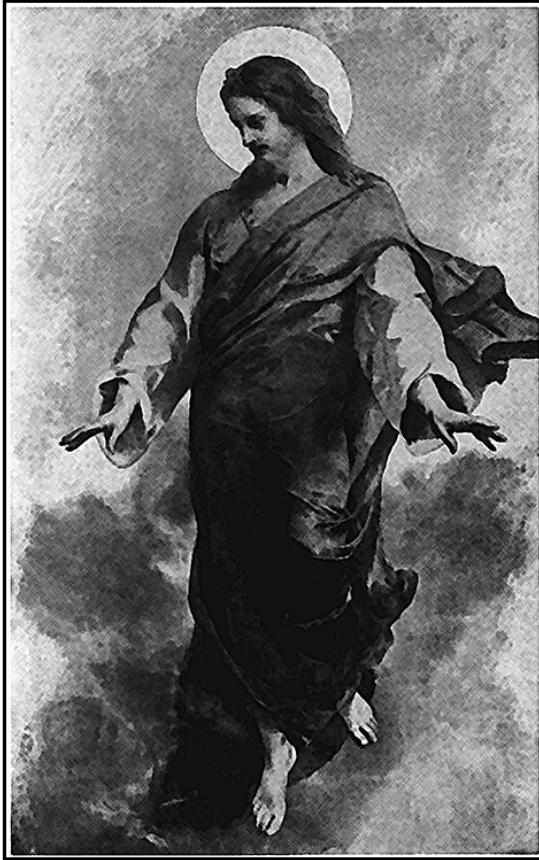


LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN



And He put all things under His feet, and gave
Him to be head over all things to the church,
which is His body, the fullness of Him
who fills all in all.
Ephesians 1:22-23

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

WHERE’S YOUR HEAD?

It was pretty clear to everyone in the gym that he didn’t know what he was doing out there. The team was trying to run its play, but one player looked like his mind was in a different time zone. The coach called a timeout for one purpose. The whole gym heard the coach holler those words so familiar to a day-dreamer—“Where’s your head at? Get your head in the game!”

Usually when we hear the phrase “Where’s your head?”, it carries a negative connotation. Most often it’s addressed to someone who isn’t focused on the task at hand.

That question would have been a good one to ask the disciples that first Ascension Day as they stood staring up at the clouds. But when we consider the question “Where’s your head?” within the context of Jesus’ ascension

into heaven, it takes on a whole new meaning.

Your Head

Jesus had been the perfect Servant. He carried out the will of His Father. He lovingly gave His life as a ransom for all. He “tasted death for everyone” (Heb. 2:9). He battled the old evil foe and emerged victorious Easter morning. Forty days later, Jesus returned to heaven like a victorious and mighty King back from battle. He ascended to His throne in heaven as a King ruling over all creation.

When someone near and dear to us leaves, we experience sorrow and even depression. But when it comes to Jesus’ ascension into heaven, that shouldn’t be the case! While His ascension into heaven means Jesus is

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no longer physically walking the Earth, we have a very unique connection to the victorious King. Having called us to faith, Jesus has made us members of His body. He is our Head.

With Jesus as our Head there are certain things of which we are assured. The Head will nourish and cherish His body (that's you and me!). He watches over His body and protects it (again—that's you and me!). And because our Head is in heaven, we can be certain that each believer—members of His body—will soon be with Him in heaven.

“Your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). Where is your Head? In heaven!

Your head

But don't we sometimes wish that Jesus had remained here on Earth? We wish we could walk with Him and have conversations with Him—just as the disciples did.

Just because Jesus isn't on the Earth doesn't mean He isn't with us. God invites us to remember where our Head is, as well as everything associated with that—“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2).

Keep your head in the clouds! Set your heart and mind on the things of heaven! Your life is there hidden with your Head (Jesus). He came to give you Life—abundant life, eternal life. Through His resurrection He says, “I've earned it all for you.” Through His ascension He says, “I'm getting it ready for you.”

All this is assured us through that heavenly word—the gospel. In that Word Jesus speaks to us! In the Lord's Supper Jesus gives Himself to us!

Set your mind on these things. Keep your head in the clouds. Your Head is already there!

Jesus, hail, enthroned in glory,
There forever to abide!
All the heav'nly hosts adore Thee,
Seated at Thy Father's side.
There for sinners Thou art pleading,
There Thou dost our place prepare,
Ever for us interceding
Till in glory we appear. (TLH #367:3)

—Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer



Devoted Mothers

One famous woman in Church History was the mother of John Huss. Apparently at an early age (a century before Luther was born), her young son

expressed a desire to become a preacher. He would first have to become a priest. As one author has it, his mother encouraged him, telling him that when he

became a preacher, he should be sure to tell the people all about Jesus' love for sinners.

Huss never forgot that. (Many pastors remember, years later, a devoted mother's urgings—mom was his first “seminary” prof!) Huss became a man on a mission. He preached against serious corruptions in the church; he proclaimed the Bible as sole authority for the Christian life; he preached that both bread and wine should be given to the laity in Communion; he taught that Jesus is mankind's only Savior. For all this, he was executed—burned to ashes at a Synodical Convention in 1415!

His mother may have seen it coming.

The saving Word and mission of God surrounded and moved many Bible mothers. We think immediately of the mothers of Moses, Samuel, John the Baptizer, and the mother (and grandmother) of Timothy. In Church History we can also think of Monica, the mother of St. Augustine of Hippo, who prayed often (for years!) for her son in his wayward youth.

In the month of May a spotlight is on mothers. Back in 1908 only two states observed a Mother's Day. Within three years all the states celebrated it, and by 1918 Congress had it formalized.

As with Thanksgiving Day, so with Mother's Day we realize that there is a great deal of misplaced emphasis, an easy deterioration into shallow sentiment and secular pap. How much focus is there on Christ, His gifts, His salvation, His Word, His mission?

If something that focuses on mothers has to be said or sung in the church service on Mother's Day, what's the point? Is it not this, that mothers accept their children as gifts of God, teach them the saving truths of Scripture, and encour-



age them to tell others?

What Can Be Done?

In many minds motherhood has degenerated along with home and family. Is there anything that our churches and pastors can do?

Yes, the *Lutheran Church Calendar* once again comes to our aid. It may be too late this year to do much about May 14th, but there is always Sunday, July 2nd, which is “The Visitation.” This day focuses on words from two noted mothers—Mary and Elizabeth—who stand under the word and mission of God. This can be a very encouraging day for all mothers, in sermon and in Bible Class.

For congregations planning early for 2007 (services, music, sermons)—look what you have on Sunday, March 25th (exactly nine months before Christmas): “The Annunciation” (see *The Lutheran Hymnal*, p. 3 and pp. 86-87).

Especially with the March 25th date, perhaps the age-old European “Mothering Sunday” (“Lady Day” in some areas) could be revived—to put motherhood under the cross in Lent once again where it belongs, with the chief focus on Christ. The *Magnificat* (TLH, Hymn #275) could be sung this July and/or next March (in case the Vespers chant version is no longer that familiar).

Mothers do not know what will happen on Earth in the future to their chil-

dren who are dedicated to Christ's Word and Work. It can be shown that even Jesus' blessed mother did not fully understand the great sorrow and the abiding joy that awaited Christ and all who follow Him. In spite of that, devoted Christian mothers know what their calling and duties are.

It has been said that "Necessity is the mother of invention." Turn that around somewhat, and make it "Mother is the invention of necessity."

Certainly some truth there regarding

Christian mothers! They will want to instill the need to be faithful to Scripture and Catechism, in confession of sin, in hearing the absolution, in communing, and in witnessing to others. That need—rightly understood, a "necessity"—springs from the Scriptures.

What great emphasis for Mother's Day! Mothers from Bible History and from Church History would concur. And so indeed would devoted fathers!

—Warren H. Fanning,
Pastor Emeritus



Jubilate...Cantate...Rogate...Exaudi **(The Church's Resurrection Voice)**

This May, worshipers in many churches may open their Sunday bulletins and find some strange names featured: *Jubilate*, *Cantate*, *Rogate*, and *Exaudi*.

These are the opening words (in Latin) of the Introit for the Day for these particular Sundays. These Introits—verses that lead the worshiper into the service itself—express to some extent a leading thought for the worship of the day. The ones that happen to appear during the month of May, 2006 are some of the most distinctive and thrilling in all the Church Year.

They are, of course, part of the Easter cycle. Two Sundays following the Feast of the Resurrection have passed, and now we come to four which speak the voice of a Church filled with the spirit of the Resurrection! "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the

Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). They reflect the Body of Christ, redeemed and quickened in concert with its Head, who has risen in the glory of the Father.

Just as springtime proclaims life in the glorious beauty of flowers and living green of the fields, so we are reminded of the voice that fills the Church under the power of Christ's Resurrection.

Jubilate — "Make a joyful noise unto God, all you lands" (Ps. 66:1). A traditional lesson for this day includes Jesus' assurance: "You shall weep and lament...but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in labor has sorrow...but as soon as she has delivered her child, she remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born..." (Jn. 16:21).

The joy of the Church in its elemental form is this pure forgetfulness and glee. A risen Christ means just that, a risen Christ! Death no longer seems scary and final; our sins and failures no longer need haunt us. Jesus lives! Why shouldn't that fact take our whole being over and put joy and hope in hearts once clouded by uncertainty and sorrow?

Cantate — “Oh, sing unto the Lord a new song (Alleluia!) For He has done marvelous things (Alleluia!)” (Ps. 98:1). If *jubilate* represents an inarticulate, surging joy of the Church, *cantate* means to sing, to compose and refine thoughts and expressions, to put into music the comfort and admonition of our Lord: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

The Church of the risen Savior does not travel on some vague ‘charismatic’ ecstasy, but on the firm ground of Spirit-imparted truth. It is a confessional Church that is prepared to tell its resurrection story and confirm what the holy prophets have spoken long ago. Jesus told His disciples, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears he will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me” (Jn. 16:13-14).

Rogate — “With a voice of singing declare and tell this.” Okay; frankly, the connection escapes me here, but this Sunday traditionally emphasizes prayer as the gift Christ leaves to His Church—prayer in His name, Who has reconciled us to the Father. “Most

assuredly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you” (Jn. 16:23).

A risen Lord Jesus opens for us a limitless treasury of spiritual gifts and blessings, such as we need if we are to declare to the world our conviction that Jesus has come to us from the Father and again has left the world and returned to the Father—His mission complete! Remember that the Ascension falls on the Thursday of this week (see John 16:28). In confident prayer, we can seek these blessings from the Father for Jesus’ sake.

Exaudi — “Hear, O Lord, (Alleluia) when I cry with my voice.” This appeal is not a desperate plea of some who are awash in despair and uncertainty. It has a note of expectation; this Sunday finds us only seven days from Pentecost, when “the promise of the Father” is given to the Church: “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me” (Jn. 15:26).

The Church of the resurrection awaits the outpouring of the Spirit by Whom the Father and the Son come to dwell with the believers. “I will not leave you orphans,” Jesus told them (John 14:18).

Make no doubt about it, we still inhabit the Church of the Risen Christ, and He fills us with this same spirit of joy, of singing, of prayer, and of expectation. When we reflect on the meaning of the gospel to us, it will bring a sense of wonder and hope to even our gloomiest days and darkest hours as surely as if we had seen the empty tomb and handled those nail-marked hands ourselves.

—Pastor Peter Reim

Do Not Fret

Let's face it, there are many problems in our world over which to fret...and we do plenty of it! "Fretting" is an all-inclusive description of what we do when we stir ourselves up, filling our hearts with worry, frustration, and anxiety—all of which easily culminates in anger.

In this psalm King David speaks particularly of envious fretting because of evildoers.

Evildoers seem to have such an easy life. They do such sinful things and never seem to get caught; on the other hand, when we try to follow God's Word, it seems to make our life hard and miserable (though our "misery" is seldom as burdensome as we might suppose). Evildoers are willing to tread on someone else for self-advancement. They are the ones who spend all their time and energy for their own goals and they often succeed in them!

It can be difficult not to fret, so that we end up saying, "I want what they have!"

Fretting is not harmless. Not only is the accompanying worry, anger, and discontent dangerous, but fretting can be the stepping stone to ever-increasing spiritual danger. David wrote, "Do not fret—it only causes harm" (v. 8b).

Asaph, another psalmist, wrote: "...my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked...when I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me—until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood..." (Ps. 73:2-3,16-17).

THE PSALMS THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER BOOK

—Please read Psalm 37—

At the outset of this article the writer explains: Psalm 37 is an "acrostic" hymn; that is, each stanza begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza is made up of two English verses. Reading each of these stanzas as a two-verse unit will help the reader to appreciate the flow of thought and poetry of this psalm.

David takes us into the sanctuary of God who, in His truth, reveals the solution for fretting.

David acknowledges the great wickedness of the evildoers; they borrow and do not repay; they plot against God's children and lie in wait for them; they seek to destroy the weak.

Remember Their End...and the Lord's Promises!

But remember what their end will be. "They shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither...evildoers shall be cut off...yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more...the wicked shall perish; and the enemies of the LORD, like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away..." (vv. 2,9,10,20).

If tempted to envy and fret about the evildoers, remember that the "LORD laughs at [the wicked] for He sees that his day is coming" (v. 13). Remember that "the transgressors shall be destroyed together (all of them); the future of the wicked shall be cut off" (v. 38).

Just knowing that evildoers will one day reap the LORD's judgment does not, in itself, provide much comfort. This is especially true as we contemplate our own sinfulness. Again, as an antidote for our oft-fretting hearts, David takes us to the sanctuary of God to reveal His truth.

First, instead of fretting, David offers these replacement activities: Trust in the LORD...do good...delight yourself in the LORD...commit your way to the LORD.

Next, David turns troubled hearts to the LORD's promises: "He will give you the desires of your heart" (v. 4) as you put your trust in His wisdom and grace. "He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light" (v. 6) through the forgiveness of sins which you have in Christ Jesus. He knows your days—how many there are, what they will bring, what your needs will be in each of them—and He will give an inheritance that endures forever (cf. v. 18).

Finally, David offers wisdom for those times when fretting seems to be the thing to do:

* When our path is rough and we are stumbling: "If the LORD delights in a man's way, He makes his steps

firm, though he stumble he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with His hand" (vv. 23-24, NIV).

* When our flesh yearns for "more" in this life: "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked" (v. 16).

* When it seems that life is hard and we are lacking what we need: "I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread" (v. 25).

The bottom line is: Do not fret because of evildoers whose earthly glory and success will come crashing down! Do not envy what the Lord will destroy in judgment. Do not burden your hearts with self-consuming fretting and destructive anger and worry.

Instead, let your hearts be light in the joy of your salvation. Wait patiently for the LORD, trusting that He does all things well. He will be your strength in time of trouble. "The LORD shall help [you] and deliver [you] and save you because you trust in Him" (v. 40).

Fret no more!

—*Pastor Wayne Eichstadt*



Genealogies and Baptism for the Dead (First of two parts)

It has been somewhat of a fad in recent decades for people to try to find out something about their ancestors. I have yet to go back any farther than my great-grandparents. This information, together with photographs, I

obtained some thirty years ago from my mother, who told me that it might be rather difficult to learn more or to go back farther, because there was a time in Germany when people were fleeing oppression, and records were

lost. So, although it would be interesting to learn more, I have been content to know that my ancestors lived in Germany and came to America in the early 1900's.

If you begin to work on your genealogy, you will no doubt be directed at some point to the work done by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Mormons. They have delved into city, county, state, and national records of births, marriages, and deaths wherever they could find them. They have spent many thousands of hours compiling and computerizing these records. And from what I have heard others say, they have made these records available to anyone who inquires. This has certainly been a great help to many people who are searching for information about their ancestors.

We might wonder why the Mormons have decided to spend so much time in this endeavor. Other than to satisfy a curiosity, what could be the value of learning the names, birth dates, marriages, children, and death dates of people who lived in this world hundreds or thousands of years ago? We might understand the desire of someone to find out more about HIS OWN ancestors. But why would someone want to compile information on every person for whom such information could be found?

There is a special reason for this activity. That reason is the Mormon practice of baptism for the dead. They believe and teach that if you can discover information about one of your ancestors, and it is learned that the ancestor was very likely not a Christian, you can be baptized in place of that ancestor. Then in the resurrec-

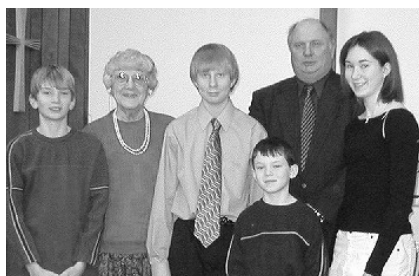
tion of the dead, that ancestor would have the opportunity to accept Jesus as his Savior and to be saved.

This runs counter to everything we have learned about death and the final judgment. From the Bible we have learned that God has given every person this lifetime as a time of grace, during which the individual has the opportunity to hear the gospel and to be saved. But once this lifetime is over, then comes the judgment. "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebr. 9:27).

It is not for us to question what will happen to someone who we think did not have the opportunity to hear the gospel. We leave that in God's hands. Our job is to do everything we can to make sure that people all over the world hear the gospel and learn about what Jesus did to save them.

During our lifetime we take what God has put into our hands to bring souls to their Savior. He has given us no privilege or responsibility to carry the gospel to those separated from us by the barrier of death, as we have learned also from the Savior's Word about the rich man in hell (see Luke 16:19-31).

—Gene Rutz (*member of Bethel Lutheran Church, Spring [Houston], Texas*)



Sunday School & staff,
Bethel Lutheran Church, Morris, Minn.

Studies in First Thessalonians—

“(We) wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. 1:10).

Chapter 3: 6-13

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP ARE THE WORK OF GOD

“For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord” (v. 8).

Wow! Paul was really serious about the Thessalonians and their steadfastness. But we know how fragile precious things are—or seem so. Paul had a lot of his own heart riding on the survival of the Thessalonians as a congregation. Theirs was a new-found fellowship.

As we have heard, Paul was there only a few weeks. This church of Christian believers was in its infancy and already suffering under a severe assault. Timothy had been sent back while Paul was in Athens, because Paul was so deeply anxious about how they would fare against the Jewish traditionalists, who opposed the gospel-preaching that salvation is free and open to all who believe that Jesus is their Savior.

The true fellowship of being united with Christ through faith is a precious thing, not to be taken for granted. It can be said that the greater our devotion to Christ, the stronger our feelings toward our fellow believers will be. Paul’s joy in being called into the kingdom of Christ showed itself in his devotion to others who shared that faith.

We recognize that just as our faith

in Christ is a Spirit-created thing—a grace thing—so also is a fellowship of believers who are united in their commitment to the truth. Neither thing is in our power to create or maintain in another person.

The familiar kinship that many of us experience when worshiping with fellow church members, or meeting at a conference, or visiting a sister church, where we find ourselves in fellowship based on acceptance of God’s Word and a Lutheran confession, is a very precious—and thus seemingly fragile—thing.

Where that fellowship is disturbed by conflict or interrupted by doctrinal controversy, there is a great deal of emotional pain or distress. Knowing how tender and new to the Christian faith his Thessalonian friends were, Paul was on pins and needles, “lest by some means the tempter had tempted [them], and our labor might be in vain” (3:5).

But in place of his distress, he found relief; for his sorrow, he was given joy: “Timothy has come to us...and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you.” The Thessalonian Christians

were standing fast, with faith and fellowship intact, and Paul could look forward to some day revisiting them and “perfecting what is lacking in [their] faith.”

Let God be Praised for All Things...

While such steadfastness and affection on the part of these Christians was praiseworthy, it should not be considered an accomplishment on their part. This was the work of God, just as are the conversion of the sinner, the loving deeds of a Christian, and the steadfastness of a seasoned saint. Let God be praised for all things at all times. Faith and fellowship are His work.

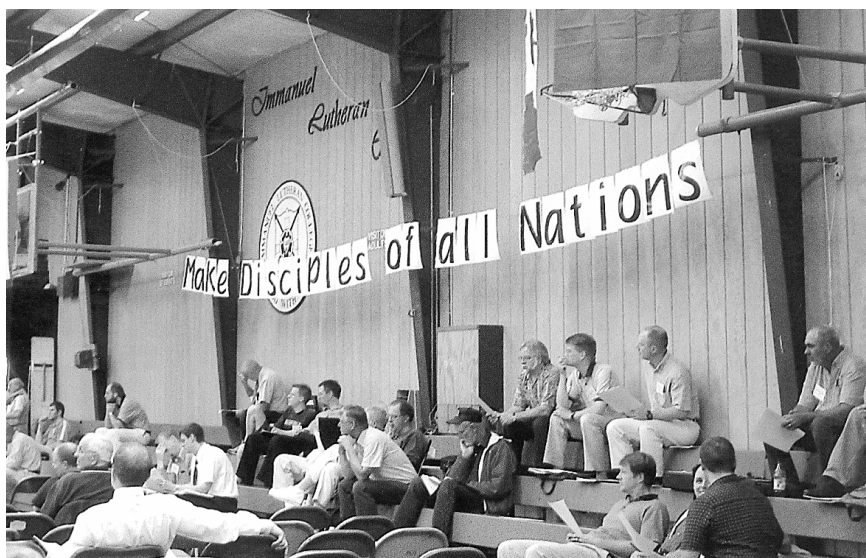
So Paul rightly prays, first of all, that “our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you.” How could Paul expect to accomplish anything without God’s blessing?

Secondly, he prays that “the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another...” For where faith is, love cannot but follow. And how can true love exist, where God is not known by faith?

Thirdly, Paul prays that the Lord “establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It is well for us to remember that “it’s not over till it’s over”—that is, all things come down to how each of us will stand at the Last Day, when Christ appears in His glory. Not those who succeed in this world (by this world’s standards) but those who stand fast in their hope in Christ, will prevail and be found acceptable, when He comes.

To stand “established” like this until the end is a work of God—a blessed work carried out through the Word and Sacraments which bind us together and unite us in a fellowship of love.



**2004 Synod Convention: Delegates at attention in the Fieldhouse,
beneath a “Make Disciples of all Nations” banner**

Many have grown up in a fellowship without really appreciating the beautiful and precious thing that it is. It is easy to take for granted. Many don't appreciate that true fellowship based on a unity in faith is a Spirit-worked ideal, worth more than larger or more convenient worship opportunities; more valuable than slick youth pro-

grams and emotionally-charged "services."

True fellowship is a commitment to help one another to remain firm in the faith that only God can create. "For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord."

—Pastor Peter Reim



INTRODUCING the Books of the Prophets

Jonah

...Does anyone "deserve" God's love, His forgiveness, His willingness to relent from sending disaster? No! All of God's mercy comes "without any merit or worthiness in me."

Jonah just "knew" (4:2) what was going to happen, and it "displeased him exceedingly" (4:1). The Hebrew prophet, identified simply as "the son of Amittai" (1:1), was sitting out "on the east side of the city...till he might see what would become of the city" (4:5).

He had done what the Lord had commanded. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you" (3:2). The message was this: "Yet forty days, and all Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

The city's wickedness was incredible; but in His mercy the Lord gave them the chance to change their ways.

And the result of Jonah's preaching was exactly that: "The people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a

fast, and put on sackcloth...The king and his nobles proclaimed...'Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?'" (3:5,7,9)

As the forty days came and went, "Jonah became angry" (4:1) because God had seen "their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" (3:10). He vented his anger toward the Lord: "Was this not what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish" (4:2).

It is true—Jonah had been a very unwilling prophet. When the Lord had first come to him with his assignment,

Outline of JONAH

I. The First Call of Jonah. His flight and his correction. (Ch. 1)

II. His Prayer in the Sea-monster. His deliverance. (Ch. 2)

III. The Prophet's Second Commission. He preaches. The people repent. God spares the city. (Ch. 3)

IV. Jonah's Consequent Great Displeasure and Bitter Complaint. The Lord lovingly corrects him. (Ch. 4)

(Outline adapted from *Introduction to the Books of the Bible*, Drewes, Concordia Pub. House, St. Louis, Mo., 1965)

Jonah had gotten aboard a ship going in the opposite direction. It was not until after he had been thrown overboard in the midst of a terrible storm sent by the Lord (see 1:4-16)—and after he had spent three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish “the Lord had prepared” (1:17)—that Jonah had finally made the journey.

Begrudge God's Mercy?

The prophet's reluctance sprang from what he knew of that city. Nineveh was the capital of the hated and feared Assyrian empire; Assyria was the dominant world power of that time, known also for its cruelty in victory over its enemies.

Jonah believed there was no reason whatsoever for God to show any kindness towards Nineveh. But he knew that if the city would relent—as they did!—God would show Himself to be “gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness” (4:2)—as He did! “It displeased Jonah exceedingly” (4:1) that God would show any kind of pity or compassion or mercy toward those undeserving wretches.

How wonderful it is to see the Lord work in His masterfully merciful way with His prophet. For are there not times when we find ourselves falling prey to

the same thinking as Jonah?—“Look at how terrible that ‘other person’ is; his sins are unthinkable!”—and then we go on to think “there is no way that person deserves any kindness from God!”

Excuse me! Does anyone “deserve” God's love, His forgiveness, His willingness to relent from sending disaster? No! All of God's mercy comes “without any merit or worthiness in me.”

Ours is not to compare our sinfulness to that of others nor to find fault with God for being merciful—it is rather to “thank and praise and serve and obey Him!” (as Luther wrote)

Years later, when some of the scribes and Pharisees demanded a “sign” from Jesus, He gave then no sign “except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here” (Mt. 12:39-41; see also Lk. 11:29-30,32).

As Jonah sat there under a shelter waiting for the destruction he thought should come to the city, God caused a plant to grow up, giving him extra shade; and Jonah was grateful. But the

next day when a worm destroyed the plant, Jonah was once again full of anger. God's question was simple: "Jonah, you have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored; should I not pity Nineveh?" (4:10-11)

May we learn with Jonah never to

begrudge God's mercy toward sinners—for that is what we all are. Instead, let us join with the angels in heaven who rejoice over one sinner who repents!

—Pastor Paul Krause



CROSS PURPOSES



COMMITMENT

The word "commitment" is defined in the dictionary as "an act of committing, pledging, obligating." Any task that we take on is worthy of our commitment. If we become slack in carrying out a task, an exhortation we may hear is, "You must be committed to your job!" The question may be asked, "How committed are you?" Employees who are not committed to their responsibility will soon contribute to the unemployment statistics.

Commitment is also an essential ingredient of an active Christian life. At confirmation a commitment is made to the Lord God: "Do you also, as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, intend to continue steadfast in the confession of this Church, and suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?" Every Lutheran confirmand has answered, "Yes."

Each of us made this commitment before the Lord predicated on the confidence that the particular Evangelical Lutheran Church before whose altar we made this commitment would stand fast in the truth of God's Word. If it means anything at all, commitment to

the Word means that we will stand fast in the Word of God and even leave the church of our confirmation if it becomes a heterodox church.

But why did we make this commitment on confirmation? We did so to the extent that we knew, were acquainted with, and believed what our church taught, and were convinced that within it only God's Word was taught.

We further committed ourselves "to walk as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to the Triune God, even unto death." The promise was a promise to the Lord God who is witness to all our vows.

Surely we want to know to what it is that we make promise and to what we are committing ourselves. It is the height of folly to make a promise (oath) in unknown matters. It is in fact a sin against the eighth commandment. It is likewise foolishness to make a commitment to something of which we are not convinced.

Commitment is an important part of spiritual life. Without commitment it is unlikely that we will receive much



CONFIRMATION

blessing from membership in a Christian congregation because we likely will not attend the Word and sacrament faithfully. Also, without commitment we will be of little benefit to the congregation we have joined, for we will feel no responsibility to its gospel witness. If we are not committed to the truth, it is unlikely that we will be particularly concerned about whether or not the church remains steadfast to the Word.

As members of society, we enjoy convenience. We like to be convenient to shopping and to the doctor, to family and to work—some even like to be convenient to a church. The problem is, such desire frequently translates into becoming involved in a church close to home regardless of what is taught (“good enough” as long as it is “Lutheran”?).

But commitment based on knowledge and appreciation of God’s truth—as well as appreciation of the blessings of divine truth—means we will not join the church closest to home, but will rather drive to church even if it means sacrifice and time. Though it may be a difficult choice, more essential than moving for the sake of a job is

locating ourselves where there is a church of our faith and confession. The Lord will bless such commitment.

On the other hand, if we cannot locate where there is a church of our own faith, commitment means that we make time and take time to practice family devotion, to make Bible reading and study a priority in our family circle. If we are privileged to have a church of our own faith and confession where we live, we will commit ourselves to be active in worshiping, allowing nothing to get in the way of time with God and fellowship with fellow believers.

Being a Christian in the world is not easy. Being a Christian in the real sense of the Word—a confessing Christ-believer—is even more difficult. But then it was not by the path of least resistance that we are what we are. By steadfast commitment to His purpose, the Savior has made us what we are. He engaged in fearful struggle with the devil and overcame him.

Christ bore the cross as a criminal under Roman law, bearing the sins of the world. He endured the shame and mockery of men—and even the forsakenness of the Father—all for us. He did not ask how far it was to Calvary or how heavy the cross or how bitter the suffering. As a lamb, He went uncomplaining forth so that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

May we respond by taking up our cross and following Him (Matthew 16:24) with appreciation and commitment. The blessing will be ours!

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer



NOTING A 300 YEAR ANNIVERSARY.
"INDIA'S CORAL STRAND"
1706-2006



Fourth in a Series—

First Protestant and Lutheran Missionaries

When the Lutherans finally did reach out (after the Reformation and the successive wars and doctrinal controversies), it was not done by the orthodox, but by the pietist Lutherans, who though Lutheran, subjugated the gospel to 'inner feelings' and such. These pietists lamented the 'barren orthodoxy' and 'dead formalism' of that segment of the Lutheran church, which, while possessing the truth, did not venture forth to share it. Instead they sat on it like a hen on eggs.

In 1698 the University of Halle was founded and under the influence of August Franke soon became a center of pietism. Franke and other pietists were very interested in mission work, and the University soon became the center of a strong missionary influence as well as the birthplace of organized foreign missionary effort.

The eighteenth century would be an auspicious century for mission work among the heathen, but it was rarely done by the orthodox.

Denmark

In their commercial ventures, the Danes were not too unlike the

Portuguese. It was money that counted. Denmark secured a trading colony at Tranquebar in 1620 and at Serampore in 1676 (both in India). Chaplains were sent out to minister to the colonists, as was the custom with all the Protestant colonial powers. And although there was supposed to be gospel work done among the natives, they were more effective in enslaving. For nearly one hundred years no mission work was done among the natives, while the money sailed into Copenhagen. It was not until Frederick IV mounted the throne in 1699 that a change took place.

When he was the prince, Frederick had been surprised that no efforts were being made to convert the heathen in Danish overseas territories. When Francis Luetkens became court chaplain in 1704, the king found an able assistant for his outreach thrust. Volunteers from the Danish Lutheran Church could not be found, and the Danish State Church criticized the proposed missionary venture.

Thank God for a king who operated under THE King. Volunteers were found in Germany, men trained at Halle,

such as Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau. And so it began, sadly so long in coming.

On the Field

The arrival of Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau in India was in preparation long before 1706. When Bartholomew's mother lay on her deathbed, she called her children to her bedside and informed them she had laid up a treasure for them, a very great treasure. You can imagine their excitement. When they asked where they might find it, the mother answered, "Dear children, search for it in my Bible. There you will find it. There is not a page that I have not moistened with my tears." Bartholomew found the treasure, and in his twelve years in India he shared his Master's love. His mother's treasure was passed on.

On July 9, 1706, after seven months at sea, the two men arrived at Tranquebar. Though Pluetschau had to return to Germany after five years due to ill health, he continued to support the



Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg

work in India from Germany. Ziegenbalg plunged into the work with amazing organization and great accomplishment. He had effectively learned Tamil in one year. He translated the catechism, sermons, tracts, and school books. By the time of his death, he had translated the New Testament into Tamil and was well into the Old Testament.

Through Many Tribulations

While one would expect trouble



Mary Koenig in Front of the St. Thomas Church, Chennai, India

from the Hindus, greater troubles arose and persisted with the Danish commandant Hassius. For instance, in 1708 while trying to obtain justice for a widow, Ziegenbalg was arrested and kept in solitary confinement for four months. Had the good King Frederick not supported this venture, there would have been worse trouble.

We should not underestimate the force of Hindu opposition either. A convert, Kanabadi Vathiar, had to endure bitter opposition from his people (as did many other converts). These people threatened and cajoled and, when all else failed, tried poison. Sad to say, this man later reverted to Hinduism. All told, about 250 were baptized through these early years.

Ziegenbalg returned to Denmark and Germany to build support where, believe it or not, he also had to defend himself against false charges. In this process the Lord blessed him with a wife who came back to India with him in 1716. The last five years of his work also involved trouble with the secretary of the mission board in Copenhagen. There were arguments about restriction of funds and cutting of funds.

Ziegenbalg reminded the secretary that they were dealing with people so poor that they could not afford a piece of white cloth to wrap a baby in for baptism. Therefore, he wrote that spiritual and material help could not always be so clearly delineated. Funds were cut anyway. Much later, when the king understood what was happening, he removed the secretary. Despite such, the work of laying a foundation went forward.

What these first two men did was of benefit to all future Protestant mission

work in India.

In looking back over the exciting work begun in India, Prof. P. Peters (WELS) recognized, "Here we must not fail to give credit to whom credit is due. Francke, the Halle Pietist, did not only train and prepare most of these men for the Tranquebar Mission, but also moved the hearts of many Christians in Germany by his letters and literary productions to become cheerful givers and thus to provide the missionaries with the necessary means of carrying on their work among their very poor converts, often bereft of all support."

This July 9th is the three-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of these two men at Tranquebar. We celebrate God's abundant blessing in the gospel coming to India. And we remember how God uses many different human instruments to accomplish His purposes—a mother on her deathbed, a king in his palace, a missionary in the field.

—Missionary David Koenig



"Louie the Lancer," mascot at Immanuel Lutheran college, Eau Claire, Wis.

The blessing of public worship in the life of a believer

Often we hear people say, “I don’t have to go to church to believe in God.” While this is true, it is not what God desires or what is best for our faith.

There are many blessings to be had by regularly attending worship services. It is at such services that you are able to worship God with other people who confess to believing the same teachings that you believe and trust. From the time you enter the church until you go home, and throughout the rest of the week, you have opportunity to talk about your faith with fellow believers. This adds to your understanding and knowledge of God’s Word.

When you enter church, the pastor and the other members greet you in a friendly and personal manner. You are a welcome member of the family. Everyone there will know you well enough to ask you about the personal events happening in your life—how your children are doing in school or sports; how your ailing relative is doing; how your vacation went. They will be concerned for your physical as well as your spiritual well-being and you will be able to respond in kind. This gives you comfort and assurance that you belong. You are in fellowship with the other church members.

God’s House...

You are also entering God’s house.



He is present there as He has promised, and you begin the service acknowledging that you are there to worship the one and only Triune God. It is here that God invites you to confess all of your sins to Him—not so He can punish you, but so that He can assure you that all your sins are forgiven because of the sacrifice Jesus made for you on the cross. What a blessing it is to hear the pastor pronounce that forgiveness!

In the Scripture lessons you hear God speak directly to you. Yes, you can read them for yourself at home, and you should do that regularly, but in the church service they are selected to teach you a particular lesson. Quite often an explanation will accompany the reading; that will often increase your understanding—an understanding that you would not have gotten by reading it yourself.

How often in this life don’t you feel that you are alone, or that you are the only one in a world that is “out to get you”? Throughout the worship service you are assured that you are not alone, but that many other people have the same problems, worries, fears, and

dreams that you have. When you join in the creeds to confess your faith, you are reminded again that you are not alone. You hear for yourself that everyone in the congregation is confessing the same faith that you hold so dear.

Hymns...

That assurance can be found in the hymns also. The whole congregation joins in to sing praises to God for all His blessings. This is something that you can't get any place besides a church service. Even if you have an awesome sound system (with CDs of a large choir singing the hymns?!), it is not the same as singing along with your friends, family, and the rest of the congregation. Through singing the hymns on a regular basis, you become familiar with them, learning their words and melodies. In times of trouble and sorrow or happiness and joy, the appropriate hymn may come to mind. The melody may keep repeating itself, and the words of comfort or praise that the hymn offers can keep running through your thoughts.

At Jesus' Feet...

How often do you say to yourself, "If only I could have sat at Jesus' feet when He was here on this Earth and heard what He had to say first hand"? In the worship service you have your chance! Every Sunday the pastor prepares a sermon. Even though it is the pastor's voice you hear, God is speaking to you—teaching you how to live your life; showing you where you have sinned and fallen short of His requirements; assuring you that through your Savior, Jesus Christ, He has forgiven all your sins, will raise you from the dead on the last day and take you to

heaven to live with Him in eternity.

Why would you want to miss such an opportunity?

Prayers...

The prayers throughout the worship service are also blessings both to you and to the entire congregation. When you pray alone, you are probably more concerned with yourself and your immediate family. When you pray with the congregation, your prayers benefit the entire congregation. You, along with the congregation, pray for the sick and hospitalized, for the pastor and teachers, for the school, for the church's mission efforts, and for many other things that may not cross your mind if you weren't part of the worship service. God promises to answer all of your prayers, and praying together with the congregation helps you pray for the things you should.

Giving Back to God...

The worship service is also an



opportunity to give something back to God. In the worship service you are giving yourself, your heart, mind, and will. You also can give of your treasures to support the work of the church, enabling God's Word to be spread throughout the world (as He has called Christians to do).

Peace!...

The Benediction is a wonderful blessing from God that you receive at the end of the service. It is the assurance that God is watching over you; that He is keeping you in His loving care; that He has not turned His back on you, but is granting you peace on this earth and for all eternity.

A Privilege...

Attending a worship service is a privilege that not everyone has the freedom to enjoy. You should appreciate and take advantage of it. Many

people throughout the world are not free to worship as they choose and are forced to worship secretly. What a joy it is to be able to freely walk into church to worship our God!

A Witness...

It also is a witness to your faith. Others see you going to church and know that you believe what is being taught there. They might ask you about what you believe. This will give you the opportunity to tell them about the salvation won for them by Jesus. How can you spread the Good News of the gospel, if no one knows that you have it?

"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 122:1).

—*Mr. Clayton Hillstrom*

(Member of our Savior's Lutheran Church, CLC, Jamestown, N.Dak.; this paper was presented to the West Central District Delegate Conference, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bowdle, S.Dak. May 31-June 2, 2005.)



Fourteen Bible-centered devotions for the person who wants to know more about God and life with God. They were first composed for the "unchurched" living in nursing homes.

#14: Where should I start?

If you don't know where to start in your study of the Bible, it's probably because the Bible still seems such a big and strange book. I understand.

But I can give you some helpful hints. If you want to know about the beginnings—how the world and universe got started, that's in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament. If you want to know about Jesus, read a Gospel account in the New Testament.

For the history of the wanderings of God's people (starting with Abraham),

the record begins in Genesis and goes through Deuteronomy. For their history in Palestine, read Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings/Chronicles. For the story behind the history, read the writings of the Prophets Ezra, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The book of Psalms was the Prayer book and Hymn-book of the Israelites.

Perhaps you are interested in doctrine, the way God explains the meaning of the life and work of Jesus. The Apostle Paul found that many

Articles which have appeared in this series:

- #1: Who are you? (Jan. '05)
- #2: I don't know God very well. (Feb. '05)
- #3: How do I get to heaven? (Mar. '05)
- #4: Tell me more about Jesus! (Apr. '05)
- #5: Why is God concerned about me? (May '05)
- #6: Why is it always about Jesus? (June '05)
- #7: Are you window-shopping for heaven? (July '05)
- #8: What is your religion? (Aug. '05)
- #9: What is my status with God? (Sept. '05)
- #10: Will I lose anything in coming to God? (Oct. '05)
- #11: So here I am! (Dec. '05)
- #12: It's all in who you know! (Jan. '06)
- #13: Have we mentioned attitude? (Mar. '06)

Christians needed more explanation about justification (the way God settled accounts with humans), and that's why God inspired him to write to Rome and congregations in Galatia (modern Turkey). Paul traveled through Galatia and Macedonia and Greece three times, for Christians there continued to need God's own explanation of His ways.

God inspired other apostles, such as Peter and John and James, to write to Christians on doctrine, as well as on Christian life and morals.

For the history of missionary work and the growth of the Christian Church (since Jesus has directed His Church

from heaven), read the Acts of the Apostles—actually, the Acts of the Holy Spirit.

You should get more well acquainted with these basics and Jesus' own advance descriptions of the End Times—before you study this subject in the picture language of Daniel and Revelation.

Of course, the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (Old Testament) are rich with wisdom for Christian daily living, as are sections in the Gospels and Epistles.

You can locate specific Bible passages when you learn to use a Bible Concordance. A Bible Dictionary and Atlas will help you become acquainted with Bible persons, Bible events, and Bible places.

These first fourteen devotions have given you much to think about. Having a Christian friend (who knows the Bible well) to help you read and understand the rest of the Bible would be a blessing to you.

When and where would you like to begin?

—Paul R. Koch

From the Editor: *This article concludes this series. We thank Prof. Koch for contributing it to the Spokesman for the benefit of our readers.*



2004 Convention meeting at the mascot: (l-r) ILC President John Pfeiffer; Bd. of Doctrine Chairmen Daniel Fleischer; CLC President John Schierenbeck; Bd. of Trustees Chairman Philip Radichel

—The Bread of Life—

Daily Bible readings for home devotions

June, 2006

Date	Reading	Thought gleaned from the text	Hymn
1	Acts 26:1-11	Paul never was a religious slouch	446
2	Acts 26:12-23	But Jesus outmaneuvered him	119
3	Acts 26:24-32	Do we believe God's prophets/apostles?	261
4	Pentecost ; Acts 28:1-10	God of mercy, God of grace	20
5	Acts 28:11-31	The Spirit at work through a convict	234

*Although the **Romans** Epistle seems to fit right in with Paul's stay in Rome, he wrote the letter some years earlier, while he was serving the Lord at Corinth. The Kingdom of God has long prospered with the **Epistle to the Romans**, the Church's Articles of Incorporation.*

6	Rom.1:1-17	I am ready to preach the gospel to you—	346
7	Rom.1:18-32	—the gospel so desperately needed by sinners.	352
8	Rom.2:1-16	Sin=>judgment=>no partiality with God	383
9	Rom.2:17-29	Self-confidence is a lethal trap	380
10	Rom.3:1-20	Everybody is sinful, guilty, and damnable,	378
11	Trinity Rom.3:21-31	but God has an exemption clause	319
12	Rom.4:1-25	Perceptive thinking about Abraham's faith	189
13	Rom.5:1-21	Our sin=>death; God's grace=>eternal life	232
14	Rom.6:1-23	Do not let sin have control of your life	334
15	Rom.7:1-25	God's Law is as serviceable as a good X-ray	379
16	Rom.8:1-17	Living in the Spirit delivers from carnality	236
17	Rom.8:18-39	Redeemed by His death; justified by His life	528
18	Rom.9:1-33	What if God adopts non-Jews, too?	529
19	Rom.10:1-21	Submission first, then attention to God's plan	507
20	Rom.11:1-36	In grace God has preserved a remnant	579
21	Rom.12:1-21	Serving the Savior in our faith-living	409
22	Rom.13:1-14	Owe nothing but love to one another	577
23	Rom.14:1-23	Each shall give account of himself	453
24	Rom.15:1-33	and please his neighbor for his good.	416
25	Rom.16:1-27	Paul's friends (dozens!) will avoid errorists	261

*As the **Romans** Epistle is the Church's Article of Incorporation, so the **Galatians** Epistle is the Church's Declaration of Independence from human works and merits, due to our Savior's works and merits.*

26	Galatians 1&2	Paul's affidavit of his credentials	375
27	Gal.3:1-29	God's Law doesn't save but has its purpose	299
28	Gal.4:1-31	It all lined up on God's schedule	99
29	Gal.5:1-26	Careful while recovering from sin-addiction	175
30	Gal.6:1-18	And not growing weary in doing good	178



Announcements

Minnesota Delegate Conference

Site: Berea Lutheran Church, Inver Grove Heights

Time & Date: 3:00 p.m., June 11, 2006

Agenda: * Review and discussion of the CLC
Convention Prospectus

* Business Meeting (including elections).

Chaplain: Pastor David Schierenbeck

—*Pastor Wayne Eichstadt, Secretary*

Ministry by Mail

Ministry by Mail is a weekly publication of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Annual subscriptions are \$40.00 for a single weekly sermon, and \$10.00 for each additional copy mailed to the same address. Large print subscriptions are available for \$50.00 for a single weekly sermon (\$20.00 for each additional copy mailed to the same address). Bulk and foreign address subscriptions are available. The weekly sermons and an archive of sermons may also be accessed online: www.clclutheran.org.

Please direct all subscription requests, renewals, and other *Ministry By Mail* correspondence to the editor: Pastor Wayne C. Eichstadt, 417 Woodhaven Lane, Mankato, MN 56001. Phone (507) 344-0898. Email: wayne.eichstadt@immanuelmankato.org.

West Central Delegate Conference

Site: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Bismarck, North Dakota

Dates: May 30-June 1, 2006

Agenda:

1. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Congregation-owned Housing for Pastors and Teachers vs. Housing Allowance.
2. A Discussion on "Right to Life", Living Will, Brain Death, Organ Donation, etc.
3. Review—What are the things a Pastor/Teacher considers when receiving a Call?

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Roseville, MN 55113

(Are there primary and secondary considerations? If so, what are they?)

4. Carry Over: Study of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 (building on study to be delivered at the '05 Pastoral Conference).
5. Teaching and Encouraging Biblical Stewardship in Connection with Maintaining Church Property and Parsonage.

Communion Service Speaker: Pastor Peter Reim

Chaplain: Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer

—*Pastor Mark Gurath, Secretary*

CLC Convention 2006

Event: The 27th Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession

Place: Immanuel Lutheran College, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701

Dates: June 19-23 (First Session: June 19—1:00 p.m.)

Theme: *The Fields are White for Harvest! (John 4:35-38)*

Essays:

God Establishes the Fields—Pastor Nathanael Mayhew

God Provides the Workers—Professor Joseph Lau

God Effects the Harvest—Pastor John Hein

Convention Chaplain: Pastor Frank Gant

Convention Communion Service:

Liturgist—Pastor Luke Bernthal

Speaker—Pastor Michael Roehl

