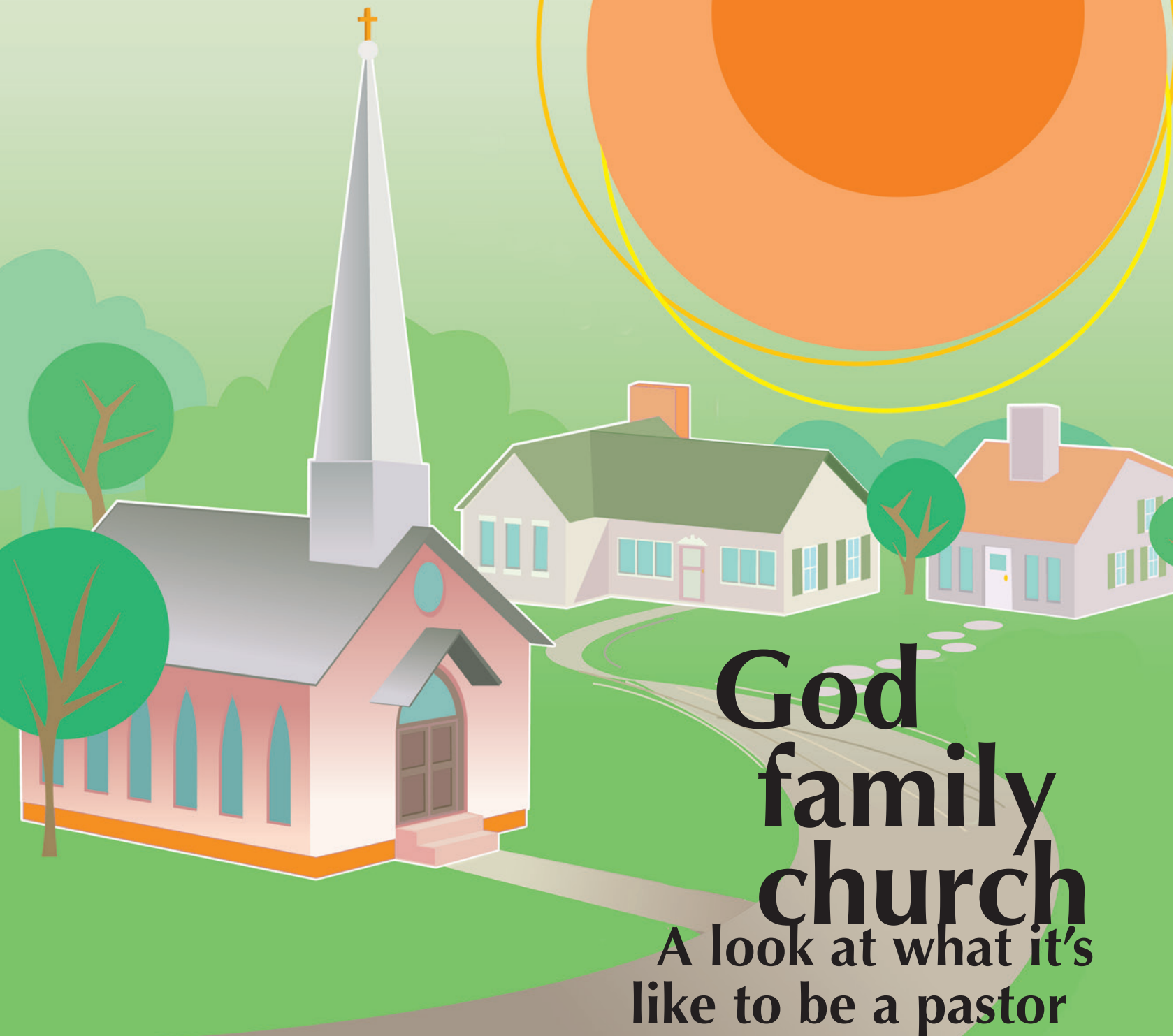


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

JUNE 2003



God family church

A look at what it's
like to be a pastor

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Encouraging Word

Do you hear God's call?

"Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I

formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet of the nations.' Then I said, 'Alas, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to



Kerwin Sletto
Ottawa, Ill.

say, 'Do not say, "I am a youth," because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak'" (Jeremiah 1:5-7).

As we read further in the chapter, God touched the mouth of Jeremiah and put His words in Jeremiah's mouth.

What we clearly see from God's words to Jeremiah is that God calls people into certain ministries, and He also equips and prepares the way before us to minister. I believe God's provision is specific for each individual regardless of what the gifts may be. Whatever the ministry may be, it takes the call and equipping of God for the ministry to be successful.

Truth may distress some people. Human nature causes us to want to take credit for the things we do. It's like the farmer who was showing his pastor his beautiful crops. As they went from field to field, the pastor would marvel at the beautiful crop God had provided. This frustrated the farmer because he had put a lot of work into the fields. Finally, they came to a field covered with weeds. "What happened here?" the pastor

asked. The farmer said, "Oh, this field God had all to Himself." While it was true that the farmer had been faithful to his work, the truth of the matter is that God provided the land, the rain, the sunshine and the ability of the farmer to have the beautiful crops.

God does call us to be faithful to Him in whatever we do. However, it is God who provides the blessings we need. This truth should bring a sense of relief and comfort to us in that we know that whatever God calls us to do, He has already provided what is needed. This includes the preparation of hearts for His work to be successful.

We also need to recognize that when we respond to God's call, it doesn't mean that everything we do will be successful in our own eyes. There may even be times when we feel like we have failed. Yet, we have God's promise that His Word will not return without accomplishing the purpose for which He sent it.

As you seek God's will, rest assured, God is at work to cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). Sometimes God calls us to plant the seed. Other times He calls us to water the soil. Still others have the pleasure of reaping the harvest.

I don't know through what ministry God may have called you to serve Him. But know that if God has called you, He will also provide what you need to be a blessing. Just as there are many parts to the human body, so there are many facets to ministry. May we be faithful to God, and may God bless you as you answer His call.

SOUND BITES

What pastors are saying

Selections from a survey printed in the Dec. 5, 2001 *Leadership Journal*. Visit www.LeadershipJournal.net.

If you had it to do over again, would you choose a career in ministry?

An overwhelming 86 percent said yes. Pastors are in the business of changing people's lives forever. That's worth doing, and doing again.

How do you feel about ministry?

Conventional wisdom bemoans crisis proportions of pastors discouraged and depressed, stressed and burned out. With due respect, our research consistently shows otherwise. For example, 91 percent of pastors say they feel "very positive" or "positive" about ministry. Nearly all feel satisfied (91 percent "very satisfied" or "satisfied"), and they want to stay in ministry (75 percent "definitely want to stay" and 21 percent "prefer to stay").

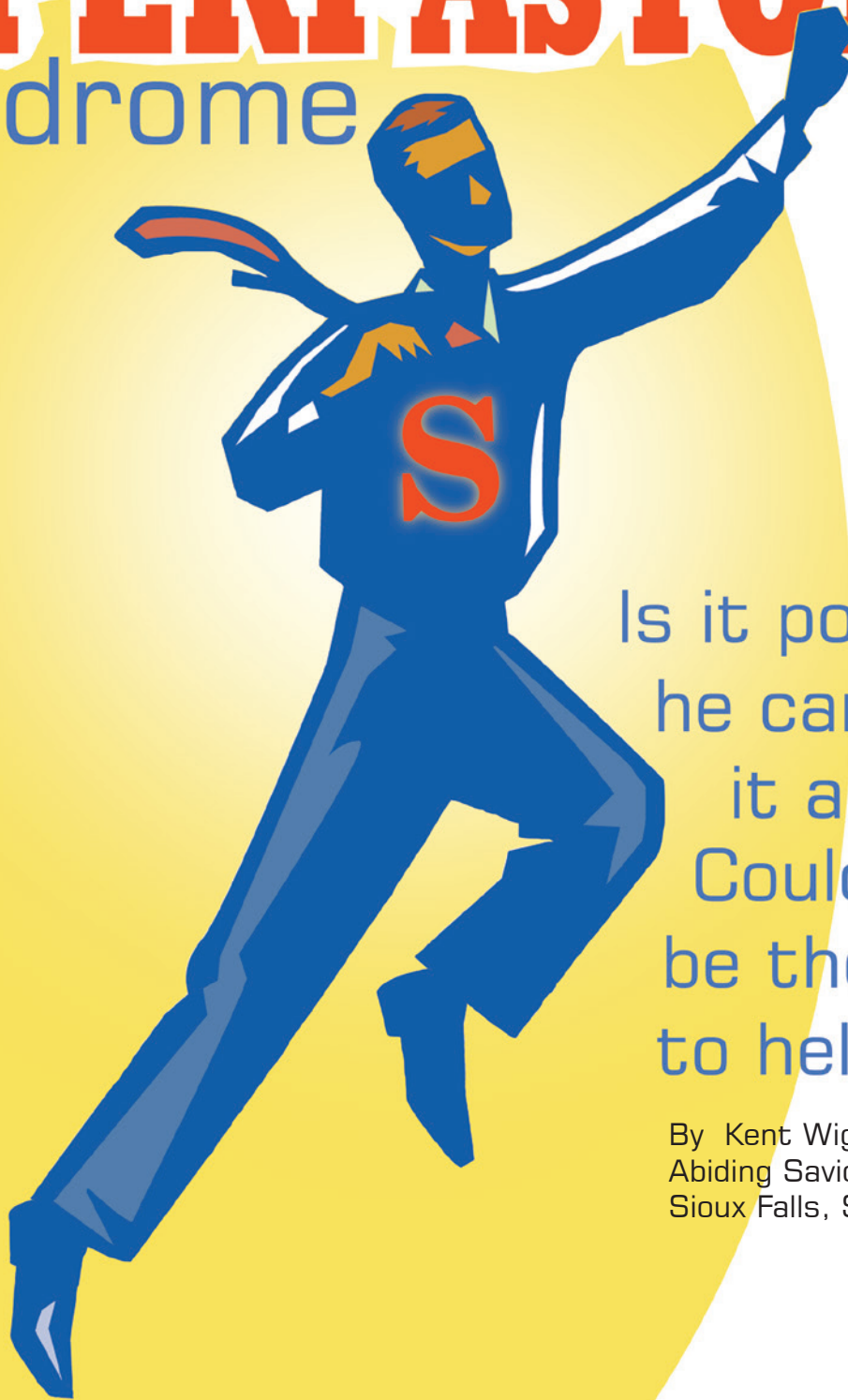
How much money do you make?

Although it's difficult to compare pastors' compensation with that of other workers, probably the fairest number to use is pastors' salary plus housing allowance. The 2000 medians for senior pastors (\$46,256) and solo pastors (\$33,312) straddle the median salary for U.S. households in 2000 (\$41,349). Yet pastors earn much less than most other professionals with the same level of education.

During your ministry, have you ever been fired or forced to resign?

Fired: 6 percent; forced out: 19 percent. (Since some had experienced both, the combined tally came to 22.8 percent; still nearly 1 in 4 pastors have been terminated.) We also asked "Who forced you out?" and found the biggest single culprit was "a small faction" of about 10 people. Pastoring is increasingly like coaching pro football: being under pressure is part of the territory.

The **SUPERPASTOR** syndrome



Is it possible
he can't do
it all?
Could you
be the one
to help?

By Kent Wigg
Abiding Savior
Sioux Falls, S.D.

Faster than a speeding coffee server. Sermons more powerful than Billy Graham. Able to leap from baptisms to new member potlucks in a single bound! Look — up in the pulpit! It's Superpastor!

Do our expectations of our pastors tend to range between qualities offered by Paul, Moses, Isaiah, John the Baptist, and perhaps a little Samson? (For those “weighty” tasks.)

Remember Superman? He was the “man of steel” who did all the work fighting evil, while everyone else, including the police and at least one division of the U.S. Army, stood around watching. No need to help, Superman did it all!

But could that be our relationship with our pastor? Is it possible he can't do it all? Does he need more help than we currently provide?

The Fuller Institute of Church Growth underscored the need for lay help in a 1991 survey. High levels of discouragement were reported among pastors concerning workloads, demands placed upon them by their congregations, negative effects on their family, and — sadly — an absence of close friendships in their lives.

The good news is that we can help. While our human nature tells us, “Be a spectator!” God's supernatural design commands us, “Be an active player!” Pastor Michael Brandt, Abiding Savior, Sioux Falls, S.D., recommends that church volunteers and workers consider a team discipleship model, whereby all the gifts God has given to people are to be lived out for His glory: “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it ... to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith” (Ephesians 4:7, 12-13a, NIV).

Steve, Brenda, Phil, Jodi, Bob, and Dee are members of Pastor Brandt's congregation. Based on their experiences at Abiding Savior and previous churches, they offered several observations and ideas for caring Christians to support their shepherd.

Desire a team attitude, shun stardom

The apostle Paul reminds us, “The Holy Spirit displays God's power through each of us as means of helping the entire church” (I Corinthians 12:7, The Living Bible).

Older baseball fans might remember the 1959 Chicago White Sox winning a pennant without stars or star-like statistics, while many teams fielded multi-millionaire stars with little success, because the team factor — the desire to contribute without expecting special recognition (stardom) — was missing. Bob and Dee, a retired couple, suggest that

meaningful expressions of team-like support for their pastor can be as simple as voluntarily cleaning dusty plants, scrubbing out a refrigerator, or driving their pastor to an event or speech to allow him time to catch up on mail or reading. Jodi, a musician and drama coordinator, suggests watching for the little things we may take for granted: “Each pastor is different in what he likes to keep ‘hands on’ for himself,” but check for opportunities such as bulletin preparation, answering a ringing phone, helping with calls at the hospital, turning off lights, or locking up on Sunday.

Stretch your goals

Fitness experts have noticed that many people limit their benefit from exercise because they stay within their comfort zone. Simply put, if you don't huff and puff a little, your heart really isn't building new strength. Serving in a new area, though uncomfortable at first, has heart-building benefits for you and your pastor alike. It further serves as a confirmation of faith, because serving in an area where your gifts weren't readily apparent, suggests Steve, a deacon, invites God to demonstrate how much He can do through you that may be far greater than what you ever thought possible.

Be an electric starter

One great benefit of electric starting mowers is the guarantee to start without pulling and pulling on a cord. What a goal for us in serving our pastor and our church body: “Guaranteed no pulling, and I'm off to work!” Is there an area where you have served effectively in the past, perhaps at previous churches, which could provide time relief for your pastor? Brenda, a newer member, recognized rapid member growth as an opportunity for new member services, as she — without any special encouragement — helped organize fellowship and devotional times among these new members to speed their assimilation into the church body.

Be a friend, be a praying friend

Pastors enjoy laughing, eating, and good conversation, just as the rest of us do. Take a moment, Steve suggests, to share a conversation or a laugh with him, or to offer special help that allows him more time to enjoy his family. Phil, as a former deacon and Bible study leader, notes the value of regular encouragement along with personal prayer for his pastor as “he may have struggles that you will never

See SUPER, page 14



God family church

Advice from
a pastor of 53 years

Having been asked to reflect back on my 53 years as a Lutheran pastor, let me begin, first of all, by saying that the clergy ministry must unquestionably be a call from the Holy Spirit. Along with the blessings of that call, my Lord has blessed me with a supportive wife, four sons, their wives and 18 grandchildren, all of them, parents and children alike, loving their Lord, loving their families and loving their country.

From those years of ministry experience and lessons learned with my family, let me share just a very few things that I think are vital within any church family and any pastor's ministry.

Priorities

I had my priorities out of order when I first went out into the ministry. I was at a gathering where



Walter Johnson
Faith Free
Lutheran
Shakopee, Minn.

best-selling Christian author Bill Gothard was speaking to a large group of pastors. Talking about pastor's priorities, he suggested this order: First God, second family, third staff, and fourth congregation. Earlier I had placed the congregation in the second position. Gothard was right. If a pastor's relationship with his family and staff are not attended to, it is going to reflect on his life and the life of his congregation. A pastor has a call from our Lord to make himself available to the entire congregation. But the congregation should

not insist that the pastor is so ceaselessly available that quality time and making memories with his family will suffer.

Encouragement

In college I participated in several sports. In track and field events I threw the shot and discus and ran the half-mile. When I ran, a friend positioned himself halfway around the track and ran alongside me off the track for a short stretch cheering me on. He really never knew how important that encouragement was in winning.

In a recent sermon, I mentioned the fact that I had looked up the term, "one another," in the Bible. I had discovered that the term was used 37 times in the epistles alone and 35 of those times it is used to talk about believers' concern for one another. In I Thessalonians 5:11, we are admonished to "encourage one another and build each other up." Over and over and over again Paul reminds us how important it is for all the members of the congregation and the

pastor to be in harmony, working together with one voice and as one team building each other up.

Satan loves to divide and conquer God's family. Pastor, encourage your members. There isn't one member who can't use some kind of encouragement. People, encourage your pastor. There isn't one pastor who can't use some kind of encouragement.

Finding the time for personal prayer and Scrip-

Quiet time

ture reading is an area of my ministry where I really needed the Lord's help in disciplining myself. There are always things that demand our time. And each one seems to be so important at the moment. But time with the Lord is an absolute for anybody who is committed to being one of the Lord's disciples. Many of those "important things" can squeeze out our time with the Lord. When that happens, our relationship with Him grows cold, our spiritual walk weakens and we find ourselves without the power for our lives that only Almighty God can provide. Neglecting to feed on the Bread of Life always brings on spiritual malnutrition. I know because I have been there.

Gifts

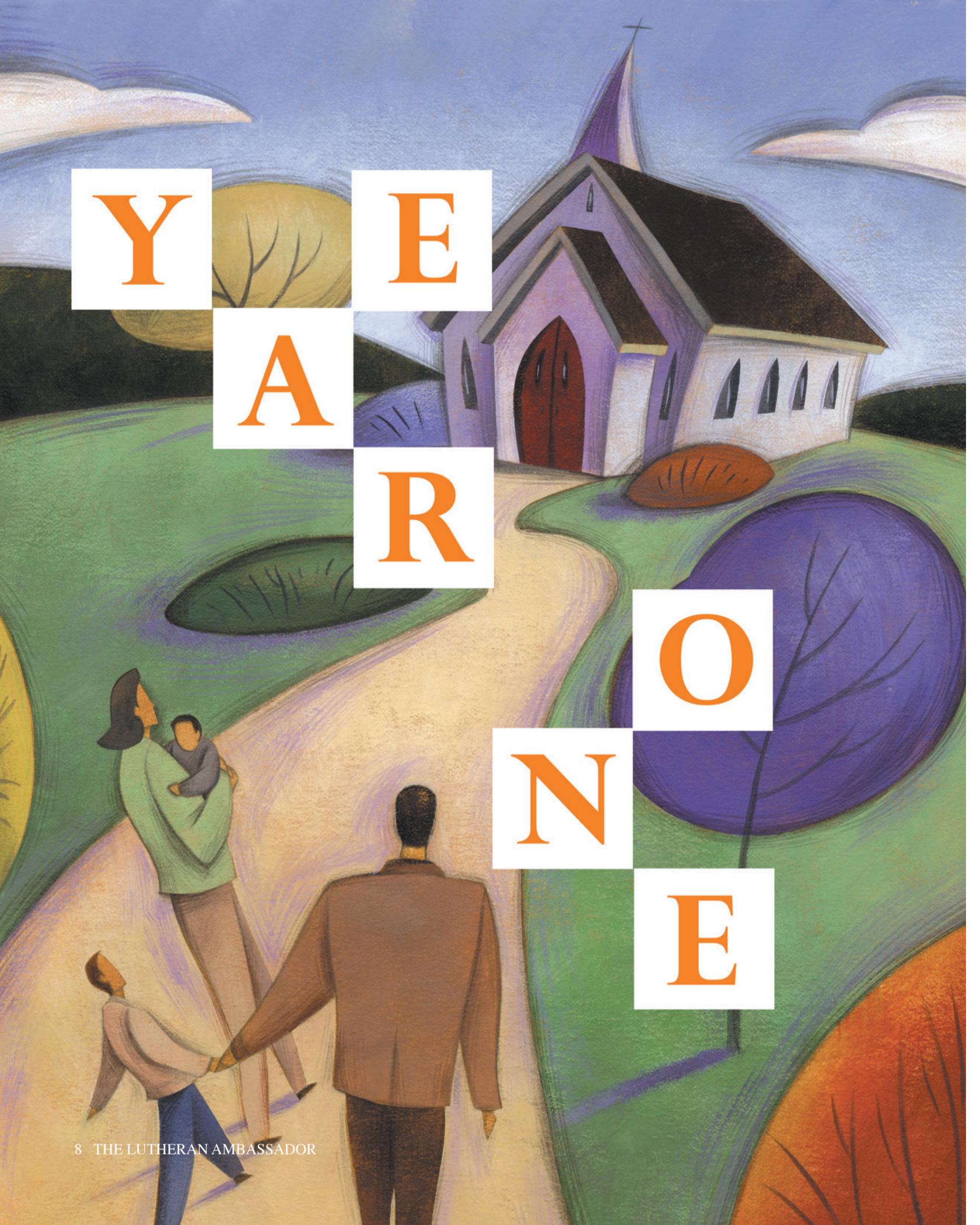
One of our sons worked for a major television station in the Twin Cities as a producer/director. I would turn that channel on for the news, but I never saw him deliver the news. Somebody else was always doing that. What I didn't see were all the people behind the scenes, unnoticed, doing their specific jobs, making it possible for me to see the news. There were the writers, cameramen, ad salesmen, floor managers, secretaries, etc.

I believe that God gives to every single one of us, lay and clergy alike, specific gifts, talents, and abilities that He can use someplace in His service. Much of the time, the deeds of those faithful servants behind the scenes go unnoticed by the rest of the congregation.

I happened to cherish my time in the pulpit and my time with the youths. The pulpit was always the culmination of hours upon hours of preparation every week. And my love for youths encompassed unnumbered campfires, coast-to-coast bus trips, mountain climbing, canoe trips, leaking tents, confirmation camps and dodging tornados. But there were always members of my congregation who were ready to serve as teachers or counselors or cooks or whatever. Thank God for all of those unnoticed servants of the Lord in all of our congregations.

Find your niche. Make yourself available. Let's employ the God-given unique gifts and talents that He has given to us and praise His name together.





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As I reflect upon my first year of pastoral ministry, I think I am most surprised by the lack of big surprises. Despite the many ministerial horror stories I've heard, I haven't been blindsided by any unexpected shocks, and I haven't had to scrape my jaw off the floor even once. Perhaps it's been a slow year at Freedom and St. Petrie. Perhaps. But no doubt the credit more properly belongs to the all-sufficient grace of God, as well as a seminary education that left me well prepared to begin the service to which He has called me.

Nevertheless, given that I am a young and inexperienced pastor, there have certainly been surprises. One of the main surprises is simply the staggering



*Pastor Dana Coyle
Ottawa, Ill.*

amount of time and energy that can be sucked up by the ministry. There is always far more to do than can be done, and the hours melt away so quickly. Every week, there are sermons and Bible studies to prepare, people to visit, phone calls to make, books to read, administrative details to handle, meetings to prepare for, mail to sort, and records to keep. Add in the additional demands of special seasons such as Advent and Lent, special

events on the church calendar, and unexpected crises, and you've got the formula for a tired, mentally-drained, and somewhat depressed pastor — a pastor who, despite having worked many long, hard hours, still feels like he hasn't done enough.

I had heard many times about this reality in the ministry, and nodded soberly in agreement with the warnings about sacrificing one's family on the altar of ministry. I probably shouldn't have been surprised to discover that a pastor's life is as demanding as advertised. But like so many things in life, you have to experience it firsthand before you really understand it.

Truth be told, there is a constant tension in the ministry, a tension between being the man called "Husband" and "Daddy," and the man called "Pastor." Both the home and the office require the best a pastor has to give. Yet, it is critical that a pastor be a husband and father first, and a pastor second. It is so easy to allow the office to steal away hours that rightfully belong to the home. I'm grateful that the deacons in the churches I serve are aware of this and regularly ask me how my wife and children are handling the burdens of the ministry. Their loving concern helps keep me mindful of this area of potential failure.

I have been surprised at how desperately I covet the prayers of the people in the congregations I have

been called to serve. Truly, the work of the ministry is a humanly impossible task; no man can faithfully pastor in his own strength. A pastor must live and serve in helpless dependence upon the grace and strength of the Lord. As I've been learning this year, that truth — taught again and again in the seminary classroom — is forcefully driven home in the crucible of parish experience. And so a pastor needs faithful and committed prayer support from the congregation. I can't tell you how much it means to me to know that there are people in these congregations who are faithfully praying for my family and me every day. I cling to that far more gratefully than I ever supposed I would.

I have also been surprised and humbled to behold the way God so quietly moves and works in me and for me, providing whatever is needed in the course of day-to-day ministry by orchestrating events, shaping thoughts, and influencing decisions. The vast majority of the time I'm not even aware of what He's doing until after it's done, and I am left marveling that God should be so intimately mindful of me.

I recognize that I probably shouldn't be surprised at these things. I know I can expect God to honor the promises of His Word. But in spite of that, there is a part of me that delights in rediscovering the fresh sweetness of God's sustaining grace. Perhaps it's a part of learning to behold the Lord through the eyes of a child and being filled with wonder at His goodness and love. I can't help but believe that our Heavenly Father delights to surprise us and stir up fresh wonder in our hearts. For me, these "little" surprises are like splashes of brilliant color that add a vibrant richness to the work I do from day to day.

How can the congregations of our AFLC care for their pastors? Seek to understand the life he lives as he serves the Lord and you. Support him and love him and encourage him, because no one is more keenly aware of his flaws and deficiencies than he is. Honor his day off and his vacation time. And above all, pray for him faithfully, that he might be found faithful.

**I PROBABLY
SHOULDN'T HAVE
BEEN SURPRISED
TO DISCOVER
THAT A PASTOR'S
LIFE IS AS
DEMANDING AS
ADVERTISED.**



What if my pastor sins?

Sadly, it is a living question for many today. Pastors, like all human beings, are people in continual need of repentance from sin and of faith in Jesus Christ. But pastors bear a special responsibility, according to James 3:1 (NASB), “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.”

Pastors and other church leaders have an especially large impact on the spiritual lives of others. Through God’s grace there are many faithful pastors, and they have an eternally positive impact. But when they fall into sin, they are especially liable to cause much harm to others as well as to themselves. “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6).

News media have recently broadcast the double scandal of sexual abuse by priests and the cover-up of the same by the Catholic Church hierarchy. But these and other sins are neither confined to the Catholic Church nor excluded from our own church body. On the other hand, these are days of false accusations. Pastors have had their lives and ministries torn into tatters by accusations that didn’t have a shred of truth to them. So how shall we deal with it if a pastor sins, if a pastor has been accused of sin, or if it looks like he may have sinned?

Scripture is very clear about what to do: “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother” (Matthew 18:15). The rule is the same for pastors as for anyone else. Jesus goes on in verse 16: “But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed” (quoting from Deuter-

onomy 19:15). I like to call this the “innocent until proven guilty” principle in Scripture. If your pastor (or other fellow Christian) heeds your admonition in private, then the matter is taken care of, and nobody else needs to know. But what if he has really done no wrong, and you are mistaken? Then the matter is still taken care of, because he gets the chance to defend himself in private!

I once knew a Pastor B of a non-AFLC home mission church. One evening he was to attend a certain meeting upon the church’s request. The meeting was cancelled at the last minute, so he decided to do some bowling practice instead. A church member spotted Pastor B at the bowling alley, and maliciously spread the rumor among others that Pastor B had “skipped the meeting.” If only someone had asked him directly what had happened, the matter could have quickly passed. Instead, a sizable percentage of the new little congregation left in a noisy huff. The disgruntled party only cheated themselves, as the struggling remnant of that little group has since grown into a large, active, vibrant congregation.

Let’s say that my pastor (or other fellow Christian) has not heeded my private admonition, and I take one or two with me, as Jesus commands. Perhaps he will listen to the two or three of us. And if he has not sinned, then he can call upon the other one or two to help him set me straight.

“Someone has just told me a terrible report about our new pastor. We don’t know him very well yet, and now we’re not sure we can trust him. What



*Go to
him in
private*



shall we do?"

I feel for anyone who is put in this bewildering position. It is understandable that one might experience doubts, but hearsay brings special temptation to sidestep the rules of Scripture. It's crucial not to give in. What do you do when you hear a single bad report? "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses" (I Timothy 5:19). Note carefully that the rule is the same for a church leader as for anyone else. One bad report is not enough evidence even for a trial, yet some have rushed to a conviction without even cross-examining the one witness, or seeking any other evidence. The accused pastor is entitled to face his accusers and be asked about the matter, as Matthew 18:15 indicates. If someone asks me, "I heard that Pastor B sinned when he was at your church. Is it true?" the first thing I should ask is, "Have you talked with Pastor B about this?" If the answer is no, then it's clearly the time to seal my lips, except per-

*Don't
rush to
convict*

haps to speak a positive word about Pastor B. Even if the answer is yes, it's wise not to say anything at the time, but to pray for wisdom. It may be good to seek the advice of an appropriate advisor, such as the president of my church body. But I must not in any way contribute to rumor or

hearsay, which is what we do any time we sidestep Matthew 18:15.

If you have heard a bad report about a pastor,

seek and listen to other witnesses. Proverbs 18:17 says, "The first to plead his case seems just, until another comes and examines him." In other words, there are at least two sides to every story. Pastor B's accuser could be a reliable witness — or he could be bitter because Pastor B gave him a righteous reprimand. One or two other eyewitnesses may agree with the accuser, or they may prove that the accuser is the real sinner. Either way, they absolutely, positively must be consulted.

"I'm afraid my pastor may have committed sexual abuse."

That's not only a sin, it's a terrible crime. But I Corinthians 6:7 says, "Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another." Does that mean that he should only be disciplined by the church, and I shouldn't report him to the civil authorities?

We must be clear about the fact that deeds such as sexual abuse and child abuse are crimes that must be prosecuted under criminal law. In many states there are criminal issues even when consenting adults are involved. Certainly when pastors sin in criminal ways it is also a matter for church discipline according to Matthew 18. But we must be clear that I Corinthians 6 does not mean that Christians should not report crimes committed by other Christians. Indeed, there are many cases in which people are



*There are
two sides
to a story*

See **SIN**, page 14

WMF Are you qualified?

A story is told about two women from different churches in a small town who met at the local cafe for coffee. They were discussing the upcoming baseball game organized by the Chamber of Commerce to stir up more community spirit. Several women, including one woman's pastor's wife, had signed up to play. The other woman thought it was not proper for a pastor's wife to play baseball and strongly voiced her opinion, "After all, MY pastor's wife leads the choir, plays the organ, teaches Sunday school, and is president of the women's group."

This story brings up an interesting question. Just what is the role of a pastor's wife? Are there certain qualifications and expectations that must be met? What if she isn't gifted in some of these preconceived ideas we've all had about the role of the perfect pastor's wife?



*Phyllis Nikunen
Faith Free
Bertrand, Neb.*

My father was ordained when I was 10 years old, so I had an up-front look at the role of a pastor's wife. My mother was a beautiful example to me. However, in her effort to be all things to all people and live up to all these expectations, she suffered a nervous breakdown. When I saw her heartbreak, pain and suffering, I decided I would never marry a pastor.

I didn't, either. My husband was in electronics until two years after we were married. Then he confessed that he'd had a definite call into the ministry at confirmation, which he could no longer ignore.

Now what was I going to do? In the first place, I did not want to be a pastor's wife! And I certainly was not gifted in all those things a pastor's wife is supposed to do. I knew there was no way I could do this in my own strength. There was nowhere to go but to the Lord in His Word, and that's where I made an amazing and freeing discovery.

Did you know that aside from the words of I Timothy 3:11, which tell us that the wives of deacons (pastors/leaders) should be "women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything," (NIV) there is nothing in the Bible which talks about any special duties a pastor's wife must perform in the church?

Because her husband's calling makes her very visible, it is true that the pastor's wife is to set a good example to others. That is what God expects of her. But, after the Lord, her first responsibility is to her husband and to her family, just like you. If she is to



be the true
helpmate
God desires
her to be and
provide a

safe haven for her husband to return to, along with raising her children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, she cannot be all things to all people.

Remember, also, that she is human just like you. Do you know the song, "He's Still Working On Me"? It's true of your pastor's wife, too. We are not perfect people and always will be "people in process." She will fail in your eyes at times, and this will be especially true if you have expectations of what a pastor's wife should be or you are comparing her to another pastor's wife. Allow her to discover her own gifts, talents and abilities and to use them as God directs her to do. At times, these may be very different from what you think a pastor's wife should have. She may even decide to play baseball. Isn't it wonderful, though, that God has not created us all alike?

No, God does not assign any specific tasks in the congregation for the pastor's wife. She is to be like any other woman, obeying the commands and instructions given wives in Scripture and using her own unique gifts and talents for the Lord.

WMF memorials

Harriet Dalager, Mabel Buhler, Lydia McCarlson, Leslie Waddle, Dorothy Wik, all of Webster, S.D.; Gerald Stenbak, Tioga, N.D.; Esther Lien, Conway, N.D.; Orlin Quanbeck, McVile, N.D.; Kenneth Ringdahl, Peoria, Ariz.; Dorothy Dick, Shevlin, Minn.; Beverly Kaldheim, Morris, Ill.; Irma Will, and Pastor Vincent Will, both of Springfield, Mo.

Stewardship Don't get attached

“We’re hungry for something, Lord. We have so much food and cake and candy for ourselves, but we’re hungry. People around us are so stiff and tight and hard to reach. And they make us that way. But we’re hungry for something more. People we know keep talking about great ideas, brilliant questions, and the problem of God’s existence. But we’re hungry for You, not ideas or theories. We want You to touch us, to reach inside us and turn us on. There are so many people who will counsel us to death. But we’re hungry for someone who can get so close to us that we can see You there. We have so many things, but we’re hungry for You. Deep, deep down inside we’re hungry, even if we appear to be silly, lazy or unconcerned at times. We’re hungry for Your kind of power and love and joy. Feed us, Lord. Feed us with Your rich food” (Peter Marshall, “Hymns for the Family of God”).

How many people in this world say this prayer deep down in their hearts? How many find the Lord through the many different ways we reach out through the AFLC and all its ministries? You make this happen. The more we get involved, the more we can reach people for Christ.

Sometimes our roots become too firmly attached to this earth that we fall in love with things. We sometimes need help to understand that the pilgrimage of this life is but an introduction, a preface, a training school for what is to come. Then shall we see all of life in its true perspective. Then shall we not fall in love with the things of time, but come to love the things that endure. Then shall we be saved from the tyranny of possessions that we have no leisure to enjoy, of property the care of which becomes a burden. May God give us the courage to simplify our lives so we may

mature in our faith and live, not merely to exist, but that we may have joy in our work and a part in God’s overall plan to reach the lost for Christ.

C.S. Lewis didn’t talk about percentage giving. He said the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. Our charities should pinch and hamper us. If we live at the same level of affluence as other people who have our level of income, we are probably giving away too little. Obstacles to charity include greed for luxurious living, greed for money itself, fear of financial insecurity and showy pride.

May no one go lost because of our greed or neglect. And may we all hunger and thirst for righteousness for all, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

— *Lavern Thompson*
Stewardship Board



Register for Summer Institute of Theology

The 2003 Summer Institute of Theology will be August 4-8 on the campus of the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary. Class offerings include “Studies in the Book of Acts,” taught by Pastor

Jerry Moan, “The Doctrine of Man,” taught by Dr. Francis Monseth, “Studies in Isaiah,” taught by Pastor Jerry Holmaas, and “The Pastoral Ministry,” taught by Pastor Phil Haugen.

Registration is \$15, tuition (per credit hour) is \$16 and an auditing fee of \$12 (per credit hour) is also available. Campus housing is available for a fee. For more information, contact AFLTS at (763) 544-9501.

SIN, from page 11

legally required to report what they know about serious crimes, and Christians are not exempt from this. “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities” (Romans 13:1).

I Corinthians 6 forbids Christians from suing one another in civil suits, in which a petitioner seeks a settlement, usually financial, from a respondent. But criminal acts such as burglary, child abuse, sexual abuse, or murder are in a different class from the cases when one party sues another. Instead, they are subject to criminal prosecution in which the state prosecutes the defendant on behalf of the plaintiff. Thus, I Corinthians 6 does not forbid us from reporting criminal acts committed by pastors or other Christians.

“My pastor criticized the teachings of a well-known Bible teacher. I asked him if he had contacted that Bible teacher privately, in obedience to Matthew 18, and he had not. Doesn’t that mean that my pastor should have kept quiet?”

There are cases in which a public offense requires an immediate, equally public response, especially in the case of false teaching. In Galatians 2:11-14, Paul rebuked Peter publicly because he was sinning publicly in a way that was leading others astray. Paul did not wait to speak first with Peter privately. In II Thessalonians 2:3, Paul says, “Let no one in any way deceive you” by a false report given in Paul’s name that the “day of the Lord has come” (v. 2). There is no evidence that Paul found it necessary to speak privately to the source of the false report before denouncing the report. It needed immediate attention, so people would not be misled.

It is certainly appropriate, whenever possible, to approach Bible teachers privately when in need of correction. In Acts 18:24-28, Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos aside privately and “explained to him the way of God more accurately” (v. 26). All evidence suggests that his teaching was already excellent; that his error may have been more one of gaps in his knowledge rather than one of promoting false teachings; and that he was very receptive to what Priscilla and Aquila had to say. Thus, public false teaching warrants a public



response, according to God’s Word. And since its destructive effects are liable to happen immediately, the truth must be immediately proclaimed, whether or not there has been a private admonition. But private correction certainly is also appropriate, whenever possible.

If a pastor (or anyone else) sins, or if we even just think maybe a pastor has sinned, it is our sacred obligation to follow the rules the LORD gives us in Matthew 18 and many other passages. It is a great temptation to break these rules through gossip and hasty judgment. But there is great power in the rules, power to heal relationships and restore ministries. It is power to reveal “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” This power does not lie within us. It is the power of Christ who promises to be present, in Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three have gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst.”



SUPER, from page 5

know about.” Jodi adds, as a side benefit, “You can’t possibly pray for someone regularly without learning to love him in the process.”

Back to the original question: Is our pastor “super,” or have our expectations and perhaps our spectator attitudes unwittingly forced the

“superpastor” title on him, with little assistance from us? Lord, help us to act on Your truth that — far more important than bending steel with his bare hands — our pastor is commissioned to help mold the precious souls given as his responsibility. We are charged and equipped by your same Holy Spirit to be the team of disciples he is counting on for assis-

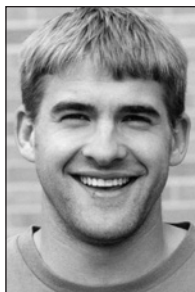
tance. May we, in that Spirit, find super ways to show our pastor, “we’re here for you!”

— Kent Wigg
Abiding Savior
Sioux Falls, S.D.



FLY A counselor's prayer

“Prayer paves the pathway for God to do great things.” I heard this statement often while attending college in Williston, N.D., where God had brought a small group of born-again believers together on the campus of Williston State College and planted within us a passion to start a campus ministry. Prayer paved a pathway



Ben Deubner
FLY Committee

for our small group to meet one another, and prayer paved pathways for many hurting students to come, hear and meet Jesus, the Savior of the world. It wasn't coincidence or chance that we met the weekend before school started, but it was God hearing the prayers of our parents and our requests to find Christian fellowship. He agreed and paved the way.

Friends and counselors, I share this happening only because it is a testimony to faith-filled prayer, and I say faith-filled because that is the only kind that ever gets heard. There's a lot of praying going on in this world today. There are many prayers not reaching the ears of God simply because they are words from the lips of ones who do not believe in the power of the One in whom they are directed toward. We must pray in faith and in the name of Jesus (John 16:23).

How do we pray on behalf of the FLY campers for 2003? We must pray continually that they may



receive the gift of seeing. We must pit our prayers against that dark spirit who blinds the hearts of people. We must pray that the good seed of the Word would fall into cultivated soil of the heart, so that it would not be eaten by the birds, withered away because of no root, or choked out by the weeds of sin (Matthew 13:3-9). Listen to Paul's heart for those in Israel from Romans 10:1, "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation."

Let's start praying, and let's continue. Counselors, now is the time to begin praying for the campers in your room. You probably don't know the names of those who will be placed under your leadership yet. Don't worry about their names, for He knows their names. Pray for what's important: their souls. I believe as you begin intercessory prayer in advance, God will begin to prepare your relationships with them even before you've had the chance to meet one another based upon the involvement you've had in their lives through faith-filled prayer. Prayer will pave the pathway for God to do great and miraculous deeds at FLY 2003, for the glory of His name and the furthering of His kingdom. Let us pray.

Plan now to Honor Our Heroes

The Mission America Coalition has announced a new nationwide initiative called Honor Our Heroes to help build bridges between churches and communities as they honor local public servants and leaders who have shown outstanding courage, character, sacrifice and service.

Honor our Heroes events are designed to take place in conjunction with Independence day weekend (July 4); Patriot Day weekend (Sept. 11) and Veterans Day weekend (Nov. 9-11).

Pastor Wayne Pederson, presi-

dent of MAC and graduate of AFLTS, said, "Honor Our Heroes will provide churches throughout the nation with an opportunity to reach out into their communities, especially touching those who might not normally attend a church event."

MAC and its partners, including Campus Crusade for Christ, are offering comprehensive resources including sermons, sermon outlines, orders of service, the "Courage" gospel booklet, and promotional materials. Go to www.honorourheroes.com for more information.

Nurses needed to volunteer at FLY

Nurses with strong clinical and triage skills are needed at the FLY Convention. The nursing team will provide around-the-clock coverage for campers' health care needs. A reduced registration fee is being offered to those who volunteer. Please contact Becky Valdez at RRV-dez55@aol.com or call (763) 420-4130 as soon as possible if you are interested in this opportunity.

World Missions Africa

The Lutheran churches in Eastern Africa recently experienced a tremendous revival. As God has worked in their lives, many from that area desire to come to our schools for training to equip themselves to be leaders in their churches. Unfortunately, many problems have prevented this from happening. The 2002 Annual Conference passed a resolution to investigate opportunities to meet this need.

After prayer and discussion, two one-week pastoral training seminars have been planned, one in Uganda and another in Tanzania. The sessions will have a two-fold purpose: First, to offer needed training; second, to be a fact-finding trip to determine what the needs are and how we can meet them. The sessions are scheduled for this August.



Monseths

Because the seminars were not budgeted, we are asking for donations to cover the costs of the seminars and to pay the expenses of the teaching staff. The team will raise their own funds. Would you consider supporting them in this endeavor? Each team member needs to raise approximately \$3,000. Members are:

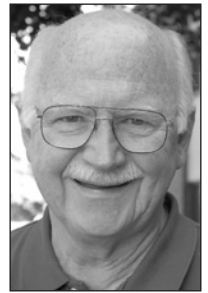
Dr. Francis and Ellen Monseth

Dr. Monseth, dean of AFLTS, will direct the teaching program. His classes will center on doctrinal study with an emphasis on the doctrine of the Word.

Ellen will minister to women through Bible studies and Christian counsel.

Pastor Richard Gunderson

Pastor Gunderson, director of the Ministry Training Institute at AFLBS, will be in charge of logistics for the seminars while the team is in Africa. He will teach practical studies, including preparation of sermons.



Gunderson

Dr. Norvald Yri

Dr. Norvald Yri, missionary in Tanzania and former co-director of MTI, will be invaluable to the team as a missionary in Tanzania with the Norwegian Lutheran Mission. Dr. Yri will be in charge of biblical study, with classes in Romans.



Yri

Nate and Rhoda Jore

Nate is an AFLTS student and missionary kid who grew up on the field. The Jores have a deep interest in missions and sense a call to work in missions. They will work with youths during the seminars.



Jores

Pastor Phillip Hooper, Salinas, Calif., accepted a call to serve as youth pastor for St. Ansgar's Lutheran, Salinas, a position that he has been filling on an interim basis since last year.

Pastor Lynn Qualm, Platte, S.D., accepted a call to be the pastor of United Lutheran, Laurel, Neb. Pastor Qualm, who previously served in Canada, comes to the AFLC by colloquy from the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

Jesse Kneeland, Corcoran, Minn., a 2002 AFLBS graduate, is the new youth worker for Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon, Minn.

Senior seminarian **Richard Carr** has accepted a call to join the pasto-

ral staff as co-pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, where he has been serving his internship.

Senior seminarian **Matt Steendahl** has accepted a call to serve as youth pastor at Elim Lutheran, Lake Stevens, Wash., where he served his internship.

Pastor Tom Gilman, Canton, S.D., accepted a call to become the associate pastor of Emmaus Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Minn., and will begin his new ministry in early fall. Pastor Gilman currently serves Redeemer Free Lutheran, Canton.

Senior seminarian **Wade Mobley** accepted a call to serve Living Word

Lutheran Church, a new congregation planted by Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, S.D. He will be ordained during the closing service of the 2003 Annual Conference, which will be in his home church, Calvary of Arlington, S.D.

Members of the Coordinating Committee accepted an application for affiliation from **King of Kings Lutheran**, Lewisville, Texas. The church is served part-time by acting Pastor John Chandler.

Word of God Lutheran, a "house church" meeting in Brooklyn Park, Minn., voted to withdraw from the AFLC. Pastor Jeff Iverson asked that his name be removed from the clergy roster.

Vision 2004 Under Construction

Members of the AFLC Schools Corporation voted this past month to begin building the new student center. God has been answering prayers for the AFLC schools' Vision project by miraculously providing the funds necessary to obtain a loan for the new student center. With \$2.2 million raised in cash and approximately \$500,000 in commitments, a loan has been established for the additional dollars needed for the \$3.5 million project.



ABOVE: Pastor Jim Johnson, AFLBS dean, led students and school supporters in an evening of prayer and praise on the site where the new student center will be built this summer. LEFT: The group went on a prayer walk around campus.

Actual construction of the student center began in May. The building will provide much-needed classrooms, library, cafeteria, music and office spaces. The schools' master building plan includes more seminary housing, dormitories and an auditorium/gymnasium, totaling approximately \$11 million.

Vision 2004 Prayer Team

Prayer chairman and AFLBS Dean Pastor James

Johnson, gathered individuals together for a time of prayer May 12 to consecrate the new student center. The group met on campus around a campfire on the actual ground where the student center construction will take place. Chairman Johnson expresses his thanks for all those who have been faithfully praying for the schools and the building project.

Have you considered Bible school?

Are you a high school senior? Not sure of what your plans are for this fall? Maybe you're attending college and aren't satisfied with your major or don't know what major to choose. Or maybe you know someone that fits this description. Preparing for the future, choosing a career, or picking a vocation — these are tough decisions.

Maybe you should consider spending a year or two at Bible school. At AFLBS, you will spend concentrated time each day in God's Word, studying under the direction of pastors and teachers who are devoted to helping people — people like you — find answers to life questions in the Bible. You'll have opportunities for ministry through music, athletics, working with youth in area churches, and witnessing by word and action to your fellow students and co-workers.

AFLBS is a two-year program of study in the Bible, church history, missions, and related topics. But the primary emphasis and focus is on studying God's Word and building a relationship with Jesus. You'll live in a dorm with other students and spend each Monday through Friday morning in classes and chapel learning about Jesus, what He has done for you and what He still wants to do for you. There are numerous opportunities nearby for part-time employment to help you financially. You'll make lifetime friends!

We would love to have you join us and learn how Jesus can help you make those life decisions. Come to Bible school for two years, one year, or even one semester. It will be a life-changing experience as you grow closer to Jesus and learn what His Word has to say to you. We've been praying that God would call more individuals to come to Bible school. Will you answer His call and join us this fall? There is a place waiting for you.

Call the school office at 763-544-9501 or visit us on the web at www.flbs.org.

Thrivent cap

Thrivent has put a yearly cap on its matching funds program. Set at \$20 million, the cap greatly reduces matching funds availability for church, school and community programs. Already, nearly half of the cap has been distributed this year. If you are a Thrivent policyholder or customer, send your gifts in as soon as possible. This includes gifts to AFLC schools.

Eligible participants (members ages 16 and older who own a Thrivent product) may give two gifts per year to different qualified institutions. The range is from \$50 to \$400. Thrivent will contribute 50 cents for every dollar that a member donates. Contact Vision 2004 (763) 412-2004 or AFLC schools (763) 544-9501.

Open house

There will be an open house honoring Pastor Raynard Huglen on the 50th anniversary of his ordination. All are invited to come between 2 to 5 p.m. on June 29 to Westaker Free Lutheran, Newfolden, Minn.

Corrections

The evening services during the Annual Conference, June 11-15, will begin at 7:30 p.m. The information was printed incorrectly in the May issue of "The Lutheran Ambassador."

Kevin Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn., has been nominated as a layman to the World Missions Committee. His hometown was printed incorrectly in the May issue of "The Lutheran Ambassador."

Pastor Tim Johnson, Fertile, Minn., has been nominated to serve a three-year term on the Commission on Evangelism. His name was misprinted in the May issue of "The Lutheran Ambassador."

Masted, retired visitation pastor, dies

Pastor Harold Masted, 84, died April 11. Born April 30, 1918, in Milwaukee, he was the son of Louis and Trine (Brekke) Masted. He grew up in Newark, Ill., and graduated from Augsburg College in Minneapolis, and from Luther Seminary in St. Paul. He married Virginia Litland June 24, 1944, in Chicago. He served as pastor at Calvary Lutheran, Chicago, Genesee Valley Lutheran in Moscow, Idaho, a three-point parish in Coon Valley, Wis., Immanuel Lutheran in Story City, Iowa, St. Timothy Lutheran in Chicago, and Helmar Lutheran (an AFLC church) in Newark, Ill. After retiring in 1989, he served as interim pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran, Morris, Ill., and Bethel Free Lutheran, Grafton, N.D. He returned to Bethlehem Lutheran to serve as visitation pastor.

Surviving are his wife; one daughter, Andrea (Scott) Stimson, Calgary, Alberta, Canada; two sisters, Anna Asp, Morris, and Helga Boe, California; and four grandsons.

The funeral service was held on April 18 at Bethlehem Lutheran with Pastor Steve Lombardo officiating.

Masted, Wigtil alike in expression of faith

This past Good Friday, Bethlehem Lutheran had a funeral service for Pastor Harold Masted. On the same day, Marilyn Wigtil went to be with the Lord. It surely is not that often that two individuals so dear to our congregation would both die just a few days apart.

I have been thinking about that and about these two people whom the Lord used to bless our church in so many ways. Although both Pastor Masted and Marilyn were gifted in different ways, there are some remarkable similarities between them. Consider:

Both had a strong belief in the Bible: It was their standard. They did not accept the "new" theology that questions and critiques the Scriptures. Both of them held fast to the inspired, inerrant Word of God. They proclaimed God's Word, taught it and lived it!

Both loved Jesus Christ. They knew the power of His cross and the grace of God that sets sinners free. Pastor Masted said many times that his only plea before God was, "Christ died for me." Marilyn, also, lived in the reality of the death of Christ for her. Both shared the truth of Christ crucified and risen again with others. Both lived close to the cross.

Both prayed and believed in the

power of prayer. They knew "prayer changes things," or, more rightly, God changes things in answer to prayer. Marilyn prayed for many people and situations of which she was aware. She came alongside persons with special needs and prayed, counseled and loved. Pastor Masted believed in prayer as absolutely vital to spiritual life in a congregation. He was dependent upon prayer for the anointed preaching that characterized his ministry.

Both believed that spiritual vitality and life were dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit and a strong commitment to Christ. Christianity was to be "lived out" and not just talked about. For them, Christians lived their lives to the glory of God. Their motto might best have been expressed in the words of John the Baptizer: "He must increase but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

Marilyn Wigtil and Pastor Masted have blessed me. They have blessed our church. God's grace in their lives impacted our lives. We are better for it. They taught us how to live and, also, how to die. May we learn the lessons well: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones" (Psalm 116:15).

— *Pastor Steve Lombardo
Morris, Ill.*

Mundfrom, AFLC pastor and publisher, dies

Pastor Gerald Mundfrom, 85, died April 25. Born Aug. 9, 1917, in Tripoli, Iowa, he was the son of Edward and Amanda (Bany) Mundfrom. He married Margaret Lindquist Dec. 17, 1949, in St. Paul, Minn.



He was baptized at St. Paul Lutheran, rural Tripoli. He moved with his parents to a farm in southern Fillmore County, Minn., at the age of 9. He attended country school through eighth grade. He was confirmed at Saetersdal Lutheran Church in 1931. He lived with his Grandmother Bany in Tripoli so he could attend high school. He graduated in 1937. He attended Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, but was drafted into the Army, serving from 1941-44. He completed his degree in 1947, graduating from Luther Seminary, and was ordained in 1950. He served congregations in the Minnesota communities of Spring Grove, LeRoy and Whalan; the South Dakota communities of Midland, Veblen and Pukwana; and the North Dakota communities of Granville, Norwich and Walhalla. He left active parish ministry and founded Mercy and Truth Publishers, wrote several books and distributed his sermons. He was a member of Hosanna Free Lutheran, Cumberland, Wis.

Surviving are his wife; three sons, Pastor John and Lorilee, Eugene, Ore., Dr. Daniel and Elaine, Greeley, Colo., and Pastor Stephen and Joanne, Arlington, S.D.; three daughters, Ruth and Pastor Mark Antal, Park River, N.D., Rachel and Bill Chesley, Chad, Africa, and Priscilla and Pastor Martin Horn, Fosston, Minn.; two brothers, Edward, Lime Springs, Iowa, and Fred, Spring Valley, Minn.; four sisters, Ruby Jones, Lime Springs, Wilma Peters, Denver, Colo., Marie Bany, Sumner, Iowa, and Emma Lou Larsen, Minneapolis; 20 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The service was May 1 at the AFLC chapel, Plymouth, Minn., with Pastor Earl Korhonen and Pastor Robert Lee officiating.

It was in 1966 that the Mundfroms officially became part of our AFLC family. Gerald was a man of the Word, and his firm convictions led him to find a home with us. I remember meeting them at the Bible camp near Alexandria, Minn., after "Gerry" began to serve our parish in Pukwana, S.D. He would often mention these summer camps with gratitude to God for their impact on the lives of his children.

After his death someone wrote to me about Pastor Mundfrom's unique ministry to those like him who suffered from depression. He could have kept the fact of his struggles within his family and closest friends, the letter stated, "but he was open, courageous, humble, and shared freely. In this way, he was like a guide with a flashlight, leading others through the dark paths of depression, into

God's radiant future. ... He had the heart of the Lord to minister to those facing emotional illnesses. Surely, he was a champion who helped many ... not just by talking theory, but by personal example. I count it a privilege to have known him."

Pastor Mundfrom probably felt that his writings were his legacy, but a greater legacy may be the ministries of his children and grandchildren who carry on a heritage of faithful service to a new generation to the glory of God.

I will miss my friend, but it is so good to know that he enjoys perfect healing now and fullness of joy, by grace alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Blessed be his memory.

— **Pastor Robert Lee**
AFLC President

Mundrom published many sermons, books and tracts

The Lord took Pastor Gerald F. Mundfrom just a few weeks ago. He had suffered much and wanted to meet His Lord and Savior in heaven. Praise God for Gerald, a faithful servant of the Lord for many years.

The Mundfrom family were members of Bethel in Grafton, N.D. Bethel was the first congregation I served as an ordained pastor. Gerald had begun the Bible Book Nook and was very interested in starting a printing ministry. At one time the Book Nook had a press. It was located in the basement of the Grafton parsonage.

This desire to print the gospel remained with Gerald for his lifetime. He has written many helpful sermons, books and tracts. Gerald was also very faithful in sitting by what became the Mercy and Truth Publishers display at many camps, retreats and Annual Conferences. His desire to see the gospel in print stayed with him.

Pastor Mundfrom's desire was to minister to the depressed, which became the center of Mercy and Truth Publishing. This emphasis will continue to be part of Mercy and Truth. A listing of sermons, books and other writings is available on the Internet at www.wiktel.net/mtp.

I commend Gerald and Margaret for their wonderful family. Each one is a gift to our church from the Lord. God bless the memory of our friend, Pastor Gerald Mundfrom.

— **Pastor Dennis Gray**
Newfolden, Minn.

FLAPS A church raising

Group travels to Tomball, Texas, to build a church

A group of volunteer workers went on a FLAPS work/mission trip to Tomball, Texas, April 7-11 to construct a new church building for Crown of Life Lutheran. A 40'x50' wood frame building was erected and enclosed in a five-day period. The concrete pad had been poured the week before the team's arrival.

Several years ago the congregation had acquired a one-acre parcel of land in a beautiful wooded and rapidly developing area. For more than a year, Pastor Gordon Waterman and the congregation had been trying to get their building permit.

Those on the team of volunteers were Ken Lehman, Milford, Ill.; Wallace Dahmm, Lincoln, Ill.; Don Olson, Fargo, N.D.; Charles and Edna Raye Allen, Durant, Okla.; Matt Olson, Minneapolis; and Fern and Lavon Bohling, Minneapolis. The Allens brought their camper and set it up on the building site, which was very helpful.

The congregation provided lodging and food for the work team. Three hot meals per day were served to the work crew on the building site. Good weather was a huge blessing with mild temperatures and no rain for the entire week.

Pastor Waterman and the congregation did an excellent job of having necessary materials and equipment on hand so the work could proceed without delay. Congregation members and friends helped each day. Everyone contributed in some way to the success of the project. Days were long and the work was strenuous. However, the Christian fellowship was a wonderful experience. Safety was a great blessing, too, since there were no mishaps or injuries during the entire week.



TOP: Members of the work team stand outside the new church building. **LEFT:** Don Olson, Fargo, N.D., and Allen Poindexter work on a roof truss. **RIGHT:** Matt Olson, Bill Bissell, Wallace Dahmm and Norma Bissell took a break for lunch.

The workers participated in devotions at the building site each morning and a midweek Lenten devotional was held in the new building.

Members of Crown of Life had been worshipping in rented facilities for the last 11 years. They are thrilled to have a building of their own. We pray that the Lord will use this congregation mightily as they "let their light shine" in their new location.

These work/mission trips are part of the Matching Resources With Needs program operated as part of the FLAPS ministry. More trips are being scheduled for next winter. For more information contact Lavon Bohling at the AFLC missions office (763) 545-5631.

— *Lavon Bohling*
FLAPS



On March 30 Roberta Foster, station manager of KAKN, a ministry of Lutheran Mission Societies (Alaska Missions) in Naknek, Alaska, was the speaker at Faith Free Lutheran in Minneapolis. Foster is currently studying at AFLBS and is taking courses at Brown Institute.



New members received at Argyle

New members were received on April 13 at Our Savior's Free Lutheran, Argyle, Minn. Pictured are Pastor Ken Thoreson with Ruth and Sandy Magnusson, Kirk, Heidi, Kip and Ian Thorstenson, Dana Bergeron, Robert and Melinda Volker, Ed and Pat Heggen, Nathan, Amy and Adam Dalager, Shanda Carlson, Larry and Lorraine Lubarski, Kenny and Nathaniel Schonmeier, Scott Solum and Laurel and Yvonne Moe. Not pictured is Donnie Magnusson.



Pastor David Nelson, former missionary to Lisbon, Portugal, was installed as pastor of Christian Free Lutheran, Wheatland, Iowa, on March 9. Presiding over the installation was Pastor Phil Haugen. Also pictured are church deacon Hal Fiala, chairman Jeff Jacobi and deacon Randy Jacobi. Pastor Keith Quanbeck served the congregation as interim pastor.



The women of Reformation Lutheran Church, El Cajon, Calif., gathered for an afternoon tea to raise funds to support Pastor Todd Schierkolk and his family as they minister in Mexico. Members of Reformation Lutheran recently voted to increase their benevolence to include a particular missionary family in addition to a regular congregational benevolence.

Large-print Ambassador Hymnal being planned

A large-print edition of the Ambassador Hymnal is in the planning stages. Chaplain Kerwin Sletto, in his work with Pleasant View Luther Home, Ottawa, Ill., has seen a need for a source of traditional hymns. Not finding one in a large-

print edition, Sletto contacted the AFLC for guidance in a project to put one together himself.

The AFLC has agreed to work with Sletto on the new edition and will make the hymnal available to all chaplains and others who desire it.

Copyrights are currently being sought and a total of 220 hymns will be published. However, don't look for the hymnal quite yet. A print date of 2005 has been set for the large-print edition of the hymnal.

Amery church dedicates addition

Members of Amery Free Lutheran, Amery, Wis., hosted a time of prayer and dedication on April 27 to celebrate the end of a building project. The project began with a groundbreaking in the spring of 2001 and was complete in the summer of 2002. Composed of 7,000 square feet, the addition includes Sunday school rooms, rooms for Mustard Seed Faith Academy, administrative offices, a kitchen

and bathrooms. The event was open to all AFLC members and was a special thank you to those who supported the project by volunteering to work, in prayer and through finances. Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC president, brought a message of encouragement during the afternoon service.

“Over the last year and a half we at Amery Free Lutheran Church, Amery, Wis., have benefited greatly

from your prayers for our congregation as we have moved forward in a building project,” said Pastor David Johnson, who extended an invitation to anyone wishing to visit and see the addition. “We thank you so much for your support and encouragement. We also thank those of you who have come and helped us with various projects throughout the endeavor.”

PIMO requests help with cost to repair missions bus

Members of Partners in Missions Outreach ask for your help for a very great need. Specifically, the bus broke down while transporting the AFLBS basketball team to a tournament in Waxahachie, Texas, in mid-March. The motor is a total loss and the cost of repairs will be in the \$12-14,000 range. A generous short-term loan by an individual will enable the repairs to be made. PIMO board members request that you would pray and, if possible, give toward this need. The treasurer for PIMO is LuVerne Hagen, 30284 Co. Rd. 114, Badger, MN 56714.

Galilee Bible Camp schedule for 2003

Lake Bronson, Minn.

June 18-22, Pre-Teen Camp

Morning speaker: Pastor Greg Schram
Evening speaker: Pastor Todd Klemme
Contact: Pastor Ken Hart, (218) 782-2246

June 22-27, Teen Camp

Morning speaker: Pastor Jim Johnson
Evening speaker: Pastor Dale Finstrom
Contact: Pastor Ken Hart, (218) 782-2246

July 6-10, AFLC Family Bible Camp

Morning speaker: Pastor Peter Franz
Evening speaker: Pastor Elden Nelson
Contact: Dr. Lyle Mattson, (218) 782-2310

July 25-26, Women's WMF Retreat

Special speaker: Faith Nelson
Contact: Carmen Gustafson (218) 681-3091

MEMORIALS: April

Vision 2004

Bradley Haugen, Lloyd Bergstrom, Richard Reinke, Max Wiemken, Lisa Swenson, Ethel Mattson, Veta Perry, Darlene Julson, Edna Frerichs, Lois Poynter, Josephine Whitmore, Mona Sorem, Eberhard Helling

AFLBS

Martha Hultstrand, Irma Will, Max Wiemken, Ethel Mattson, Pastor Harold Masted

Home Missions

Anna Stoppelman, Mattie Erbes, Veta Perry, Sid Thompson

AFLTS

Orville Nelson, Everett Dill, Ethel Mattson, Pastor Harold Masted

World Missions

Gloria Hvidsten, Mary Perkins, Olivia Ness

PIMO

Helen Dugan

Evangelism

Carol Udby

Parish Education

Lisa Swenson

Legacies

Raymond Jacobson

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (4 month) – January 1 - April 30, 2003

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN APRIL	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$305,568.00	\$21,747.15	\$90,651.35	30
Youth Ministries . . .	48,154.00	2,722.80	15,616.19	32
Parish Education . . .	90,907.00	3,807.67	25,055.30	28
Seminary	150,070.00	15,477.47	44,916.41	30
Bible School	263,356.00	26,174.23	67,376.33	26
Home Missions	305,087.00	24,415.80	86,202.54	28
Church Extension . . .	28,945.00	696.31	3,713.79	13
World Missions	247,082.00	23,370.69	68,963.02	28
Personal Support . . .	301,156.00	30,224.23	124,645.02	41
TOTALS	\$1,740,325.00	\$148,636.35	\$527,139.95	30
TOTALS 2002	\$1,521,284.00	\$145,998.26	\$550,854.41	36
Goal 33%				

The Evangelism Department received \$5,349.85 in April.

Editorial In good company

Three hundred years after his birth, Jonathan Edwards is considered one of the most significant men in the history of evangelicals in America. His preaching sparked the Great Awakening. His book written in 1737 titled “A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God,” is considered a classic and has never gone out of print. His sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” is one of the most well known in history. He has been called the “father of evangelicalism.”



Craig Johnson
Editor

That is how Edwards is viewed now. But things were different with some in the congregation he served in Northampton, Mass. In 1750, after serving the congregation as its pastor for 23 years, Edwards was dismissed. The vote was a resounding 230 to 23.

The cause of some of the problems was the fact that Edwards wasn't an outgoing, gregari-

ous individual. He visited members of his congregation only if he was called to their side in cases of sickness or emergency. This made him seem cold and distant to some.

Other areas of Edwards' life were criticized as well. People found fault with his salary and the way his family spent money. Many became upset with the way he handled an incident involving the misdeeds of some young people.

Much anger arose when Edwards took steps to change the congregation's policy on membership and communion. He viewed the previous policy as too lenient. He was concerned that many who had been touched by the recent revivals and now sought church membership did not have a true faith but simply a religious experience. When it became apparent that he intended to return to the earlier, stricter Puritan position that demanded not only a profession of faith but also evidence of repentance and holiness, the troubles reached the boiling point. Edwards became an unemployed, 46-year-old ex-minister “fitted for no other business but study” with a large family to support. He ended up accepting a call to the town of Stockbridge in what was considered Massachusetts' “wild west.”

Today we long for men like Edwards with a brilliant mind and a heart for God. The church in Northampton had him and dismissed him. How could that be?

People are often judged differently by history than

by their contemporaries. Edwards is not the only one who was looked down upon by many in his own generation but highly esteemed later on.

I expect there was a pastor in Massachusetts in 1750 who was considered to be a true “mover and shaker.” He was probably getting a lot of attention and praise. Everybody wanted him to speak at their event or be their pastor. But now we don't know his name.

Some of the work and achievements we consider impressive today will be ignored by history. We may have in our midst some who attract little attention and receive scant applause in the present, but the passing of time will show their unique giftedness and significance.

As we serve, let us be sure we do so with a long-term perspective. It can be tempting to get overly concerned with how we are being received and perceived in the present. Too often we worry about what they think of us now and give little thought to what difference our actions will make for eternity. Jesus has chosen us and

appointed us “to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last” (John 15:16, NIV). Are you bearing fruit that will last, or are you simply settling for getting a little praise in the here and now?

What happened to Jonathan Edwards can also serve as encouragement for those who don't receive much praise in the present. Many faithfully serve God for years and receive little recognition. Their gifts are such that they don't

impress crowds. The significance of their work isn't noticed or appreciated. They don't have big numbers flocking to hear what they say.

If you are faithful to God and His Word, but it appears you're not making a difference — don't give up; don't get discouraged. You're in good company. You're in the line of Edwards, the apostles, the prophets, and Jesus Himself. When the Lord ascended to heaven He left behind a crowd of only 120. That's not a mega-church-size congregation. But God used that group to change the world.

Edwards had his flaws, and he faced trials. It is the same with all of God's servants. Even though we often don't want to admit it, we all fall short. We all have times when it seems nothing goes right. But God still chooses “the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him ... Let him who boasts boast in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:28, 29, 31).

**It can be tempting to
get overly concerned
with how we are being
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SOMETHING TO SHARE

Keep your pastor in prayer

Acts 20:28, “Keep watch over yourself and over all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own son.”

I was at a funeral a few weeks ago and had the privilege of talking with



*Larry Behne
Christian Free
Lutheran
Wheatland,
Iowa*

one of our missionaries there. He was refreshed by the Spirit within him.

As I was driving home that day I was thinking about this missionary, wondering how many challenges he has had in his life, and yet he was so refreshing that day to me. I am sure he has faced many disappoint-

ments and also has been on many mountaintop highs.

It reminded me of the great calling that pastors have from our Lord. Some are called for a greater job than others. I was also reminded of a Bible study we used to have in our home when pastors would come and talk. One particular pastor led a

young man in our area to the Lord. This young man was a drug dealer, and after he was converted and came to this pastor's church, he upset the congregation because of his convictions for Christ. There were problems in the church, and this pastor was asked to leave. I never once heard him complain about the situation. I watched him and his family through the years, and God took care of them. The young man who was once on drugs is still walking with the Lord.

Another pastor who came was facing a different challenge. His denomination no longer believed that the Bible was the inerrant Word of God. If he left, he not only was facing giving up his job but also giving up his retirement and his medical insurance. He chose to be involved with a denomination that still believed the Word of God was true. The Lord provided for him and he did retire. This pastor never thought about self, he just thought about his calling. This made quite an impact on my life.

The Lord will always make a way if we choose Him. I learned from meeting with these men that pastors have the same feelings and hurts that we have, they face the same trials, and the same temptations are

before them.

We can all choose to go down many roads. Some of those roads today are more like freeways; they are easy to enter and it looks like you can get off at any point you want. But sometimes when you get in the left lane you miss your turn-off. Then you have a tendency just to go on. The Bible talks about just one way, straight and narrow, that leads to the right place. “Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Many pastors have helped me through many challenges in my life. I am grateful for the ones I have known. You and I have a great responsibility to pray for our pastors every day. Pray also for the leadership of the AFLC, the faculty and the board members. We have been blessed in a tremendous way by Almighty God. If you have not regularly been praying for your pastor, your church leaders and the leaders of the AFLC, it is my prayer that you would make that commitment today and be faithful to it.