

Lutheran Spokesman

Luke, chapter 2

*A*nd it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

22: (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3: And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4: And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6: And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7: And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9: And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were afraid.





Celebrating the Birth of Christ—

Christmas Is For Children!

Who would question that our title statement is so?

You'd think it wouldn't be questioned by those who have seen the eagerness of the children as they memorized their Christmas Eve 'parts' and then join in giving praise and glory to God for sending His own Son in human flesh to be our Savior.

You'd think it wouldn't be questioned by those who have heard the whispering and restlessness of the little folk in their beds, unable to sleep because they know the Christmas tree is going up that night.

You'd think it wouldn't be questioned by anyone who has seen little faces all aglow with anticipation and hands moving at warp speed as they tear open their presents.

Nor would it be questioned by any who have seen little eyes wide open as they behold familiar and new Christmas scenes—scenes to be cemented into memories for unnumbered future years.

Yes, I think it's safe to say that Christmas is especially for the children.

Perhaps the only year of my young life that I actually played with a toy truck, I

remember being captivated by the sight and smell of our family Christmas tree. Its decorated boughs beckoned me to draw near, even to the point of my taking naps underneath its fragrant needles. When some needles fell, I gathered them up and trucked them around as a precious cargo. No need for Mom to sweep them up; as long as the tree was up that year, I was mesmerized by it.

What an invitation to celebration and remembrance John extended when he first wrote, "Behold, what manner of the love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God" (1 Jn. 3:1).

Very often the recipient of a gift concentrates on the gift rather than on the giver. That can happen with us at Christmas. Being so overjoyed with the gift of a Savior, we can easily pass by the grace of the Giver—the Father who so loved the world!

God Loved Us to Death!

Christmas is really about the Father's love—a love so great and gracious that

Postmaster: Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN 55113 and additional offices (825-580). ISSN#0024-7537. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville MN 55113

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). Website address: www.CLClutheran.org. Editor: Paul Fleischer, 1741 E. 22nd Street, Cheyenne, WY 82001-4138, E-Mail to paulgf@qwestoffice.net; Assistant Editor: Paul R. Koch; Artists: John Fox, Matthew Schaser; Staff: Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Wayne Eichstadt, Warren Fanning, Daniel Fleischer, Joel Fleischer, David Fuerstenau, Mark Gullerud, John Klatt, Paul Krause, Joseph Lau, Nathanael Mayhew, Paul D. Nolting, Nathan Pfeiffer, David Reim, Peter Reim, Andrew Schaller, Thomas Schuetze.

Material submitted for publication should be sent to Editor Paul Fleischer six weeks before date of publication. Announcements and other short notices should also be sent to Editor Fleischer.

Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. E-Mail to BennoSydow@yahoo.com. Individual subscriptions {foreign-U.S. currency only}: \$13.00 {\$17.00} for one year; \$24.00 {\$32.00} for two years; \$35.00 {\$47.00} for three years sent in bulk to congregations: \$11.00.

Spokesman Internet access: <http://www.lutheranspokesman.org>

Printed in U.S.A.

He made us His children by faith in the Son He gave.

Behold that love! He knew and loved us already in eternity! He loved us while we were His enemies. He loved us even though we hated Him. He loved us while we were incapable of loving Him or of doing anything to please Him.

Behold that love. Consider it and ponder it. God the Father, who is love, in the fullness of time “sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). Indeed, God loved us to death!

If as a child I camped out under our Christmas tree because I deemed it a special place, God’s love is our holy ground, a place to return to again and again to behold His glory. If as a child I found comfort next to a dead tree, surely God’s eternal love is our security blanket for all time. If as a child I found pleasure in trucking around fallen needles, what joy there is in experiencing a love that has adopted us as God’s children—a love so strong that nothing can rip us out of His hand.

Can there be any doubt at all? Christmas is for children—God’s

children by faith in His own Son Christ Jesus! This is love sent in a gift that has eternal implications and promise, for not only does the Spirit bear witness that we are children of God, but “if children, then also heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...that we may also be glorified together” (Rom. 8:17).

Surely then, Christmas is for children. It can really be comprehended and appreciated only by children—God’s children.

The world’s offspring may celebrate Christmas, but only as outsiders, as pretenders and copycats. They can sing the songs, sit in some Santa’s lap and tear open their presents, but they cannot behold and understand the love of the Father. At least not yet, not until their personal adoption!

Only true children can so behold and see the Light of the world. And in their beholding this marvelous grace and mercy of God, they will surely be compelled to share what they have seen and daily experience so that others also may faithfully behold and celebrate.

There’s no doubt about it: Christmas is for children!

—*Pastor David Fuerstenau
Ketchikan, Alaska*



Jesus, the Light of the World

CHRISTMAS KNOWS NO SEASON

As this Christmas article is being written, south Texans are in the midst of a streak of almost two weeks of daily record-setting temperatures. In addition, in the same area of the state, according to reports the drought has been the worst since 1925. If we were “global-warming” religionists, we would get on that stump. But we are not! Rather, we are people who know that the message of the Christmas knows no season.

As surely as we celebrate Christmas, we know that there will be nay-sayers who will again raise the tiresome reminder that we do not know the exact day or month of Jesus’ birth. They are correct. So what!

Detractors of Christmas will further tell us that the date upon which the birth of our Lord Jesus is celebrated is piggy-backing on the date of a pagan Roman festival dedicated to Saturn, the god

of agriculture. At that festival heathen excesses were celebrated. Further, among the Romans as well as the Persians the 25th of December was the day of the celebration of their specific sun god who was recognized with heathen festivities.

The earliest reference to the celebration of Jesus' birth on December 25 is A.D. 354. It has been suggested that the day was chosen in order to direct people's attention away from the heathen celebrations.

While efforts have been made over the centuries to determine the date—the church father Chrysostom (A.D. 345?-407) says that the date of December 25 is the correct date—the reality is that since Scripture does not specify the day, the Church is free to choose the date it celebrates Christ's birth. That December 25th was chosen to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world, as a counter to the darkness of idolatrous paganism is certainly a plausible reason.

Though we cannot give with absolute certainty the actual day of Christ's birth, neither can it be said that December 25th is not the day. Whatever the case, we will not let detractors derail our confidence and joy at the birth of God's Son incarnate. For us it is sufficient to know that "When the fullness of the time was

come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).

In the heat of the hottest day of summer or the coldest day of winter we rejoice that the Heavenly Father kept His promise and sent the promised Seed of the woman who destroyed the power of Satan.

Focusing on Jesus Christ!

Rather than obsessing on a date, blessing at Christmas is garnered by focusing on the subject. The subject is Jesus Christ! Why did He come into the world? The necessity—from our point of reference, not God's—for His coming was established already in Eden with the introduction of sin into the world.

Sin so corrupted mankind—who until sin entered had free access to God—that a wall of separation existed between God and man (Isaiah 59:2). Sin is a wall over which no man can climb. In view of how people and most religious theories today promote the idea that man can make his own way back to God, we dare to wonder if Adam and Eve in their post-sin corrupted minds comprehended the full significance of what they had done.

God was not driven by the sinner's necessity; He could have washed His hands of rebellious man! Nevertheless, the sinner's necessity was immediately addressed by the encompassing exercise of divine love and the incomprehensible expression of God's grace. He would send forth His own Son to destroy the power of sin, death, and the devil. His Son would come into the world to save sinners. The Father nurtured this promise through the centuries until the time was ripe in His own mind to send the promised Seed Who would tear down the wall of separation and restore access to His throne.

Of this One whose birth we choose to celebrate on December 25, the apostle Paul wrote: "For when we were still



without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly; But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:6-11).

By the way, in those words lies the reason why we will not want to pack away our Christmas faith—and appreciation of it!—with the Christmas ornaments!

Christ was born in the fullness of time—God’s “time”! People who confess their sins and recognize that they are

beggars before God will rejoice that the love of God “was manifested toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 Jn. 4: 9).

Even as our necessity knows no season, for we need His grace every passing hour, so His grace and His love know no season. Hardly are Christ-believers—who are anxiously awaiting deliverance from this sinful, mixed-up world—fretting over the precise date of the Savior’s birth. Such obsession only detracts from the anticipation of that day when the Father, according to a time known but to Him, says to His waiting child, “Now is the time; come Home.”

Summer, winter, fall, or spring—
”Come, Lord Jesus!”

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer*
Corpus Christi, Texas



The Luke 2 Christmas Story—

***HAVE YOU OPENED YOUR GREATEST GIFT?
Please read Luke 2:8-20***

It was a cold winter morning. Two women, their arms filled with packages and their coat collars raised against the biting wind, were walking past the window of a large department store. In the window was a life-size Nativity scene—the Christ-child in the manger, Mary and Joseph, kneeling shepherds, and cattle lying nearby.

“Can you beat that!” one of the women said to the other, “The churches are even barging in on Christmas!” To her the substitution of the Christ-child for Santa Claus was an unwelcome intrusion by religious people of the community.

How ironic that the world should have drifted so far from the original

significance of Christmas that the King of kings would be accused of “barging in” on His own birthday celebration!

This story reminds of the religious cartoon where one boy is complaining to his friend, “When your birthday is on Christmas, everyone’s too busy with toys, gifts and merrymaking to remember it.” Standing behind them is Jesus who says, “Tell me about it.”

What the world needs today is more, not less, of such “barging in” on the part of the Church and us Christians. We and our children need to constantly be reminded that the real significance of the Christmas holiday is the good tidings of GREAT JOY that is Christ, THE

GREATEST GIFT EVER GIVEN.

I don't believe many of us have ever received a gift that will last our lifetime, even if it has a lifetime guarantee. The birth of the Christ-child, however, is a GIFT that lasts a lifetime and more, a celebration that never ends. HAVE YOU OPENED YOUR GREATEST GIFT?

It would be a rare person who sees a large gift under the tree with his or her name on it and just leaves it sit there, never going over to open it, never caring to see what is inside of it. Well, the GREATEST GIFT EVER GIVEN remains wrapped up and hidden for most people.

Over the past month the annual American version of the Christmas story has been proclaimed over the TV in shows, specials, movies, and advertisements. The world's version of the Christmas gospel is heartwarming stories of family togetherness, stories of acts of kindness to the less fortunate, lessons on loving one's neighbors, and maybe even stories of miracles that change a scrooge into a giving, loving person.

But all of these messages miss the mark! Wholesome as they may be, these Christmas versions are not the Christmas story; they are not the GREATEST GIFT EVER GIVEN; they are not the REASON FOR THE SEASON.

Even if this world's media gets it right on occasion, they still miss the point. When the nativity is mentioned, the birth of the Baby in Bethlehem, the focus is on the quaint uniqueness of the situation, the manger, the stable, the poverty of the couple, the meanness of the inn keeper. "Wrapped up and hidden" is the fact that this Baby is God's Son in human flesh come to be perfectly obedient to His Father's will. "Wrapped up and hidden" is the fact that this little Baby was born for one purpose—to die on the cross as our Substitute, to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and to bring about reconciliation with God. "Wrapped up and hidden" is the fact that this Baby came not to be served but to serve, not to be "cooed over" but to be worshipped

with penitent, believing hearts.

A Never-ending Celebration!

Have you opened YOUR GREATEST GIFT? In other words, have you seen with your heart the real reason for Jesus' coming? We celebrate Jesus' coming in the flesh. We commemorate this fact once a year at this time. But there is much more. We also worship the crucified and risen Savior and look forward to this same Savior, resurrected and glorified, to come again and thus complete the redemption that was begun in Bethlehem's manger.

It is Christ's life, death, and resurrection for lost mankind that is hidden from most people. It is the effect of Jesus on their lives that is not seen. Most have not opened this GREATEST of all GIFTS through faith, nor seen the salvation that is being given by a loving God to a sinful world.

Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit leads us through faith to open this GREATEST GIFT, to see in this Baby our SAVIOR, CHRIST THE LORD. This entails recognizing our own sins and spiritually lost condition and then seeing in that Baby our only Savior.

Imagine getting the GREATEST GIFT ever and then hiding it away and never telling anyone about it. HARD TO BELIEVE THAT COULD HAPPEN? It happens every day; it happens every time we don't tell others about Jesus when we have the opportunity.

What did the shepherds do? We read, "NOW WHEN THEY HAD SEEN HIM, THEY MADE WIDELY KNOWN THE SAYING WHICH WAS TOLD THEM CONCERNING THIS CHILD AND ALL THOSE WHO HEARD IT MARVELED AT THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE TOLD THEM BY THE SHEPHERDS." The shepherds "barged in" on Christmas. They came with haste to see the Baby and then went and told others. This was what they had been waiting for all their lives—the GOOD NEWS of God's great love for mankind

GOD BLESS YOUR HOME THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

Christmas Day Worship

We usually hesitate to say one day of worship is more important than another. After all, our entire lives are to be a worship to God. Each new day is an opportunity to live our lives in thanks for the indescribable gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

However, there are days during the church year which have been especially set aside for Christians to gather together in order to praise God for His marvelous grace. CHRISTMAS DAY is one such day! For centuries Christians have set aside December 25th as a special day to remember the great miracle of God coming to our world in human flesh to redeem us from our sins!

Certainly we all love to spend Christmas Day with family; but what a better place to be with our families on Christmas morning than in church praising God? On Christmas Day we have opportunity to praise God for joining the human family so that we could be part of his heavenly family forever!

Instead of following the lead of many--even some of our relatives?--who schedule Christmas Day gatherings without church in mind, why not make a statement: "We'll be over to open presents later, but first we're going to church to open the best gift of all--God's gift to the world; the gift that never wears out; the gift that we need above all others; the gift of God's Son, which assures us of His love, His forgiveness, and eternal life...Hey, and you're welcome to join us!"

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15). See you in church on Christmas morning! Oh, come, let us adore Him!

***--Pastor Michael Wilke
Saginaw, Michigan***

wrapped up in the flesh of the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

The shepherds became the first Christian missionaries—even before they returned to their flocks they told all whom they met the good news of that evening and the message of the angel, "TO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID, A SAVIOR, WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD"!

The world has been busy preparing for the event of Christmas. What an excellent opportunity we have to follow the example of the shepherds and tell those we meet what this GOOD NEWS really means—that their GREATEST

GIFT is JESUS CHRIST, their Lord and Savior. Ask them if they have OPENED THEIR GREATEST GIFT! Ask them if they have TOLD OTHERS ABOUT THIS GREATEST GIFT!

For us Christmas is a year-around celebration. Once led by the Spirit to open the GIFT through faith, we cannot help but tell others of the GIFT. This GIFT of a Savior from sin, death, and hell will be for us a GIFT that lasts not only for a lifetime, but on into eternity—a celebration that will never end!

***—Pastor Mark Bernthal
Middleton, Wisconsin***



An Advent Devotion—

At Just the Right Time!

We complete and begin new stages of life all the time. We might mark off different periods in our lives something like this: birth; childhood; grade school; high school; college; marriage; children; the empty nest; retirement; and so forth.

In many different ways each of us might mark off these new eras of our lives. Some of these may come expectantly—such as graduation from high school and college, or retirement. For such events we have a date or a year in mind when it will happen. But other stages in our lives—such as marriage or the arrival of children—may happen very

unexpectedly on one hand, or be a long time in coming on the other.

When waiting for something to happen, we may ask ourselves, “When will it happen?” Beginning at the fall into sin, over the subsequent course of history this question was asked about the coming of the promised Messiah by many Old Testament believers.

Yes, the time for the arrival of the coming Savior started ticking in the Garden of Eden after the fall into sin. Remember that the LORD God had promised to send the “head crusher” to defeat Satan, telling the serpent: “I will

PARADING THE CHRISTMAS GOSPEL!



Pictured is a parade float from Our Savior's Ev. Lutheran Church in Jamestown, N.Dak. Our church outreach committee was given the idea to construct a float for inclusion in a local evening holiday parade which took place on November 28, 2008. Thanks to much time and effort from a number of members, the float was constructed and displayed with the purpose of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Well-lit for the evening parade, the float featured a large cross, a manger, and

an open-Bible design with the words of John 3:16 printed across the pages. Our efforts were officially recognized in connection with the parade itself, as the float was awarded first place in the “Civic Float” category (non-profit/non-business entries)—to God alone the glory! In addition, thanks to a donation from members of our congregation, we were given the opportunity to display the float in a local park through the end of December.

—Pastor Eric Libby

put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15).

This promise Adam and Eve expected to be fulfilled—according to their timetable, right away! But this was just the beginning; “the fullness of the time” had not yet come. The coming of the Christ into this world would be according to God’s timetable—not man’s.

God Knew—and Knows—the Right Time!

Throughout history the LORD repeated the promise of a Savior to His people. Through such prophets as Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah the LORD told the people that the time had not yet come and then gave them many more promises about the coming Savior.

Then the Greek empire came. Alexander the Great conquered the Persians. His empire brought with it a language that would become almost universal throughout the then-known world. Two centuries later the Romans would rise to power and conquer the Greeks. They would bring a good road system—plus a peace to the world that the LORD would use in the spread of the Good News of

Jesus as the coming Savior of the world. God waited to fulfill His promise until the time was just right: “When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5).

God knew the right time for news of redemption—He sent forth His Son into the world at just the right time!

As did the Old Testament believers, don’t we also wonder: “When will our Savior return?” Do we get frustrated or discouraged as we wait? Do we wonder what is going to happen and when our Savior will return? Certainly we do!

But concerning our Savior’s return Peter encourages us: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

So, just as the Christ’s first coming was at just the right time, so we can be sure that the Christ’s second coming will also be at just the right time.

“Even so, come Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20)

—*Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia*



The Discourses of Christ

Parable of the Penitent Widow—Luke 18:1-8

“Keep On Praying!”

This “earthly story with a heavenly meaning” (parable) begins with Jesus introducing us to a judge.

Great judges, even fair judges, are those who render verdicts on the basis of what is just—that is, decisions that both God and man would support and praise for being correct and fair.

However, this judge is described as a judge “who did not fear God nor regard man.” This judge had no care for what God thought of him and his rulings. Nor did this judge care what his fellowman thought about his decisions. This is the type of judge who would render verdicts based on selfish ambition. This is the

type of judge that could be led to see things your way—if the price were right. He was, as Jesus calls him, an “unjust judge.”

The second person we are introduced to in this parable is a widow. Jesus uses a widow as the example of someone who is reliant on another for help. She no longer has her husband to defend her and protect her from her adversaries. She is now dependant on the justice system. And so she comes to the unjust judge pleading, “Avenge me of my adversary.”

The unjust judge ignored the cries for justice from this woman. Since he had no regard for man, it did not matter to him that a defenseless woman was being taken advantage of. Nor did he fear God (who speaks of justice as defending the cause of the widow, cf. Isaiah 1:17; Jer. 7:6). There was nothing in it for him to avenge her cause. If she could come up with enough money, perhaps then the judge would help her out.

But the unjust judge finally did act in her favor, not because he thought it was the right thing to do but because she was persistent. In other words, he became annoyed with her. “Because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.” He finally did the right thing because he was sick of her pestering him with her problem.

As with all stories Jesus told, He was not just trying to entertain the crowds with a nice story. He wanted to teach a higher, heavenly truth. The heavenly meaning behind this earthly story is told in the opening verse, “He spoke a parable to them that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”

Discouraged? No Need!

Especially when it comes to our prayer-lives, we all have a tendency to get discouraged easily—in particular, when we pray for Jesus’ return in the face of the oppression of the world. For nearly 2,000 years Christians have seen the wickedness in the world around them

and persisted in their prayers, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20) Every generation of Christians has seen the world falling deeper and deeper into wickedness. Every day we see the strangle-hold which the old evil foe has on the world tightening around us. And so with the widow we may cry out, “Avenge us of our Adversary!”

But has this prayer been answered?

Remember Jesus’ purpose here: “... that men always ought to pray and not lose heart” (18:1). Jesus says that if this unjust judge finally avenged this widow, how much more so will not the most just and loving Judge of all people hear the cries of His people and answer them! “Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily” (18:7-8a).

The unjust judge had no fear of God and no regard for man, yet he acted on behalf of the widow. Does God have a superior regard for us? Absolutely! To see what sort of regard and care God has for us, we only need to see what He did to His most prized possession in the whole universe—His Son! He gave Jesus into death for our sins and raised Him from the dead because of our justification.

When He raised Jesus from the dead, the Judge rendered His verdict for us, “Not guilty!”

The same God that has such a high regard for us that He would give His Son for us has promised that for Jesus’ sake He will hear our prayers. Though it may seem as though He is remaining silent for a time in order to test our faith, He can’t break His promises—He hears our prayers. Since He is supremely just, He is supremely good—He will avenge us speedily!

Scripture tells us that the Last Days will be especially evil and difficult for the Christian. For this reason Jesus asks, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (18:8)

Therefore let us always pray and not lose heart! The Father has promised

to hear us and avenge us speedily. The Son has promised that He is coming quickly. The Spirit has promised that He will sustain us through His Word and Sacrament.

May the Triune God help us to pray without ceasing and not lose heart! Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus! Amen.

—*Pastor Nathan Pfeiffer*
Hecla, South Dakota



The Psalms—The Christian's Prayerbook (Please read Psalm 118)

Our Advent Joy

As we observe another Advent season and prepare ourselves for the joyous celebration of Jesus' birth, it is good for us to remember that the cause of our joy is much more than just another child being born into the world.

This psalm is all about Jesus and His mission of salvation. This psalm predicted the troubles that lay ahead for the Savior who was to come into the world. All the forces of evil would be gathered against Him, so that He was surrounded by people of all nations (v. 10) and they were coming at Jesus like a swarm of angry bees (v. 12).

This beautiful psalm resounds with Jesus' trust in the face of great trouble and His joy in deliverance. It leads us to comprehend the confidence of faith that Jesus knew within His heart. This confident trust in His Father strengthened Jesus as He faced the most difficult hours of His life, bearing the guilt and shame of our sin while enduring the suffering necessary to secure our salvation.

Although there was no help to be found from men, even from princes, our Savior's faith was not shaken. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (v. 8).

Even though Jesus would endure the very wrath of God for our sins, His confidence in God was not misplaced. The words of the psalm express Jesus' faith, "The LORD is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation" (v. 14).

"The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.... The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:14,22-24).

The Gates of Heaven Opened!

The Savior exalts the LORD, "I will praise You for You have answered me, and have become my salvation" (v. 21). The gates of righteousness have been opened through Jesus' victory so that we may all enter through faith in His name (vv. 19-20).

Jesus' victory would be complete, for even though He was rejected by the established spiritual leaders of the Jews, He has become the chief cornerstone of the Church. "This is the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes" (vv. 22-23).

This salvation is our cause for rejoicing this Advent season. We can identify the fulfillment of many of the prophecies of this psalm in Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Matthew's record of this event is the historic Gospel lesson for the first Sunday in Advent).

Words from this psalm flowed from the lips of the people as they welcomed Jesus and praised Him. Now the Spirit

of the Lord leads us to join in with our own songs of praise and thanksgiving as we consider how Jesus has come into the world to be our Savior and King. “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD” (v. 26).

Let us echo those songs of praise from our houses of worship this Advent season

as we continue to look to the Lord for our help and our salvation.

Let us sing of Jesus, “You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You. Oh, give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever” (vv. 28-29).

—*Pastor Theodore Barthels*
Austin, Minnesota



From a Pastor's Desk—

What does it mean to be Lutheran?

This is certainly a question of utmost importance.

It is a very sad fact that the majority of Americans today have an astonishingly incorrect understanding of what it means to be truly Lutheran. The largest “Lutheran” church body in the United States recently held its convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and voted to allow active gay and lesbian people to serve as ministers in their pulpits.

This only adds to a very long list of unbiblical (and un-Lutheran) teachings held by the 4.7 million member Evangelical “Lutheran” Church in America (ELCA).

For those who may not know, this church is NOT what genuine Lutheranism is all about! How can one be Lutheran and have fellowship agreements with both Reformed churches and the Catholic Church? (The ELCA currently has fellowship agreements with the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian

Church [USA], the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Episcopal Church; it also signed a joint declaration on the doctrine of Justification with the Roman Catholic Church in 1999.)

Ironically, it was separation from both the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed churches that brought about true Lutheranism in the 1500’s.

So what does it mean to be a Lutheran?

To be truly Lutheran means one will uphold the truth of teachings such as the following—all of which are teachings rejected by the ELCA:

- The Bible IS the divinely inspired Word of God;
- Jesus was born of the virgin Mary;
- Jesus is true God;
- Jesus came to live and die as our substitute before God;
- Jesus rose physically again from the dead and showed Himself alive;

ANNIVERSARY HISTORICAL FACT:

The Immanuel Lutheran High School and College graduating classes of 1960 published the first school yearbook, “The Lance.” It was dedicated “to those who have had the God-given courage, faith and foresight to establish our school.” The first “Lance” reported the list of the first graduates: 10 from High School; 5 from college; 1 from the Seminary.

- Knowing and believing in Jesus is the only way to be saved; and yes,
- Homosexual behavior (as well as fornication and adultery) is a sin.

These are among the Biblical teachings that must be upheld if one would be truly Lutheran, and yet these teachings are rejected by the ELCA. To reject such essential Christian teachings demonstrates that the ELCA is no longer Christian, nor can it be truly Lutheran!

This problem is not limited to the ELCA. Others within “moderate Lutheranism” are steadily drifting into the same non-Lutheran chasm with their compromises on Scripture, the role of women in the church, and their fellowshiping with errorists—to name just a few. Sad to say, very few within Lutheranism are holding on to the Truth of God’s Word.

What can we take away from all this?

Paul’s words to Timothy are an essential reminder: “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

Lord, keep us faithful to Your Word and the preaching of it!

—*Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
Lawrenceville (Atlanta), Georgia*



Chapel Talk on Chapter Five of the Book:

The Church of the Lutheran Confession—Fifty Years

Chapter Five of the history of our church body is entitled “The Interim Conference.” An interim is a period of time between two other periods of time. For example, I could ask you students today, as you return to school after your spring break: “Did you have a good interim?” For your last week was an interim between two periods of time when you were in class.

The Interim Conference was temporary. It lasted about four years, from 1956 to 1960. It was in 1956 that pastors and congregations began to withdraw from the Wisconsin Synod and from other synods of the Synodical Conference because false teaching was being tolerated. Immanuel congregation of Mankato, Minnesota, was one of the first to withdraw. There were six

congregations in the state of Washington that withdrew. Sometimes only parts of congregations withdrew, and then they had to form new, smaller congregations.

Sometimes pastors and teachers withdrew without any followers. Some pastors and teachers lost their jobs and their homes, and they had to look for work and places to live. Some had large families and there was very little income. One pastor delivered milk. Another pastor worked in a boat factory. Another tried to sell World Book Encyclopedias. There was no church body or synod that these pastors or teachers or congregations could join, for they did not find any of the existing synods to be faithful to the teaching of



continued, p. 15



Surveying CLC History

From the 25th Anniversary Booklet (1985) "Reflections...Projections"

Number Twelve: A SOLEMN LITANY

For enabling our founding fathers to give up comfortable homes, schools, and churches for the sake of the true doctrine...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For giving our founding fathers secular work, shelter, and a place to worship with their flocks...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For granting them the two-fold privilege of not only believing in Jesus the Christ, but also suffering for His name's sake...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For Thy forgiveness when they indulged in self-pity, indignation, and also desire for revenge in those early years...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For calming their fears, correcting their errors, and for causing good to come out of their labors...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For restoring and preserving the wholesome Scripture doctrine of religious fellowship in our midst...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For guiding us to strive for unity of doctrine and of our practice in an

evangelical rather than in a legalistic spirit...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For our schools, college, and seminary which provide doctrinally sound lay members, teachers, and pastors to carry the work forward...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For the continued benefit we receive from the *Lutheran Spokesman*, the *Journal of Theology*, and the *Ministry By Mail*...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For the Holy Spirit, who alone keeps us scriptural, evangelical, and mission-minded...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For allowing us to share the Savior with others here at home and in foreign lands...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

For these and all other undeserved blessings showered upon our Church of the Lutheran Confession...

We Thank Thee, Lord.

**—Pastor Em. Robert Mackensen
Red Wing, Minnesota**



ANNIVERSARY HISTORICAL FACT:

The August 1960 convention at Watertown, S.Dak, heard an estimate of 60 students for the High School. The faculty had increased to three for the High School. A second professor was called to the seminary, and one to college. Four laymen from Immanuel in Mankato, Minn. used their "borrowing power" to borrow money for the construction of a second building for the school.

the Bible. There was no school for the young people to attend if they wanted to get a solid Christian education. There was no school in existence to train their future pastors and teachers.

So what were they going to do? More importantly, what did the Lord want them to do? The work of preaching the gospel and teaching the young had to continue. But they were scattered all over the country, and there were so few of them. They were lonely, and they were sad. They could no longer work together and worship together with all the people from the synods which they left, because they wanted to be obedient to the Word of God.

Psalm 68:6 says: "God sets the solitary in families." God brings lonely people together. In fact, Jesus promised His disciples that if they had to leave others in order to follow Him, He would provide replacements. And that is what He did. Those who had withdrawn from the synods of the Synodical Conference

learned about others who had taken the same steps they had, and they began corresponding with each other and arranging meetings where they could talk about their common problems.

One of the first such meetings was in Mankato, Minnesota, in 1956. Other meetings followed in Lyons, Nebraska, Spokane, Washington, Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Red Wing, Minnesota. They were not in a hurry to begin a new synod or church body. There were a lot of things that needed to be discussed first.

The main thing that needed to be resolved was what they were going to teach and confess as their doctrine. They wanted to make sure they were all agreed in their teaching. There were two areas in particular that needed their close attention. One was the teaching on church fellowship. The question was important. What does God's Word say about uniting with others in worship and prayer and mission work? What does God's Word say about terminating



*Women's
Retreat West,
Ft. Robinson
near Chadron,
Nebr., Sept. 15-
17, 2009; Back:
Kay Morrison,
Dawn
Mayhew, Joyce
Ohlmann,
Rebecca
Lillo, Christy*

Kesterson, Colleen Kalblinger, Anna Maas, Mary Greening, Louise Mayhew, Sharon Gowin, Chris Klatt, Jennifer Schoon, LaVon Schoon, Audrey Arndt, "Grandma" Laila Fleischer, Luanna Schoon, Priscilla Bade; Front: Geri Ohlmann, Barb Ruegge, Marilyn Greening, Carolyn Swanson, Julie Mueller, Jackie Booth. Not pictured: Tracy Ohlmann, Rachel Arndt

ANNIVERSARY HISTORICAL FACT:

In 1960 a recommendation was made to publish a theological journal. At the Sleepy Eye convention it was reported that the theological journal had been set up with 43 pages. The "Journal of Theology" first appeared in February, 1961. Cost for 5 issues was \$2.00/year.

fellowship with those who taught or tolerated false teachings? These were questions that needed to be answered, and they needed to be answered on the basis of God's Word.

At the meeting in Lyons, Nebraska, they asked Pastor Winfred Schaller, Junior, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, to study what the Bible teaches about church fellowship and to put it down in writing so that they could all study it.

There were questions about what the Bible teaches about the church and its ministry. They asked Pastor Leonard Bernthal of Clarkston, Washington, to study the Bible's teaching on church and ministry and put it down in writing so that they could study it.

At every meeting they arranged the attendance was higher than the previous meeting. More pastors, teachers, and congregations were joining the group. They started calling themselves the

Interim Conference, and they elected a chairman and a secretary. They tried to help those pastors and teachers that were in need of financial help.

They started a little magazine called the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

The first issue came out in June 1958, over fifty years ago, and it is still being published today. They had a special concern for the Lutheran mission in Japan, for the missionary, Fred Tiefel, had also left the Wisconsin Synod, and there was no synod that was supporting him and his wife and his very small Japanese congregation.

The interim was very short, only four years, but God blessed the work of these few who were involved and prospered their efforts. The Lord kept the group together and gave them unity in faith and confession, one of the greatest blessings there is. (TLH #532; see box—ed.)

—Pastor David Lau

*Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be.
Lead me by Thine own hand;
Choose Thou the path for me.
I dare not choose my lot;
I would not if I might.
Choose Thou for me, my God;
So shall I walk aright.*

*Choose Thou for me my friends,
My sickness or my health;
Choose Thou my cares for me,
My poverty or wealth.
Not mine, not mine, the choice
In things or great or small;
Be Thou my Guide, my Strength,
My Wisdom, and my All.*



West Central Pastoral Conference, Grace, Valentine, Nebr., Sept. 15–17, 2009; (l-r) Mark Gurath, Andrew Schaller, Paul Fleischer, Matthew Gurath, Nathan Pfeiffer, Michael Roehl, Peter Reim, Warren Fanning, James Naumann, Daniel Fleischer, James Sandeen, Mark Gullerud, Eric Libby, Frank Gantt, John Klatt

“OUR JUBILEE IN CHRIST”

REDEMPTION FOR THE PAST. HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.



“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you...” (Deuteronomy 32:7).

“...Rehearsing the Lord’s Leading”

As a fiftieth anniversary undertaking of the *Lutheran Spokesman*, we have invited charter members of the CLC to write personal accounts of their experiences in becoming members of a new synod and fellowship.

The intent is to allow individuals to speak for themselves. The first-hand historical perspectives which they provide—theological and otherwise—are just that, those of the individual writer.

“...We as God’s children have been on a journey—and yes, we have memories. Let us strive to keep the younger generation in contact with our Lord’s leading us on our journey. Remember, the Israelites were directed more than once to rehearse the Lord’s leading them OUT of Egypt and INTO the promised land—and that was meant to be training lest the experience of their parents/grandparents be lost to them. All anniversaries should serve this good and edifying function.” (*Spokesman* staff writer)

Prof. Gurgel’s account which follows is heavy on the way things went in those early years and the struggles many called servants who “took a stand” had to deal with in the mundane—such as keeping a roof overhead and food on the table for one’s family. The Scripture passage the professor weaves throughout the tale that is told was and is truly the source of spiritual strength and sustenance for those who bear the cross that can often accompany Christian discipleship.

With that, find Roland A. Gurgel’s article in our *JUBILEE JOURNEYS & MEMORIES* series. We trust it is found to be interesting and informative.

Jubilee Journeys & Memories 1960-2010—A Half Century of Blessings

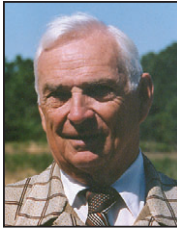
“Remember those who...have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow...”—Hebrews 13:7

Memoirs of Professor Roland A. Gurgel (age 88)

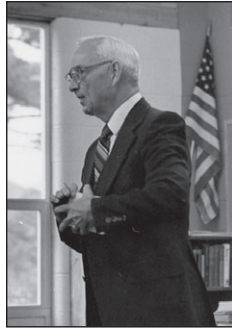
“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee” (Isaiah 26:3).

That passage, which echoes many other passages of Scripture, has offered advice and comfort throughout the 88+

years of my life. Through morning and evening devotions my father conducted at the dining room table, he made me aware of that passage. He reviewed and enlarged on that thought during the eight years of grade school that I had him as a teacher.



**Prof. Gurgel
...in an ILC
classroom**



It came as daily thought offered through four high school years, four college years at Northwestern College, and three seminary years at Thiensville, Wisconsin. (Teachers' names that come to mind from those years are Herman Fleischer ["Epi"], A. Sitz, Martin Franzman, John Meyer, Adalbert Schaller.)

When for conscience' sake I had to leave the Wisconsin Synod after years of struggle and help from Paul Nolting Sr., Elton Hallauer, Egbert Schaller, and some others, and when the congregation that I was serving for the most part refused to leave the synod even though they had for years been served by faithful pastors (Waldemar Schuetze and Gordon Radtke), then came the question: WHAT NOW?

With a wife, nine children, and very little money—Where to go? What to do? I looked for a place with a church that I could identify with. I made a call to the pastor in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and was informed that there was not much available there. The next call went to Vernon Gerlach in Phoenix, Arizona. He, Alfred Fremder, and Richard Halle had left the Wisconsin Synod and moved to Phoenix where they formed their own church body. Vernon's reply was short but very welcome: "The first article of the Apostles' Creed is very much in effect in Phoenix." ("Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.")

We packed up the family and with help of a friend headed for Phoenix. The two cars got separated the first day out from Minnesota; we did not see the other half

of the family until we reached Phoenix and the Gerlachs. The Gerlachs opened their home to us for some weeks. Only after I had purchased a house and had my furniture trucked down from Minnesota did we move out. ("Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.")

During the stay at the Gerlach home, I was offered a position with a real estate office. For five evenings I attended a class to qualify for taking a test to receive a license for selling houses. We had been in Arizona for about a week and the checking account showed a balance of about two dollars. I held an open house on a Sunday afternoon; before the day was done I had sold two houses. ("Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.")

Until the fall of 1960 real estate was a good source of providing for the family. Then for several reasons the resale of homes dropped off. The position of serving as a teacher in a private school was offered. For two years I taught in that school. The first year I taught children of the fifth grade level. The second year I taught the upper grades (Spanish, Latin, and English grammar).

In addition I also worked for Sears on a part-time basis. My wife also worked for a large department store. Between the two of us we managed to keep the children clothed and fed. ("Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.")

When one of the Wisconsin Synod congregations in Phoenix left that synod for the same reasons we had left, they joined with us and formed the present day congregation of Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church.

In the spring of 1962 I received a call from Redeemer Lutheran Church of Cheyenne, Wyoming, to serve as pastor. So after two-plus years out of the ministry, I was happy to be back in the work for which I had been prepared. From Cheyenne I went to Eau Claire as a professor at Immanuel Lutheran College (1964 to 1986), serving as Dean of the

College and as president (1978-1982).

End Note: Within the CLC the Lord of the Church has often found opportunities for continued public service of able retirees. Such was the case with Professor Gurgel, who recalls how his services were variously used after his retirement from ILC. At Indian Landing, N.Y., he served some months to introduce a congregation to the CLC; in North Port, Fla., he helped Robert Peters get a CLC congregation started; at request of the Board of

Missions he did some exploratory work in Columbus, Ohio; in addition, pastoral vacancy stints were at CLC congregations in Middleton, Wis.; Ballwin, Mo.; Loveland, Colo.; Okabena, Minn.; Fond du Lac, Wis.; and Coloma, Mich.

All praise to the Lord for His faithful servants whom He allows to continue preaching and teaching His Word in their advanced years.

Prof. Gurgel now resides in Mankato, Minn. The Lord took his wife Lois to her heavenly home on March 2, 1999.



With the Lord—

Pastor Bertram Naumann (1931-2009)

(Adapted from the obituary provided by the family.)

Bertram Justus Naumann was born on June 19, 1931, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He entered God's kingdom of grace three weeks later, being baptized by his father, the Rev. Paul George Naumann, Pastor of St. Jacobi Ev. Lutheran Church.

When Bert was nine, his father suffered a stroke and was called to his eternal rest in May, 1941. His mother then moved the family to New Ulm, Minnesota. He was confirmed in the Christian faith on March 25, 1945. He attended high school at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm. After one year at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin, Bert graduated from Concordia Lutheran Junior College in Milwaukee the following year. He completed his pre-theology and entered the seminary at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota.

At Bethany Bert met his future wife, Alice Dahle. After Bethany, he continued his studies at the WELS Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, graduating in May, 1957. Bert and Alice were joined in holy wedlock at Lime Creek Lutheran Church



in Emmons, Iowa, on June 15, 1957. Bert soon took up his duties at the two churches to which he had been called by God: Calvary Lutheran of Marquette, Michigan, and neighboring St. Paul's of Green Garden.

The early years of Bert's ministry were tumultuous ones in the history of the Synodical Conference. False doctrine had entered the conservative Lutheran church. Teachings concerning the inspiration of Scripture and the origins of the universe were being corrupted and challenged in Lutheran schools, colleges and seminaries, and many resultant loose practices regarding the doctrine of

church fellowship threatened the unity that had once existed in the Synodical Conference. Again and again the Wisconsin Synod delayed dealing with the false teachings of the LC-MS and, in the fall of 1959, the two congregations Bert served voted to suspend fellowship with the WELS. A number of other congregations around the nation had taken the same action. Bert began attending meetings of the group then known as the Interim Conference; he became a founding member of this new fellowship which had taken the name: Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Bert served in Marquette from July, 1957, until December, 1966, when he accepted a call to Messiah Lutheran Church of Milwaukee. He pastored there through June of 1973, when he was called to Redemption Lutheran Church of Alderwood Manor, Wash. He served Redemption for 27 years, retiring in May, 2000. He had served in the public ministry for 43 years. Over that time he served on numerous synod boards and committees. He authored the adult instruction course, *Learn From Me*, which has been used to instruct thousands of people in the basics of the Christian faith.

Pastor Naumann was always looking for new places to proclaim the gospel. While in Milwaukee he was instrumental in establishing new congregations in Madison and Chicago. After moving to the Pacific Northwest, he had a hand in starting CLC missions in Ketchikan, Alaska, Vernon BC (Canada), and

Tacoma, Wash. He was the longtime visiting pastor for the Pacific Coast Conference.

Following retirement, Bert was a faithful member and church officer at Ascension Lutheran of Tacoma. He continued to participate in synodical conventions and pastoral conferences. The Pacific Coast Conference appreciated his wise counsel over the years—the conference that was meeting on the day he died was the first one he ever missed.

After a brief illness, his Lord granted Bert a peaceful death on October 7, 2009, at his home in Puyallup, Wash., at the age of 78 years. Among the survivors are Alice, his dear wife of 52 years, sisters Lois Neubauer and Eunice Roehl, children Paul (Carol), Ann (Scott Radcliffe), David (Desirae), Bruce (Paula), Gail (Al Richardson), Thomas (Jennifer), James (Sheila), and Steven (Eve-Lynn), 31 grandchildren, and many other relatives and friends. “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

A memorial service took place on Sunday, October 11, at 2:00 p.m. at Redemption Lutheran Church, Lynnwood, Wash., Rev. Caleb Schaller officiating; his message was based on 1 Thess. 4:13-18. All eight children were present, as well as their spouses and many grandchildren. Son Paul writes: “Those present feared for the structural integrity of the building, as the congregation concluded the service with a thundering rendition of TLH hymn #39, ‘Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.’”

A Personal Note:

This editor’s first divine call out of Seminary (1964) was as assistant to Pastor Naumann in the two Upper Michigan churches he was then serving (this was before any kind of “vicar” program existed in the new synod). Under his capable tutelage some all-too-human idiosyncrasies beginning preachers/pastors are prone to were exposed and treatment advanced by the Holy Spirit.

A couple months back (September issue, p. 17f) an article appeared on these pages in connection with the on-going 25-year-old survey of CLC History. In the article titled “In Memoriam,” it was brother Bert who led us in giving praise and thanks to God for “those gifted and stalwart men and women (who) have been

taken to their eternal rests.”

Now it’s our turn—as we herewith give public praise and thanks to God for long-time colleagues in ministry, Bertram Naumann and Michael Sydow, stalwart gifts from God to a fledgling CLC.

May we follow in their train.



With the Lord—

Pastor/Professor Michael Sydow (1941-2009)

It’s in the parable of the talents, one of the final quad by which Jesus edified His disciples a few days before fateful Passover week. Jesus is the man in the parable who was about to travel to a far country after he had delivered his goods to his servants for their use while he was away. You remember the way things went: two received the commendation, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21).

That’s a suitable epitaph for our brother Michael Arthur Sydow, who entered into the joy of the Lord Jesus on October 9, 2009.

“Enter into the joy of the Lord!” What a wonderful reality for Pastor Mike/Prof. Sydow, beloved son, spouse, father, grandfather, and friend! In addition to the multitude of enjoyments granted him during his earthly pilgrimage, Mike has now attained the ultimate joy of being with Jesus, in whose “presence is fullness of joy” and at whose “right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11).

The following is adapted from his obituary published in the local newspaper. As you read it, keep in mind that Mike enjoyed everything that came his way—his marriage partner Kathy, his children and grandchildren, serving the Church as pastor and educator, doing sports and theater...and he especially



enjoyed singing! Singing got his entire heart and soul and lung-power! And now, praise the Lord, Mike is bolstering the heavenly choirs!

On Friday, Oct. 9, 2009, the Savior Jesus ended the earthly pilgrimage of Michael Arthur Sydow. His journey began Dec. 19, 1941, in the care of Gilbert and Ruth (nee Schwartz) Sydow, in Waterville, Washington. The pre-eminent feature of his sojourn was spiritual. He was redirected for his journey through the sacrament of baptism in early 1942, given the gift of faith in Jesus. In 1955 he was confirmed and became a communicant member of Good Hope Lutheran Church in Ellensburg, Wash. Mike lived with his family in Ellensburg through 1965.

The Lord also directed Mike’s educational endeavors. He attended

Northwestern Lutheran Academy in Mobridge, S.Dak., graduating in June 1959; in the fall he began intensive Bible studies at Immanuel Lutheran College, also attending classes at Mankato State College. Mike completed his theological training at Immanuel Lutheran Seminary in Eau Claire in June 1965. In 2000 he completed a Master of Education degree (Professional Development) at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

His journey continued as the Savior directed him to service in the public ministry for five congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC), bringing the saving message of forgiveness of sins through the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ: Holy Cross of Phoenix; St. Paul's of Winner, S.Dak.; Faith of Ballwin, Mo.; Redeemer of Cheyenne, Wyo.; and Faith of Markesan, Wis. He also served the CLC on the Board of Trustees and chairman of the Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran College.

In the mid 1980s Pastor Sydow published a translation (with Exposition) of *Martin Luther's Small Catechism*. In the spring of 1996, Pastor Mike accepted the call of Immanuel Lutheran College to become an instructor in both high school and college departments. He served as dean of students and academic dean, directed many school theatrical productions, coached sports teams, and directed the pep band for a number of years. The Lord led Professor Sydow to

retire at the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

It was the Lord's will that Kathryn (nee Firlle) share forty-three years of Mike's pilgrimage. They were married in 1966 in Elm Grove, Wis., at Messiah Lutheran Church. Surviving children include Christine, wife of John Gerbitz and mother of Rebekah, Hannah, Sarah, Rachel and Joshua of Milton, Wis.; Cheryl, wife of Paul Meyer and mother of Benjamin, Jessie, Caleb and Chara of Eau Claire; and Jonathan, husband of Blair (nee Seybt) and father of Maggie of Lexington, S.C.

Still on their pilgrimages are Mike's mother, Ruth, of Altoona; three brothers and three sisters, Jane (Gerald) Rutz, Patricia Rutz, James (Elizabeth) Sydow, Benno (Barbara) Sydow, Peter (Patricia) Sydow and Bonnie (Donald) Chadbourne. He is survived by a host of other relatives and friends. Those whose sojourns are already completed are his father, Gilbert; a son, Paul; and a brother-in-law, Eugene Rutz, all of whom Mike now joins in the mansions of glory.

The victory service...was at 3:00 p.m. Monday, Oct. 12, 2009, at Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire; lunch and fellowship followed the service.

For all of which we thank the Lord; brother Mike has gone "to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise" (Psalm 42:4). Amen and Hallelujah!

—Prof. Em. Paul R. Koch, reporting



A Congregational Anniversary

Celebrating 100 Years of Grace, Mercy, and Peace

On July 5, 2009 in a 10:00 a.m. worship service, the members of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Lemmon, South Dakota, along with many former members and friends, lifted up voices to glorify the

Lord Jesus Christ for 100 years of grace, mercy, and peace.

In March of 1908 the Herman Ferking family was making its way from Greenway, S.Dak., to Lemmon. At



Anniversary cake made by member LouAnn Bubbers



Servants of the service: Chuck Christman, Ted Quade, Frank Gantt, Norman Greve, Barry Hay

Roscoe, S.Dak., there was a layover of several hours between train connections, and Pastor Scherf of the Minnesota Synod in Roscoe was called upon to perform a baptism. Roy Ferking was the child to be baptized. However, Pastor Scherf was not in town, so the Ferking's boarded the train for Lemmon.

The child, however, was not forgotten. Soon Pastor Scherf, together with Pastor Keller of Bowdle, S.Dak., came to Lemmon for services. Pastors Scherf and Keller ministered to a fledgling group of Lutherans in the Lemmon area until a student from the seminary, Vicar Julius Lenz, was called. To him was given the privilege of finding Lutheran families in the Lemmon-Meadow area and to conduct worship services. Among those in the Meadow area were Mr. and Mrs. Jake Preszler and Mr. Fred Haman. The worship services were held in various homes.

In 1909 the first resident pastor was called—Pastor William Pankow. Under his shepherding, St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized. The Board of Trustees was elected and a constitution adopted on October 8, 1909, with four charter voting members: John Erlenbusch, Ludwig Harmel, Carl Scheeburger, and Herman Ferking. The congregation became legally incorporated on October 27, 1909, in Pierre, S.Dak.

The congregation began to plan at once for a church building. The grand total of the cost of the building and its contents was \$2,400. The building was dedicated in the fall of 1910. The Norwegian

Lutherans were permitted use of the building for worship services at the cost of \$3.00 per month.

Along with the town of Lemmon, the congregation experienced a steady growth. In 1918 preaching in the German language was prohibited by state law (this was during WWI), and St. Luke's closed its doors. Services were held in various homes in North Dakota and also for a time in a building in North Lemmon. As soon as the ban was lifted, the church building was used again. By 1939 the church was conducting only one German service per month. This continued until 1950 when German services were discontinued.

In 1961 the present site of St. Luke's was purchased. Construction began on this new building, and on April 5, 1964 the new church was dedicated. The cost of this building was substantially more than the first building, coming in at \$55,000 and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor.

In January of 1974 plans for a Christian Day School were begun. St. Luke's Lutheran School opened for the fall semester of the same year. Mrs. Erma Maier was the first teacher of the new



Anniversary meal



The children sang “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” during the anniversary service

school. The school remained opened for eleven years and then closed at the end of the 1984-85 school year.

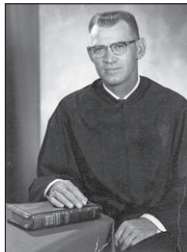
In 2001 a new parsonage was purchased and placed on the property with the church building.

Speakers for the anniversary worship service included Pastor Norman Greve (a son of former pastor V. E. Greve), Ted Quade (former teacher of St. Luke’s School and son-in-law of current

Pastors who have served St. Luke’s:

- Pastor Julius Lenz (1908)
- Pastor William Pankow (1909-1912)
- Pastor Henry Hopp (1913-1916)
- Pastor Herman Kuether (1916-1918)
- Pastor William Haar (1919-1922)
- Pastor G. A. Hinz (1923-1925)
- Pastor D. F. Rossin (1925-1931)
- Pastor F. E. Blume (1931-1935)
- Pastor E. C. Kuehl (1935-1938)
- Pastor H. E. Rutz (1939-1946)
- Pastor W. A. Schumann (1946-1949)
- Pastor E. W. Rische (1949-1950)
- Pastor W. F. Winter (1950-1952)
- Pastor R. E. Pope (1952-1956)
- Pastor V. E. Greve (1956-1969)*
- Pastor Adalbert Geiger (1970-1973)
- Pastor David Koenig (1974-1984)
- Pastor Walter Schaller (1985-1996)
- Pastor Timothy Wheaton (1997-2001)
- Pastor Frank Gantt (2001-present)

* St. Luke’s, Lemmon, was one of 43 charter member congregations of the CLC in 1960. Pictured here is pastor at the time: Vernon Greve, (1921-1991).— Editor



Cover: John Fox

members Robert and Evelyn Rieger), and Chuck Christman (a life-long third generation member of St. Luke’s).

Following the fellowship meal, the history of St. Luke’s was read together with letters sent by those who were unable to attend. Those present shared fond memories and expressions of thanksgiving to God for His mercy these many years.

Throughout the history of St. Luke’s, our God and Savior has proven Himself faithful to His promise: Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

—*Pastor Frank Gantt*

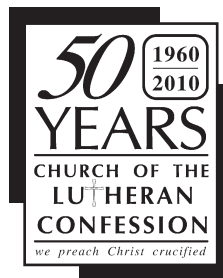
ANNOUNCEMENT

Installation

In accord with our usage and order, Ms. Jennifer Ohlmann, who was called by Peace Thru Christ Lutheran Church and School, Middleton, Wisconsin, to be its Christian Day School teacher, was installed on Sunday, July 5, 2009.

—*Pastor Mark Bernthal*

To our readers: A blessed Christmas and New Year from the staff of the *Lutheran Spokesman!*



Cover: