

# Lutheran Spokesman



What harm can sin and death then do?  
The true God now abideth with you.  
Let hell and Satan rage and chafe,  
Christ if your Brother-ye are safe.  
T.L.H. 103 v.4

To shepherds as they watched by night  
Martin Luther 1543 • tr. Richard Massie 1854

*“The shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’” — Luke 2:15b*

## *How Far Is It To Christmas?*

Already in September I saw Christmas items on display. I knew then that the countdown of shopping days left would soon begin.

If the shepherds wondered when Messiah would come, it was certainly not with reference to shopping days. But after the angel’s announcement, they might have asked how far it was to the Christ at Bethlehem. Since distance is mainly determined by the road one travels, we might profitably ask, “How far is it to Christmas?”

If we travel to Christmas on the double-lane highway of pride and self-righteousness, we will never arrive. There was nothing at Bethlehem to appeal to the proud heart—no royal palace with all the trimmings. Only a nondescript town, an inn, a stable,

common people, a Babe wrapped in strips of cloth. And though the Babe was King of kings, yet He “made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant” (Php. 2:7).

This humble Babe was God’s Gift to all. Yet He cannot be understood or received by those with proud and self-righteous hearts. Such sinners see no need of a Savior and ultimately do not behold Jesus as God—only a symbol of mushy love and feel-goodism. Bethlehem will have no meaning—beyond fleeting emotionalism—to one who has Satan’s snake of pride and self-righteousness coiled in a death grip around his heart. If you travel the big-headed, proud-hearted road to Christmas, you will never get there. Lost, you won’t even be tempted to ask

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for directions.

If we travel to Christmas on the super-highway of materialism, we will never arrive. If Christmas is only a Festival of Spending and Using, it cannot be the Festival of the Father's Loving Gift. If the holy joys of Bethlehem are crowded out by the pleasures of this life, we will have no time to seek the Kingdom of God.

Never-ending consumerism may be encouraged by governments and commercialism by store owners, but a stable was the birthplace of Him who had 'no place to lay His head.' Neither did He care, for the eternal Word came to give mankind the things that the eye cannot see, nor money can buy—forgiveness of sins, peace, and eternal salvation.

### **The Road Can Be A Trap**

If our lives are wrapped up in ourselves, if we insist that our way is the best way, if we live only to buy and possess, then we will never get to Christmas. Know that this road is bedecked with many attractions, among which are King Ahab's "I-gotta-have-it" Vineyard,' the spectacular real estate of Ananias and Sapphira, Everyman's House of Discontent, and the 'Treasure-Keepers' Mall' owned by a certain young rich man.

This road is a trap for the unwary. It promises happiness but does not even

reach the outskirts of Christmas. Its end is a junkyard of broken toys, rusted gadgets, and discarded dreams. Its many owners delight in all they have but then sadly end up begging forever for a single drop of water.

How far is it to Christmas? If we travel the road of humble, repentant faith and joyful adoration, then we will find Bethlehem. In fact, Christmas will find us, for Immanuel is "God with us." Then will be revealed the Babe as Lord and Sacrifice. Then faith will claim the Father's Loving Gift as the only remedy to sin and guilt, alienation and despair. Humble faith will open the precious presents—freedom from the curse and power of sin, death, and Satan. Faith will respond with the voice of angels: "Glory to God in the highest . . ."

What road shall we take to Christmas? There is only one that leads to Bethlehem, to the Savior. It is the road straight and narrow. It is the Bible road, along which are signposts and encouraging instructions—those truths "which the Lord has made known to us."

"Let us now (so) go even unto Bethlehem." And let our travel dress be—now and for all seasons—robes of righteousness designed in eternity, spun in a manger, splattered red on a hill, and made gloriously white in an empty tomb.

—*Pastor David Fuerstenau*



## ADVENT—OUR HOPE IN HIS COMING

**W**e live in distressing times, times of considerable unrest in the world. Terrorists would unsettle us

with threats of violence. Anthrax rumors and scares abound.

Great distress has been seen in the

world before. It always causes the same nervous reaction among men, even among the children of God. When some spoke to Jesus of the wonder of the temple in Jerusalem, and Jesus responded that all this would be thrown down and destroyed so that one stone would not be left upon another, that was very unsettling for the disciples. They couldn't imagine the destruction of the temple and all of Jerusalem, without it marking the end of the world. Forty years later they would see these things come to pass.

It was shocking for us to see the disaster of 9/11. It is easy to make the same assumption that the disciples had of the temple. We know that when the end comes, these monuments to the greatness of man shall come tumbling down. When the towers had been attacked and collapsed to the ground, the distress in America was intensified.

Our flesh grasps what it can see. Our spirit is led by the Lord to grasp what cannot be seen. And that is where our Spirit-created faith leads us to find our hope. "We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

### **The Substance Of Our Hope**

This Advent season is more than just the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. This is a precious season of the church year in which we are reminded that in the coming of our Savior we have hope in the face of the bleak prospects of this earth.

As we celebrate Christmas we rejoice in one of these precious comings of our Lord to this earth—His



coming in the flesh to be our brother, to bear our sin. That coming is the substance of our hope, the fulfillment of so many promises which God had made through the prophets. It lays a rock-solid foundation for our faith.

Jesus comes into our hearts. By this advent of our Lord we receive the assurance of faith that in spite of all the upheaval that surrounds us in the world, in spite of the uncertainty in the economy that causes many to fret, we have no need to fear. "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10).

The righteousness of Christ which is credited to us through faith in Jesus sustains us through all the troubling times of life. What a blessing to be upheld by the mighty righteous hand of our Savior-God! No harm can befall us with the Lord as our God!

A wondrous hope still lies before us. When all the world is perplexed and distressed, we continue to look for that day of the Lord's return, His final advent. We look with great hope and expectation. At the end, when for the world all is lost, "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up our heads, because your redemption draws near" (Lk. 21:27-28).

Yes, our hope of life and eternal salvation, even the redemption of our bodies, is found in the advent of our Lord.

We look for the day of His return with eager anticipation because in it is the deliverance from every evil and from every imperfection that afflicts us

in this life.

We look for that final advent of the Lord because it is the final culmination of our salvation, found in the full revelation of Jesus' glory and divine majesty.

—Pastor Theodore Barthels



## On Christmas Night

*P. Schaller*

On Christ - mas night the an - gels came, they came from heav'n a - bove,  
 On Christ - mas night the shep - herds came, they came from fields a - round,  
 On Christ - mas night dear Je - sus came, He left His throne of light.

To bring Good News, to sing Good News, of God the Fa - ther's Love.  
 To Beth - le - hem, to Beth - le - hem Where they their Shep - herd found.  
 Come leave be - hind All cares of mind And praise Him, too, this night!



At our request Professor Paul W. Schaller of Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin shares another of the Christmas carols he has composed for his family.—The editor

## Teaching our Children To Appreciate Christmas

When the post-Thanksgiving shopping is past, if toy sales are up over the previous year, it is good for the merchants. It also means that many children will have a good Christmas. Sad!

The promotion of Christmas according to the world's standard—the standard by which many people judge what is a good Christmas—is quite easy. One does not have to teach children in this regard. They absorb the ads on TV. They listen to the tales of Santa Claus. They make their Christmas lists. They walk through the toy stores and the malls. They absorb Christmas by osmosis.

Sadly, that is the most that many children know about Christmas, or at least the most they remember. Well-meaning adults who ask, “Did you have a good Christmas?” reinforce this when they ask, “What did Santa Claus bring you?”

We look at Christmas in a different manner. We start from the premise that there would be no Christmas, no Christ-festival, if there had been no Christ. The world, while giving lip service to Christ, in fact uses the birth of Christ to serve its own purpose. The achieved result is that the blessing of Christmas is lost because the Christ of Christmas has been diminished.

The real meaning of Christmas is not absorbed. It is found in Scripture. It is taught!

“But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom

you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:14-15). “I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also” (2 Tim. 1:3-5).

### **Christmas Is — Taught!**

It falls primarily upon the parents to teach their children. This responsibility secondarily belongs to the church as assistant to the parents in looking after the spiritual welfare of the children.

Children need to have a clear understanding of sin. Without sin and its condemnation there would have been no need for Jesus to come into the flesh.

The instruction of children will include the teaching of Old Testament prophecy, namely, that in the Old Testament the Heavenly Father prophesied through the prophets about Jesus Christ.

Children are to be taught who Jesus is. He is true God become Man to be our Savior. That is the meaning of the name Jesus.

Children need to know that life on

earth is passing, and that the real life is in heaven. Jesus is the only way to heaven, as Scripture clearly teaches.

Children need to be taught of the love of God, and how the epitome of this love was the sending of Jesus Christ into the world so that—when toys are broken, clothes are outgrown, games are over, and life on earth is past and gone—trusting in Jesus, they may enter into life everlasting.

All the trappings and giving of Christmas will come home to haunt those parents who have not taught their children what Christmas really is.

What will be the response of parents to those children who naturally like to ask, “Why?” What will parents say

when on judgment day the child asks, “Why did you not teach us what Christmas was really about? Why did you not lead us to Jesus and teach us the gospel?”

The gospel and the message of Christmas—“Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior”—is not absorbed; it is taught. Therefore, let your Christmas be built first upon the Word, with the Child of the manger as its focus. Then it will be a good Christmas.

Without the Word, a good Christmas is not the best. Do you not desire the best for yourself and your children?

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer

—*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . ” — John 1:14*

## *God Is With Us – Immanuel!*

“*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . .*” What amazing words! Who can fathom them?

. . . The eternal Word, Who was with God and was God, through Whom all the universe was made, became flesh and blood and dwelt among the people of the earth. . . . The God who holds all things in the palm of His hands was held in the womb and then the arms of a young virgin. . . . The God who possessed all the riches of heaven was born in the poorest and dirtiest place on earth, a feed trough for cattle.

. . . Most amazing of all, God came to DWELL WITH US. . . . The holy God did not come to condemn us, or even to threaten us. . . . He came to dwell with us as one of us. . . . He did not come with thunder and lightning,

fire and smoke, and the sound of a loud trumpet, as He did on Mt. Sinai. . . . He came as a little baby who could be adored by all without fear.

. . . Even the angels who announced His birth struck fear, but there was no



*God in a Child, Immanuel*

fear in seeing and holding the Son of God. . . . He came to take our place and endure our punishment so that we could be made one with God. . . . Now—in and through this Child Jesus—God is with us and we are with Him.

### No Reason To Fear

Take those words to heart. GOD IS WITH US. These are not just empty words. It is not some dream. When the world tries to take comfort from this without knowing the God who has come to us, it IS just an empty dream for them.

We have heard more people saying and singing “God bless America” in the past few months than we have in a long time. Yet many of those who say it and sing it blaspheme God with their lives and words. They offer worship and prayers to Allah, to Buddha, to the god of the Jews, and to many other false gods and then say, “God bless America.” They reject the one and only God who can save them and bless them.

But all those who know the God of heaven and honor the Son He sent truly have God with them. God is with us to bless us, to protect us, to guide and strengthen us, and to save us.

We have no reason to fear the terrorists or any others who may kill the body but cannot harm the soul. He who has power over all enemies—even over death and hell itself—is with us.

Luther describes our confidence so beautifully in Hymn #103 (TLH):

“Oh, then rejoice that through His Son  
God is with sinners now at one;  
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,  
Your brother is th’ eternal God.

What harm can sin and death then do?  
The true God now abides with you.  
Let hell and Satan rage and chafe;  
Christ is your Brother—ye are safe.

Luther once said, “It is not enough that we should hear his story if the heart be closed. I must listen, not to a history, but to a gift.”

We often lament because of what the world has done with Christmas. It has become so commercialized. But we should not be surprised. The people of this world do not know this Child. They may know the history, that Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem. But they have not received this gift. They do not celebrate salvation in God’s Son. They just celebrate.

May all our celebrations remind us of this one thing—God is with us!

Christ is your Brother! You are safe!  
Rejoice!

—*Pastor David Reim*



Children singing in a service held in Jungli Ghat, Port Blair on South Andaman Island



Pastor Ohlmann with orphans of the BELC. Building painted by the Mission Helper team.



# Parables Of The Master

## Matthew 21:33-46

### The Parable of the Vineyard

As His earthly ministry and mission drew to a close, Jesus continued to attempt to gather into the kingdom of God the chosen descendants of Abraham, the Jewish nation. The result—as it had been throughout Israel’s history—was a continued rejection of God’s grace by His chosen people. Jesus continued right up until the end to call the Jews and their religious leaders to repentance. In chapters 21 and 22 Matthew recorded three parables which were a wake-up call for the nation of Israel. These three parables (the Two Sons, the Vineyard, and the Wedding Feast) all stress the terrible rejection of God’s grace by those who were called by God.

This second parable of the vineyard was familiar, not only because of the vineyards which covered the hills of Palestine, but also because this image was familiar to readers of the Old Testament Scriptures. Isaiah used a vineyard as a picture of God’s people. Isaiah stressed that, in spite of everything the husbandman (God) did for His vineyard, this vineyard did not produce fruit. “For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help” (Is. 5:7).

Jesus echoes Isaiah’s picture in the parable of the vineyard in Matthew 22.

God planted this vineyard, making the nation of Israel His chosen people. The history of Israel was the history of the continued rejection of God by His own people. Throughout the Old Testament, God sent His prophets to call His people to repentance. Not only did Israel refuse to listen to God’s prophets, they threatened, beat, and killed His representatives. This open rebellion against the Owner was repeated time after time.

The Owner then decided to send His own Son to these ungrateful servants, saying, “They will respect my son” (Mt. 21:37). The servants plotted together, seized, and then killed the son. Jesus then asked the Pharisees, “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” (Mt. 21:40) The answer is obvious, “They said to Him, ‘He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons’” (Mt. 21:41).

#### Application Is Obvious

The application is obvious to us. Jesus is laying bare the terrible rejection of the Son of God by the religious leaders of Israel. The application was also obvious to the Pharisees, who perceived that Jesus was speaking of them. This only intensified their oppo-

sition and strengthened their resolve to get rid of Jesus at any cost.

Jesus used Psalm 118:22-23 to nail down the message. He said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'" (Mt. 21:42) God made this rejected and crucified Jesus the chief cornerstone of His Church. In fact, Jesus revealed that the Kingdom of God would be taken from the chosen descendants of Abraham and be given to the Gentiles.

Surely this parable clearly revealed the unbelief and sin of the nation of Israel. Jesus called the Jewish nation and their religious leaders to repentance. History reveals that they did not heed His call. Jesus also reveals the unbelief and rejection of those in the organized church today who are secure in their own righteousness and do not take seriously Jesus' call to follow Him.

This lesson of Old Testament Israel and the vineyard is a serious warning to us. God in His kindness and mercy is calling to us.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck

## THE WORSHIP SERVICE

"Oh come, let us worship and bow down;  
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker."

Psalm 95:6

*Eleventh in a Series—*

# The General Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

## The General Prayer

The *General Prayer* is a further offering of the heart as the worshippers are led to thank and praise the Lord for His innumerable blessings. We are assured in Psalm 145:18-19, "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them."

This *General Prayer* may include a wide variety of subject matter, or it may more briefly summarize the primary thoughts emphasized in the service. Special prayers are also offered at this time for the sick, for mourners, for

newborn children and their parents, for newlyweds, etc.

## The Lord's Prayer

Finally, the prayer which our Savior taught us to pray (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4) concludes the second part of our worship service.

The *Lord's Prayer* is so well-loved and meaningful to worshippers that the danger of recitation without thinking is a concern which every worshipper needs to address. The following may be helpful for us to read from time to time to help remind us of the spiritual meaning in the simple petitions of this prayer (taken from "That I May Know

Him,” by Oswald Riess).

**Our Father who art in heaven:** Our Father, God of all love and power, hear us, Your children in Christ Jesus.

**Hallowed be Thy name:** We bear Your holy name. Let us not disgrace it by false teaching and ungodly living, but do it honor by clinging to Your pure Word and leading a life that glorifies You.

**Thy kingdom come:** Give us a deep concern for souls. Send out Your saving truth. By Your Word and Spirit work faith in the hearts of men. So let Your kingdom come to many, as it has come to us. And may it not be long until we see You in Your unveiled splendor.

**Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven:** It is Your will, because You seek our happiness, that we live close to You. Father, Your will be done! Let no one and nothing separate us from You—without You there is no living! Grant also that we may be continually doing Your will, obeying You as gladly as do the angels in heaven. And when You send us sickness, pain, or sorrow, help us to submit ourselves to Your will, knowing that You are only trying to draw us still closer to Your loving Self.

**Give us this day our daily bread:** Give us each day the things we need for this life. When You give us much, may we be humble and generous. When You give us little, keep us from envy and worry. And for everything, be it much or little, make us thankful.

**And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us:** They are “our trespasses”—we are guilty over and over. And yet they are no longer ours, for You laid them all on Your holy Son. For His sake, Father, forgive us whatever is wrong in our lives. Then, moved by Your redeeming love for us, make us loving and forgiv-

ing toward our fellowman.

**And lead us not into temptation:** When the devil and the forces of evil that are in and around us tempt us to sin, give us the strength to stand firm, to say “no.” And, Father, when You test us in the fires of affliction, keep reminding us that such trials are sent only “if need be”; that You want our faith to flow from the furnace like purified gold.

**But deliver us from evil:** Protect us in soul and body. Keep us from sin and error. Give grace to bear our crosses without murmuring. Speak peace to our hearts. At last, our Father, for the sake of Him who died for us and rose again, grant us a blessed end—an end which is the beginning of glory without end.

**For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever:** You are our King. To You alone we come in prayer. You alone can do more than we ask or think. You alone shall have all praise forever.

**Amen:** Our prayer is heard.

What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Ev'rything to God in prayer!  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,  
Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Ev'rything to God in prayer. (TLH, 457:1)

Following the third hymn, the worship service is concluded with the **Collect** (short prayer) for the Word or for the Church, and with the **Benediction**.

*(To be concluded)*

—Pastor Em. L. Dale Redlin



(One who had been in the audience the day this chapel talk was delivered recommended it to the *Spokesman*. The speaker was Prof. John Pfeiffer, president of our Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin)

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## Chapel Talk on the Terrorist Attacks

**Scripture Text:** *“And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him” (Gen. 4: 8).*

From heaven’s throne, O Lord, bend down  
And touch our hearts this day,  
That we may find the cause for hope  
Upon our heavenward way. Amen.

Whose fault was it that the World Trade Center was destroyed, the Pentagon attacked, and the airplane crashed into the fields of Pennsylvania?

Does this seem like an easy question?

We say, “Of course, it was the fault of the terrorists, who hijacked the planes.” Perhaps we want to point to Osama bin Laden. Some people would even like to get rid of everyone of Arabic descent.

But are any of these answers correct? If, indeed, the fault lies with the terrorists themselves, then we should be safe, because those who flew the planes are dead. — If the fault lies with Osama bin Laden, then getting rid of him should bring an end to our fears. — If the fault lies with . . . And we could go on and on.

It is true that our government should bring the guilty parties to justice. All governments should do everything in their power to stop terrorists. However, we should realize that the governments of this world are not going to stop terrorism.

“And it came about when they were

in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him” (Gen. 4:8).

Since the moment that Cain struck Abel with a deadly blow, terrorism has existed in this world. Actually, it has existed since the moment that Eve “gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:6).

The root cause of this horror in our country is not a handful of terrorists, nor is it bin Laden, nor the Muslim religion. All of these are fruit hanging from the branches of a deadly tree, and that tree is rooted in the ground of sin.

Every disaster that strikes this world is caused by sin. It is either the result of the sinful acts of men, or it is God’s judgment upon the sinful acts of men, or it is God’s discipline, teaching His children to avoid sin.

So, whose fault is it? Adam’s? Eve’s? Satan’s? Surely they are at fault. But we need to look beyond them. We need to get at the root. Get rid of sin and you will get rid of terrorism. It’s the only way. Every other effort is just stop-gap. It’s only temporary. Pluck the fruit off the tree and the tree of sin will produce more fruit.

Whose fault is it? Jesus said, “Do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:4f).

The disaster at the tower of Siloam gave Jesus cause to point to everyone.

Whose fault? It's my fault and it's your fault and it's the fault of everyone who sins . . . and that is everyone. If we want to get rid of terrorism, we have to start right here at ILC. We have to start with you and me.

The sin that crouched like a lion at the door of Cain's heart is the same sin that crouches at the door of your heart and mine. . . . "sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Gen. 4:7).

We cannot see this lion as it lurks about the campus of ILC, because it is lurking inside of us. The Apostle Paul writes, "I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23). Sin is waging a war within each of us, and we must master it.

Of course, we cannot master sin. We cannot get rid of the sin tree. It is far beyond our ability. This is why our wonderful Creator, who so greatly

loves His creation, sent His own dear Son into this world of sin. Christ Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of men—including that of the hijackers—and suffered the penalty for us all. How horribly sad for those who died without knowing this.

We have to get rid of sin. Only in Christ will this happen. Christ has poisoned the root of the tree with His own blood. Those who put their faith in Jesus' blood and righteousness have gained the mastery over sin.

Oh, I do not mean that we never sin, but sin cannot rule us, because we are always turning to Christ for forgiveness and regeneration. We are always finding peace and hope in His blood-stained cross.

Now, instead of resorting to terrorism, we preach the message of peace . . . peace with God through Christ Jesus. We speak to others about the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Especially here at ILC we need to be about the work of training people to proclaim this gospel. Only where the gospel has taken root will the tree of



Hiking at the CLC Youth Conference (see next page)

sin be uprooted.

Of course, we know that the vast majority in this world has rejected and will continue to reject this peace. And so terrorism will continue until Christ returns to blot it out forever, and along with it, all sin.

In the meantime, we Christians are the only ones who can really do something about terrorism. This we do by hearing the gospel and by preaching the gospel. Then, one by one, potential terrorists will become peaceful citizens

of the kingdom of heaven. God help us to be true anti-terrorists.

Let us pray:

*Father in heaven, look upon us with mercy and blot out our sins, for we daily sin much. Turn our eyes to the cross of Christ, where He paid our debt and the debt of all people. Give us the courage and zeal to carry this good news to a world of enemies, that some may be transformed by it and gain their eternal salvation. Grant this for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

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## CLC YOUTH CONFERENCE 2001

Immanuel of Mankato, Minnesota sponsored the second CLC Youth Conference at the Shadowcliff Lodge in Grand Lake, Colorado from August 7-11. Forty-nine young people (representing fourteen different CLC congregations) supervised by a staff of twelve (representing seven different congregations) explored the theme: "Faithful Stewards of God's Grace!"

Ten learning sessions were held during the four-day period. They focused on how we might be faithful stewards of the means of grace, our time of grace, our talents in service to one another, our decisions particularly

in view of advances in medical science, the proclamation of God's grace, our bodies, our environment, our relationships, and our hearts.

Sessions were conducted by Pastor David Povolny of Mountain View, Calif., Dr. and Mrs. James Sydow of Fridley, Minn., Dr. and Mrs. Bruce Buchanan of Tacoma, Wash., Pastor Delwyn Maas of Phoenix, Ariz., and Ms. Tina Radichel of Eau Claire, Wis. Pastor Maas and Pastor Paul D. Nolting, Mankato, Minn. conducted the morning and evening devotions.

Time was set aside each day for relaxation and fellowship. One day



Counselor Paul Stelter & his students



Youth Conference Staff

was spent white-water rafting on the Arkansas River, followed by an impromptu theater/talent show. The final evening included a “shout out”—a session in which both the young people and their supervisors could share with each other words of encouragement in connection with contributions each had made to the conference.

Saturday, after leaving Shadowcliff, most of the conference participants proceeded to the Denver area to help our sister congregation, St. Paul’s of Lakewood, distribute 4,500 invitations to the neighborhoods surrounding their new church building. The conference was closed with a worship service at St. Paul’s on Sunday, August 12. The sermon summarized the conference theme, and the conference choir shared two anthems with the congregation. Conference evaluations both by the

students and staff were very positive, as revealed by the following comments:

“I love it so much and I really want one every year because I need this spiritually. It is the best thing I do all year.”

“This was awesome; I can’t believe how much it helped me to become comfortable with my faith.”

“What a fabulous time! I loved being around Christians my age and relating to them in ways I’d never imagined. EXCELLENT!!! I had so much fun!”

“It helped me grow and know myself. It was encouraging to know that all these young people our age have the same ideas and values in a world where we sometimes feel lost.”

A third conference is being planned for the summer of 2003.

—Pastor Paul D. Nolting, Reporter

# Immanuel

1. A wond - rous Child A Glo - ri - ous Birth  
 Ly - ing so low - ly Yet King of the earth.  
 Im - ma - - nu - el, Im - ma - - - nu - el,  
 God is with us, Im - ma - - nu - el.

**2. He made the stars  
 He made the sun  
 His Word was spoken  
 And life was begun  
 Immanuel, Immanuel,  
 Now He is born with us to dwell.**

**3. In Bethlehem  
 Behold this Child  
 Oh what a marvel  
 That God came so mild.  
 Immanuel, Immanuel,  
 God in a child, Immanuel.**

# Announcements

## Change of Address

Pastor & Mrs. Karl Neumann  
P. O. Box 255  
Kimball, MN 55353  
Phone (320) 398-2996

## French Translator Needed

Pastor Blanchard of our sister church in France will likely be completing a church history booklet in January. Is there anyone qualified and interested in doing a translation of this into English? Contact: Pastor Koenig at dav-ekoening@aol.com. When the completion date gets closer, more information can also be gotten.

## Daily Devotions Insert

Again this year we thank Professor emeritus Paul R. Koch, who compiled the 2002 daily Scripture readings for Home Devotions, together with theme and hymn stanzas.

God bless you, dear reader, in your faithful use of these readings.

## Clarification

A reader wrote to ask a couple questions regarding Pastor Schierenbeck's article ("The wonderful works of God—in our own language!" October 2001, p. 7-8). Acknowledging some lack of clarity, Pastor Schierenbeck responds that it would be more accurate if a couple of sentences had read as follows: "Luther's first translation of the New Testament into German was published in September of 1522. His complete translation of the entire Bible did not take place until 1534." Another sentence on p. 7, the author says, could be clarified to read: "Jerome's Latin 'Vulgate' was the prevalent translation of the Bible available."

The same astute reader mentioned that yours truly in his European trip report (SMORGAS-BORD, same issue, p. 13) had "removed Salzburg from Austria" and had misspelled "Innsbruck." As we blush, we learn. — *The Editor*

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## Blessed Christmas and New Year!

Since the celebration of the Christmas event twelve months ago, our nation has been attacked on its home shores and has subsequently gone to war to defend itself.

Such events in no way alter the genuinely Christian exchange of greetings and wishes connected with the birth of the Prince of Peace at Christmas, or the assurance of the abiding presence of the eternal God—our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.

Seasonal holiday and new year's greetings to you, our readers! Our wishes are wrapped up nicely in the words of Paul Gerhardt's Advent hymn of welcome to the coming King:

He comes to judge the nations,  
¶ terror to His foes,  
¶ light of consolations  
¶ and blessed hope to those  
Who love the Lord's appearing.  
O glorious Sun, now come,  
Send forth Thy beams more cheering,  
¶ and guide us safely home.  
(LH 58:9)

—Pastor Paul Fleischer, Editor