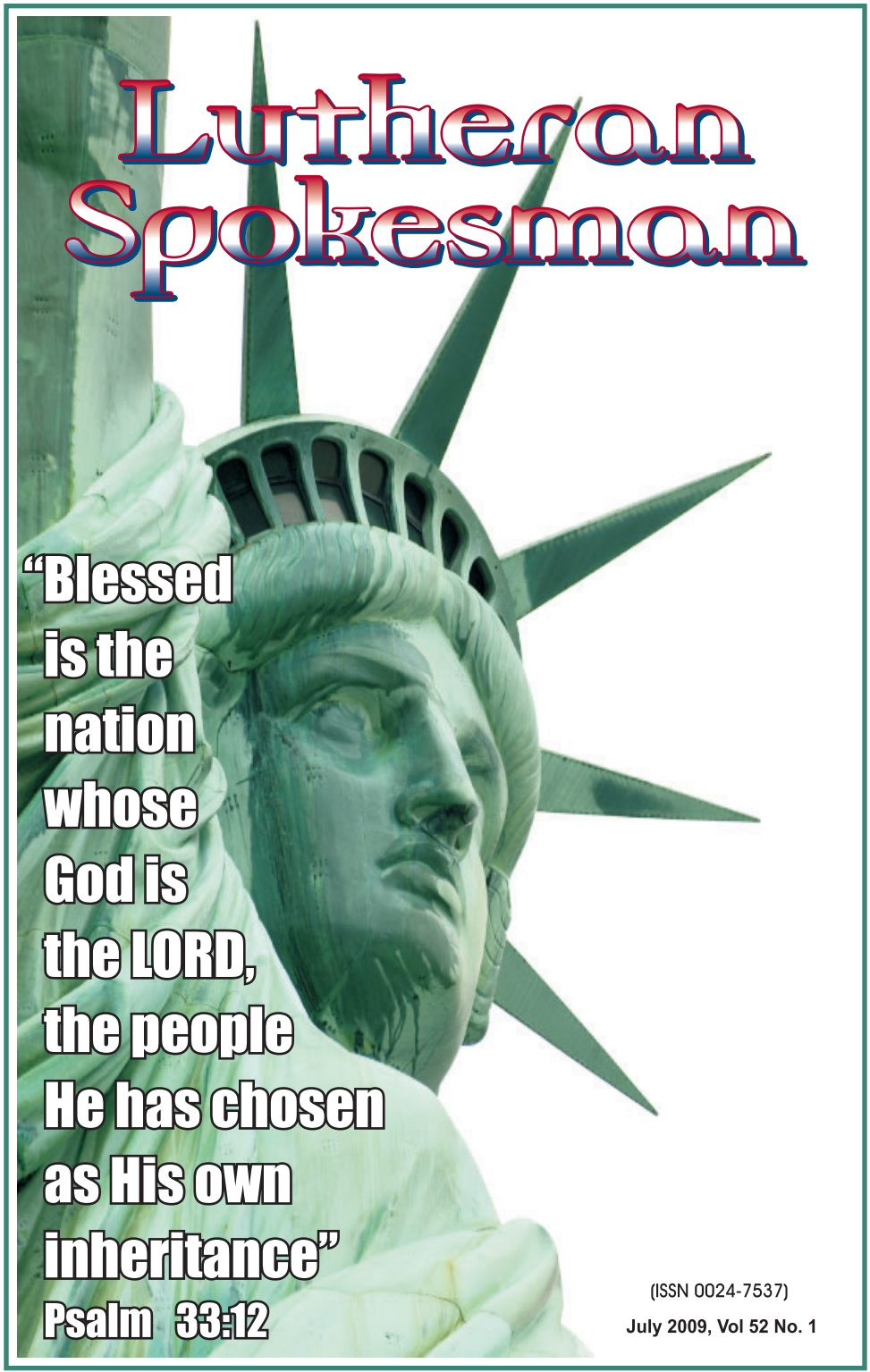


A close-up, low-angle photograph of the Statue of Liberty's head and crown, set against a bright, overexposed background. The statue's face is in profile, looking slightly upwards and to the right. The crown's spikes are prominent. The image has a slightly grainy, high-contrast quality.

Lutheran Spokesman

**“Blessed
is the
nation
whose
God is
the LORD,
the people
He has chosen
as His own
inheritance”
Psalm 33:12**

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Blessings of Discipleship

*"A name given to the followers of any teacher."
"A student or pupil."*

The above dictionary definitions for the word "disciple" (a commonly used word in the New Testament, occurring over 200 times). Often the word is applied to the men Jesus selected to be His apostles—the inner circle of "The Twelve" who spent three years as His closest associates, learning His Word in preparation for the task He would commit to them of serving His New Testament Church.

In many other instances the word "disciple" is used in a broader sense, with reference to all whom the Lord called to follow Him.

The term disciple is a beautiful one, rich in meaning. It calls to mind a host of priceless blessings we enjoy as present-day followers of Jesus.

At the top of the list is the privilege He gives us to sit at His feet and learn His Word. Through the textbook of the Holy Scriptures, our Divine Instructor presents lessons through which He makes us wise for salvation. By His law He leads us to an understanding of our need for a Savior. By His gospel He leads us to the happy knowledge that He reconciled us to our Father by keeping the law in our stead and atoning for our

sins on the cross.

In the "textbook" of the Bible Jesus presents many other lessons to guide us in our lives as His disciples and to show how we may glorify His name. Here's a sampling:

- He assures us of our heavenly Father's providential care and loving concern for us, His dear children, when we're confronted by life's problems (financial/health/job-related/etc.): "All things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

- He strengthens us to take up our cross and follow Him in faith when we suffer the world's ridicule because of our loyalty to Him: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:10).

- He inspires us to share with others the great things He has done for us: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mk. 16:15).

- He redirects our hearts to the things that really matter when worldly cares distract us and cause us to lose our heavenly focus: "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to

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eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you” (Jn. 6:27).

- He instructs us to take His Savior-love as our model and guard against acting towards others in ways that aren’t loving: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another” (Jn. 13:34-35).

- He encourages us to cling to Him ever more tightly when the siren call of false teachers threatens to draw us away from Him and the pure teaching of His Word: “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take

your crown” (Rev. 3:11).

How blessed we are to be disciples of our Lord Jesus! What a joy to know that as often as we study our Bibles, read a devotion, or attend a church service, our Divine Instructor is “at the head of the classroom.”

He uses the Scriptures to bolster our faith, to help us grow in the grace and knowledge of Him, and to strengthen us to live our lives in ways that bring glory to His name until the day He leads us safely home to heaven.

—*Pastor Thomas Schuetze*
Coloma, Michigan



Christians As Citizens

By the grace of God and the calling of the Spirit Who has brought us to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are citizens of heaven. We are no longer strangers from the household of God but fellow citizens of the eternal state in heaven, “from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Php. 3:20).

How blessed we are to be called the children of God and citizens of heaven! While awaiting our treasure in heaven, we exercise our citizenship as Christians in this world—the nation, the state, and the city in which we reside.

It is in this latter sense that we celebrate our national birthday each July, as well as the Declaration of Independence. Increasingly the appreciation of the Declaration of Independence as well as the Constitution of the United States is politicized and twisted to serve personal ends and agendas.

How shall we as Christians—Christ believers—exercise our citizenship in these trying times?

First, let us define terms. Over 100 years ago, Francis Pieper said, “We must actually face the situation that those who style themselves Christians do not agree as to what Christianity is” (An essay, 1902, “What is Christianity?”) Pieper again says, “Christianity consists in faith in Christ, not in one’s own moral conduct.”

When we speak of a Christian, we are speaking of a person who confesses his sin and trusts in Christ for divine grace, forgiveness, and eternal life. A Christian is not one who generates a God-pleasing life, but is one through whom flows the power of the Spirit, manifest in the fruits that are borne in the life of a Christian. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself apart from its connection to the root source, neither can the Christian unless he abides in Christ (John 15:4).

The fruits borne in the life of a Christian therefore are not defined by the goodness of the deed, even the best of which can be mimicked by the hea-

then, but by faith in Christ in whom they live.

So then, what is a citizen of these United States (for that is the object of our concern when speaking of Christians as citizens)? A citizen is defined as “a native or naturalized, as opposed to alien, member of a state or nation, owing allegiance to its government and entitled to its protection; an inhabitant of a city or town, esp. one entitled to its privileges or franchises” (*The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary*).

It is becoming increasingly difficult to be a Christian in a world that is anti-Christian and in a nation in which biblical Christianity is not only the minority, but fast becoming a despised minority. The inhabitants of this nation are losing more and more of their inherent rights as the authority of government assumes more and more control of their lives—even to the point of redefining what constitutes marriage and family, as well as interfering in the raising of children within the home.

Let Your Light Shine!



In this scenario the confessing Christian is a double loser—he is maligned for being a Christ-believer with morals and principles established by the divine authority of the Word; in addition he suffers

under the heavy hand of government depriving him (and others) of rights which are his even under natural law.

Under the circumstances, we can complain and lament. To do so may feel good, but it does not change anything. As Christians we shall pray to the Lord for boldness to exercise our Christian faith. We will confess our own sins and pray for forgiveness, and that the Lord will be gracious to this nation for the

sake of His children who still reside in it. We shall take opportunity to pray that our leaders will govern justly and wisely. We will pray for the repentance of those whose present way is destruction. We will remember our Lord's counsel to render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's (Matthew 22:21), and all this out of respect for the Lord and for His Word (Romans 13). We will not want to give Satan or the watching world opportunity to mock our Lord. Yes, so long as we have the privilege, we will exercise ourselves in the promotion of fair, just, and righteous governance through making use of our voting privileges.

Above all, as citizens of heaven we will have a heart for those who are still caught in the throes of sin and whose sense of citizenship is bound only to this dying world. While we bow to the authority of men in those things which are not contrary to faith and morals, we march to the call of a greater authority—that of our Lord Jesus Who through His apostle has called us “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Pet. 2:9).

With this high calling goes responsibility from which neither threat nor intimidation dare turn us. We are what we are, “that you may proclaim the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light...having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet. 2:9,12).

Christians as citizens can do no better than to live their faith as the redeemed children of God, and in the exercise of that faith rejoice in the truth that in every way and in whatever circumstance we are the Lord's. Whatever the lot and trials of the Christian as citizen of this world, they who trust in the Lord and His Word know that His cause is never lost!!

Our sights are higher than what is found in this dying world. Our sights

are set in heaven in which the King of heaven and Earth resides, and Who will welcome each faithful citizen-believer to eternal rest.

Citizens of heaven! Let your light shine!

—*Pastor Daniel Fleischer*
Corpus Christi, Texas



A Most Comforting Assurance

The Scriptural doctrine of election—predestination to eternal life—has been misunderstood and confused for centuries.

In fact, each one of us at some time in our life has probably struggled with the meaning of this doctrine. Dr. Martin Luther himself struggled with this doctrine; it wasn't until he was brought to understand the gospel of God's free grace in Christ that the doctrine of election brought him abiding comfort.

What Is It?

By the doctrine of God's election we refer to the eternal act of God with respect to all who are saved, by which, out of pure grace and for Christ's sake, He purposed to endow them in time with the spiritual blessings of conversion, justification, sanctification, and preservation unto eternal life (cf. Romans 8:28-30).

This act of God's will occurred before the world was created: "...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

What God determined to do in eternity, He carries out in time through the Means of Grace: "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13).

The doctrine of election emphasizes God's grace—the above Bible verses are gospel words showing what our Triune God has done for us: God the Father

chose us; God the Son made that election effective by redeeming us; and God the Holy Spirit conveyed that election to us by working faith in our hearts.

The Foundation

Two other doctrines of Scripture must be considered for a proper understanding of the doctrine of election:

Universal grace means that God sincerely and earnestly wants everyone to be saved (cf. 1 John 2:2). The doctrine of election teaches that God elected a certain number from the mass of fallen mankind to eternal salvation. While there are some similarities between these two doctrines, there are key differences: One extends over all people, the other over a certain number of fallen mankind. While the Lord is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 2:9), we are also reminded that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt. 20:16). These two doctrines do not contradict each other, for both emphasize God's grace.

Grace alone is the foundation for correctly understanding the doctrine of election. The Bible teaches that our salvation is not due to something valuable or worthy in us, but is fully and completely a gift from God: "Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; oth-

erwise work is no longer work” (Rom. 11:5-6).

We must have a correct understanding of these two doctrines of Scripture in order to correctly understand the doctrine of election. To not understand this brings about disastrous results!

The Purpose

The purpose of the doctrine of election is to confirm and impress on us that our salvation is by grace and not by any worthiness in us. Its purpose is to give the child of God the comforting assur-

ance that his salvation rests in God’s hands alone.

And finally, the doctrine of election urges us to use the Means of Grace so that we become more established and mature in faith-living unto our salvation (cf. 2 Peter 1:10).

With true God-given faith believers will confess, “This is most certainly true!” and rejoice in their election unto salvation!

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



Studies in First Timothy

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work...” (1 Tim. 3:1).

Chapter 5:1-16

The Christian Family

When the church phone rings, it is often someone asking for help with food, rent, utilities, or travel expenses.

When we talk to these callers, we naturally feel a certain sadness for them, but not just because of the particular troubles that they are calling about. It is because often they seem to have no circle of family or friends to appeal to for help. They may have family and friends but no one who is able or willing to help them. And what is saddest of all, they are often not part of a Christian congregation, a family of believers that would take an interest in them.

In 1 Timothy Paul speaks of the Christian congregation in terms of family. He calls it “the house of God” (chap. 3:15), a household made up of God’s children with God as the Head.

In the section before us Paul counsels Timothy to use family relationships as his guide for his dealings with the

members of the congregation. Timothy should not rebuke an older man but appeal to him as he would to his own father. Younger men he should treat as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters.

That is not just good advice for pastors and elders but for all Christians in their conduct toward one another. Paul says that the congregation should treat the widows among them as they would their own mothers. They should sympathize with them in their need and support them. In the case of widows who had no family, the congregation should provide for them.

But the apostle does not teach that the congregation should replace the family by taking over the duties of children toward their parents. If a widow had children or grandchildren, these should “show piety at home” by taking care of their widowed mother or grandmother.

Opportunities to Serve!

This is an act of piety toward God because He has commanded that we honor father and mother. Children should learn “to repay their parents,” Paul says. Their parents brought them into the world and spent their resources to give them food, shelter, and education. They should be glad then for the opportunity to repay some of that when their own mother was in need.

Paul did not intend that the congregation should encourage idleness by their support of widows. Rather, he advised younger widows to “marry, bear children, manage the house.” They should do the useful work that was available to them.

Congregational support should be reserved for those whom Paul calls real widows. The Greek word for widows that Paul uses here is more descriptive of a widow’s situation than our English word implies. It refers to one who is bereft, left desolate and without support. Those who really fit that description are the ones for whom the congregation will want to provide.

For these older widows Paul envisions a rich and full life of service to fill up their remaining years. They may no

longer be up to a lot of physical activity, but they could “continue in supplications and prayers night and day.” In other words, they could be examples of trust in God by recognizing and speaking of their blessings—especially the spiritual blessings of forgiveness and salvation from Christ. They could speak from experience, encouraging the young to be faithful spouses and good parents.

In our day widows are not ordinarily dependent on their congregations for financial support, though this should be given where it is needed. But there are other kinds of support that our older widows may very much need. We can give them our love and companionship. We can encourage them in the work that they can do for the Lord—supplications and prayers for children and grandchildren, for fellow Christians and neighbors, for pastors, teachers, and missionaries.

Their years of caring for children, tending to the needs of a spouse, and working at a job outside the home may be over. Yet as active members of the Christian family, older widows are privileged to devote themselves to the work that Paul here describes.

*—Pastor John Klatt
Rapid City, South Dakota*



All History is God's Story!

Jacob's Ladder

No. 14 in series: Genesis 28:10-22

“The wages of sin is...” a stone for a pillow?

When I was a child in Sunday School, I always had trouble understanding the chief lesson of this biblical account.

I could easily understand the lesson taught in the account of the Flood—God judges impenitent sinners while He

saves faithful believers! The same was true for my personal favorite—Daniel in the lions’ den.

But Jacob’s ladder? That lesson just seemed to elude me no matter how eloquently my teacher presented it!

I think part of the problem was that I never quite got past the idea of Jacob having to sleep with a stone for a



pillow. That must have really been uncomfortable...and all because of sin! I remember thinking that if Jacob had only been nicer to his brother, Esau, and had not deceived his father, Isaac, all would have been well. He would have gotten to stay home

and sleep on a pillow made out of...well, maybe goat's hair!

However, "to be good so that you don't get sent away from home and a soft bed" is not the lesson of this story!

God's Abiding Promises and Presence

Jacob had indeed been sent away from home. His mother, Rebekah, feared the anger of Esau, who planned to kill Jacob out of revenge for having stolen his father's blessing. Heeding the complaints of Rebekah regarding Esau's Canaanite wives, Isaac instructed Jacob to go to his Uncle Laban and seek a wife among his daughters.

Being now under way and quite alone, Jacob traveled until nightfall. He then lay down with a stone for a pillow... and he dreamed! He beheld "a ladder... set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

Above that ladder stood the LORD Himself, who identified Himself as the "God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac." He made the same promises to Jacob that He had made earlier to them—he and his family would inherit the land of Canaan and his descendants would be as numerous as the dust of the earth!

Beyond that, the LORD once again affirmed the promise of the Savior, stating: "In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed!" Beyond those promises, God assured Jacob that He

would be with him to keep him wherever he went. He would never leave him until everything He had promised was fulfilled!

God's Picture of Jesus

Jacob awakened in wonder! "Surely the LORD is in this place.... This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

I am sure this is where my juvenile mind must have wandered as my Sunday School teachers explained the underlying meaning, for I never quite understood that Jacob's ladder pictured that gate of heaven, which is Jesus!

When Jesus addressed His disciple, Nathanael, He drew the connection between Himself and Jacob's ladder. After informing Nathanael that He had seen him under the fig tree before Philip had even invited him to come, Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (Jn. 1:51).

Jesus is the gate to heaven!

Later in John's Gospel, Jesus put it this way: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14:6).

Jacob had taken things into his own hands by deceiving his father and stealing from his brother. God—who had just promised to bless all the families of the Earth through Jacob's "seed" (his descendant Jesus)—wanted Jacob to place his trust in that promised Savior, Jesus, rather than in himself. Thereby Jacob would be blessed!

A Plea for God's Protection

This story ends with Jacob's plea for God's protection.

Jacob vowed that if God would bring him safely home once again after his journey, he would willingly serve Him. Jacob, recognizing the significance of what had just happened, set up a pillar at the spot, poured oil over it, and called it

Bethel—meaning, “the house of God!”

What is the lesson we are to learn?

It has nothing to do with just being nicer so that you do not lose your soft bed!

Rather, the story assures the child of God—who may at various times and for various reasons find himself alone and

suffering the consequences of sin—that God is always with him, will always provide for him, and that through Jesus the child of God gains forgiveness and entrance into God’s eternal presence!

—*Pastor Paul D. Nolting*
Mankato, Minnesota



Portraits of Christ

from the Gospel of John

Chapter Five—The Great Physician



On almost any given day the parking lots of our nation’s hospitals and clinics are filled and the hallways of these institutions are likewise bustling with activity. People come with broken bones, ordinary sickness, extraordinary diseases, and other kinds of trouble.

There are many kinds of illnesses but all have one thing in common—their source. God created our bodies to live forever, but we face sickness, injury, and death because sin corrupts God’s design, leaving our bodies flawed, vulnerable, and unavoidably destined to die.

God has created us in such a way that, in spite of facing sickness and death, we naturally have a desire to be healed, to get better, to live.

This common desire was evident in the crowds that thronged to Jesus looking for His healing touch. By the time she came to Jesus, one woman had spent everything she had by trying every remedy the doctors could suggest (cf. Mark 5:25-26).

The man whom Jesus met at the pool of Bethesda likewise would have taken advantage of the opportunity to be made whole, if only he could get into

the pool’s healing waters before someone else.

The paralyzed man at the pool had only one means of healing in mind—getting into the pool. Jesus showed him another means—He healed the man simply with His powerful word.

In reality, the means of healing was the same whether in the pool or through Jesus’ word. Only God could heal and restore the man who had been an invalid for 38 years.

Jesus revealed Himself as the Great Physician and demonstrated His power by healing the man. He demonstrated His power over every affliction through the many times He healed others with diseases, demon possession, and sickness. “Jesus went about all the cities and villages...healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Mt. 9:35).

For Us Today Too!

Jesus continues to be our Physician today. If any of those people drawn to hospitals and clinics today experience healing, that healing is provided by Jesus.

There is nothing on the Earth that has not been created and provided by God. There is not a piece of healing knowledge or skill that has not been

The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. — John 5:7ff.

given by God. There is not a discovery in science and medicine that has not been made possible by God.

Therefore, from simple diagnosis to life-sustaining surgeries, from aspirin to cancer fighting wonder-drugs, all of what we have come to know as the marvel of "modern medicine" is really Jesus at work. Our Great Physician provides healing for us today even as He did while walking the Earth. That healing is just by different means.

Jesus healed many people. And yet many others did not have that opportunity and they died. A few of these Jesus raised up from the dead, but even then they eventually died again.

Today, not everyone who sees a doctor, who takes a prescription, or who enters a hospital is cured. In other words, whether by miracles of personal contact then or miracles of modern medicine now, Jesus does not always heal; and even when He does heal, still one day we are going to die.

A lack of healing in any given situation does not suggest that our Great Physician is limited in His ability. Rather, it declares that He has a greater goal than simply healing our bodies.

Jesus does indeed grant us healing and renewed strength through modern means, but He has provided an even greater and a more lasting remedy. We will experience this all-inclusive cure when Jesus gives each of us a perfected, whole, and glorified body in the resurrection on the Last Day.

For, you see, the Great Physician of our bodies is also the Physician and Savior of our souls. He allows sickness, gives healing, or extends or ends life on a case-by-case basis according to each soul's individual need.

After Jesus healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda, He later found him and said, "See you have been made

well, sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (Jn. 5:14). Jesus used the circumstance of bodily restoration to direct the man's attention to his soul's restoration.

God watches over all of our coming and going, our sickness and health, with the promise that He will "preserve your soul" (Ps. 121:7).

This biblical portrait of Christ includes the picture of Him as a Savior who is ever at the ready to hear our prayers for physical healing and to answer them according to His wisdom—even as, at the same time, He is ministering to the health and welfare of our souls.

***—Pastor Wayne Eichstadt
Mankato, Minnesota***





Divine Love-The Greatest Gift

Devotional Studies on 1 Corinthians Chapter 13

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Sixth in a Series

(Love) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:7

When we read the Bible account of Jesus' earthly ministry, something that stands out is the spirit of love and forbearance the Savior showed toward His disciples despite the fact that they often manifested sinful weaknesses.

It's amazing to see, for example, how Jesus reacted in the Garden of Gethsemane when His disciples fell asleep, failing to support Him in His hour of greatest need. Instead of “bawling them out” for their spiritual dullness—as He might have done—He continued to instruct them patiently and to show them “agape love”—we might say, “divine love.”

In the verse quoted above, four characteristics of divine love are listed—characteristics which the Holy Spirit nurtures us to practice in our associations with others.

The first of these is that such love “bears all things.”

When our neighbor manifests a sinful weakness, then rather than making a big deal of it or talking about it in unloving ways with others, divine love leads us to overlook it whenever possible and to bear patiently with our neighbor.

Another characteristic of divine love is that it “believes all things.”

It leads us to think the best of our neighbor rather than the worst, and to interpret his words and actions in the kindest possible way. For example, when a spouse or family member speaks an unkind word to us, rather than reacting in anger or jumping to the conclusion that they're being intentionally mean, we will want to put the best construction on everything, choosing to believe that they may be having a stressful day—thus allowing love to “cover the multitude of sins.”

Thirdly, divine love “hopes all things.”

Such love has the confidence, in a given situation, that there will be a good outcome and all will turn out well. For example, when a person shares the Word of Christ with a friend, divine love leads the person to trust that the Lord will use it for his friend's blessing. Rather than thinking that “I might as well not try sharing the gospel with him; he's too far gone for the Word to accomplish any good,” divine love will have confidence that the God of grace can use the Word to serve His saving purposes in His own time and way. Divine love chooses to believe the best. It leads believers to be optimists—the glass is half full” kind of people, instead of “the glass is half empty.”

Still another characteristic of divine love is that it “endures all things.”

In the trials of life—including in the painful crosses God calls on His children to bear along life's road—divine love causes believers to bear up under them patiently and not to lose heart. It likewise teaches Christians to say with a heart of faith: “Lord, I know You will



make everything work out for my good, even if I can't understand how."

Will we ever arrive at the point when we exhibit the traits of Jesus' agape love to perfection? No. Throughout the duration of our earthly sojourn we have our sinful nature to contend with, which prompts us at times to talk and act in ways that aren't loving.

Yet we have reason for optimism. We have learned from the gospel that where sin abounds, our heavenly Father's grace abounds more. His agape

love for us is like a water fountain that never runs dry. He removes our sins, for Jesus' sake, as far as east is from west.

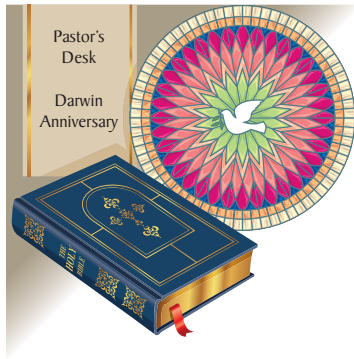
As we immerse ourselves in His Word and keep the cross in view, we can be sure He will enable us by His Spirit to grow in this area of Christian sanctification to His glory, to our neighbor's blessing, and to our own great joy.

—*Pastor Thomas Schuetze*
Coloma, Michigan



From a Pastor's Desk—

Darwin Anniversary



We trust we have your attention with the reference to Charles Darwin, the man known for developing the theory of evolution (someone—hardly a fan of the man's ideas—has said it was and is not even a “theory” but a “dream”).

2009 is the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth (born in England on Feb. 12, 1809) and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his book *On the Origin of the Species*... (Another has called attention to the book's full title which suggests Darwin was a racist: *On the Origin of the Species by Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.)

Reputable (even Bible-believing) scientists have repeatedly argued that observable scientific facts do not support evolution. But facts don't seem to matter to those who believe in evolution. And make no mistake, evolution IS a “faith,” even as is creationism—the difference being that evolutionists have no basis for theirs (Darwin's leap-frog assertions notwithstanding), while creationists have the foundational basis of the Word of God which testifies to God, the Creator, the Intelligent Designer, from its very first chapter!

Your pastor is hardly a scientist, though over the years he has read a book or two on the subject (including *Evolution is Not Scientific: 32 Reasons Why*, Copyright 1995, by CLC pastor Albert Sippert [1908-2002]).

While we creationists will grant that observable variations exist within species (sometimes referred to as “micro-evolution”), that is a far cry from saying that supposed transitional forms evolve—where one living organism/animal gradually turns into another over millions

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen....By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Heb. 11:1,3).

and/or billions of years (amoeba-to-man "macro-evolution").

Pastor Sippert's good book has many things to say about Darwinism and its influence. After detailing Darwin's 1832 trip to the Galapagos Islands off the coast of South America (in which Darwin supposedly "discovered the solution to the origin of species"), Sippert wrote:

"...The influence that Darwin's thinking had upon the rest of the world during the last 125 years cannot be overestimated. His ideas of evolution have been carried over into every phase of life today. Astronomers began to speak of the evolution of the entire universe, starting out with the Big Bang and explaining the origin of all matter in the universe and the evolution of the Earth and especially of the structure of its surface. Historians and anthropologists began to speculate on the prehistoric existence of man over millions of years. Psychologists began to look upon man as only a highly developed animal. And they tried to solve all of man's moral ills by changing his physical environments. Even theologians, either because they feel they could not harmonize the so-called scientific belief of evolution with the teachings of the Bible or because they actually began to believe it, began to succumb to the teaching of evolution. They began to treat the Bible as a book which at best can only present highly developed religious ideals..." (pp. 269f).

Existing Creationist societies produce magazines, books, CDs, DVDs, and so on, with abundant evidence supporting divine design of man and all of God's created world. One such magazine recently had this to say about the

impact of Darwinism today:

"The philosophy of evolution popularized by Charles Darwin in 1859 has literally transformed the thinking of societies around the world. And even though many honest scientists would distance themselves from much of the inadequate conclusions of Darwin, they nonetheless cling to this origins-by-accident 'theory' as the only alternative to man's enduring belief in a Creator. Why? Because evolution, though dogged by scientific weaknesses (admitted by evolutionists of every generation), is the most acceptable explanation of the origin of life for those who are running as far from God (and moral responsibility) as they can. Darwin is atheism's prophet and evolutionary science is its sacred book" (ACTS&FACTS, March 2009, p. 5).

While we are happy for any and every piece of scientific "evidence" supportive of the wonders of creation, the final word for us remains Holy Scripture—the Word of Him who alone was there when the world was first created: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Heb. 11:3).

Fellow Christians, in addition to studying what Scripture teaches, we do well to arm ourselves and our children with the scientific information available to counteract the flood of evolutionistic propaganda that permeates our secularistic, humanistic society, including public school and university systems at every level.

And let us pray for courage to be outspoken witnesses to the biblical teaching (as was St. Paul in the book of Acts—see 14:15, 17:24 etc.), for the "domino theory" surely holds—if there was and is no Creator, where is the need for the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ? If man evolved from an amoeba in the swamp, what accounts for sin and its wages death? If man is the author of his own destiny and determiner of his own fate—if man is his own "moral

determiner” who can choose his own standards of right and wrong with no accountability or responsibility to a Supreme Being—what happens to the need for a “Savior” from sin?

*All praise to God, who reigns above,
The God of all creation,*

*The God of wonders, pow’r, and love,
The God of our salvation!
With healing balm my soul He fills,
The God who ev’ry sorrow stills,—*

*To God all praise and glory! (TLH
#19:1)*

**—Pastor Paul Fleischer
Cheyenne, Wyoming**



Devotion for a Christian School—

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat” (Psalm 19:1-6).

“Listen, God Is Calling...Through His Whole Creation”

In the name of Jesus, our Savior, dear friends of Christian education:

Do you remember the hymn in the *Worship Supplement* that goes: (sing) “Listen, God is calling Through the Word inviting, Offering forgiveness, Comfort and joy”? That refers to how Jesus, before He ascended into heaven, called His disciples to do mission work—to preach or proclaim His gospel throughout the world so that poor sinners everywhere might believe in Him and be saved.

But now I’d like you to think for a few minutes about how God invites us to listen to Him as He talks to us **THROUGH HIS CREATION**. That’s what the first half of Psalm 19 talks about: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands...”

Here is what a Bible Commentary says about this: “The beautiful, orderly universe which the Lord created and still maintains gives silent testimony to the power and wisdom of its creator. The majesty and orderliness of the stars are

a silent rebuke to all who deny the glory of their creator. The pagan who worships the stars instead of their creator, the astrologer who seeks

wisdom from the stars instead of from their creator, and the atheistic evolutionist who worships the order of the cosmos instead of the creator who established that order are all condemned by the silent testimony of the universe...By night

and by day, from one end of the world to the other, the stately procession of the heavenly bodies declares the power and wisdom of their creator. Everyone who has eyes should be able to read this testimony...” (*The People’s Bible, Psalms, Vol. 1, p. 97*).

And I would add: Everyone who has ears—whether Christian believers or



non-believers—should be able to “hear” God’s beautiful creation and what it is saying to them. (Sing: “Listen, listen, God is calling...”) Heavenly bodies like the millions of stars, the brilliant sun with its dependable movement every day, the planets with their orderly progression around the sun—these all “speak” loudly that there IS a Creator-God. The sun and the stars don’t give an audible sound; yet they speak of and testify to God.

This summer when you are on vacation—maybe camping out under the stars and observing the night-time sky, or lying in the warm sun by the lake, or hunting and fishing out in the forests and mountains—then (sing) “Listen, listen, God is calling...” He is talking to you through His creation. He is showing you and everybody else in the world His marvelous glory, His power, His eternal nature. St. Paul writes to the Romans: “Since the creation of the world, (God’s) invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and God-head, so that they are without excuse...” (Rom. 1:20).

As the Bible Commentary said, the unbelieving heathen, the atheists, the evolutionists have no excuse for their unbelief. They only need to “open their ears to hear” the silent sermon that is preached every single day to everybody in the whole wide world!

These silent sermons are not just for unbelievers; they are also for us who are often weak and trembling believers. Remember how Jesus one time told His disciples to “hear” the message preached by beautiful flowers like the lilies? Flowers don’t worry about clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not as beautiful as that simple, little flower. Or, said Jesus, “listen” to the birds of the air, “for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Mt. 6:26)

So when you see beautiful flowers or hear the birds sing so sweetly, (sing) “Listen, listen, God is calling...” He is

telling you and me not to worry about our earthly needs, but to trust Him to take care of us, for (as Jesus says in another place) we are surely of more value than many sparrows!

Truly, how precious we are to God is shown by His sending His only begotten Son Jesus into this sinful world to suffer, die, and rise again to save us from sin, death, Satan and hell. THAT good news of the gospel is something we cannot learn from nature, and THAT is the big reason why God gave us His holy Word in the Bible.

We have been listening to God talk to us regularly during the past school year by studying His Word together.

Refrain:

*Listen, listen, God is calling,
Through His whole creation
Showing off His glory,
Wisdom, and might!*

*1. Every day the sun shines
Keeping us warm.
It’s just like a strong man
Running a race.
Listen...*

*2. Every day the planets
Orbit the sun—
God has so arranged it—
His handiwork.
Listen...*

*3. Every night the stars shine—
Speak to the world.
Not a single nation
Can miss their speech.
Listen...*

*4. As we hear Your Word, Lord—
Finer than gold,
Sweeter than a honeycomb,
Our souls are saved.
Listen...*

—With permission of Howard S. Olson:
Revision of “Listen, God is Calling” (Worship
Supplement 2000, #771);

by Pastor Paul Fleischer

Now that school is out, let's keep on listening to all the silent sermons God is preaching to us every day by His beautiful creation.

Knowing that God is also calling us to spread His Word and His free salvation in Jesus, let us proclaim His glory,

for we know He loves us and all people and wants to take us to be with Him in heaven one day. Have a great summer out in God's wonderful creation! Amen.

—*Pastor Paul Fleischer
Cheyenne, Wyoming*



Surveying CLC History

From the 25th Anniversary Booklet (1985) "REFLECTIONS...PROJECTIONS"

Number Seven: Our Doctrinal Testings

With our Savior's charge "Let your light shine" comes the heavy responsibility that, as we present His gospel to the world, we say and do nothing that will dim or hide that Light. Guided by the Spirit, we have learned to accept the Savior's proposition that a "little leaven" of error can in fact dim and hide the truth of the gospel. We have been led to the conviction that in the interest of that gospel we will not indulge in pseudo-fellowship activities that in any way support or encourage the spread of error.

It has not been a simple matter to stand firm in this conviction. We are surrounded in the religious world with on-going pressure to be tolerant of those who are guilty of using "their voices" instead of teaching God's truth. Such pressure from the outside has served a healthy purpose. A restudy of the Word has assured us that our conviction in these things rests firmly on our Savior's Word.



Over the course of 25 years there have been internal testings also. There were times when doctrinal disagreement appeared among members of the CLC. On no occasion were these problems ignored. We turned to the Word. When agreement was there after discussion, there was joy in the work of the Spirit. When disagreement went unresolved, there was heart-

ache when highly respected people felt constrained to leave our fellowship.

Certainly one of the most difficult problems was to recognize that membership in familiar fraternal insurance societies involved our members in promoting error. It was a subtle problem because we needed to recognize that the character and the benevolent programs of these societies had changed. The situation called for the most

careful study of the Word and discussion of the problem. What a healthy experience that was! Strengthened in the conviction that we dare not be responsible for anything that would hinder the work of the gospel, we determined to instruct those of our members caught in this problem and help them resolve the situation. But we again experienced heartache when some left our fellowship with the charge that we were legalistic, and others with the charge that we were not faithful to the gospel.

Other “testings” will come! We face the future with the urgent prayer that we remain strong in our conviction that we will be responsible for nothing that will dim the Light we are to let shine.

—*Pastor Robert Reim (1916-1991)*



Obituary

Rev. L. W. Schierenbeck
June 17, 1917-April 27, 2009



The Lord of the Church took Lester William Schierenbeck from the Church militant into the Church Triumphant on Monday, April 27. We join those who knew and loved him in praising Jesus for the grace given to His servant at his birth (June 17, 1917), at his Baptism, and with the Word he received and cherished throughout his life of ninety-one years, ten months, and ten days.

Lester was privileged to serve the Savior and His flock in the public ministry for fifty years; first as pastor of the joint parish of St. John's, Darfur and St. Matthew's, Butterfield, Minnesota (1941-1944), then at St. Paul's of Austin, Minnesota (1944-1969), and finally at Messiah of Eau Claire, Wisconsin (1969-1982).

At the age of sixty-five Lester entered another phase of his service to the Lord at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire in the Seminary department, where he helped prepare young men for the public ministry (1982-1991). His retirement years included service as as-

sistant to the pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church of Eau Claire (1991-1995). We are the beneficiaries of his vigorous style in pulpit and at lectern, his engaging personality, and his devotion to the Word in all matters of doctrine and practice. We praise the Lord for this gift to His Church!

Other statistics of note: Lester attended high school and college at Concordia in St. Paul, Minnesota, graduated (1938) from Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin, and from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Thiensville, Wisconsin, in 1941.

As a result of doctrinal issues with the WELS, Pastor Schierenbeck and St. Paul's congregation of Austin, Minnesota were led by the Lord to become charter members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (1960), where L.W. served at various times on the Mission Board, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Education, and the Board of Doctrine.

The Lord blessed the marriage (June 4, 1942) of Lester and Agnes (Strege) with four children—Pastor John (Sharon) Schierenbeck of Winter Haven, Florida; Pastor David (Mary) Schieren-

beck of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota; Barbara (Prof. John) Pfeiffer of Eau Claire; and Mary Beth Schierenbeck of Eau Claire. In addition to his children, he is survived by 14 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren; sister-in-law Ruth Siegel of Tucson, Arizona; nieces and nephews, and many dear friends from his ministry and from his daily contacts, including those who met him during two-and-one-half years of his declining health in-and-out of nursing home care.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Agnes, three brothers, one sister, and two brothers-in-law.

Lester's victory service was held on Sunday, May 3, at Messiah Lutheran Church of Eau Claire, with Pastors Mark Gullerud and Paul Tiefel officiating; a private burial at Prairie View Cemetery, Town of Hallie, Wisconsin, preceded the service; following the service family and friends visited in Messiah's Fellowship Hall.

The victory service at Messiah was deeply heart-warming because of the choice of hymns (God, We Praise You;

For All the Saints; Forever with the Lord; Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness; Now Thank We All Our God—all sung with vigor!) and with the Scriptures read from lectern and preached from pulpit (2 Cor. 3:2-9, "A Love Letter from Jesus").

We cannot close without crediting the edifying, well-written obituary in the Eau Claire Leader/Telegram, which has brought Christian testimony to a large readership.

The family requests that memorials be directed to the Immanuel Lutheran College Student Aid Fund (SAF).

For the closing word, we turn to the cover of the Victory service folder: "It is finished! By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

We will miss you, brother Lester, and we look forward to our reunion at the throne of Jesus!

—Paul R. Koch, Reporter

(Photo courtesy of Barbara Pfeiffer)



Obituary

Lowell Moen

September 30, 1931-May 3, 2009



Lowell Roger Moen of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, joined the assembly of the saints at the throne of the Lamb on Sunday, May 3, 2009. In earth-time, the hour of his departure coincided with the committal service of

Lowell's former pastor, L. W. Schierenbeck, both of them God's elect. Lowell's earthly pilgrimage totaled 77 years, 7 months, and 3 days, many of which were marked by declining health

and physical infirmities.

His earthly pilgrimage began Sept. 30, 1931 in Albert Lea, Minnesota, when the Lord brought Lowell into the family of Gustav and Anna Marie Moen, then born again into God's family by Baptism. The years of his youth were spent in Albert Lea, Minnesota; he served in the US Army (1953-54) during the Korean War and then cultivated his accounting skills in a number of financial institutions.

All who knew Lowell will warmly recall his gentlemanly demeanor, espe-

cially notable to students, parents, and associates during his faithful service to the Lord as Treasurer for the Church of the Lutheran Confession and as Business Manager and Book House Manager at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, for almost three decades.

The Lord brought Lowell and Rita Jo (Allen) together in Christian marriage (Dec. 14, 1958) and blessed them with three sons, with whom they shared the Lord's heritage. In his short retirement years, Lowell enjoyed traveling, fishing, and the companionship of family and Christian friends.

He leaves behind his wife Rita, sons Kevin (Debra), Kermit (Sandy), and Kyle (Christy) with children Emma and Lilah, his sister Margaret Hoeper, niece Judy Bulger, and many friends in his Christian family.

Pastors Mark Gullerud and Paul Tiefel served God's Word to the assembly at Messiah Church on Thursday, May 7, as we celebrated Lowell's entry into life eternal and were attentive to His Word, "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.... Establish your hearts.... Indeed, we count them blessed who endure.... The Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (the funeral sermon text: James 5:7-11).

We look forward to joining Lowell in the assembly at the throne of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who redeemed us with His self-sacrifice and claimed us as His own.

We thank and praise You, Lord Jesus, for Your gifts and mercies to Lowell Moen! Amen!

—Paul R. Koch, Reporter
(Photo courtesy of Lowell's family)



Retirement

The Spokesman invites brief biographies of called servants in our CLC churches and schools who are retiring from their respective ministries.

Please include a picture or two. Thank you!—Editor

Mrs. Gail Schaefer Retires



Gail (nee Kottke) Schaefer was born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, just after mid-century and spent most of her growing-up years on the shores of beautiful Lake Winnebago.

Pastor Gerhard Pieper baptized her at St. Peter's Lutheran Church (WELS). It was when she was in the third grade that the WELS-CLC division came, and Paul and Audrey Kottke's daughter was part of the first batch of students in the CLC's newly organized Luther

Memorial Church. "Her classroom (grades 4-8, teacher Gerhardt Mueller) was in the basement of an old building within a few feet of railroad tracks. Everything halted when the noisy trains rumbled by. That was the year Gail decided she wanted to be a teacher." (Remarks in quotes are directly from Mrs. Schaefer's autobiography passed along to us—ed.) By her fifth grade the new Luther Memorial Church and School had been built. She confirmed her baptismal vows on Palm Sunday, 1965, with Waldemar Schuetze as her pastor.

After attending high school in Fond du Lac, Gail's three years of

teacher training took place at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire. Her student-teaching assignment was to Redeemer Lutheran School, Cheyenne, Wyo., where she enjoyed being paired up with fellow faculty members, Barb Bernthal (Gurgel) and Carla Thurow (Pelzl). Her first fulltime call was to Faith Lutheran, Markesan, Wis. (grades K-4). “What an exciting year!...Learning to juggle kindergarten and four other grades was interesting.”

For her second year of teaching the Lord took her to Immanuel Lutheran in Winter Haven, Fla., “following the footsteps of her student teaching buddy, Barb Bernthal, soon to be Gurgel. The culture of the Florida school was very different from Markesan’s. There were many nonmembers in Florida and several students from broken families, much less common in Markesan in the early 70’s.” An unusual thing was that half of the second graders “were lefties to whom she had to teach cursive.”

After one year she resigned from teaching and became engaged to Dan Schaefer. Another change in location allowed her to accept a call to teach a couple months in the Christian Day School at Servant of Christ Lutheran Church, Los Angeles. Then “Gail married Dan Schaefer and they were living in Urbana, Ill. while he completed his Ph.D. in nutrition.” In the next few years son Jeremy and daughter Mary were God’s blessings to them, even as the family moved first to Indiana for a couple years, and then to Madison, Wis. Mrs. Schaefer operated a child day-care center when her own were preschoolers. She also worked at H&R Block for some ten years.

The Lord would seek out Mrs. Schaefer’s services with one more formal call to teach. The CLC congregation, Peace Thru Christ, Middleton (Madison), Wis. called her to teach in their new school. “During eight years of teaching there she had the delight of serving twenty-eight children, a dozen of whom were South Korean.” Gail



concluded her bio to us with these words: “This small congregation’s unwavering support for this school has truly been a blessing! May God continue to hold us in the palm of His hand.”

Now that she has retired from teaching, surely the Lord will engage His talented, ambitious servant in other worthy pursuits for His Kingdom!

NOTICE:

Due to the change in printers, the single copies of the June Lutheran Spokesman were 3-4 weeks late due to postage permit changes. Thank you for your patience.

—Editor

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