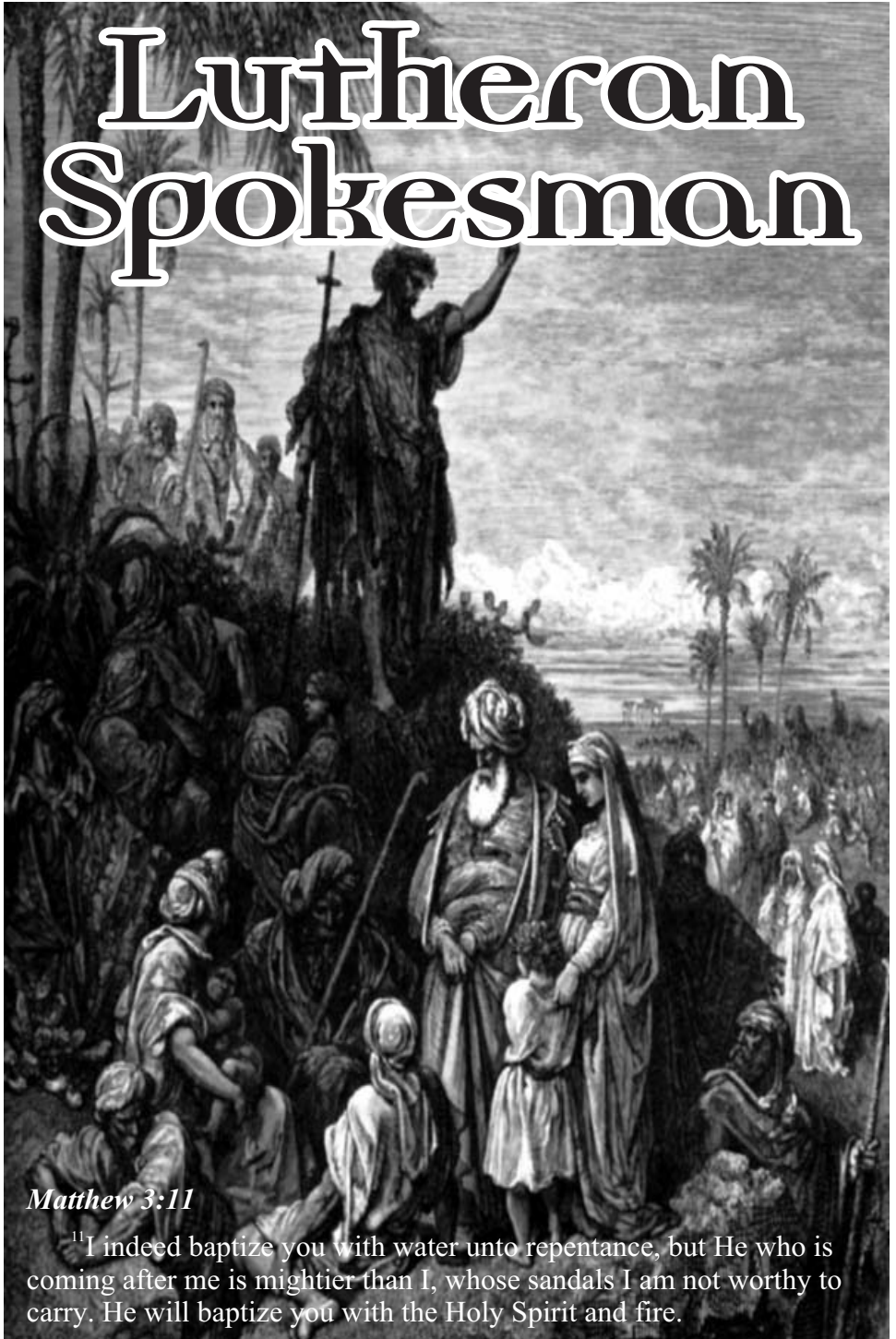


Lutheran Spokesman



Matthew 3:11

¹¹I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

A Cleansing Flood

"Eight souls were saved through water." When we hear these words from 1 Peter 3 regarding the flood in the days of Noah, we may be somewhat puzzled. After all, weren't Noah and his family saved because of the ark? That would seem to be the logical answer. All people, land animals, insects, and birds that were not on the ark when the flood came, perished. Yet the Lord Himself tells us that eight souls were saved through water.

The question that needs to be asked is, "From what were they saved?" In Genesis 6:11 we read the following, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." With only eight believers on the entire Earth, it would have been a horrific time to live. There is plenty of violence and wickedness even when there are millions of believers around as the salt of the Earth. We cannot imagine the daily atrocities committed in a world lacking godly influence. The

Lord's intent was to rescue His children from the oppression of the ungodly.

If the Lord had given Noah exactly the same instructions in building the ark, and shut him inside for the same number of days but did not send the flood, then Noah and his family would have walked out into exactly the same violence and corruption. The water of the flood cleansed the world by removing that wickedness.

That flood is a picture of Baptism. 1 Peter 3 continues: "There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The Power In Baptism

Once again we need to ask, from what do souls need to be saved? The answer is sin. We need the answer of a good conscience toward God, which is

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impossible due to sin. Sin resides in every human being, and we all need that cleansing on the inside. God provides this in the Sacrament of Baptism.

Baptism is water used by God's command and connected with God's Word. Because of the presence of the gospel of Christ, there is power in Baptism. When a person is baptized in the name of the Triune God, the Holy Spirit connects that person to the death and resurrection of Jesus. In Baptism that forgiveness of sins won by Jesus on the cross is made ours personally. Through faith created by the Holy Spirit, in the blood of Christ God removes the stain of sin (Isaiah 1:18,

Rev. 7:14). There is the cleansing of the soul which we so desperately need as sinners.

In that forgiveness we have the "answer of a good conscience toward God." We can rightly say that in Christ we are not guilty, knowing that "Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). In the connection with our Lord that the Holy Spirit forged through Baptism, we are also connected to the resurrection of Jesus and the promise of everlasting life.

Every time that we see a rainbow we can remember God's promise to never again destroy the Earth with a flood of water. At the same time we may think of the benefits of the flood, namely, God's rescue of His children from the violence of the Earth and the preservation of the ancestor of our Savior Jesus.

But also remember that the flood is a type of Baptism. See in your Baptism a personal, cleansing flood.

—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck

An Ascension Devotion—

"A Heavenward Gaze"

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven?" (Acts 1:11a)

This question posed by heavenly messengers was not directed to dreamers who had their heads in the clouds, wondering about the meaning and purpose of life. Nor was it directed to stargazers, trying to learn more about the universe by studying the heavenly bodies. It was directed to the apostles

who would shortly reveal and make widely known the one true God who created us, redeemed us, sanctifies us, and will finally glorify us in the heavenly mansions.

Why were the apostles gazing up into heaven? They had just witnessed an awesome lift-off from this Earth unlike any of us have ever seen in our modern space age. Right before their very eyes they saw the Lord Jesus

physically ascend out of sight into the skies above, without the benefit of a rocket booster pack or a space shuttle.

This would have caused anyone's mouth to drop open in wonder—with eyes fixed heavenward in amazement!

The Word of God has removed from the wondering mind why and where Jesus ascended. We rejoice in the comforting truths of Scripture that the Lord Jesus had just finished His redemptive work for the eternal salvation of all mankind. We bend the knee in worship and praise before our exalted Lord who returned to the unseen heavenly realm of God to reassume His position as the sovereign King over all. And we are filled with unyielding hope that where He is there we will be also, because He has gone to make all the necessary preparations for us to finally realize that glorious future (cf. John 14:1-6).

There are many eyes in our day gazing heavenward. Sad to say, they are not all thinking of the Lord Jesus who is ruling over everything for the sake of His Church of believers or looking forward to the day when Jesus will be descending from the clouds above to usher in eternity (cf. Acts 1:11b). No. Millions upon millions of dollars are being spent to send up space shuttles, satellites, space telescopes, and Martian land creepers in order to discover the origins of the world and of man. How vain and futile are such pursuits of sin-blinded man!

The psalmist reveals—without spending a single dime on space equipment or vehicles—that anyone can simply look up with the bare human eye and learn a great deal about the origins of the vast world we are living in. "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" (Ps. 19:1-3; read the rest of the psalm and meditate on its important message).

**Destination:
"A New Earth"!**

While the world of unbelievers is spending mind-boggling amounts of money on space exploration in the hopes of learning where they came from and where they are going, we have been taught that our Creator God came to this Earth in the form of man (cf. John 1:1-14), not only to reveal where we came from, but also to reveal where we are going after this earthly life because of Him.

Our Savior Jesus paid an astronomical price in the shedding of His holy, precious blood to atone for all our sin-debts so that at the end of time we can finally be lifted up from this Earth. We are not merely going into outer space to the moon or another planet in our universe. Rather, we will be transported to a new perfected planet, called a "new earth" with new heavenly skies above. This is what the apostle Peter was writing about when he revealed,

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:13).

How are we going to be transported to this new Earth? It wouldn't be with a spacecraft or any rocket-propelled device. Speaking of that future day (which the two angels referred to on Ascension Day) when Jesus returns from the clouds above, Paul writes, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ

will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16,17).

What a grand sight it must have been to watch the Savior ascend out of sight into the clouds above. Even grander still—yea, beyond compare!—will be the Final Day when Jesus descends from the heavens above to lift us off this globe and transports us to the new heavenly Earth.

—Pastor Mark Gullerud



A PENTECOST MOVIE

Certain historical events from the Bible lend themselves to being depicted on theater screens. Over the years many Biblical events with typical Hollywood embellishments and interpretations have been committed to film. The latest, "The Passion of The Christ," probably sticks closer to the divine script than any other film, but even it has embellishments.

There is a Pentecost presentation, "The Miracle of Pentecost," at the Biblical Arts Museum in Dallas. It is a well-done slide-and-light show and is very impressive. Nevertheless, one wonders how Hollywood or a film director would reproduce the Pentecost theme on screen. It is doubtful that such an effort would attract a large audience, because the third person of the Trinity does not lend Himself to theatrical production. As we celebrate Pentecost, we should not

expect a film on the events of that day any time soon.

The sights and sounds of the first Pentecost would make for an interesting audio and visible sensation. The Spirit of God worked mightily on that day. One could reproduce the sermon of Peter. But how does one depict what happened within the hearts of those who witnessed the event and heard the message on that day?

Each Christian is an example of a Pentecost miracle.

We are Christ-believers because of the work of the Spirit in our heart. We confess that Jesus is Lord by the power of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12:3). The Spirit has called us by the gospel and daily confirms to us the grace of God through the gospel. It was the Spirit of God who worked in the hearts of the Emmaus disciples as Jesus spoke to them on Easter day.

They said, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" (Lk. 24: 32)

Whenever the gospel is preached, a Pentecost miracle takes place.

"You are our epistle . . . "

The Spirit of God—Who does not work apart from the Word of God—daily attends us as He keeps us in the faith. The Spirit gives understanding of things which to human reason are foolishness. He is the Comforter (Jn. 14:17), Who quiets and stills the heart with the assurance of the Father's love in Jesus. On Pentecost He descended upon the apostles and they spoke the Word "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

It is the Spirit of God who gives us the courage and the words to speak when we are called upon to confess the Lord Jesus. When we cannot put our petition into words, "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26). We are told also that "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

The good works of the Christ-believer are fruits of faith created by the Spirit. Our works say what we are. Paul needed no letter of commendation concerning his ministry, for he said to the Corinthians, "You are our epistle" (2 Cor. 3:2). Their Christian life was the highest recommendation of Paul's ministry.

But more than that, "You are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the liv-



ing God" (3:3). The child of God is daily on display; each one of us is read and watched everyday by the public. As we confess our faith in Christ and live according to His will, we are testimony to the power of the gospel and to the love of Christ.

On Pentecost the Spirit worked mightily, so that the early believers "were continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house (and) did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people" (Acts 2:46,47).

To be consistent with our analogy, dare we say that as we emulate the believers in the early church, we are in fact a Pentecost "movie" created by the Divine Director and produced by the Divine Producer?

May we faithfully manifest the Spirit's work in our heart and life daily—to the glory of the Lord whose children we are!

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer

The Work of the Holy Spirit

In Luther's Small Catechism used in my congregation, the study of the Third Article takes up 21 pages—21 very important pages!* From the Bible passages listed under each question, we learn many truths vital to our Christian understanding and life. The overall topic of the Third Article is sanctification.

What does sanctification mean? Sanctification in the wide sense "refers to everything the Holy Spirit does to create faith and give us the benefits of Christ's redemption" (1 Cor. 1:2; 2

Thess. 2:13). We also learn that sanctification in the narrow sense "is everything the Spirit does to produce in us the fruits of faith. These fruits of faith are sometimes called 'good works' in the Bible" (1 Thess. 4:3, 7).

A most necessary truth we learn about the Holy Spirit is that He does His work of sanctification through the Means of Grace. The Means of Grace is the gospel in Word and Sacrament (Acts 8:26-39; 1 Cor. 11:23-29; Rom. 10:17). In other words, God gets His forgiving grace to sinners through the

The Third Article

(About Sanctification)

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him.

But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified, and kept me in true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead and give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life.

This is most certainly true.

++++++

Large Catechism Comment:

"In the Word (God) has given us His Holy Spirit to lay the treasure of redemption on our hearts and make it our very own. Thus to sanctify or make holy is nothing else than to bring us to Christ our Lord to receive this treasure, which we could never have obtained by ourselves."

gospel as it comes to us in the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

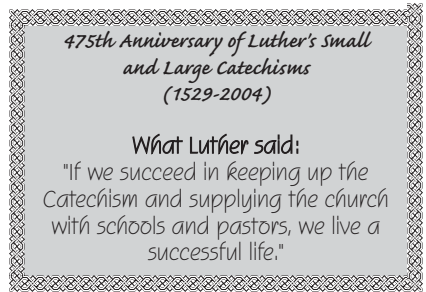
Most Christian denominations have a very poor understanding of this Bible truth. How blessed we Lutherans are in the Bible's teaching that the Holy Spirit dispenses His blessings through Word and Sacrament. When we need the comfort of the gospel, we don't have to guess where to turn. "The Means of Grace is the tool the Holy Spirit uses to create faith and keep people in faith."

As we continue our study of Scripture as brought to us in the Third Article, we learn that saving faith is entirely God's gift to the sinner, worked by the Spirit through the gospel. Luther's explanation to the Third Article says it so beautifully: "I believe that I cannot by my own reasoning or effort believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, nor come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel"

These words stand in sharp contrast to the false doctrine of "make your decision for Christ." When we teach the Third Article, we emphasize the Scripture which gives all glory to God! He alone deserves all the credit when a person is brought to faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8,9; 1 Cor. 12:3).

The Holy Christian Church

The Catechism devotes many pages to a study of the Scriptures that teach us the nature of the Holy Christian Church. The Church is the creation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains the Church through the Means of Grace. But what is the Church? The Holy Christian Church is the communion of saints—that is, ALL WHO BELIEVE in Jesus Christ



for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 1:2).

Where can the Church be found? "The Church is found on Earth wherever the gospel is preached and the sacraments used" (Mt. 28:19-20; Isa. 55:10,11; Rom. 10:17).

All believers belong to the Invisible Church! But in God's Word, as summarized in the Third Article, we learn that not all confessing Christians are to participate in fellowship activities with one another (worship, prayer, etc.). "There are Christians in any church where the gospel is preached. This does not mean that we may have church fellowship with them."

In our day this teaching seems almost entirely lost. But the Bible still teaches that fellowship amongst confessing Christians is to be based on complete agreement with what God's Word teaches (1 Cor. 1:10). The Word of God says keep away from those who teach God's Word incorrectly (1 Jn. 4:1; Rom. 16:17). "The Lord wants us to end fellowship with false teachers and those who support them."

This wonderful doctrine protects the preaching of the gospel from being contaminated by error. It's also there to protect the personal faith of God's sanctified people.

The Third Article ends with discussions on forgiveness and eternal life. We might think that those topics are

best left to the Second Article, where we learn of Jesus Christ and His work of redemption for all sinners! Why, then, do they come up again in Article Three? Because it is the blessed work of the Holy Spirit to make our heart sure that Jesus won forgiveness and eternal life for us personally! "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your sal-

vation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13-14).

—Pastor Michael Wilke

• All quotations are from *MARTIN LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM* by Michael A. Sydow (Copyright 2000).

The Fifth Commandment

"Thou shalt not kill." What images come to mind when you hear these words? Perhaps the horrific scenes of the aftermath of 9/11, or the news clips of another car bombing in the Middle East, or the faces of any number of serial killers? Certainly the moral depravity of mankind is reflected in these images. There seem to be no limits to the methods man has devised to kill.

Our own country is a violent one. We have a high suicide rate, as many commit murder against themselves, seeing no hope for the future. Domestic violence, usually husband against wife, is a leading cause of unnatural death among women. And the battle continues to be waged over assisted suicide (called "mercy

killing"). It wouldn't surprise me if this became an accepted feature of our "progressive" society.

In addition, there are murders taking place every day which are not even considered crimes by society, nor their perpetrators criminals. Blood stains the hands of all who participate in a "woman's right to choose" an abortion. The government's condoning of this practice does not make it any less of a sin. The challenge for the Christian is how to best "help and befriend" these victims in their bodily need.

Are you feeling pretty good so far? After all, you're not a terrorist, an abortionist, or a wife-beater, are you? As a child I vaguely remember feeling pretty good about my ability to keep

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.
What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt nor harm our neighbor's body; but we should help and be a friend to him in every bodily need.

++++++

Large Catechism Comment:

"In this commandment we go out of our own homes, among our neighbors, in order to learn how each one should conduct himself toward his fellow man."

*475th Anniversary of Luther's Small
and Large Catechisms
(1529-2004)*

What Luther said:

"My advice is not to discuss matters that have not been revealed but simply to stay with the Word of God, especially with the Catechism. For there you have a very precise course in our entire religion. . . . But it is despised because it is light stuff and youths and little children daily recite it."

the Fifth Commandment. After all, I had not killed anyone. Luther's explanation, however, soon dashed those naive hopes, for he made it clear that God is condemning any thought, word, or deed which brings harm to our neighbor.

The Problem:

Man's Sinful Heart

In the Sermon on the Mount, our Savior leaves no doubt about man's inability to keep this commandment, when He says, "I say unto you, that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hellfire" (Mt. 5:21-22). And again: "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer" (1 Jn. 3:15).

The problem, you see, is with the state of man's sinful heart from which murderous thoughts proceed.

If one still isn't convinced of his guilt, Luther's explanation to the Fifth Commandment addresses the sins of omission as well. Sins of omission are those in which we fail to do what we should do in protecting our neighbor

from harm.

Pretty bleak picture, isn't it? We are all guilty of sinning against the Fifth Commandment. If it had not been for the One who did keep it perfectly, we all would be serving life—eternal life—sentences.

But what can we do while we remain on this Earth? Our government debates how best to reduce the crime rate. Some feel that limiting access to weapons will help, others favor stricter sentencing for criminals, and still others feel rehabilitation will result in fewer repeat offenders. Good intentions notwithstanding, these efforts can, at best, only change outward behavior. They can't attack the root cause.

So how can we begin to change our hurtful thoughts and actions against our neighbor? How can we help and befriend him in every bodily need? It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word that we can begin to obey the Fifth Commandment. It is only in that Word that we will find the desire and the power to change.

May we reflect Jesus' love for us in our lives.

Jesus, Savior, wash away,
All that has been wrong today.
Help me ev'ry day to be,
Good and gentle, more like Thee. Amen.
(TLH 653:2)

—Prof. Joseph Lau



At our request, Pastor Paul Nolting of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota passed along these devotional thoughts—and accompanying prayers—used at a Memorial Day (2003) service at the congregation's cemetery in that city.—*Editor*

Pilgrims On Earth!

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth . . . But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (Hebrews 11:13,16).

Dear friends in Christ Jesus, who is preparing a place for all who believe in Him as their Savior from sin:

The souls of our departed fellow-believers have gone ahead to be with their Savior, while their bodies lie here or elsewhere in this world. They all had different stories, and yet by God's grace their stories all had a common thread. That common thread is found in the name chosen for this cemetery—OUR CEMETERY'S NAME IS PILGRIM'S REST! These twelve believers (the names were listed—Ed.), and all others who have faith in Jesus, are but pilgrims in this world simply passing through to a different and better place. These twelve rest in the earth, here or elsewhere, but their bodies only rest, for in a time to come they will arise and be joined to their souls to

enjoy life everlasting in heaven. Let us, therefore, consider these truths—those who have died in faith confessed themselves to be pilgrims on this Earth and will rest here until they go to a better place, heaven!

These Died in Faith

Our text tells us, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." The individuals referred to in our text were Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob. God called Abraham and Sarah out of their homeland to a Promised Land. While they eventually arrived in Palestine, they understood that this land was not their final destination. God promised to give

Memorial Day General Prayer: *Lord God, our dear heavenly Father, we come before You this day filled with thanksgiving, hope, and confidence. Through Your dear Son, our precious Lord Jesus Christ, You have redeemed our souls from sin, death, and Satan. You have promised to us and secured for us the forgiveness of our sins and the blessed hope of eternal salvation. We thank You for the lives of our departed loved ones and for all the blessings You bestowed upon us through them. We pray that You would watch over their earthly remains and then call them forth on that great day of final resurrection. May we then, who now trust in Your dear Son, be reunited by Your grace and before Your throne to rejoice in Your presence forevermore in heaven. All others petitions, dear Lord, we ask in the words You have taught us to pray . . .*

their descendants that land, but they knew that they were really only passing through that land and this life enroute to a much better place. They were indeed strangers and pilgrims.

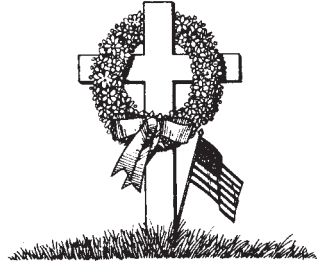
Those of our loved ones who have, as the patriarchs before them, "died in faith" shared that common understanding of their earthly existence. They lived their lives—many of them long and full lives, all of them lives filled with the blessings of the Lord—knowing that while life here on Earth can be sweet, because of the effects of sin it is not everlasting. "The wages of sin is death," writes St. Paul, "but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Consequently, while they lived and loved and worked and played, they each knew it was but for a time.

Yes, our loved ones who have "died in faith" were strangers and pilgrims in this world, and so are we. Do not let the world convince you otherwise. Oh, the promises of medicine are that life can be extended, but no life in this world can be extended forever. The glitter and glamour of this world seeks to cover up the reality both of sin and death, but it ultimately cannot. We are but strangers and pilgrims, and one day the time of our end will come.

Heaven—A Better Place!

When that time comes, however, you may be assured that we together with our loved ones who have died will rest here or elsewhere until we all go to a better place—heaven! Our text tells us, "But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."

There is no shortage of skeptics who suggest that the Bible is simply a



Remember Those Who Served

book promoting a "pie in the sky" philosophy, which will only hinder your success here in this world. There are others who take the promise of heaven after this life and change it into a mandate to create a heaven on Earth. Neither group is correct, and we should not allow ourselves to be deceived.

Believers of all ages have lived and died knowing and entrusting themselves to their Savior-God, who has promised us the gift of everlasting life in heaven. From the simple, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mk. 16:16) to the comforting, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn. 14:2), the Bible is filled with the assurances that life on this Earth is not all there is.

Dear friends, as we consider the lives of our departed loved ones, together with the sacrifices they made and the blessings they were, may our hearts take comfort in the fact that God has "prepared a city for them" as well as for us. It will be grander than anything we ever have or ever will experience here in this life, for it will be a dwelling place of absolute peace and security. No more need for a police force or detention center, no more need

Memorial Day Prayer for Our Country: Dear blessed, holy Trinity—our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, we come before You on this Memorial Day with a special prayer for our country. You have blessed us richly, and for this we thank You. You have given us peace and prosperity, opportunities and freedoms. You have by Your grace moved many to place themselves at risk and to make tremendous sacrifices to protect us and preserve our way of life. We thank You, Lord, for these blessings, and we acknowledge the debt that we owe to so many who have given their lives up on our behalf. Be with and bless our elected leaders. Grant them wisdom, honesty, and integrity. Be with and protect the men and women who serve in our various armed forces. Preserve their lives and grant them success in their various duties. Comfort those individuals and families who have lost loved ones in the defense of our country. May we as a people ever prove faithful to You, thereby securing Your continued blessing of our country. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

for hospitals and clinics, for all of the troubles of this life will have passed away.

Take heart, therefore, for the name of our cemetery—Pilgrim's Rest—describes both our status in this world

and our situation after we depart this world until that Great Day when our Savior returns to call us home to heaven. That will indeed be a most grand and glorious day! Amen.



BIENNIAL CLC CONVENTION
June 21-25, 2004
Immanuel Lutheran College
Eau Claire, Wisconsin



Theme:
"O BLESSED MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION"
 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Keynote Address:

"God has Reconciled Us to Himself in Jesus Christ . . ." — *Professor Steven Sippert*

Follow-up essays:

". . . and has given us the ministry of reconciliation . . ."

1. In our individual lives — Mr. Larry Dassow
2. In our congregational work — Pastor Andrew Schaller
3. In our synodical endeavors — Professor Paul Sullivan

Chaplain: Pastor Theodore Barthels

Communion Service Preacher: Pastor David Fuerstenau

Communion Liturgist and Service Coordinator: Pastor David Povolny

Memorial Service Speaker: Pastor Elton Hallauer

Organ Coordinator: Professor Paul Schaller

Convention Reporter: Professor Joseph Lau

The Church's Unsung Heroes

It was some years ago, we recall, that another church magazine had a series of articles titled "The Church's Unsung Heroes." The articles focused attention on such contributors to the church's work and mission as organists, Sunday School teachers, ushers, congregational presidents (and other Church Council positions), ladies aids, and even the church's elderly.

In a recent worship service, the epistle reading was 1 Corinthians

chapter 12 where this is said: "Those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. . . . Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually." In the church everyone from custodians to councilmen fills necessary and important roles. Where would the church be without those who—often behind the scenes and without much recognition—willingly, eagerly, and capably fill such roles?

Christ is the Head of His Church.

A "Mission Statement" Of Our Church Ladies Groups . . .

The Gethemane, Saginaw Ladies Guild meets monthly from September to May. In accordance with Scripture we strive to assist the Pastor and our congregation in the work of the Lord. By assisting with the home-church missions and festivals, and abroad (we currently sponsor a Nigerian Seminary Student and his family), we also are active in works of charity (we have started a "Ministry of Meals" to members who are sick or who have had surgeries, etc.). Our goals are to foster Christian fellowship and Bible devotion among the ladies of our congregation for the purpose of encouraging and uplifting each other in the Lord. Inspirationally we take Hymn 400, stanza 1, as our guide:

*Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

Ladies Guild pictures which have appeared include:

- Redeemer, Sister Lakes, Michigan (April 2003)
- Grace, Sleepy Eye, Minnesota (May 2003)
- Church of the Lutheran Confession, North Port, Florida (October 2003)
- Faith, New Ulm, Minnesota (September 2003)
- Immanuel, Mankato, Minnesota (September 2003, Women's Auxiliary)
- Berea, Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota (November 2003)
- St. Paul, Denver (Lakewood), Colorado (September 2003)
- Gethsemane, Saginaw, Michigan (December 2003)
- Immanuel, Mankato, Minnesota (January 2004, Study Guild)
- Immanuel, Winter Haven, Florida (January 2004)
- Trinity, Watertown, South Dakota (February 2004)
- Faith, Markesan, Wisconsin (February 2004)
- Prince of Peace, Loveland, Colorado (April 2004)

He calls pastors to the privileged position of serving as His undershepherds. If the pastor is the "lead servant" within the Body, he is hardly expected to do all the work. Nor will a congregation expect that, and its members will eagerly serve their Lord however and wherever they can. Many do so, often without calling attention to themselves. They are the church's "unsung heroes."

About a year ago the *Spokesman* invited each of our CLC congregations to submit a picture of its ladies group. About a dozen such pictures have thus far appeared (see box). We also thank

Debi Leinberger, Ladies Guild Treasurer, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Saginaw, Michigan, for sending us the general purpose or "Mission Statement" of Gethsemane's ladies; it's a fine summary of the work eagerly undertaken and so well done, behind the scenes, by all these groups. They are the unsung heroes of which we speak.

If your congregation's ladies have not yet submitted a photo, it is not too late to do so. Send them to the editor (address in masthead, page 2). Thank you!



Ladies Group, Trinity Lutheran Church, Spokane, Washington

Ladies Group, Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin



More of the Church's Unsung Heroes



Luther Memorial Ladies, Luther Memorial Lutheran Church, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Ladies Aid, St. John's Lutheran Church, Okabena, Minnesota.



Ladies Of Our Redeemer, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Women of Redeemer, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bowdle, South Dakota.



CLC Mission Helper Program



Megan Owings (front) & Hesper Busse at a village in India.

Vanakkum! (Pronounced "wanna come," this Tamil word literally means "praise"; this is the Indian way of greeting.)

From July 15th to August 4th, Hesper Busse and I (Megan Owings) traveled to India as part of the CLC Mission Helper Program. For those who don't know us, Hesper lives in

Kamiah, Idaho; I live in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I had previously attempted two trips to India, but was not able to go because of bad timing. Hesper heard about the trip last year when she read an announcement in her Sunday bulletin and felt compelled to send in her application. We felt like we could really help the children by teaching

In 2003 the CLC Mission Helper Program organized a team of volunteers for a trip to India to work with our brothers and sisters in Christ in the BELC and the CLCI. Along with one other individual, Megan Owings and Hesper Busse volunteered their time, talents and treasures to the glory of our Lord as they carried out Christ's great commission to go and teach all nations.

Pastor Koenig made arrangements for Megan and Hesper to visit several village congregations. They were blessed with the opportunity to touch the lives of over 700 children and elderly women, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ through Bible stories, crafts, and children's songs which reinforced the message of God's Word.

If you are interested in participating in the CLC Mission Helper Program or would be willing to offer financial assistance to a willing and qualified individual, please contact program coordinator, Pastor Todd Ohlmann at 636.225.3458 or toddohlmann@clclutheran.com.

Although words can never fully capture or express the joy and excitement that comes from sharing God's love with those who are hungry and eager to learn of their Savior, the accompanying personal travel log will give you some idea of what these two ambassadors for Christ experienced in the 2003 CLC Mission Helper Trip to India.



Hesper handing out crowns.



Megan with a village baby.

songs and crafts and, most importantly, broadening their knowledge and faith in Jesus.

After our applications were approved, the Program Coordinator assisted us by arranging the details. There are so many things to be taken care of before a trip like this can take place—airline tickets, itineraries, passport and visa applications, vaccinations and travel advice. The Mission Helper Program also coordinates the effort with Pastor Koenig and other pastors in India.

Before leaving, we were prepared by many people about the poverty; no matter what we had been told, it still broke our hearts to see how people lived on nothing.

Indian food is very different and not appealing to American tastes. However, we loved the chapattis and potato curry, which were prepared special for us while we were at the orphanage. Other than that, we pretty much thrived on ice cream. If the Lord blesses you with the opportunity to go to India, I suggest that you take along snacks.

What surprised us was all the attention we received. These people rarely, if ever, see white people—especially white women. Because of the lack of white people, if we did happen to see

another white person, it was as if we had found a family member.

Our main source of transportation was a rickshaw, which is basically a three-wheeled motorcycle with a windshield, cab, and a bench seat in back for customers. After getting over the fear of falling out, we had a ton of fun riding them. Riding in India is an adventure in itself; drivers are constantly weaving in and out of traffic, honking their horns, and nearly colliding with other vehicles. Traveling in India is not for the weak of heart. Crossing the street is also a heart-pounding experience. Hesper's philosophy was, "just close your eyes and go for it; don't open them until you get to the other side." Although they may try to run you over when you cross the street, really all the people are super nice and very helpful. They are ready to give you anything they have to make you happy.

In India, we went to both the CLCI and the BELC. We spent five days going to the village congregations of the BELC from Chennai, traveling two or more hours every day out to the villages to teach. Then we spent about five days in the Nellore district of the BELC, going to a different village every day to teach. We then spent four days in Nidubrolu working with the

orphans of the CLCI.

At each location we did crafts and songs. We would have them make a crown of gold paper, explaining that God gives them a crown of life through His Son Jesus Christ after one dies. We did several other crafts, including making crosses out of popsicle sticks. We taught everyone a song that was simple (because of the lack of understanding they had for English). The language barrier was terribly frustrating. We never could understand what they were telling us, and they couldn't understand what we wanted them to do. The most frustrating thing was not being able to communicate with the children. What we did find rewarding was that the children—as well as the adults and elderly—very much enjoyed the simple crafts and songs.

The people have a great thirst for Biblical knowledge. I was amazed by

the enthusiasm for worship. Despite their poverty, they relish hearing the Word. We went there to teach them, and ended up learning a ton from them.

All of the children captured our hearts, always calling us sister ("sis-tah") or madam. We were in a different village every day. This prevented us from forming a real bond with individual children. The experience was different when we spent time at the CLCI orphanage in Nidubrolu. It was terribly hard to leave the children. We were with them for four days, and each child captured our hearts. They taught us Indian songs and games. They're great little performers. We had a ton of fun with them. We have to warn you—we taught the children to stick out their tongues when you take a picture; we also taught them the macarena; oh yeah, when you try to shake their hand, they may try to tickle you—you

IF YOU WISH TO MAKE A GIFT TO

The CLC Foundation

The ways to do so are many. Here are examples:

- Special Gifts: Cash Payments Income from Assets
 Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Fund Shares
 Real Estate
- Bequests: General Contingent
 Specific IRAs
 Residuary Life Insurance

(For consideration of tax benefits, such as tax deductions and avoidance of taxes on capital gains, etc., professional advice may be suggested.)

Those interested in making gifts to the CLC Foundation, perhaps as part of an estate plan, will be interested in having "Ways of Giving" material which reviews some options. Request from

**CLC Foundation
c/o Immanuel Lutheran College,
501 Grover Rd., Eau Claire WI 54701**

94. From whom do we receive our property?

A. We receive our property from God. However, He remains the owner and we are only His stewards.

(Luther's Small Catechism - Gausewitz)

can thank us for that too. If you stay in the orphanage, be sure to tell Jojo (Pastor Koenig's "pet" rat) "hello" for us.

We would be happy to discuss our trip with anyone who is interested. Please feel free to contact me (Megan) at owingsm@uwstout.edu or Hesper at jasminejune84@yahoo.com.

Announcements

**West Central Delegate Conference
June 18-20, 2004**

Grace Lutheran Church, Valentine, Nebraska

Starting time: 10:00 a.m. (Central time) Friday,
June 18

Agenda:

1. Study in Gratitude—Receiving Our Daily Bread with Thanksgiving. Mr. Andrew Mayhew, Redeemer, Cheyenne
2. Scriptural Study of Malicious Desertion as Grounds for Divorce, with Congregational handling of divorced parties in cases of malicious desertion. — Pastor John Klatt
3. Devotional Study: Essayists choice of an Old Testament minor prophetic book or a part thereof — Pastor Matthew Hanel
4. Do we do good works out of thankfulness? Is it misleading to preach that we do? — Pastor Michael Roehl
5. Examination of role of women in Biblical times, with current and practical applications. — Mr. Steve Mielke, Grace, Valentine
6. Review and Discussion of 2004 CLC Convention *Prospectus*
7. Discussion of the Role of the Chapel Facility in the Training of Christian Youth (as suggested by the 2002 CLC Convention).

Communion Service Speaker: Pastor Frank Gant

Conference Chaplain: Pastor George Dummann

—*Pastor Mark Gurath, Secretary*

Anniversary Invitation

The members of Faith Lutheran Church of West St. Louis County would like to announce and invite our fellow CLC sisters and brothers in Christ to a celebration of 50 years of Faith on Sunday, June 6, 2004. Festivities will include a church picnic at the home of Dave and Debbie Menton on Saturday, followed by a Festival of Worship and a potluck meal on Sunday.

Under the theme "Fifty Years of Faith," former pastors of the congregation will bring a gospel message to those in attendance, with the following thoughts in mind: Prof. Michael Sydow—"Foundations of Faith"; Pastor Mark Gullerud—"Blessings of Faith"; Jerry Barthels—"Growing in Faith"; and Pastor Vance Fossum—"Going Forward in Faith."

For more information please send an e-mail to faithstl@swbell.net or call Pastor Ohlmann at 636.225.3458.

—*Pastor Todd Ohlmann*



Farewell ceremony for Hesper & Megan at Nidubrolu Orphanage; Missionary Koenig (left) & Peter Evensen. (story inside)