

Lutheran spokesman

December 1989
Vol. 32, No. 6
(ISSN 0024-7537)



IN THIS ISSUE

- * "On Earth Peace"
- * Pilgrims on Earth (Jacob)
- * Man-Made Gods
- * NCLC Ordination Service
- * Treasuring Our Partnership
- * Millston, Wisconsin



CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

"Unto You is Born a Saviour"

"Away in a manger" all the hope of the forgiveness of the sins of the world lay. "Away in a manger," surrounded by animals, the Savior of the world rested his "sweet head." No beautiful maple wood baby crib, no cushiony soft mattress, just straw and rough wood make up His bed.

In a field not far away shepherds kept watch over their flocks. "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Lk. 2:9-10). What good tidings did the angel of the Lord tell? He said: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:11).

"To All People"

To people everywhere, whose life is not all cushiony and beautiful but is racked with pain and grief and sin, these words come: "Unto you is born a

Saviour." Unto all men is born this Savior who at birth suffered the rough wood of a manger and who at death suffered the rough wood of the cross for the sins of the world.

All men everywhere are born sinful and under the dark condemnation of God's Law. Men need rescue. Men need light. Men need mercy. Men need deliverance from God's wrath. Men need forgiveness. Men need a Savior.

And God has provided a Savior for the world. He sent His own Son into this world to fulfill all the law for mankind and to die for the sins of all men. Therefore the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has forgiven your sins and my sins and the sins of all men. Christ is the light of the world, the merciful rescuer and Savior of mankind. Christ has brought us out from under the dark condemnation of the law.

To the mother, who feels that she has failed and who is wallowing in despondency, here is the message of hope this Christmas: "Unto you is born a Saviour." To the father, who is sorrow-

Postmaster: Second Class postage paid at Lake Mills, IA 50450. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville, MN 55113.

The Lutheran Spokesman is published monthly by the Church of the Lutheran Confession, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113, and is an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Editor: Paul Fleischer, E. 11315 Broadway, Spokane, WA 99206; Assistant Editor: D. Lau; Artist: W. Bernthal; Staff (Also District Reporters): V. Fossum, J. Klatt (West Central), D. Koenig, K. Luebke, R. Mackensen, B. J. Naumann, K. Olmanson (Minnesota), Rollin Reim (Pacific Coast), Ronald Roehl (Wisconsin), Ross Roehl, P. Schaller, W. V. Schaller, J. Schierenbeck (Eastern), D. Sweet, M. Sydow, M. Thom.

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

Business Manager: Benno Sydow, 2750 Oxford St. N., Roseville, MN 55113. Individual subscriptions: \$6.00 for one year; \$11.00 for two years; \$16.00 for three years. Subscriptions sent in bulk to congregations: \$5.00

ful because he has not loved his children nor his wife properly, these words are addressed: "Unto you is born a Saviour." To the children, who are sorry because they have disobeyed their parents and wish they had not, here are words of comfort: "Unto you is born a Saviour."

In Every Condition

To those who are in the darkness of despair because they are sorry for their sins and long for forgiveness, here is a message that will bring peace: "Unto you is born a Saviour."

To the lonely, to the elderly, to the widows and widowers who long for

the grace and mercy of God, comes this good tiding: "Unto you is born a Saviour."

To those who feel that death is knocking at the door, come these words of hope and life and light: "Unto you is born a Saviour."

For those who mourn in their hearts over their sins there is certain hope. For the poor in spirit, for the downtrodden and oppressed, here are words of life. Listen now, listen to the clear voice of the angel of the Lord and to his golden words once again: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

—*D. Sweet*



CHRISTMAS IS FOR THE FAMILY

Many think of Christmas as a time for the family. On Christmas Day many families will gather, even those who rarely get together at other times. For some this is even the essence of Christmas. Their sense of the meaning of the birth of Jesus is either vague or nonexistent. These are the people who will also feel empty and alone when the family Christmas is over.

For Christian families Christmas is a time when they gather to share the joy of celebrating the Savior's birth. For them the family gathering is certainly not the essence of Christmas, but another blessing from God to be enjoyed thankfully.

A Family Event

But there is a connection between

Christmas and family. Christmas was a family event; the birth of a child. When the eternal Son of God took on humanity He was born into a human family. Though His conception by the Holy Spirit was unique, He was born of a human mother like everyone else. Though He had no natural human father, Jesus had a legal human father in Joseph. It was through Joseph as well as Mary that Jesus was the legal descendant of Abraham and David. This is the point of the genealogy which Matthew places before his account of the birth of Jesus.

Though the human family of Jesus served a necessary purpose, it was a temporary arrangement. Mary, Joseph, and their relatives had no permanent special relationship with Him. All

those who would believe in Him and follow Him would be His brother, sister, and mother (Mt. 12:50).

The work of Jesus was to bring into being a family larger and more lasting than any flesh and blood family. He came to remove the barrier of our sins which separated us from God that we might become members of God's own family. As God's beloved children by faith in Jesus, we are brothers and sisters and fellow-heirs with His Son Jesus Christ.

The Family of God

This is the true family significance of Christmas: the coming of the Savior assures us of an eternal place in the family of God. This is a fact to give us lasting comfort this Christmas, the kind of comfort our earthly families cannot give.

Many families who celebrate

Christmas this year will be families torn apart by divorce. Others will have a void left by a death in the family. Some who celebrate Christmas will be Christians who have little or no family left. Others will be separated from their families by great distances. This should in no way interfere with our Christmas joy because we know that in the Savior we have God as our Father, Jesus as our Brother, and a host of fellow believers as our brothers and sisters.

If you have a family to gather with this Christmas, give thanks. Our earthly families are blessings from God. And make an effort to include those who have no family. Recognize that your fellow believers are your family. If you have no family, or if your family is far away, remember that through Jesus you belong to the eternal family of God.

—John Klatt

*A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL
from the Lutheran Spokesman*



"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE . . ."

O n a Christmas Eve during the first world war, a soldier stands up in the trenches and begins to sing "Silent Night, Holy Night . . ." A voice from the darkness beyond joins him in German. Soon many voices join him. Out of the trenches they come from both sides to meet in "no-man's-land" with Christmas greetings. For one evening the horror of the "war to end all wars" comes to a pause, and peace reigns.

As Christmas draws near, one of the refrains heard most often is "peace on earth." "A noble goal, but far away" say some. "Almost within reach" say others. The unbelieving world is unanimous, however, in the conviction that peace on earth has not yet been achieved, and surely not by Jesus Christ. Perhaps if all followed His rules . . . someday.

The Peace of God

Yet every Sunday, not just at Christmas, in our churches we hear the pastor say these words just after the sermon: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (TLH p. 12,22)

How can we print it in our hymnal that the Minister say this same thing every week? How do we know that it will always fit the sermon just preached?

We know it will fit, not just because it is a Bible passage (Phil. 4:17), but because it is Gospel truth. The burden of the angel's message over Bethlehem was the Gospel—"Good news of great joy," what God had done for the lost human race. This good news is also the heartbeat of every message of a minis-

ter of the gospel. The angel host was able to follow the Good News of Jesus' birth with the assurance of "peace on earth"—and so can we.

Of course, this is not the peace which so many are talking about during the holiday season. It is not the peace which human beings with great effort find, work out, or achieve in their relationships, their communities, or their countries. That is the peace of man.

This is the peace of God. This is His creation through Jesus Christ. This is His gift to mankind through Jesus Christ. It is not the physical peace that so many set as the ultimate goal. It is spiritual peace. It is peace of heart and mind. It is peace with God.

This peace was Peter's, even though he had denied his Lord three times one evening. It was his because of forgiveness. This peace was Stephen's even as the violence of the stones rained upon him. This peace was given to James, even while he was beheaded by Herod. Paul and Silas had this peace even though they had been severely flogged, thrown into prison, put into the inner cell, and had their feet fastened in the stocks.

The peace of God goes far beyond our power of understanding. Here is a

The Sermon ended, the Congregation shall rise, and the Minister shall say:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The Offertory shall then be said or chanted, at the close of which the Congregation shall be seated

The Offertory

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right

spr - it with-in me. Cast me not a - way from Thy pres - ence;

The image shows a musical score for the Offertory. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right spr - it with-in me. Cast me not a - way from Thy pres - ence;".

person who seems to have everything—honor, rest, financial security, and even useful employment—but does not have the peace of God. And here is a person who has nothing, a renegade from society, nailed to a cross and dying, bereft of honor, dignity, and self-esteem, who hears the words “Today, you will be with me in paradise,” and he has the peace of God!

This peace is simply not given in the way that people seek it in this life. It came when we sought it not. It is based on deeds that we have not done, and it remains even among the thorns and thistles, the wars and wickedness of this life.

Guarding and Keeping

This peace guards our hearts and minds. Often when protection is needed, people turn to guard dogs, big and strong, and who have some teeth.

Other forms of protection appear even more formidable.

When it comes to spiritual things, what is there with more teeth than God’s laws and commands? When the law was given to the Children of Israel, with it came thunders and lightnings and fierce trumpet blasts. “Do not touch the mountain or you die!” God’s Law says: “The day of accounting is coming and everyone will have to stand before the judgment seat of God.” Who will be able to resist the gathering angels on that day?

Even now, in our everyday life, it is by laws that the outward activities of people are controlled, by threats of punishment for bad behavior, and promises of reward for good behavior.

But when guarding and keeping is needed for the heart and mind, it is not to the thundering of the law that the apostle turns. Rather, he turns to the

peace of God, to a little Baby in a manger, to a Lamb led to the slaughter, to a little Word, and to the forgiving grace of God through Jesus Christ. There is no threat, since Jesus has already suffered everything in our place. There is no reward to earn, for all things are already ours in Christ. Yet a clean heart is created and preserved, a spirit that wants to please the Father who has made us His own children.

The heart and mind are guarded by the peace of God, as we realize what a treasure it is to be called the children of God. We know what a loss it would be were He to treat us as our sins deserve, to cast us off like King Saul, to remove His Spirit from us. But His kind word of peace invites us to confess our sins

and sinfulness, and to seek the forgiveness of which we are assured.

Through that forgiveness, the joy of His salvation is restored to us and a willing spirit is bestowed upon us. This is something that we could never come up with on our own, but which He freely gives and guards by the Word of His peace.

Jesus, guard and guide Thy members,
Fill Thy brethren with Thy grace,
Hear their prayers in every place.
Quicken now life's faintest embers;
Grant all Christians, far and near,
Holy peace, a glad New Year!
Joy, O joy, beyond all gladness,
Christ has done away with sadness!
Hence, all sorrow and repining,
For the Sun of Grace is shining!

—P. Schaller



Pilgrims on Earth (Seventh in a Series) . . .

“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff” (Heb. 11:21)

The Man Who Wrestled with God

Parents are often fearful about the personality traits which they see in their children. They worry about the child who is self-willed and stubborn because such a child is not easy to train; the parents wonder what trouble he or she is headed for.

Personality traits of children tend to exhibit themselves in contrary ways because of the “old Adam.” Yet, in themselves, these traits are gifts of God which can be used either for good or evil. It all depends on whether the person is guided by the flesh or by the Spirit of God. The stubborn child can become the strong Christian adult who perseveres in the good and steadfastly resists the evil.

A Strong-willed Man

Jacob is an example of a strong-willed man whom God turned into a steadfast man of faith. His strong personality was evident even before he was born. When he and his twin brother, Esau, were still in their mother's womb, Jacob was already fighting with his brother. The struggle within their mother, Rebekah, was so

violent that she was troubled, and asked the Lord what this meant. He answered that the two children in her would be the beginning of two nations. They were already struggling with each other for supremacy. The younger would prevail.

And when they were born, Esau was first, but Jacob wasn't one to concede the struggle: he was born holding onto his brother's heel. This unusual occurrence caused Isaac and Rebekah to name him Jacob, which means "He grasps the heel." The picture in this unique name is that of a man who throws his wrestling opponent by taking hold of his foot. A "Jacob" is one who overcomes and displaces his adversary especially by tripping, that is, by sly or deceitful means.

Jacob twice displayed this heel-grasping quality towards his brother. As the firstborn son, Esau would have become head of the family after the death of Isaac and would have inherited a double portion of his father's property.

But one day when Esau came in from a hunting trip tired and famished, Jacob convinced him to sell his birthright for a bowl of stew. As the firstborn son, Esau was to receive a special blessing from Isaac: that he would carry on the Messianic line of descent from which the Savior would eventually be born.

But Jacob, at the instigation of his mother, tricked Isaac into giving him the blessing. Jacob lied to his nearly blind father, pretending to be Esau. He even went so far as to use the name of God to support his lie (Gen. 27:20). Jacob valued the blessing because he believed God's promises. Undoubtedly

he also knew from his mother that God wanted the blessing to be his. But in his zeal he failed to trust God, and worked to get the blessing by sinful means.

A Spirit-taught Man

Still, Jacob's personality was a gift of God. In his earlier days Jacob misused his gifts. But God dealt with Jacob according to His grace, not according to Jacob's sins. He appeared to Jacob at Bethel, and repeated to him the promise He had given to Isaac and Abraham: that from his descendants the Savior of the world would be born. By His Holy Spirit, God taught Jacob the right use of His gifts.

Such lessons are often difficult and painful. Jacob had to taste the bitter fruit of his own sins. He had to run for his life when Esau threatened to kill him. While working for Laban, his father-in-law, Jacob found out what it is like to be the victim of another's tricks.

God refined Jacob during his years working for Laban. The Jacob we see on his return to Canaan was very different from the younger Jacob. No longer relying on his own devices, Jacob now understood his need to trust in the Lord. As he neared home he was anxious about meeting Esau, thinking he might still be angry and seeking revenge. When Jacob heard that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men, Jacob feared that he and his family would be slaughtered. He was aware that this would be more than a personal tragedy; it would be the end of the Messianic line.

Spending the night alone, Jacob's prayers were so intense that they took

the form of an actual, physical wrestling with God. It is here that we again see Jacob the heel-grasper; not the trickster or deceiver this time, but the persevering struggler prevailing on God for the fulfillment of His promises.

Ancestor of the Savior

Jacob won that good fight and obtained his blessing. The Lord spared him and his family to carry on the Messianic line. The Lord also gave him a new name, Israel, which means "He struggles with God."

Jacob's faith grew until the end of his life. On his deathbed Jacob prophesied the future of each of his sons. The prophecy about Judah revealed that he would be the one to carry on the Messianic line. From Judah's descendants would come Shiloh, the Savior.

Jacob's last words show that he

believed God's promises: he directed his children to bury him, not in Egypt where he was when he died, but in Canaan. This was surely more than a desire to be buried in his homeland, near his relatives. It was an expression of faith in God's promise that He would give the land of Canaan to Jacob's descendants and that there the Savior would appear.

We, like Jacob, have personalities corrupted by sin, naturally inclined toward evil. But we, like Jacob, are also the objects of God's grace. We have been called by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel. We have been made children of God through faith in His Son. The Spirit has also been active in us, sanctifying our personalities so that God might use us in His work. He has turned us from our self-trust to faith in our Savior-God.

—J. Klatt



NCLC Ordination Ceremony (See story p. 12)

... He gave His only-begotten Son ...

Flute

Alto Recorder

1. O Fa - ther now our thanks we bring That You have
2. O Sav - ior, from Your throne a - bove You came to
3. O Ho - ly Spi - rit grant us now A heart to
when You made the heav'ns and earth; A - - gain the night
live for us, to die our death, This low - ly Babe
fore the man - ger and a - dore The Gift of God

Upon the editor's request, *Spokesman* staff writer, Pastor Paul Schaller, has again agreed to share with our readers. He composes annually for his family and friends.

Tracing the Acts of the Apostles (Acts ch. 17) . . .

"For as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you . . ." (Acts 17:23).

MAN-MADE GODS

Finally a "day off." This was Athens. Culture didn't get any better. Some sightseeing would fill the hours while he waited for Silas and Timothy to arrive from Berea.

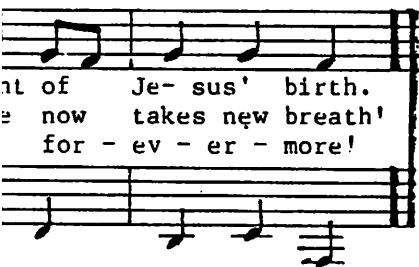
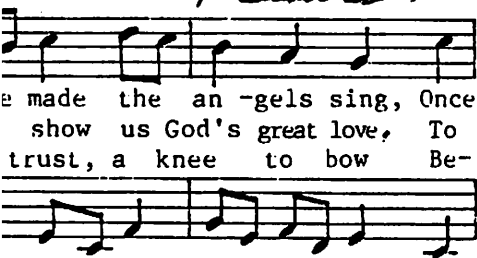
But the tour of the city only served to upset the apostle Paul. The genius of its architectural and sculptural beauty was dedicated to the enemy. And that would agitate any disciple of the Lord.

It's a good thing that it was Paul who was there. The restlessness in his spirit spilled over into a powerful witness to anyone who would listen.

It was some Athenian listeners who

were particularly intrigued by what Paul had to say. Some thought him a "seed picker"—possessor of a few scraps of information crudely assembled into some far-out religious confession. Many were interested simply because it was something new. NEW in Athens was always acceptable—to a point.

F. Schaller 1988



eaders the words and music for a Christmas hymn he

Keeping track of all the gods on Olympus and elsewhere was rather difficult to begin with. We wonder what might have happened that the Greeks would erect an altar TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. What was it? Some catastrophe? Some battle lost? Some untimely political devastation which they couldn't blame upon any one of the gods they knew? All those gods and still there was superstitious backlash for some unexplainable event.

But that's about the best the mind of man can do. The Greek gods were barely better than humans, mired in the same weaknesses, tragedies, feuds, and battles as the people they were allegedly to guide . . . somehow, we know not how, through their earthly lives. Role models they were not!

The best of idols of any generation

can only be an invention of what a person wishes a god to be.

The Search

It was later at Mars' Hill where Paul capitalized on the opportunity presented by this altar TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. That altar stood actually as a monument to the failure of human wisdom. "The world through wisdom did not know God" (I Cor. 1:21).

Paul grabbed the inscription of ignorance and used it as his theme to tell the Athenians about the only God there. The real God—the One they didn't know about yet—

*is the creator of everything—heaven and earth and all they contain (v. 24a);

*could not be confined to a "box" as if some temple or shrine might define His limits (v. 24b);

*does not require the adoration of mankind to vindicate His existence (v. 25);

*is vitally interested and concerned about the welfare of human beings. He has given man a universal, common heritage—one blood and a well-defined sphere of life (v. 26);

*built into mankind the urge to search for truth beyond his physical and material world (v. 27).

The search goes on.

So we search for Him until He finds us! As Jesus said: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you . . ." (Jn. 15:16). Hymn 37 also has it:

Lord, 'tis not that I did choose Thee;
That, I know, could never be;
For this heart would still refuse Thee
Had Thy grace not chosen me.

Paul preached a good sermon, directing his listeners—as we all

should—to the Savior, Jesus Christ. There is the solution to the sin problem. The punishment has already been taken care of through His atoning death.

What validates the atonement caused the meeting on Mars' Hill to break up: Paul started to talk about the resurrection of Christ. In the Athenian mind that was one step too far. None of

this impossible stuff for them! Ah, but there were some who were moved by the power of the gospel and the possibilities of the real God as confessed by Paul. Dionysius, Damaris, and others.

And all Paul really had started out doing was to wait for Silas and Timothy. The work of the kingdom, though, just never stops.

—M. Sydow



A Red-Letter Day for the NCLC—

TEND THE FLOCK



“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (I Pet. 5:2-4).

On Sunday July 9th two men were ordained into the holy ministry in the Nigerian Church of the Lutheran Confession (NCLC), our sister church in

Nigeria. Pastor P. Udo conducted the service at our Efa Anyam church. Pastor D. Koenig preached the sermon based on the above quoted text. Pastor E. E. Essien performed the ordination ceremony.

A Service of Praise

The two men ordained had been with Pastor Essien in the capacity of evangelists for well over ten years when our missionary arrived in September 1986. The two men were en-

rolled in our Bible Institute which began in January 1987, and have finished two and one-half years of instruction. Their prior service and the urgent need to get shepherds out among the sheep moved the faculty to allow them to finish one-half of the five-year program.

Representatives from our five congregations and ten preaching stations joined in the service of praise to our God for His abundant grace and mercy in granting to us men to lead us in His Word. There were 230 worshippers. After the service a light lunch was partaken of consisting of goat meat, groundnuts (peanuts), and mineral (soda pop). The NCLC Board met and assigned the men to their stations.

A Demanding Ministry

Thomas Ekpo Obot was the senior member of our Bible Institute student body, having served in the British Army in Egypt in World War II. He is likely hovering in age in the late sixties. He still has two children at home. Obot will serve in a station some two hours travel time distant from Efa Anyam (where we have the Bible Institute).

This preaching station at Akampka was a fair-sized group at one time. We then had many problems, including some troublemakers who tried to take the church building and small group to another church body. Since that turmoil, the Lord has given us an opening again at Akampka. We now possess the building and a small group have been gathering to worship, minus the troublemakers. Pastor Obot has his work cut out for him in seeking to build a congregation again. Pray that God supplies him with the needed

physical and spiritual strength.

John A. Benson was born likely in 1940. He has ten children. His home village is next to the village of Efa Anyam. He was assigned to the large city of Calabar. It is about two hours travel time from Efa Anyam. He will have two preaching stations there at Abito and Ikot Anwatim. We have sought to build up our small groups in Calabar for some time. Now there will be a resident shepherd to lead them.

A Crown of Glory Awaits

Ikot Anwatim is a section on the side of a hill. Our people gather under a simple zinc roof to worship. At Abito they worship in a small building on a member's compound. Even though these two groups are small, not having many more than a dozen in the worship services at this time, we pray that now through greater service of the Word God will add to their numbers.

In the cases of both of these men no salary from our NCLC is offered. The small groups at the stations are encouraged to give as the Lord has prospered them to support the preaching of the Word. But that will not be enough. Each of them will have to work with their hands as did the missionary Paul in several places. They will likely do trading on foodstuffs and/or lease land to raise food on or near their stations.

Such sacrifices are called for at times in serving our Lord. But we count it all joy when we meet various trials knowing that through such our faith is strengthened. The real "pay" comes later, for these men know that when the Chief Shepherd is manifested they will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

—D. Koenig

Partners in the Gospel . . .

This fellowship we share within the Church of the Lutheran Confession had its origins, for the most part, stemming from the struggles of doctrinal controversy. This fact is one which we do well not to forget.

TREASURING OUR PARTNERSHIP

On the Lighter Side

A person new to the CLC commented to us one time: “You long-time CLC’ers know each other quite well, maybe even your sister churches and some of their history, but what about us newcomers? How are we supposed to know about our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the states?” Fair question.

The 1988 CLC statistics, compiled by statistician Harvey Callies, tell us that we have 67 congregations (served by 52 pastors) made up of 6,304 communicants and 8,655 total souls. Of these 67 churches, nine were featured in our 25th anniversary series (1985-1986) on congregations “born with the CLC”—that is, which began as a direct result of the controversy with the now defunct Synodical Conference in the late 1950’s. Of the remaining 41 congregations, here and there one or another have been featured in connection with some significant happening in their church such as an anniversary celebration or a building project.

But there remain about two dozen of our congregations rarely given space on these pages. What about them? Where are they located? How and when did they have their beginning? What are they up to for the Gospel’s sake? What would they like to tell their fellow CLC’ers about themselves?

In a new series *Partners in the Gospel* we hope to acquaint, or reacquaint, you with your brothers and sisters in these congregations. The series begins with this month’s article on Trinity of Millston, Wisconsin.

On the Heavier Side

The partnership of which we here speak implies a common bond, a common confession of the Gospel and Word of the Lord. Our Gospel partnership implies far more—or at least runs deeper—than does partnership in some social or business endeavor.

While sitting in prison for the Gospel’s sake, St. Paul wrote to the Philippian: “I always pray with joy because of your *partnership* in the gospel from the first day until now” (1:4). The apostle John in exile on the isle of Patmos for the

Gospel's sake identified himself to the seven churches in Revelation in terms of a deep appreciation of Gospel partnership: ". . . your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus" (Rev. 1:9).

The Bible word for "partnership" we are perhaps more accustomed to hearing as "fellowship." This fellowship we share within the Church of the Lutheran Confession had its origins, for the most part, stemming from the struggles of doctrinal controversy. This fact is one which we do well not to forget.

Back in those early days of our origin we had a holy fear of the subtle inroads of human wisdom and reason being interjected into Bible teaching, specifically in the area of the biblical doctrine of church fellowship. In special meetings over the course of the last year or so, our CLC Board of Doctrine has been discussing this doctrine in depth and detail with our former Gospel partners in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The question under discussion has to do with Romans 16:17: "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." In connection with this passage, does "admonition" precede or follow the Lord's directive to "mark" false teachers before the action of "avoid" is taken? In other words, *the role of admonition in connection with the avoiding of errorists*—while not the only question—is a central one. It has been frankly admitted by both sides that restoration of a once cherished partnership can take place only on the basis of complete doctrinal agreement in this area as in all other areas.

"Thus Saith the Lord"

There are those in the church today who would charge that all this is just picking at straws. We fail to see it that way. Bound to the inviolable Word of our Lord, it is always important to "resist the beginnings" for "a little leaven leavens the lump" (1 Cor. 5:6, Gal. 5:9). What is finally at stake here—yea, the "lump" in danger of permeation by the leaven of error—is the precious Gospel of God's free grace in Christ Jesus.

There are those also in the conservative camp today who have been heard to say, quite scornfully: "When everybody thinks alike, nobody is thinking much." The implication is that there is no room within such an orthodox partnership as the CLC for free and open Scripture study and discussion. We beg to disagree. Throughout its history the CLC has—within its partnership—debated a variety of doctrinal issues. Through God's merciful grace the Scripture (above all) as well as the Lutheran Confessions have been studied and allowed to lead to God-pleasing resolutions of the controverted issues. In other words, open discussion and

"It has never been easy to stand fast and firm in defense of the pure Word. We in the CLC need to pray for and encourage one another that we might, in a truly evangelical manner, continue to 'stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the Gospel.' "

“thinking” is hardly stifled as, within the fellowship, we endeavor to practice in keeping with the unity enjoined upon us in such passages as I Corinthians 1:10: “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

It has never been easy to stand fast and firm in defense of the pure Word. We in the CLC need to pray for and encourage one another that we might, in a truly evangelical manner, continue to “stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the Gospel” (Phil. 1:27). Thus did St. Paul enjoin his Gospel partners in Philippi, adding: “Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose” (2:2).

In these last days of sore distress few are those churches, those synods, anymore which have the spiritual courage and will to declare “Thus saith the Lord” without compromise. Among us in the CLC the Lord God has graciously preserved a holy respect for the clear assertions—teachings—of the Bible. By His grace alone we have this precious Gospel partnership, a partnership brought about and preserved to us only by much earnest contending for the Truth. May we deeply appreciate and dearly treasure it!

—Paul Fleischer



Partners in the Gospel . . .

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church Millston, Wisconsin

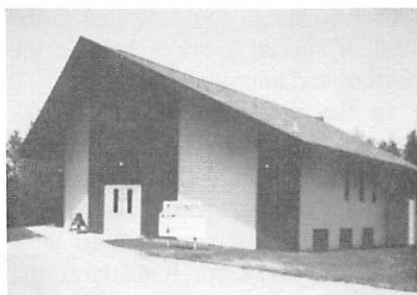
For close to 25 years Trinity Lutheran Church was blessed with the use of a rent-free Community Church in the village of Millston, Wisconsin.* However, since this building was not to be sold to any church group and did not have a suitable basement to hold Sunday School classes and other church-related functions, the congregation took the step of faith in January 1980 to make plans for the building of their own place of worship, which could be dedicated to the Lord.

*Millston is located about 60 miles south of Eau Claire off Interstate 94.

In March of 1981 three lots west of the parsonage in Millston were purchased for what was to be a two-level church structure of 40' x 70'. While the congregation was relatively small at the time, it was looking to and planning for the future by providing adequate space for growth and for a possible Christian Day School.

Ground Breaking

On Easter Sunday, April 11, 1982 ground breaking ceremonies were conducted and work began on what turned out to be close to a seven-year building project. The building program had



been originally envisioned to extend over a 3-5-year period with a majority of the work being done by members of the congregation. The project took longer than anticipated, as there were delays due to the architectural planning, weather, pastoral vacancy, limited funds, and a small work force for a large building project.

In and through it all the Lord God who oversaw the building of His house in Millston provided ways and means for it to be finally completed. Besides the generous offerings of the members,

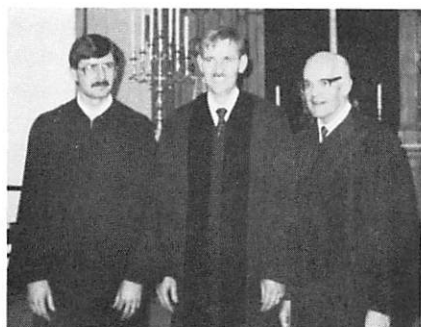
the congregation was blessed with a loan of \$43,446.00 from the Mission Extension Fund of the CLC, for which they are truly grateful.

Over the long haul countless hours of volunteer work were expended for this work of the Lord. Area cranberry men donated the use of their heavy equipment whenever needed. And brethren from Messiah in Eau Claire came down to help out with putting up the shell of the sanctuary and the chimney.

Being concerned about providing a place for the children to have their Sunday School classes, the church basement was finished off first. At the start of 1987 the congregation began holding worship services and Sunday School in the basement area.

The chancel furnishings, such as the altar, pulpit, lectern and communion rail, were given in memory of charter members of the congregation. The





Pastors Mark Bernthal, Mark Gullerud, Robert Mackensen

pews, which came from St. Luke's of Stoddard, Wisconsin have quite a history behind them. They were originally sent to Stoddard from Millston years ago before finding their way back to Millston. The globe-like light fixtures were given by Luther Memorial of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. And as the Lord has moved His people many other furnishings have been given for His house of worship in Millston.

Dedication

At the end of 1988 the congregation could lift up their hearts and voices to the Lord in thanksgiving for making it possible for His house of worship to be finally completed. On December 4,

1988 the church was dedicated to the Lord in special services held in the morning and afternoon.

In the morning service Pastor Robert Mackensen, who had served as the congregation's first pastor, exhorted the congregation on the basis of Matthew 28:18-20 to look to their name of *Trinity*, for it declares the source of their strength to build this new church, as well as the reason for building it. In the afternoon service Pastor Mark Bernthal, under whose pastorate the building project began, preached on I Chronicles 29:10-13. He exhorted the people to give all honor and praise to God, for His is the power and the riches that built this church.

The ILC Tour Choir also joined their voices in the dedication service by singing: "Lift High the Cross" by C. Schalk and "Praise the Lord" by George Handel.

To God alone be all the glory!

—Mark J. Gullerud

(Pastor Gullerud has since moved to St. Louis, Missouri where he serves our CLC church, Faith of Ballwin. Pastor Mark Bohde has accepted the call to Trinity.

*May the Christ Child
bring you and your family
Christmas Joy and Peace
and May His Love Guide You
each Day of the New Year*



Daily Devotions For January 1990

Date	Scripture	Theme	Hymn
1	Romans 11:13-24	Jesus is Savior of both Gentile <i>and</i> Jew.	123:1-4
2	Romans 11:25-36	O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!	123:5-8
3	Romans 12:1-8	Present your bodies a living sacrifice to God.	80:1-3
4	Romans 12:9-21	Pray for divine love in all situations.	80:4-5
5	Romans 13:1-7	Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.	343:1
6	Romans 13:8-14	Love is the fulfilling of the law.	343:2
7	Romans 14:1-9	"In essential things, unity; in indifferent things, liberty; in all things, charity."	343:3
8	Romans 14:10-23	The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.	343:4
9	Romans 15:1-13	The strong must bear with the weak.	343:5
10	Romans 15:14-33	Paul closes his epistle with various exhortations	343:6
11	Romans 16:1-16	"Behold, how they love one another!"	343:7
12	Romans 16:17-27	A loving warning and a fond farewell.	133:1-3
13	Genesis 1:1-13	God said, "Let there be . . ." and there was!	133:4-7
14	Genesis 1:14-25	God continues His creation of the world.	98:1
15	Genesis 1:26-2:3	God creates man and completes His creation.	98:2
16	Genesis 2:4-14	God created a paradise for man to live in.	98:3
17	Genesis 2:15-25	After giving His "test command" God tells in detail His creation of woman.	98:4
18	Genesis 3:1-7	Satan deceives Adam and Eve and they disobey God.	98:5
19	Genesis 3:8-15	Sinners receive the First Promise of a Savior.	353:1
20	Genesis 3:16-24	God in mercy sends man out of paradise.	353:2
21	Genesis 4:1-16	Sin bears its ugly wages.	353:3
22	Genesis 4:17-26	"Pre-historic man" was no dumb brute.	353:4
23	Genesis 5:1-17	Adam bore children after his own (sinful) image.	353:5
24	Genesis 5:18-32	Godly Enoch walks with his God.	353:6
25	Genesis 6:1-10	In a wicked world Noah finds grace before the Lord.	353:7
26	Genesis 6:11-22	The Lord establishes His covenant with Noah.	383:1
27	Genesis 7:1-16	Noah, his family, and all living creatures enter the ark.	383:2
28	Genesis 7:17-24	The Flood covers the earth; only those in the ark survive.	383:3
29	Genesis 8:1-12	God causes the Flood to recede.	383:4
30	Genesis 8:13-22	God promises to curse the earth no more.	383:5
31	Genesis 9:1-7	God blesses Noah and his sons.	329:1-2



Announcement

Following a colloquy held on October 23, 1989 and upon recommendation of the Board of Doctrine, Warren H. Fanning of Bismarck, North Dakota is declared eligible for call into the pastoral ministry of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

—*Daniel Fleischer*
President

Address

Rev. Warren H. Fanning
1929 North 11th St. #4
Bismarck, ND 58501
Phone: (701) 223-0710

Call for Nominations

The Board of Regents of Immanuel Lutheran College invites nominations for the office of ILC president for the term June 1, 1990–May 31, 1992. All professors, pastors, male teachers and voting members of the CLC may nominate a candidate or candidates. Nominations must be post-marked no later than December 31, 1989 and sent to Pastor Vance Fossum (Secretary, ILC Board of Regents), P.O. Box 98, Okabena, MN 56161.

Installation

The undersigned, assisted by councilmen Paul Blumhardt, Fred Adams, and Myron Schiermeister installed Warren H. Fanning as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church of Bismarck, North Dakota on November 5, 1989.

—*Daniel Fleischer*
(CLC President)

“I bring you good news
of great joy that will
be for all people.”



Luke 2:10