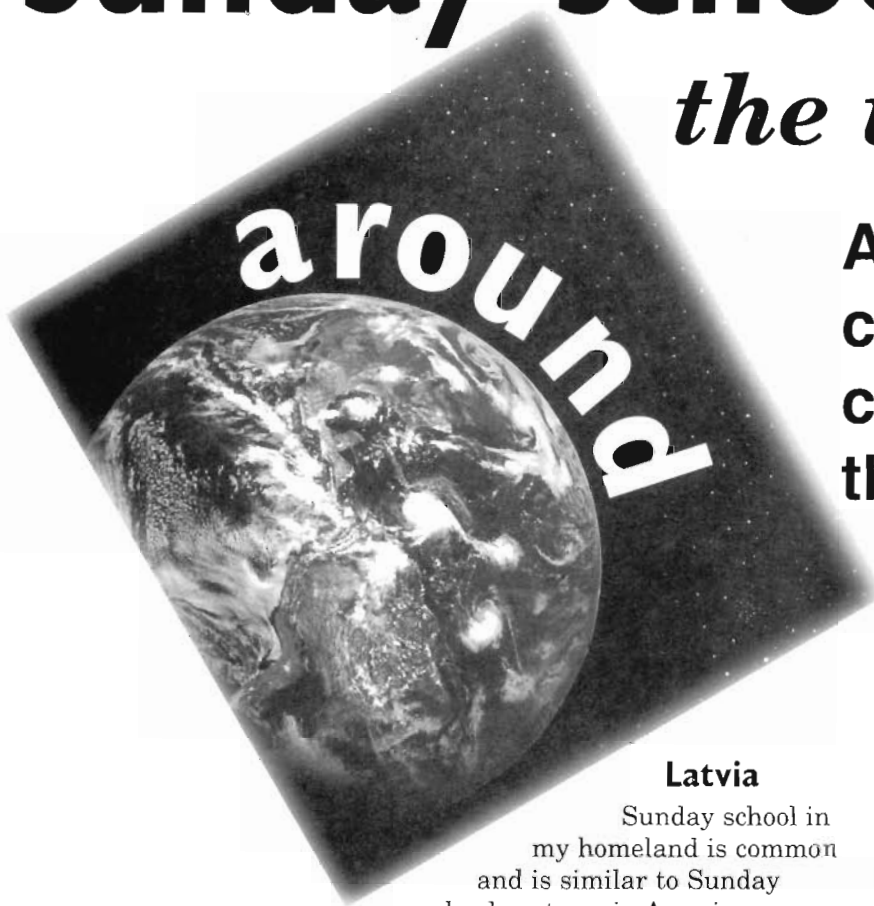
Many of those attending Kids’ Club initially came at the invitation of a friend. It’s an invitation that continues to be offered in our little community. We thank God for the big things that happen in the hearts of our little neighbors and their families when He enters and lives as Lord and Savior.

— **Pastor Lynn Kinneberg**  
**New Luther Valley**  
**and Bethany Lutheran**  
**McVie, N.D.**



# Sunday school

## *the world*



**A look at how churches in other countries take on the role of educator**

### **Latvia**

Sunday school in my homeland is common and is similar to Sunday school customs in America.

Children learn Bible stories and study Bible characters. They get to know Jesus and learn to pray. They enjoy coloring and creating crafts related to the day's theme. When a special occasion nears, like Christmas or Easter, children often make cards for their parents and grandparents.

The time for Sunday varies. Some churches lead Sunday school studies for children parallel to the service time. Youth groups gather an hour or two prior to the worship service. Other churches prefer making their Sunday school available to all ages and hold it a couple of hours before the service. Latvian churches usually set aside another day in the week for congregational adult studies.

One of my earliest Sunday school memories is lighting the candle at the beginning of each Sunday school class. Then we would stand in a circle around the candle and pray together. Sometimes my classmates fought over blowing the candle out when the class was over.

— *Liga Plaveniece*  
**AFLBS Ministry Training Institute**  
**Minneapolis**

### **Brazil**

In Brazil, the church traditionally held Sunday school on Sunday mornings. Starting with an opening exercise, we would continue for approximately two hours. Sunday worship was held on Sunday evening. Today, much has changed. Most churches are closed on Sunday mornings, and of those that do have Sunday school, many have switched their programs to the afternoons or evenings. Sadly, most churches don't have Sunday school at all.

Our congregation in Campo Grande chooses to have Sunday school because we feel it has been a great tool to get children into the church and at a young age create in them a love for the gospel. When they are older, though their families may not be Christians, they will have a better understanding of what Christianity is, and the seed of the Word of God has been planted in their hearts. We also have found Sunday school to be a very beneficial time to disciple young people and adults. This is the one time during the week where all age groups can learn about Christianity and Scripture on their level. For now, we plan to continue our Sunday schedule even though the cultural trends are abandoning the Sunday school tradition.

— *Tamba Abel*  
**Campo Grande, Brazil**

## Kenya, East Africa

In the Kenyan churches, the tradition of Sunday school is thriving and struggling at the same time. It is thriving in the sense that God has used it tremendously to build His Kingdom among the children. However, it is struggling because it's an overwhelming task and wanting in many ways. These struggles range from a lack of teaching materials to enough teachers to cope with the demands of the ministry.

The Sunday school is a tradition among the Protestant churches that is believed to have begun in 1870 in England as a way to educate poor and orphaned children on their one day off from factory work. Today, it is still carried out all over the world as an essential part of the Church's ministry. Added to that, in the Kenyan church context, Sunday school has been primarily a teaching and nurturing time. In most parts of Africa, especially south of the Sahara, the tradition is viewed as one of the church's foundational ministries and, thus, given a proper place within the Protestant church in both rural and urban congregations alike. The Sunday school tradition in Kenya has great significance in the life of the church and culture as a whole: that is, the spiritual and social aspect of its young ones.

A primary task of the Sunday school in the Kenyan church is to train children in the Word of God. This is done in the simplest ways possible. It is also in Sunday school where the spiritual-faith formation of children is nurtured. For example, the children are taught to read, memorize and recite the Word of God and to pray and worship God with simple songs. The teaching of the Ten Commandments plays a pivotal role in shaping the children's understanding of sin and morality.

I recall the experiences that I had as if it were yesterday. Yes, I remember the songs we used to sing, the memory verses we recited, the friendships made, and the godly Sunday school teachers that I had.

Another focus is the building of a sense of community among children. It is an imperative part of life, especially in Kenya, where the culture stresses community. The church is a community of believers. Here, Sunday school is a place where the essence of Christian community is initiated and nurtured in the light of God's Word.

In Kenya, we take children's ministry seriously. The teachers are volunteers, who respond to the calling of God in this way. They are mainly women, maybe owing to the

fact that women are the primary caregivers in our society. I think it would be proper to say that among every 10 Sunday school teachers in Africa only two have had some formal training on how to minister to the children. This is especially so in the rural areas. The urban churches have better facilities, well-trained teachers and some (though not enough) good teaching materials, unlike their rural counterparts.

Even so, the Lord has continued to use the Sunday school teachers as instruments of His grace. Pray that He would continue to raise up more teachers and resources for the ministry to continue to God's glory.

— **Philemon  
Ngare**  
**Free Lutheran  
Seminary  
Minneapolis**

## Mexico

Obedying the Great Commission and making disciples of children and young people in Mexico is filled with many of the same challenges and privileges as anywhere else in the world, with a few added twists.

After using a number of different curriculums over a number of years, Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles are hard at work translating the *AFLC Ambassador Series* for the congregations in Mexico. The hope is that it may be used in other countries in Latin America and even in Spanish-speaking congregations in the United States.

Debbie teaches one of the classes, and each Sunday she tests a newly translated lesson to see if it makes sense to the children. The little ones are with Barb Schierkolk, and though their energy level and attention span make it a great challenge to get through a lesson, they calm down and show great interest when craft time comes.

Sometimes young people come down from the United States to visit their families in Jerez, and then we inject some English into the lessons. In whatever language, it's a challenge and a privilege to be a part of following the Great Commission here in Jerez, Mexico.

— **Jerez, Mexico**



Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson, Lisbon, Portugal, are conducting a Children's Club for the neighborhood kids on the first Saturday of each month. Pictured are the children at their first meeting in their new church location. Pray for the Nelsons as they continue this outreach into their community.



# One day with Parish

*There's nothing typical about it*

— Solveig Hjermstad  
Assistant to the editor

“**T**here is no such thing as a typical day in our office,” so claims the AFLC’s Parish

Education Director, Marian Christopherson.

I recently spent part of a day visiting the staff in the offices on the lower level, west side, of the administration building overlooking Medicine Lake. In spite of her claim, I found a common spirit of peace and purpose in the midst of enormous tasks that have to be accomplished while woven between phone calls, visits, and incoming orders.

Parish Education employees spend most of their time assisting congregations in their need for Sunday school material.

“We recognize it takes time, and we have to patiently wait on the Lord to accomplish it in His time,” Christopherson said of the development of Sunday school curriculum. Over and over again I heard that underlying theme of waiting and trusting in the Lord to provide for His work in His Church.

Currently, four grade levels (pre-school, third, fifth and seventh) are in the process of being re-done at an estimated cost of \$35,000 each. Typically, 3,000 student books and 500 teacher manuals are ordered per printing. Total sales volume in 2000 was about \$95,000, which is up from \$25,000 nearly 10 years ago.

“We’re grateful for the increased volume,” Christopherson said, “however, only about 50 percent of our AFLC congregations are using *The Ambassador Series*. We believe it is



important that each congregation use curriculum that supports our stand on the inerrancy of the Bible and our Lutheran teachings.”

The Parish Education Department publishes more than just curriculum. They are expanding with literature on the history and distinctives of the AFLC. The recent book, “Quest for Freedom” and the ongoing development of the “Heritage Series” reflects that emphasis. Volume two in the “Heritage Series” will be a book of daily devotions by C.O. Rosenius. The newest Bible study guide on Colossians is on the press.

A current project largely funded by a grant from Aid Association for Lutherans is Bible teaching tapes and CDs. Medicine Lake Lutheran children’s choir is helping with the first recording session scheduled for Nov. 10. All 72 Bible stories from the

**Parish Education employee Karen Palmer boxes up educational tools to send to customers in the department’s workroom on the first floor of the administration building.**

kindergarten and first-grade curriculum are being read along with music.

“This is a tool not only for Sunday schools, but also for homes where children can listen to God’s Word,” Christopherson said, adding, “It can be a great evangelism tool and will make excellent gifts for families. We hope to have the first CD completed sometime in 2002.”

Another AAL grant is assisting in the production of a catechism poster teaching guide on the means of grace, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. Supplies are depleted, so it’s time to redo pamphlets on confirmation and baptism. Then there are the conven-

# Education



Parish Education Director Marian Christopherson is currently working on producing Sunday school materials for the AFLC.

tions to attend with booths to set up, which is another way to serve the congregations or to receive more exposure to other Lutheran groups. Several churches outside the AFLC are using *The Ambassador Series* with its Word- and Christ-centered emphasis.

The day I visited the office, articles for the back of the AFLC church bulletins were arriving to go on to the printer for the first quarter of 2002. Then, with autumn around the corner, the office had to compile

a collection of recommended Christmas programs selected from different publishers, which was scheduled to be sent out to all AFLC congregations in September.

Christopherson is the only full-time employee of the Parish Education Department. Karen Palmer takes a big portion of work using the phones and serving customers. She is the part-time staff member who can efficiently walk through the maze of inventory and find that one

## Ambassador Sunday School Series

What makes the Ambassador Sunday School Series unique?

**IT REFLECTS** the scriptural distinctives of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations because it is written by the people of the AFLC specifically for AFLC congregations.

**IT UPHOLDS** the authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures.

**IT FOCUSES** on the Gospel: That Christ is the only way of salvation.

**IT NURTURES** believing children in their faith.

**IT CALLS** unbelievers to receive salvation through faith in Christ.

**IT CORRELATES** with Luther's Small Catechism, which emphasizes the way of salvation, Law and Gospel, sin and grace, daily repentance and faith, and teaches the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**IT HELPS** students understand the significance of the means of grace (the Word, baptism and Lord's Supper) in their daily lives.

**IT SYSTEMATICALLY** covers specific topics for each grade level, so that students receive a complete overview of the Scriptures as they move through the series.

item out of 800 registered in their computers. A Bible school student helps in the office during the afternoons. No matter what the immediate deadline might be, the friendly and knowledgeable staff is obviously there to offer their service.

During a number of two-day sessions a year, the members of the Board of Publications and Parish

See **PARISH**, page 14



## PARISH: Work with volunteers

From page 13

Education meet to edit material, review outlines and objectives, plus oversee the normal business of the department. Pastor Martin Horn of Foston, Minn., is the chairman.

Thirty volunteers are currently working on projects. They are people of all ages and backgrounds. Some have worked with Christopherson all four years she has served as director.

She said, "That's an area I appreciate more and more. Working together with a variety of people takes cooperation and patience. I am amazed to see how God brings people with different gifts together. It's a beautiful thing, and it clearly demonstrates our free Lutheran emphasis on the role of the local congregation."

Not everything in the Parish Education inventory is produced by the AFLC. I looked at the displays in the entrance and found lots of teaching aids, reference resources, maps, commentaries, etc. Visitors to the Minneapolis campus and headquarters are discovering the department bookstore to be a valuable resource for personal or congregational use. Orders from as far away as Germany and Puerto Rico have come from hits on the Web site ([www.aflc.org](http://www.aflc.org)).

Christopherson is right. There is nothing typical about the Parish Education Department. God's work done in God's way is always amazing and exciting. Maybe that's why there is a serene yet purposeful feeling around the office — it's the Lord's work.



## What I REMEMBER about Sunday school

I remember the songs we were taught. There seemed to be a song for every Bible story, which helped me remember the Bible messages. I haven't heard most of those songs for more than 25 years, but I still remember them.

I thank God for putting the songs and Scripture in my heart and for the leaders and teachers who took the time to teach them to us.

— **Cynthia Meservey**  
**Amery Free Lutheran**  
**Amery, Wis.**

I've been going to Sunday school ever since I can remember. A lot of people ask me, "What is the point of going to Sunday school if you're going to church right after it?" I like going to Sunday school because I get to hear a good Bible story and learn a lesson, plus interact with people my age. It also prepares my mind for listening to God as I go into church.

— **Elizabeth Blood, 14**  
**First Lutheran Church**  
**Oklahoma City, Okla.**

Coming home from Sunday school when I was about 4 years old, I asked my parents if God would part Lake Ida, where I lived, so I could cross to visit a friend. My teacher had just taught me the lesson on Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, and I believed God could do that for me too.

Sunday school has always been an important part of my life. Although I don't remember a lot of specific things, I know that those lessons were part of the process of learning about Jesus that brought me to faith in Him. I'm so thankful for all the teachers who were a part of my life.

Even now as I teach the kindergarten class in our church, God speaks to me through the lessons, and I am being reminded about Jesus the Good Shepherd. I am encouraged to trust in Him and remember that He calms the storms in my life even when I am afraid.

— **Julie Fugleberg**  
**Roseau Free Lutheran**  
**Roseau, Minn.**

## The evolution of a new curriculum

Many people wonder why it takes so long to revise and publish curriculum. The development and publication of curriculum are ongoing process that involves many people and realistically takes several years to complete one grade level from inception to printing. The process goes something like this:

The Parish Education Board establishes an outline of lessons and objectives for each grade level.

Volunteers from AFLC congregations are prayerfully sought for various aspects of the curriculum.

The Parish Ed Board meets almost every month for two full days of editing and discussion on various projects.

The steps are repeated until the work is complete. The areas of Sunday school curriculum submitted by AFLC volunteers include writing Bible lessons and Bible background studies, creating artistic illustrations, designing age-appropriate learning ideas, and writing detailed lesson plans for the teacher manual.

**Lay Pastor Warren Swanson**, Ottawa, Ill., resigned as pastor of St. Petrie and Freedom Lutheran congregations, where he has served for the past six years and accepted the call to serve Body of Christ Lutheran and Living Faith Lutheran churches in Tucson, Ariz. He expects to begin his new ministry in October.

**Pastor Tim Carlson**, Wheatland, Iowa, resigned as pastor of Christian Free Lutheran Church, where he has served since 1989, and has accepted the call to serve Bethel Lutheran Church in Grafton, N.D. He began his new ministry on Sept. 9. Pastor Dennis Gray had been serving the congregation as interim pastor.

**Ryan Klenner**, Freeman, S.D., was pictured in the Sioux Falls *Argus Leader* on Aug. 28 as one of the three University of Sioux Falls football players whose quick action saved the life of one of their teammates. On Aug. 25, one of Ryan's roommates fell to the floor unconscious. Ryan immediately began CPR and another roommate went for help. Having taken CPR training in junior high school, Klenner said, "I just did what I remembered."

The football players were quick to give God the glory, saying, "It was God's plan all of us were there and had a role to play."

Klenner is a sophomore offensive lineman and a biology major who hopes to become a doctor. He is the son of Pastor Mike and Kathy Klenner of Salem and Immanuel Lutheran churches.

**Pastor Paul Jecklin**, Fairhope, Ala., has resigned from Zion Lutheran Church, Silverhill, Ala., in order to accept a call as interim pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Ambridge, Pa.

**Pastor Dennis O'Neil** has resigned without a call from St. Peter Lutheran Church, Metz, Mich.

**Pastor Herbert Hoff**, serving St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church, Salinas, Calif., was accepted onto the fellowship clergy roster on Aug. 27 by the Coordinating Committee. St. Ansgar's joined the AFLC earlier this summer.

**Pastor Tom Brock**, Hope Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, has been accepted onto the fellowship clergy roster. Hope Lutheran was welcomed into the AFLC earlier this year.

**Pastor James Olson**, Fargo, N.D., was removed from the AFLC clergy roster at his request.

**Pastor Tim Bartholomew**, Kallispell, Mont., was removed from the AFLC clergy roster of licensed pastors at his request.

**Pastor Fred Faughn**, Paducah, Ky., was removed by the Coordinating Committee from the AFLC fellowship clergy roster.

**Pastor Tim Hinrichs**, serving in Poland with his wife, Renata, recently finished a month of intense Polish classes at Silesian University in Cieszyn. There were 100 students representing 29 countries. The main purpose for the class, according to Hinrichs, was to improve his Polish for their work in the Bible school in

## Vision 2004 position cut

As a result of the schools corporation decision at the annual conference in June to cut administrative expenses of Vision 2004 by 50 percent, the Board of Trustees has voted to eliminate the position of Project Director for Vision 2004. As of Sept. 28, I will no longer be directing Vision 2004.



I wish to thank all of you for your prayers and financial support over these past four years. As I leave, I ask you to continue to pray for the project, because the needs for this expansion are greater than ever before. I ask that you pray for my family and myself as we seek God's leading.

Pray that the finances needed to expand the project would come in by March 1, 2002. Any questions you may have concerning the future of Vision 2004 should be directed to the Board of Trustees as they take over leadership of this project.

The Lord is faithful, and He has everything under control. He says, "Call to me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you have not known" (Jeremiah 33:3).

— **Pastor Tonnes Pollestad**  
Andover, Minn.

Dziegielow.

**Pastor James and Linda Johnson**, Minneapolis, spent July 12-24 in Smilovice, Czech Republic, where they taught at the Tabor Christian Youth Camp. The camp is a ministry of "Christian Fellowship," a free movement organization among the Silesian Lutheran Church in northeastern Czech Republic. AFLC seminarian Michal Klus and his wife, Sarka, traveled with the Bible school dean and his wife. Michal expects to finish his

See **PEOPLE**, page 16



## Wisconsin church accepted into AFLC; marks one-year anniversary

Faith Lutheran Church, Mineral Point, Wis., was accepted into the AFLC on Aug. 27 by the Coordinating Committee. Serving the church is interim Pastor Brian Davidson.

On Aug. 6, 2000, congregation members met for the first time after breaking away from the ELCA. Many of the people left the church they had been baptized or married in. It was a step of faith, and that step led them to name the new congregation Faith.

Pastor Dick Ewing of Argyle, Wis., spoke at the first service. Faith members consider Alma Lutheran Church in Argyle their sister congregation. Members from Alma attended the anniversary service on Aug. 5.



Pastor Arnold Stone, Alexandria, Minn., celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination. Pastor Stone is a former teacher at the AFLC seminary and Bible school, where he taught from 1966 until the late 1970s. He served for many years as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fridley, Minn.

## PEOPLE: Several changes in AFLC churches in Canada

*From page 15*

seminary training in two years and return to Silesia to be a pastor.

**Pastor John Kent** has requested prayer for Rancho San Diego congregation, El Cajon, Calif., who are forced to move from their current meeting place by the end of the year due to a huge rent increase. So far, the growing congregation cannot find another adequate place to meet for worship, and so they invite AFLC friends to join them in prayer that God will provide.

**Lay Pastor Martin Christensen**, serving Bethel Lutheran Church in Elbow, Saskatchewan, Canada, is retiring. He served Bethel for eight years. He and his wife, Arlene, will return to their home in Frontier, Saskatchewan.

**Pastor Kelly Henning**, Salmon Arm, British Columbia, Canada, is now the chairman of the Coordinating Committee for the AFLC in Canada. Henning replaces Pastor Gerald Gettis, who recently took a call to Calvary Free Lutheran Church in Mesa, Ariz. Don

Hernberg, Frontier, Saskatchewan, is the new secretary of the committee.

**Pastor James Winter** and his wife, Lorene, have moved from Lake Alma, Saskatchewan, to Three Hills, Alberta, Canada. Winter had served Faith Free Lutheran Church in Lake Alma.

**Correction:** A photo was misidentified on page 4 in the Aug. 7 issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*. Pictured with Pastor Robert L. Lee was Dave Van Hoveln, St. John's Lutheran Church, Milford, Ill.

## School board puts focus on Bible school needs

Because of urgent need for housing at the Bible school, members of the AFLBS/AFLTS Board of Trustees voted Aug. 20 to postpone the construction of a second semi-nary housing unit.

According to recently elected board chairman Dan Mundfrom, the decision came after seeing how many students had registered for AFLBS this fall.

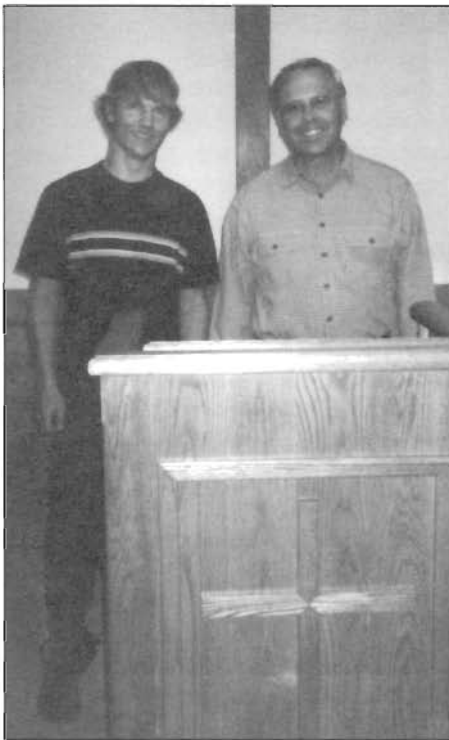
"Our focus at this time is going

to be on the student center and dorm needs at the Bible school," said Mundfrom.

The need is great. As much as \$3 million is needed to build the student center, which will house classrooms now held in the men's and women's dorms and the cafeteria. A new dorm to alleviate the needs of 175 registered students is estimated to cost around \$1.5 million.

A group of 250 Bible school supporters and contributors has been asked to share the need with congregations in November during what Mundfrom calls a "blitz campaign." The goal? By graduation next spring, the school board members hope to break ground on the student center.

To give, contact Vision 2004 at (763) 412-2004 or email at [vis2004@aflc.org](mailto:vis2004@aflc.org).



The Wilderness Bible Camp, Lake Park, Minn., hosted the annual Labor Day Weekend Family Retreat from Aug. 31 to Sept. 3. Pastor Greg Schram of Northwood, N.D., was the special speaker. Earlier this summer at their Bible camp, Pastor Terry Olson, Thief River Falls, Minn., conducted the dedication service for the chapel's new lectern. Olson is pictured with Tyler Estrem (left), a senior at AFLBS, who designed and built a lectern to match the altar, which was dedicated last year. Tyler is the son of Doug and Tami Estrem, Fargo, N.D.

## Member named Miss Rodeo South Dakota

Jennifer Hier, Prairie City, S.D., is Miss Rodeo South Dakota 2001. Over the past nine months, the 21-year-old member of Slim Buttes Lutheran Church, Reva, has represented rodeo and the



state of South Dakota.

Jennifer is the daughter of Iver and Bev Heir. One of her favorite times last summer was participating at the Rodeo Bible Camp at Crooks, S.D. The camp is a growing ministry headed by Milton and Pamela Opland of Abiding Savior Lutheran in nearby Sioux Falls, S.D. For more information on the camp, call (605) 529-5533.

## Setting up a charitable remainder trust

Establishing a CRT needn't be a difficult or time-consuming process, but it does require the services of a good advisory team, usually including an attorney, an accountant and a financial representative. The laws governing CRTs are very specific and rigorously enforced. What's more, many of the decisions made when structuring a CRT are irrevocable—that is they cannot be changed without jeopardizing the

tax-advantaged status of the entire trust. A team of appropriate professionals can be your most valuable asset in establishing a CRT, creating an appropriate investment plan for the trust's assets and overseeing the distribution of trust income.

For more information, contact Vision 2004, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441, (763) 412-2004. Email: [vis2004@aflc.org](mailto:vis2004@aflc.org)

## Classics Retreat will be at ARC

The Association Retreat Center is hosting the annual Classics Retreat for people 55 and older on Oct. 5-7. Pastor Ken Thoreson, Argyle, Minn., will be the evening speaker, sharing his "Parable in Chalk and Art." Pastor Bruce Peterson, Buxton, N.D., will lead the

morning Bible studies and the Sunday morning worship service. The retreat includes a luncheon cruise down the colorful St. Croix River. Stay in Tabitha and Bethany motel-style lodges for \$60 per person. For more information, call Pam Olson at 1-888-748-3969.

# Congregations celebrate 100 years

## Bethany and Calvary Free Lutheran churches reach a centennial mark

**Binford, N.D.** — Bethany Free Lutheran Church celebrated its centennial on June 3. Pastor Wes Langaas, a former pastor, spoke during the morning worship services and AFLC Vice President Elden Nelson gave the afternoon message. More than 200 people attended the festivities.

Bethany began as a Lutheran Free Church congregation under the leadership of Pastor O. Swenson. After meeting in homes, the present church was built in 1903. Through the years, many changes were done with the building. A neighboring congregation, Bethlehem Lutheran, later joined with Bethany.

In 1962, Bethany joined with New Luther Valley of nearby McVile and became one of the early parishes forming the new AFLC. Other pastors serving this parish include Ernest Langness and Kenneth Anderson. Lynn Kinneberg is the current pastor.

In 1990, plans began to build a new church. On May 8, 1994, Bethany congregation held its first worship service in their new facility.

Esther Oien, who compiled the history of the congregation, said, "We have always had willing members who would do their part in serving in different capacities as Sunday school teachers, Bible study

leaders and various officers. God has blessed us all the way."

Oien concluded the history with Psalm 67:1-2, "May God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. That Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation among all nations."

**Everett, Wash.** — Calvary Lutheran Church celebrated a century of proclaiming Christ on the weekend of August 10-12. Pastor Les Galland, the congregation's current pastor, preached the opening sermon on Friday evening. Former pastors Del Palmer, David Hinrichs and Dr. Francis Monseth were guest speakers during the weekend's activities, which featured the theme, "Go Light the World With Christ."

During the 1890s, one of the first churches to be established in Everett was Zion Norsk Evangelisk Lutherske Menighet — now known as Calvary Lutheran. The town grew to a sprawling industrial city, and the church grew with it. The church was a fundamental partner in the forming of Bethania Lutheran College. During its 13 years of existence, the college was home to 732 students.

In 1914, a large number of members of the congregation moved to Alberta, Canada, and the work of the Lutheran Free Church was dis-

continued in Everett, but not for long. Within four years there was a renewed interest in a "free and living" congregation in the community. Pastor J.R. Gronseth led the formation of the Norwegian Lutheran Free Church of Everett. In 1932, the congregation settled into its present church facility, and in 1938, the name of the church became Calvary Lutheran. During this time, the Bethany Nursing Home was formed, located in the old college building. Over the years, Calvary enjoyed a close working relationship with the nursing home.

In 1962, the congregation decided to affiliate with the newly formed AFLC. In 1971, under the direction of Monseth, Calvary was instrumental in the formation of Elim Lutheran Church in Lake Stevens, Wash. Two decades later, the congregation assisted in the planting of another AFLC congregation, New Hope Lutheran in Snohomish, Wash. When writing the history of the congregation, Jon Galland reported, "It is with much praise and thanksgiving to our Lord and Savior that we gather to celebrate the 100th anniversary. The last 100 years have proven to us that we serve a mighty and faithful Savior."



## Pastors Prayer Summit planned

The Western North Dakota/Eastern Montana District is planning to host a Pastors Prayer Summit Oct. 7-9 at Logging Camp Ranch, south of Medora, N.D. The setting is the beautiful rustic scene of a ranch in the Badlands, owned by an AFLC couple. Pastors are encouraged to

use the time to get away to pray. Sessions will include personal prayer and reflection, corporate prayer and praise times and some thought provoking Bible studies on prayer.

AAL has provided a grant that will help with the cost. The cost for room and board will be \$30 for the

first 14 pastors to register, and after that the cost will be \$60 for each pastor. The schedule will begin 7 p.m. Sunday and will continue through noon on Tuesday. Register by email Pastor. Lloyd Quanbeck at [bethel@minot.com](mailto:bethel@minot.com) and send the \$30 ahead of you. The deadline is Sept. 30.



Fifth in a series on "women of excellence"

WOMEN IN SERVICE FOR HIM

# Ruth: Trusting God in the unknown

**P**ut yourself in this situation: A new family moves into your town that represents a different culture and different religion.

This family has left a nation where the economy has created widespread famine. You fall in love with one of the sons and thus marry this foreigner. Your new brother-in-law also marries someone from your neighborhood.

Your father-in-law dies and these two sons are responsible for the welfare of their mother. After 10 years, neither you nor your sister-in-law has any children. Suddenly, your husband dies. Your brother-in-law also dies. You are now alone with two other grieving women in a male dominated, pre-welfare society. Your mother-in-law has seemingly lost everything — including hope. She becomes angry and bitter. Life looks bleak and hopeless.

Your mother-in-law hears that the economic condition in her home country has improved and announces her decision to return home. She wants you and your sister-in-law to return to the homes of your parents. The tears flow freely. What should you do?

Do you want to leave the comfortable familiarity of your country to become an unwelcome foreigner

in a strange land? How would you survive there? The thought of enduring your mother-in-law's grief, pain and anger is overwhelming.

Your sister-in-law decides to return home to her parents. Should you return to her home, too? Could you return to the worship of those other gods? More tears! Your sister-in-law leaves and your mother-in-law still insists that you go back, too. Yet there is something ... something that keeps you from returning home. She needs you.

What would you do?

Yes, this is the story of Ruth as found in Ruth 1:1-22. She did make a decision. She chose to go with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to serve the God of Naomi, to make Naomi's people her people.

Let's briefly look at the results of this selfless decision. Perhaps you are at a crossroads in your life. Or does your future look dismal and uncertain? Does a decision need to be made? What can you and I learn from Ruth?

As Ruth placed her trust and her future in God, she experienced God's gracious provisions firsthand. Naomi and Ruth's physical needs were supplied. Ruth's humble service to Naomi attracted the attention of Boaz, and God gave her a wonderful husband. Take a moment and

read the love story of Ruth and Boaz in chapters three and four. God blessed Ruth with a son, Obed, who would be the grandfather of David. God had a very unique plan for this humble foreigner from Moab.

I think God gave us the book of Ruth to encourage us in the difficult times, the decision times, the dark times. He has a unique plan for you and me. As Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us, His plans are for our welfare, to give us a future and a hope.

Obed's grandson, David, wrote these words in Psalm 25:1-3: "To Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul, O my God, in Thee I trust, do not let me be ashamed; do not let my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none of those who wait for Thee will be ashamed."

Other phrases from this chapter include, "He leads the humble in justice, he teaches the humble, his soul will abide in prosperity, his descendants will inherit the land, the paths of the Lord are loving kindness to those who keep His covenant and His Testimonies."

Yes, as Ruth learned, I, too, can trust my God in the unknowns of my world.

— *Laurie Nash*  
*Solid Rock Lutheran*  
*Anoka, Minn.*



## Districts announce WMF fall rallies

The Eastern North Dakota WMF Fall Rally will be on Sep. 29 at Living Word Free Lutheran Church in Edmore, N.D. The rally begins at 10 a.m. Guest speakers are Pastor John and Ruby Abel, retired missionaries to Brazil. The theme for the rally is "Jesus Christ Is Lord."

The North Central District WMF Rally is Sept. 29 at Grace Lutheran Church in Bagley, Minn. National WMF Executive Secretary Cheryl Aakre of Argyle, Minn., will be the guest speaker.

The Minneapolis District WMF Rally begins at 9 a.m. Oct. 13 at Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church in Cokato, Minn.

## WMF Memorials

Evangeline Rye, Tioga, N.D.  
Harry Johnson, Oglethorpe, Ga.  
Thelma Watterud, Tioga, N.D.  
Gertie Joens, Eagle Butte, S.D.  
LeRoy Jurgens, Bruce, S.D.  
Mary Lloyd, Arlington, Wash.

## A fund challenge

Arnie Kooiman of Bloomington, Minn., and Lee Olson, Tioga, N.D., are issuing a challenge to members in the



**Kooiman**



**Olson**

AFLC. They want members to give up their federal rebate to Vision 2004.

"Just think," said Kooiman, "if 17,000 people gave up their \$300 rebate, it would amount to \$5.1 million. And if \$100 would be matched through Aid Association for Lutherans or Lutheran Brotherhood,

it would mean a total of \$6.8 million."

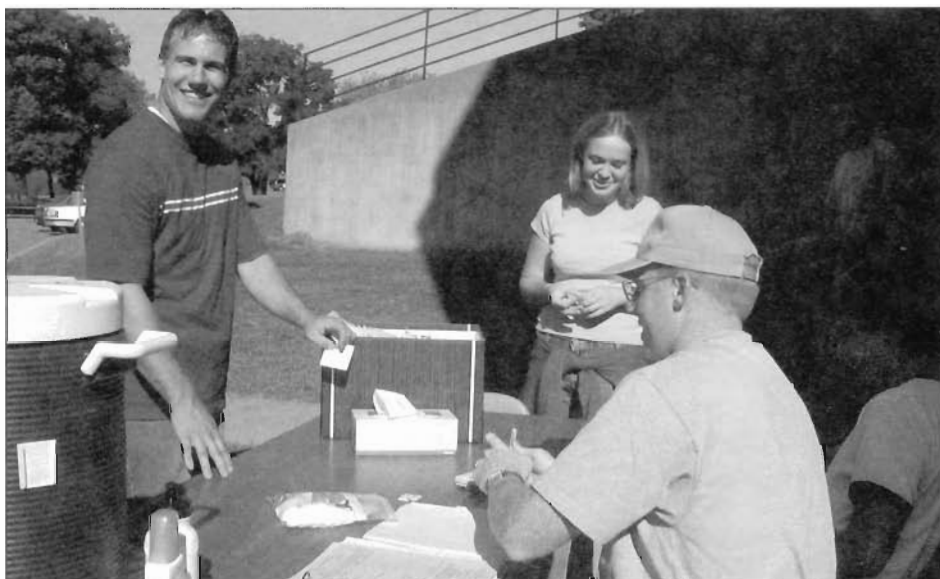
Olson said, "After all, this is money we weren't expecting in the first place."

## Fall retreat for Canadian pastors

A fall retreat for Canadian pastors and laity will be Oct. 1-4 at Rocky Mountain College, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Guest lecturer Dr. Francis Monseth, AFLTS dean, will present a session on the "Means of Grace." Pastor Jim Winter will present a message Oct. 3. All are welcome to attend. Call (403) 272-4775.

## Back on campus

A total of 175 students are enrolled at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in Plymouth, Minn. Of those, 103 are juniors and 72 are seniors. Three more men and two women are expected to enroll in January. Also registered are 11 students in the MTI program. In seminary, there are nine juniors, five middlers, six seniors two interns and five special students.



**TOP:** Incoming juniors were assisted by seniors to help unload on Sept. 8. Plenty of signs were needed to direct traffic.

**CENTER:** Junior Brandon Pessina, Montgomery, Ill., checks into the men's dorm with the help of Wade Mobley, men's resident head. Watching is MTI student Kara Crimmin, Oswego, Ill.

**RIGHT:** Senior Mindy Robertson, Zumbrota, Minn., helps junior Rebecca Duff, Bethel Park, Pa., unload.



# Seminary hosts summer institute

The Summer Institute of Theological Studies was Aug. 6-10 at AFLTS. Before the classes started, a time of hymn singing, sharing of God's Word and prayer time was held. This year, the subjects presented were: Studies in Ecclesiastes, by professor Jerry Homaas; Studies in Romans, by Dr. Norvald Yri; and History of the Reformation, by AFLC President Bob Lee. Our last class, which touched many on a personal level, was on dealing with loss and grief. Our teachers John Reith and Kerwin Sletto did an excellent job in helping us to understand and help those who are going through difficult times in their lives.

In summary, from Ecclesiastes,

the truth of coping with life and maintaining a viable relationship with God was discussed in-depth.

Romans presented the all-importance of Jesus Christ in the justification and sanctification process. Our Protestant heritage was followed as we trailed the lives of Luther and other reformers. And, last but not least, we discussed ideas and tips on enhancing our ministries in helping others cope with various hardships of life.

The participants endured the 100-degree heat and high humidity.



The classes were excellent. And the overall fellowship made the S.I.T. a very meaningful program. On behalf of the 2001 class, thank you to our instructors and all those who helped in our accommodations and other efforts of support. We appreciate our friends at our AFLC headquarters.

— **Pastor Wayne Olson**  
**Bethel Lutheran Church**  
**Faith, S.D.**



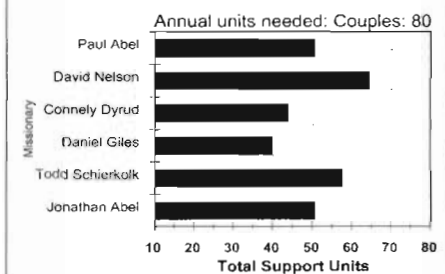
**ABOVE:** Board members Dan Mundfrom (left) and Dave Borg (right) welcome junior Paul Risdall, Cloquet, Minn., to campus Sept. 8.

**LEFT:** Michele Mobley, director of student support, helps senior Linn Monica Langeland, Norway, register for classes

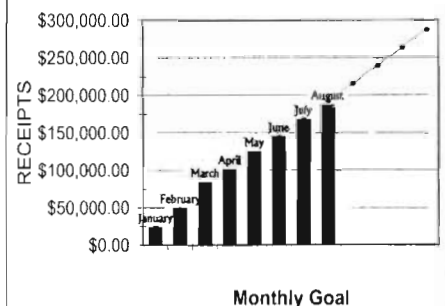
## AFLC MISSIONS

### "PS" PERSONAL SUPPORT UNITS

January / August - Goal = 53.3 Units



### AUGUST "PS" TOTALS



# AFLC memorial gifts

*August 2001*

## Department given to ...

*In memory of ...*

### Home Missions

Laura Bystel Darcy Thomson  
Harry Johnson Mrs. Clarence Ahlberg

### AFLBS

Russell Mathre John Jenson  
Anton Falde Lowell Lindbergt  
Grace Erickson John Walsvick  
Alfred Voxland Ruth Kager  
Elvera Sundhagen Art Olson  
Gene Warner

### Vision 2004

Dorothy Tuppe Ruth Highness  
Phylis Strand Harry Johnson  
Lester Davidson

### AFLTS

Dave Prohl Kevin Coler

### World Missions

Sheldon Mortrud Lester Davidson

### Youth Ministries

Bennie Thorvig

### Evangelism

Lester Davidson

### AFLTS - International student

Lester Davidson

### General Fund

Lester Davidson

### Legacies

### Home Missions

Esther Helgeland

### World Missions

Esther Helgeland

### In honor of ...

### Vision 2004

Rev. James Molstre  
Rev. John Dennis

## Ambassador assistant editor says goodbye after 22 years

In 1979 I had not yet reached my third decade of life, but I began with generous doses of enthusiasm and energy, to work with the ministry of *The Lutheran Ambassador* and its editor, Pastor Raynard



**Hjermstad**

Huglen. I had been a schoolteacher and had studied a year at the University of Minnesota's School of Journalism. I was ready to work. Marriage, three children, four parsonages, over 460 issues and two editors later, I am grateful for that privilege you, the readers of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, have given me to serve. You have been forgiving. Grace has been the hallmark of my editors: Pastor Huglen, Pastor Robert Lee and now Pastor Craig Johnson. For about the past 18 years, our printer, Ellis Bloomfield of Wanamingo, Minn., patiently worked together with me as a team no matter how

many miles separated us.

The Old Testament is filled with milestones. I like the stone Samuel placed between Mizpah and Shen when the Philistines were subdued. He named it Ebenezer, meaning, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." It's true, and for that I praise Him.

I will miss the phone calls and emails. You allowed me to interrupt your schedules, and you kindly shared of the Kingdom's work in your lives, your congregations or departments. And that is what families do. Welcome the new member of the family, Ruth Gunderson, and let's continue to enjoy seeing God's hand at work throughout our church family.

— **Solveig Hjermstad**  
**Bruce, S.D.**

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences (8 months) – January 1 - August 31, 2001

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$267,241.00	\$20,627.97	\$182,658.81	68
Seminary . . . . .	126,462.00	9,963.14	88,137.54	70
Bible School . . . . .	162,545.00	24,556.57	145,392.99	89
Home Missions . . . . .	242,838.00	27,738.54	170,473.41	70
World Missions . . . . .	206,762.00	11,372.49	122,712.97	59
Capital Investment . . . . .	9,490.00	391.79	4,184.68	44
Parish Education . . . . .	78,302.00	4,114.27	45,401.56	58
Church Extension . . . . .	26,119.00	630.55	12,563.70	97
Youth Ministries . . . . .	48,375.00	3,774.01	25,323.42	38
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,168,134.00</b>	<b>\$103,169.33</b>	<b>\$802,629.59</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>TOTALS 2000 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,147,510.00</b>	<b>\$84,633.59</b>	<b>\$669,306.10</b>	<b>58</b>

**Goal 67%**

(2000 figures do not include Youth Ministries)

The Evangelism Department received \$15,285.50 in August, including \$11,250 AAL grant.

## Train students to dream

**A**n author observed that many students in kindergarten have great confidence in their creative abilities. If you ask them if they can draw an elephant or sing a song, they reply, "Sure can." They'll often be glad to give a demonstration to prove their point. Some of those same students, however, a few years later claim to have little ability at all. They describe themselves as not being very creative. They are hesitant about letting others see what they have done or hear what they can do. "I can't" often becomes a more common phrase.

This type of observation leads one to wonder about what goes on in the homes and schools of these children. What causes a child to go from, "sure can" to "I can't"?

It is disappointing when time spent in school leads a child to develop a defeatist attitude and unwillingness to try new things. It is particularly sad if that type of attitude comes about because of time spent in Sunday school and other Christian education programs.

It can happen. Discouraged teachers, instead of spreading the good news of Jesus, can spread discouragement. Adults who have seen their dreams dashed share their pessimism with kids. One generation tells the next about how people have failed but not about how God has been faithful.

Students need to hear of their limitations. Jesus said, "No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ... Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:4, 5, NIV). The Lord, after His resurrection, warned the disciples not to attempt to do His work on their own. "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father has promised, which you have heard me speak about" (Acts 1:4, NIV).

"Believe in yourself" is the message the world shares in an effort to shore up a young person's confidence. That is not the message of Scripture. The Bible calls on us to be realistic and humble about our own lack of ability and need of the Lord. We are also urged, though, to be realistic about the great things God can do. "Believe in Jesus" is the call.

After making clear that we cannot serve effectively without Him, Jesus declares, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit" (John 15:7, 8, NIV).

Young people who remain in Christ can do much. They can make the declaration Paul did: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13, NIV).

"I can't" type of thinking starts to set in when the impression is given that the best days of the church are over. We should look back and give thanks for good things God has done. We must not, however, become sentimental about the past to such an extent that we act as if the days in which God works have ended.

The night before the cross Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12, NIV).

It would have been tempting for the disciples to think that the days of observing great deeds were over once Jesus was no longer visibly present. That is not the case. Because of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit we can have confidence that God is at work today. Good things await the children of God. The best days for serving Jesus are still ahead. Students should be encouraged to look back and learn but also look ahead with anticipation and hope.

Teachers must be careful that we do not look upon our own experiences and think that is the limitation of what is possible. We may get tempted to think, "If my generation could not get it done, the next generation won't be able to either. If I have not seen it happen in the past, it won't happen in the future."

The Bible tells us, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." It follows with the good news that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:7, 8, NIV).

We remember what has been done, and we give thanks that the same Lord is at work today.

I hope that the more time students spend in our Sunday schools, the more confidence they will develop in what God can do in and through them. We adults may have suffered some discouragement. We may have had dreams not come true. But let us encourage young people to have a large vision of what God can do and take big steps of faith as they serve our great and faithful Lord.

— *Pastor Craig Johnson*

**'Students should be encouraged to look back and learn but also look ahead with anticipation and hope.'**



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## BUILDING THE BASE

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# Artificial flavoring

**J**ust today I received a call from a member in our congregation who pondered why it was that the lemon juice he buys at the store is artificially flavored while the dish soap he purchases at the same store contains real lemon juice. Now that's a good question. I know that this was all a joke but it does bring up an interesting thought for me. Our world contains gobs of artificial flavoring. I am not speaking of the kinds that occur in foods either.

Consider, for instance, the joys of the marital relationship. Those joys are real, and they are placed there by the very hand of God. Yet we find a movement in our culture away from marriage. Many are opting for alternatives of all kinds, including living together, same sex partnerships, multiple partner agreements and more. People are doing these things, without being forced, believing that they will find joy. They may find something, but it will certainly not be the joy that God designed for marriage. Rather their joy will have an artificial flavoring.

It is not just in marriage that this occurs, either. It seems that there is an artificial brand of just about every gift that God gives. Take, for instance, salvation. We

have the real thing, which comes only through God's Son, Jesus, as the apostle Peter proclaimed, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). But we also are confronted with a host of artificial paths and names that are given to bring salvation. Whether it be working toward our own righteousness paradigm of some kind, or an inward seeking of our own fulfillment, any method of salvation that is not based on Christ alone and Him crucified is only a competitor that contains artificial flavoring rather than the real article.

Now we should not be surprised that this kind of thing occurs, either. The Scriptures have been very upfront with us about the nature of our enemy and the enemy of our world. He is the top supplier in his region of artificial flavor, which is designed to compete with the gifts and grace of God. "Satan," the Scriptures tell us, "disguises himself as an angel of light" (II Corinthians 11:14). Satan is the *crème de la crème* when it comes to making himself, his servants, and his products look like the real thing when they are just miserable imitations.

Let's be clear about real things.

If you want a real being, then the God who calls Himself "I Am Who I Am" is that being. If you want real joy, it only comes from one place — the hand of our Maker. If you want real life, it can not be found without God's provision of a Savior who alone can give it. Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have (it) abundantly" (John 10:10).

It is very sad, but people that we live near, work with and socialize with are so content with the artificial flavoring that Satan supplies in this life. God has placed you and me to be sentinels of the truth. Our lives and our words should be constant witnesses to the real life that comes from God alone. Our presence and our speech should cause people to question some of the ingredients that are a part of their lives.

May God give us all wisdom in how He would have us live our lives, and may He truly make His church, "The light of the world," and "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14).

— *Lay pastor John Kent*  
*Rancho San Diego Lutheran*  
*El Cajon, Calif.*

