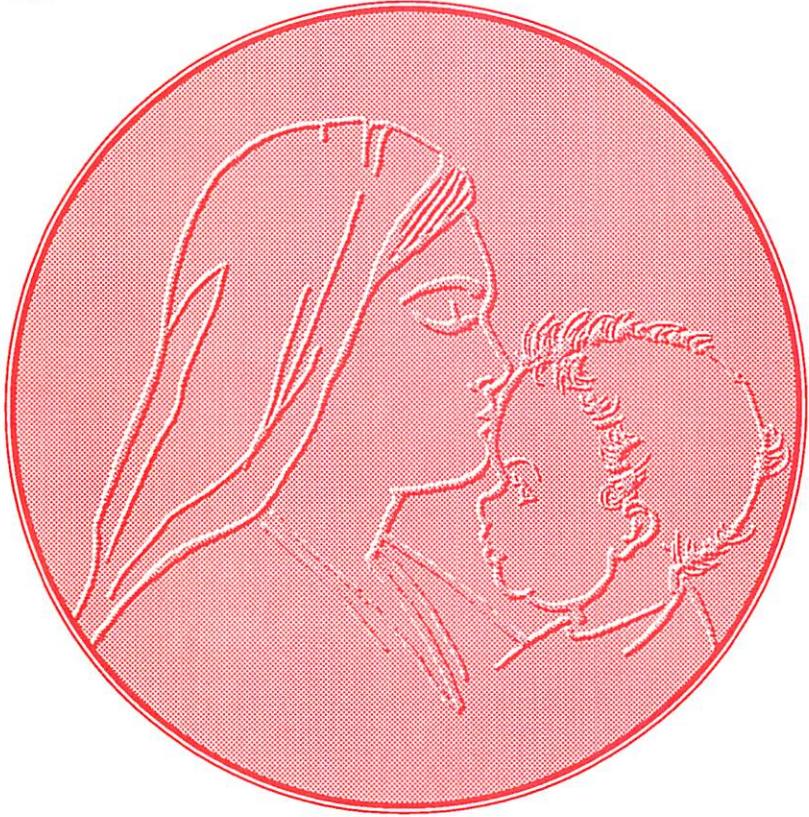


Lutheran Spokesman



What Child Is This

In This Issue

- * A Confessional Christmas
- * The Little Wheelbarrow Boy
- * Epistles For Epistles
- * Answer To A Popular Song
- * Must God Forgive...?
- * Messiah, Eau Claire



Church of the Lutheran Confession



Message From Our CLC President...

May It Be A Confessional Christmas

The shepherds certainly were most blessed. To them came the first announcement of the birth of their Savior. The announcement came in a most unique manner, as it came by angels through song. Never before, or since, has there been a more capable choir announcing a great message. Indeed, there still echoes in our ears the angelic song: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:11). This announcement provoked an immediate response. "They came with haste..." (2:16). But even more! These shepherds became confessional witnesses

to that which they had heard and seen. "Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (2:20).

A Statement Of Faith

We are privileged to be receivers of the same message given to the shepherds. God does not, however, speak to us through angels. He speaks to us through His revealed Word, the Holy Scriptures. In the inspired Word of God is given to us a message of fulfillment of prophecy. Christ the Savior is born. The fact is reported!

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But more than that. The report is made very personal—FOR YOU! To you is given the Savior, the Redeemer, the Reconciler. The Father in heaven validated His promises by sending Jesus. Furthermore, He validated Jesus' ministry by offering Him up upon the cross for the sins of the world. Let's make it personal—Jesus died for me! Therefore it is beyond any doubt—the Father in heaven will keep the promise upon which our hope is built.

He will give to us the fulfillment of our hope, eternal life. As the saying is, "You can look it up." Dear friends, let no one shake your confidence in the very personal commitment that the Father made to you when He sent Christ into the world. As the apostle Paul wrote in another context: "But even if we or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8).

Ours is a confessional Christmas. That is, our celebration of Christmas is a statement of faith as well as hope. Furthermore, it is a statement of objective Truth which in itself calls for an open and steadfast confession.

Not the Word of God, not the message of Christmas, not our hope, is subject to revisionist history. It remains forever true: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (I Jn. 4:9). Therefore, "we have seen and do testify (just like the shepherds) that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (I Jn. 4:14).

It is ironic that we must contend for what the Lord has freely given us. We contend, not to gain what has been

given us, but to hold on to what has been given us. For that reason we are a confessional church. God help us always to remain a confessional church.

Example: The Virgin Birth

For example, we must contend, through faithful preaching, for the doctrine of the virgin birth of our Savior against even such as call themselves by our name—Lutheran. What can Christmas possibly mean to such as confess with their mouth in the creed, "born of the Virgin Mary," and then deny in their teaching the reality of that miraculous conception and birth?

We must likewise contend against those who would diminish the Son of Mary by raising Mary herself to the level of her Son. That is what is done when Mary is addressed as in "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners..." or even more crassly as was seen on a bulletin board recently, "Holy Mary, Refuge of sinners..." We must contend for the very Word of God without which neither the reality of Christmas, or the blessing of Christmas is known, much less certain.

Confessionalism is often ridiculed. It is looked upon as being contentious. Indeed, it can be contentious if confessionalism is practiced for its own sake. True confessionalism, as is clearly seen from the example of Luther, is confessionalism in the cause of and for the promotion of the Gospel.

Confessionalism in the cause of the Gospel, which is the source and ground of salvation, is an exercise of love. It serves the cause of salvation. Unless God's people are confessional they will not serve those who are still in the throes of sin, death, and hopelessness.

For, lacking confessionalism in the cause of the Gospel, Christmas celebration and even preaching becomes an empty exercise.

The shepherds returned to their fields thanking and praising God. Hardly did they change the message they had received of the angels. For at the angel's message they went to see, and returning they spoke what they had seen and heard. They reported what they knew and believed in their hearts. Christ their Savior was born, and they

had seen Him. They neither reinterpreted the message, nor did they give it a more dramatic spin.

May all who read this have a blessed Christmas, and rejoice in the certainty of salvation in the Savior born for you. And yes, may it be a confessional Christmas.

In His Service,



The Little Wheelbarrow Boy

While Christmas shopping last Saturday I overheard a four-year-old boy say to his mother, "This will cheer him up!"

His mother and I both glanced to see what he had discovered on the shelf of this craft store. It was a little wooden wheelbarrow.

"Cheer who up?" she asked.

"Baby Jesus," was the heartfelt answer.

I smiled...and not just because his answer was cute; I was impressed that even with all the materialism and other worldly distractions that have been heaped on Christmas, this little boy was concerned about Jesus. This wasn't the little drummer boy—this was the little wheelbarrow boy.

The mom smiled also, but only briefly. "I don't think Baby Jesus needs to be cheered up," she told him.

"...Or this would cheer him up," continued the boy, picking up another item, oblivious to his mother's remark.

My back was turned to most of this, but the mom saw my smile. That must have been what prompted her to snap at the little boy, "Come here now, let's go before you embarrass me any more." I didn't hear the little boy say another word.

Yes, that's what she said and yes, all the smiles were gone—mine too. I turned to tell the woman that there was no need for embarrassment; but they had already walked away.

Was she embarrassed because he had mentioned Jesus in public or because he thought Jesus needed "cheering up"? Perhaps the little boy had heard of "Christmas cheer" and was just trying to put all the pieces of Christmas together.

You know, he was thinking in the right direction when he focused his attention on Jesus. The world thinks in the opposite direction. The world has removed Christ from Christmas as effectively as this mother had silenced

her son. Christmas cheer, from the world's viewpoint, means gifts, food, family, and world peace. "Vanity of vanities," King Solomon would say; "no true cheer," we would say; "time to buy a wheelbarrow to cheer up the Lord" the four-year-old would say. The world's version of Christmas is vain, unreal, and sad.

Real joy at Christmas comes from knowing that God has given us and all mankind a Savior from sin and eternal damnation. God has kept His promise: He has given His only-begotten Son. We are saved!

It's that simple. Christmas does not depend upon earthly gifts, food, family, or world peace. Christmas is not restricted to a day or two in December. The Christmas message is for the entire year.

In fact, I won't be surprised if, even in summer—probably while loading the wheelbarrow—I'm reminded of "the little wheelbarrow boy" and the true meaning of Christmas cheer.

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.



Merry Christmas, and may the TRUE cheer of Christmas be yours.

—Karl Olmanson

(Mr. Olmanson is Principal and upper grade teacher at Gethsemane Lutheran School, Spokane, Washington. This article, with the artwork, appeared in the *Gethsemane School Newsletter* in December 1990.)


*The Word
became flesh
and dwelt
among us*

John 1:14

*"What is the Bible the world is reading? Your daily life and mine.
What are the sermons the world is heeding? Your daily life and mine.
What are the creeds the world is needing? True lives, yours and mine."*

Epistles Of Ink For Epistles Of Flesh

When we asked him to compile our DAILY DEVOTIONS—BOOKLET #2, Pastor Mark Bohde of Millston, Wisconsin gladly consented. Left to choose what he would, he selected Bible readings from the New Testament epistles.

"Epistle" means "letter," and that is how the word appears in the text of most modern Bible translations. The word is used not only for letters or books of the Bible, but also of Christian believers. St. Paul writes: "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; you are manifestly an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:2-3, NKJV).

In our opinion the translation "letter" loses something. The word *epistle*, even as *apostle*, comes from a root word meaning "to send." An *apostle* is unique for he is *sent out* directly by the Lord to proclaim the Gospel. (No apostles exist today.) Similarly every believer in Christ is unique. Wherever such believers are today, they exist as *epistles* "written" by the Holy Spirit, "sent on" to be witnesses to the rest of mankind as to what the new life in Christ is all about. Christ sent out His apostles. The Holy Spirit—by baptism and conversion—sends on His epistles, you and me, to be read by all people. The number of "epistles of ink" is set, fixed, in the canon of the Holy Scriptures. The number of "epistles of flesh" is continually changing, increasing, as the Spirit works through epistles of ink.

We epistles of flesh desperately need to read the epistles of ink. In the latter the Gospel of our Savior is explained and applied in copious detail. Through them we "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18), and that in a day when the Word of God is being disparaged, ignored, and twisted as much as ever.

One apostle wrote of another apostle's epistles: "...as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures..." (2 Pet. 3:15ff). The message is: Beware of Scripture twisting!

To help guide epistles of flesh in their reading of the epistles of ink, Pastor Bohde has attached some "Questions For Thought" with each reading. If you are uncertain of the answer to any question posed, please seek out your pastor's help.

REMOVE →

DAILY DEVOTIONS - BOOKLET #2

January 1992 — December 1992

There are four columns to these devotional suggestions. The first column is the day of the month; the second is the scripture text; the third column contains questions for thought; and the fourth a hymn for meditation from *The Lutheran Hymnal*.

Where (Sunday) is so indicated, Pastor Bohde suggests reading over the sermon text from your home church and meditating upon one of the hymns from your worship service.

January 1992

The Epistle Of St. Paul To The Romans

Day	Reading	Questions For Thought	Hymn
1	1:1-7	Who has called us? What does His resurrection declare about Christ?	198
2	1:8-17	Have you been living as though you were ashamed of the Gospel or has the news of your faith been spreading around your community?	507
3	1:18-21	According to God, who in the world will have an excuse on Judgment Day?	610
4	1:22-32	What does our Lord teach us about those who are homosexuals and rebellious children?	612
5	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
6	2:1-4	What leads to repentance?	279
7	2:5-16	Can anyone in the world say that they had no knowledge of the law's requirements?	608
8	2:17-24	Is your life and lifestyle bringing honor to God?	400
9	2:25-29	Who is a real Jew? Where does real circumcision take place?	586
10	3:1-4	What was the most important advantage of being born a Jew according to the flesh?	156
11	3:5-8	Do we try to use the knowledge of God's grace to justify careless sin?	420
12	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
13	3:9-20	How many people are considered righteous before God because they were very good people?	369
14	3:21-26	What is the only way that anyone is declared righteous before God?	319
15	3:27-31	What would you say to a person who believes he will go to heaven because he is really trying to be a good person?	387
16	4:1-8	God considered Abraham a righteous person. Why?	40
17	4:9-12	Who are the children of Abraham?	415
18	4:13-17	What response of God does the law bring on us?	295
19	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
20	4:18-25	Are you fully convinced of God's promises? What has Christ accomplished for you?	189
21	5:1-11	Do we have peace with God? Does any good come from suffering?	342
22	5:12-21	How did sin enter the world? How was righteousness for each person accomplished?	377
23	6:1-11	Should you take sin lightly because of God's grace? Are you living for God?	404
24	6:12-23	Are you enslaved to sin or God? What is the free gift of God?	334
25	7:1-6	Do you worship and serve Christ because you desire to or are you trying to earn God's favor by doing certain things?	370
26	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	

27	7:7-13	What is one purpose of the law?	289
28	7:14-25	In our misery and struggle against sin, where is rescue found?	379
29	8:1-9	What is the difference between those who follow the flesh and those who follow the Spirit?	236
30	8:10-17	What does the Holy Spirit testify to our spirit?	201
31	8:18-27	Have you compared your suffering to your glorious future?	434

February 1992

1	8:28-30	As a believer which things work together for good in your life?	529
2	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
3	8:31-39	What in your life can separate you from the love of God in Christ?	528
4	9:1-8	Who are Abraham's real descendants?	586
5	9:9-14	Did God call you to be a believer because of something that you did or didn't do?	378
6	9:16-24	What does our salvation depend upon?	376
7	9:25-33	Who did Israel stumble over? How do you receive righteousness?	297
8	10:1-11	As a believer what do you believe in your heart? What do you confess with your mouth?	130
9	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
10	10:12-21	How does faith come? If you want to grow in faith what should you do?	507
11	11:1-7	Why has God chosen you?	37
12	11:8-22	As a believer, how do you continue to stand in God's presence?	381
13	11:23-36	Is it possible for us to figure out all of God's decisions?	519
14	12:1-8	How should you offer yourself to God? What has God given to renew our minds?	142
15	12:9-21	How are we to treat other Christians? Our enemies?	464
16	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
17	13:1-7	Who do you really oppose when you resist governmental authority or break the law?	577
18	13:8-11	What is the only thing we should owe anyone?	60
19	13:12-14	How should you as a believer live?	421
20	14:1-12	If a fellow believer is doing something that is not against the Word, but is different from the way you do things, how should you respond?	453
21	14:13-23	In our relationships with other believers what should determine how we live and act?	439
22	15:1-13	Where do we get patient endurance and encouragement?	293
23	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
24	15:14-21	What did God accomplish through Paul? Are you witnessing for Christ?	495
25	15:22-33	Have you considered how you can help believers who are poor (perhaps in India or Nigeria)?	440
26	16:1-16	If Paul wrote about your life as a Christian, what would he write?	320
27	16:17-27	How should we respond to those who turn away from one or more doctrines of the Word in what they believe or teach or in how they live?	288

The Epistle Of St. Paul To The Corinthians

28	1:1-9	Who will strengthen you in your Christian life? What means does God use to do that?	345
29	1:10-17	When Paul proclaimed Christ did he try to use clever speech or simply the Gospel? What does this say to us?	508

March 1992

1	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
2	1:18-31	Does God choose the way the world does?	366
3	2:1-5	Was Paul ever fearful in proclaiming the Gospel? Are you?	504
4	2:6-13	Whom has God given to each believer that insures we will grow in understanding God's Word if we apply ourselves to learning it?	609

5	2:14-16	Can an unbeliever understand the love of God? How does he regard them?	377
6	3:1-9	Are you a spiritual baby or are you growing in the Word?	46
7	3:10-17	Believers are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Is your building project progressing?	385
8	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
9	3:18-23	Are you concentrating on growing in God's wisdom or the wisdom of this world?	407
10	4:1-6	When our Lord returns, what will His light reveal in your heart and life?	485
11	4:7-21	Who are you seeking to imitate in this life? Is it Paul?	409
12	5:1-8	What does Paul mean when he says that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?	462
13	5:9-13	How should we respond to those in our congregation or synod who live impenitently in sin?	414
14	6:1-8	When a fellow believer wrongs us should we take it to court?	464
15	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
16	6:9-11	Can a church member who practices sin still consider himself an heir to the kingdom of God?	323
17	6:12-20	The temptations to sexual sin are manifold in the United States. How should we respond to them?	141
18	7:1-11	If you are married, is it O.K. to withhold sex from your spouse when you are angry? Is remaining single a good thing?	623
19	7:12-16	What should you do if you have an unbelieving spouse? Does any good come from such a relationship?	625
20	7:17-24	Circumcision is nothing. What is everything?	416
21	7:25-31	Why did Paul say it was better not to be married?	399
22	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
23	7:32-40	What is the advantage of being single? How long are a husband and wife bound together?	393
24	8:1-13	What is wrong with this statement: "I have liberty in Christ to do anything that isn't forbidden by the Word."	395:1-3
25	9:1-18	Even though Paul did not want financial support, how should we take care of pastors, teachers, and other church workers?	491
26	9:19-22	How can Paul's attitude be reflected in your life?	496
27	9:23-27	Are you in training or standing on the sidelines?	247
28	10:1-13	Will God allow you to be tempted beyond what you can endure? What way out is God providing for you?	376
29	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
30	10:14-11:1	Whose benefit and advantage should you seek? When we take bread and wine at communion what else are we receiving?	314
31	11:2-16	Who is over the man? Who is over the woman?	624:1-2

April 1992

1	11:17-34	What do believers proclaim when they take communion? Why is it important to discern the Lord's body when you take communion?	306
2	12:1-11	Are you exercising your spiritual gift(s)?	229
3	12:12-31	Who gives us the gift and ability to serve the body of Christ?	224
4	13:1-13	What characteristic of love do you need to ask God to produce in your life?	530
5	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
6	14:1-25	What should be the goal we seek when serving the church?	8:3
7	14:26-40	How does the Lord want worship services conducted? Should women speak to the church during worship service?	466
8	15:1-11	How many people were eyewitnesses to our resurrected Lord? What changed Paul from a persecutor to a preacher?	378
9	15:12-34	How important was our Lord's resurrection? What are the characteristics of people who don't really know God even though they go to church?	187
10	15:35-58	Whose likeness will we have when we are raised? Paul says we should do more work for the Lord than ever. Why?	206
11	16:1-4	What does God teach us about regular offerings?	438:4

12	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
13	16:5-8	When the Lord opens a wide door for us to evangelize and work for Him, does that mean we will have little opposition?	520:5
14	16:10-18	How should we do everything?	445
15	16:19-24	What do Paul's closing comments indicate about the relationship that existed among believers?	231:3

The Second Epistle Of St. Paul To The Corinthians

16	1:1-7	God comforts us in every trouble. Why?	144
17	1:8-11	What does God teach about responding to difficult situations? What is taught about the power of prayer?	515
18	1:12-16	What does God teach about our conduct in the world?	536:2
19	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
20	1:17-24	What is one reason believers have been given the Spirit?	427:3
21	2:1-4	What was Paul's motivation for a strong rebuke to the Corinthians? What does the absence of godly rebuking indicate, if it is needed?	583:3
22	2:5-11	If someone is rebuked and repents, how should fellow-Christians react?	458:6
23	2:12-17	What kind of fragrance are you spreading?	652:3
24	3:1-6	Can we produce anything for the Lord by ourselves? Who gives us the ability?	11:5
25	3:7-18	What guarantees our liberty in Christ?	398
26	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
27	4:1-4	Why don't some receive the Gospel, and others believe it?	514:6
28	4:5-18	What was Paul's attitude toward the troubles and difficulties he had as a result of proclaiming the Gospel?	20:2
29	5:1-10	What do you have as a guarantee of salvation and eternal life? What is the believer's one goal in this life?	226
30	5:11-17	What does Christ want you to live for?	405

May 1992

1	5:18-21	Are you an ambassador for Christ?	453:2
2	6:1-2	Procrastination is common, but how should we treat God's offer of salvation?	331
3	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
4	6:3-13	Paul already told us to imitate him. What characteristics did Paul demonstrate in his life that we should strive for?	412
5	6:14-7:1	Given our goals and desires, can we have fellowship and compromise with unbelievers?	184:2
6	7:2-16	When is sadness a good thing? Did fear stop Paul from proclaiming the Gospel? Has it stopped you?	276
7	8:1-15	What was the attitude of Macedonian Christians about giving? What is your attitude?	96
8	8:16-24	What does generous giving demonstrate?	440:4
9	9:1-7	What kind of giving does God love? What can the one who is cheerfully generous expect as an outcome?	498:5
10	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
11	9:8-15	How does our generous giving cause those believers we give to, to respond to God?	309
12	10:1-11	Christians are involved in a great battle. What kind of weapons do we use? Are they powerful?	444:1
13	10:12-18	Are you growing spiritually and serving Christ so that God's kingdom will be spread beyond you to those who haven't heard?	472
14	11:1-15	Are you growing in your knowledge of God's Word so that you will be able to discern Satan's lies?	226:2
15	11:16-33	Some are reluctant to serve Christ because they feel inadequate. But what does Paul boast about?	38:4

16	12:1-10	Why was Paul glad to be weak? Who is our only strength?	54:1
17	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
18	12:11-19	All that the Spirit has given us in God's Word through the apostle has a purpose. What is it?	53:4
19	12:20-21	Have you repented of sin in your life or are you practicing some sin?	320
20	13:1-10	Whose life and faith should we be busy examining?	318
21	13:11-14	Are you striving to grow in Christ?	240

The Epistle Of St. Paul To The Galatians

22	1:1-10	Who should you listen to and try to please?	547
23	1:11-24	Are people praising God for what is happening in your life as a result of what God is doing in you?	391
24	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
25	2:1-10	Do you treat people of high position and low position differently? Who worked in Peter and Paul to make them effective apostles? Who can work in you likewise?	383:4
26	2:11-21	What is the only way a person is declared righteous by God? Who are you living for—Christ or you?	375
27	3:1-14	Do we grow spiritually by great effort or by hearing God's Word and believing?	297
28	3:15-18	What is salvation based upon?	428
29	3:19-29	Why was the law given? If by faith you belong to Christ, what are you?	299
30	4:1-11	As a believer you have been adopted. Whose child are you?	99
31	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		

June 1992

1	4:12-20	Because Paul was sick, he stopped in Galatia and preached the Gospel to them. What opportunity to proclaim Christ is the Lord giving you because of some difficulty in your life?	46:1
2	4:21-31	Should believers expect persecution from unbelievers?	516
3	5:1-15	How does the Lord want us to use our freedom in Christ.	418
4	5:16-26	Is the Spirit directing your life?	225
5	6:1-5	If a believer falls into practicing some sin, what should his fellow believers do?	464
6	6:6-10	Does the Lord reward what we do out of love for Him?	235:7
7	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
8	6:11-18	How did Paul consider himself in relation to the world? How should we consider ourselves in the same relation?	175

The Epistle Of St. Paul To The Ephesians

9	1:1-14	Why do we have forgiveness of our sins? Did we choose God or did He choose us?	461
10	1:15-23	What are the great blessings of coming to know the Lord better and better through His Word?	284
11	2:1-10	Because of our Lord's mercy we have been given new life in Christ. What has God designed us to do with our new life?	374
12	2:11-22	In Christ what do believers have and what have they become?	467
13	3:1-13	By faith in Christ, how may we approach God?	394
14	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
15	3:14-21	How are we strengthened? According to v. 20, is there any need in your life too big for God?	348
16	4:1-16	According to v. 12, what is a pastor's job and what is a congregation member's job? Are you maturing in your knowledge of God's Word and doctrine?	481

17	4:17-32	According to these verses, what is the difference between a believer and an unbeliever?	468
18	5:1-21	Who will not enter the kingdom of Christ? What should we be like as children of light?	25
19	5:22-33	How is the wife to treat her husband? How is the husband to treat his wife?	624
20	6:1-4	What is the father's responsibility?	630
21	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
22	6:5-9	What does this teach about the way employers and employees should act towards each other?	544
23	6:10-24	Who is our real fight with? What means does God use to give us our armor? How important is prayer?	444

The Epistle Of St. Paul To The Philippians

24	1:1-11	Who begins and completes the good work in us?	333
25	1:12-26	Were the prayers of believers important to Paul? What was Paul's goal in life? What is your goal?	488
26	1:27-30	What two gifts from God does Paul mention?	527
27	2:1-4	How are believers to act toward other believers?	75:3
28	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
29	2:5-11	What was the attitude of our Lord that we are to strive for?	104
30	2:12-18	Where do believers get the desire and strength to live for Christ?	395:2

July 1992

1	2:19-30	Which men should Christians honor?	493
2	3:1-15	Where do you and Paul get your righteousness? What did Paul do with the things in his past?	380
3	3:17-21	What do the enemies of Christ have their minds set on? When Christ returns what will He do with your body?	413
4	4:1-9	How can we handle serious problems that cause us to worry? What results in peace in our life?	561
5	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
6	4:10-14	What kind of circumstances did Paul face? Where did Paul get his strength to face those circumstances?	520
7	4:15-23	Who will provide for everyone of your needs?	426

The Epistle Of St. Paul To The Colossians

8	1:1-12	What was Paul praying for? Why? Who strengthens us?	293
9	1:13-23	What has God reconciled to Himself by His blood on the cross? From whom and by whom was everything created?	173
10	1:24-29	What is the mystery that was hidden for ages but has been shown to believers?	84:1
11	2:1-7	What do we as believers overflow with as we are strengthened and built up in the faith?	13:1-4
12	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
13	2:8-15	What happens in baptism?	192
14	2:16-23	How effective are man-made restrictions and rules in curbing our sinful desires?	289
15	3:1-4	What should we keep our minds on? When Christ appears what will happen to believers?	291
16	3:5-11	What should be done with our sinful habits and practices? What do these things bring down from God?	408
17	3:12-17	List the traits believers should "put on." Have you gotten dressed yet? What should we do with God's Word?	540
18	3:18:4:1	What should be our attitude when we work?	122:6

19	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
20	4:2-6	How should we pray? How should we live and talk around unbelievers?	498
21	4:7-18	What does Epaphras' prayer life teach about prayer for other Christians?	544:2

The First Epistle Of St. Paul To The Thessalonians

22	1:1-10	As one loved by God, who has chosen you? What do the Thessalonians teach us about living the Christian life?	37:1
23	2:1-7	In Paul's proclamation of Christ, who did he seek to please? Whom should we seek to please in our witness?	226:2
24	2:8-19	Paul said he acted toward the Thessalonians as a father. How? What would he say to you? Can Satan cause obstacles?	615:3
25	3:1-13	What gave Paul joy? Is your life and growth giving joy to your pastor?	18
26	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
27	4:1-12	What things does Paul urge the Thessalonians, and you, to excel in even more?	412
28	4:13-18	What words has God provided us to use as comfort for fellow believers who are concerned about those who have died?	604
29	5:1-11	Are you ready for the Lord's coming? Who have you encouraged and strengthened recently?	449
30	5:12-22	There are some things we should always be doing. What are they?	62
31	5:23-28	Who can you depend on to sanctify and preserve you?	234

August 1992

The Second Epistle Of St. Paul To The Thessalonians

1	1:1-12	Is your love and faith growing stronger? The Lord will certainly give us relief from suffering. When?	409:2
2	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
3	2:1-12	What must happen before Christ returns? Is loving the truth (God's Word) important?	579
4	2:13-17	Believers were chosen by God from the beginning. What for? Who will give comfort and strength?	61
5	3:1-5	Who will protect us from Satan? Are you praying for the rapid spread of the Gospel?	494
6	3:6-15	Which Christians should we not associate with? Even though you don't associate with them, how should you treat them?	260
7	3:16-18	Who can give us peace in the midst of difficult circumstances?	227:2

The First Epistle Of St. Paul To Timothy

8	1:1-11	What is the goal of godly instruction? When is the law used lawfully?	370
9	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
10	1:12-17	Why did Christ come into the world? What does our Lord's mercy to Paul teach about His mercy towards believers?	342
11	1:18-20	Is it dangerous to ignore your conscience?	536:2
12	2:1-8	Who should we pray for? How many people does God want saved? Who is the only Savior?	504:6
13	2:9-15	According to God's Word, should women be pastors or leaders in the church? Why?	485:7
14	3:1-13	What qualities should church workers have? Does the Lord consider it a good thing for men to aspire to the pastoral office?	483
15	3:14-16	Why was Paul writing these things to Timothy? Who is Paul talking about in verse 16?	76
16	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
17	4:1-5	What do we learn about all that God has created? What sanctifies what God has created?	43:3

18	4:6-16	What kind of training is even more important than physical training? Are pastors to keep on teaching God's Word even when people don't like it?	264
19	5:1-2	Are you treating those around you according to God's Word?	228:6
20	5:3-16	What does the Lord teach about those who don't take care of their own family?	434
21	5:17-25	How should you treat your pastor? What should you do if you hear accusations against him?	482
22	6:1-9	How does Paul describe those who teach false doctrine? What should be your goal regarding material possessions?	260
23	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
24	6:11-21	What are Paul's instructions to those who have more than they need?	452

The Second Epistle Of St. Paul To Timothy

25	1:1-5	What does Paul teach us about prayer?	446
26	1:6-18	What is the believer's attitude about witnessing? Why has God saved you?	209
27	2:1-13	As a believer should you expect to suffer hardship? How can we face hardship by God's grace?	447
28	2:14-26	What should you do if you name the name of the Lord (that is, if you call yourself a Christian)? What should you pursue?	370
29	3:1-9	Does Paul's list characterize our country in the last days? Can any of these characterize a Christian's life?	611
30	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
31	3:10-17	What means does God use to strengthen and equip us to live the Christian life, serve Him, and be saved?	296

September 1992

1	4:1-8	Paul says a time will come when people who claim to be Christian will not want to listen to God's Word and doctrine. What will they do? What will the Lord give to those who continue to trust and follow the truth?	599
2	4:9-17	What was Demas' problem? Where did Paul get the strength to stand for the truth in spite of opposition?	61:4
3	4:18-22	Who delivers from all evil, and brings them safely to God's heavenly kingdom?	29

The Epistle Of St. Paul To Titus

4	1:1-4	Can the Lord who has chosen you to believe lie about His promise of eternal life?	26
5	1:5-9	How is your pastor to treat God's Word? As he leads the congregation, how is he to use it?	491:1
6	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
7	1:10-16	For those who deny Christ, what have they turned away from?	390
8	2:1-15	What should older women teach younger women in the church?	405
9	3:1-2	How do these verses apply to your life?	
10	3:3-8a	Is the believer still enslaved to sin? Why did our Lord save us? What do we learn about baptism?	382
11	3:8b-11	As a believer what should you be busy doing? What steps should you take with one who departs from the truth?	414
12	3:12-15	What should believers learn to do?	453
13	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		

The Epistle Of St. Paul To Philemon

14	1:1-7	Philemon caused Paul great joy. Why? What would Paul write about you?	231
15	1:8-25	Did Paul use his authority and command or make a loving appeal?	653:2

Why did Paul approach Philemon this way? What does Paul teach us about dealing with fellow believers?

The Epistle To The Hebrews

16	1:1-3	What do we learn about Christ? How powerful is God's Word?	657
17	1:4-14	What do angels do for believers?	221
18	2:1-4	Should we listen to and learn God's Word carefully? Why?	291
19	2:5-10	How did God perfect and complete our Lord? Is anything in our life outside of God's control?	219
20	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
21	2:11-18	What did Christ accomplish by His death besides our salvation? Is our Lord able to help us in temptation?	189
22	3:1-6	Believers are God's house. How do they remain that way?	103
23	3:7-19	How often should we encourage fellow believers? What is the goal of our encouragement?	49
24	4:1-11	What must be united with learning God's Word before it is profitable? What is the outcome of faith?	660
25	4:12-13	Is there anything in our heart, mind, or life that is hidden from God?	318
26	4:14-16	Because of Christ our Lord, how may we approach God and what can we expect from him?	531
27	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
28	5:1-10	How did Jesus learn obedience? Is the Lord teaching you the obedience that results from faith?	177
29	5:11-14	Have you been lazy in learning God's Word? In spite of being a church member for many years, would you be able to teach basic Bible doctrine?	366
30	6:1-12	Are you pressing on toward maturity in faith?	53

October 1992

1	6:13-20	What has the Lord done to guarantee our hope of eternal life so that we would be greatly encouraged?	385
2	7:1-28	What is our eternal High Priest always doing for us?	213
3	8:1-13	How is God's new covenant in Jesus Christ better than the old covenant? What has the Lord done for you? in you?	117
4	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
5	9:1-10	What happens to the conscience of an unbeliever when he becomes a Christian?	140
6	9:11-22	What cleanses the conscience of believers? What is required for the forgiveness of sins? (v. 22)	2
7	9:23-28	How many times does a person die? What follows that? Does there need to be any additional sacrifice for sin?	171
8	10:1-23	According to v. 12, how many sins were removed by our Lord's sacrifice on the cross? Acc. to v. 14 & 18, what is left to be done?	156
9	10:24-31	What does the Lord teach about public worship? If we go on sinning willfully, what can we expect?	10
10	10:32-39	What do we need if we are to receive what was promised?	544:5
11	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		
12	11:1-19	What is faith? Is it possible to please God without faith? Are you living as a stranger on earth like Abraham?	614
13	11:20-40	What choice did Moses make when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter? Have you chosen similarly?	430
14	12:1-17	What should we rid ourselves of? Who is the author and finisher of our faith?	463
15	12:18-29	Are you listening to the Lord in His Word? How are you serving?	478
16	13:1-6	What does God think of sex outside of marriage?	521
17	13:7-19	What can we expect if we follow Christ? Do we make our spiritual leaders happy or sad at our spiritual growth?	120
18	<i>(Sunday) The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>		

- 19 13:20-25 Who equips us to do what is pleasing to God?

The Epistle Of James

20	1:1-11	Will faith-testing produce anything good? Is there any reason to lack wisdom?	514
21	1:12-15	Who tempts us to sin? As a believer, when this life is over what will you receive?	398
22	1:16-27	Where does every good thing come from? What means does God use to give us birth.	48
23	2:1-9	What does God think of favoritism?	130
24	2:10-13	Is the nicest person you know doomed for eternity if he is without Christ? (v. 10)	610
25	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
26	2:14-26	What does genuine faith always produce?	377
27	3:1-12	How is your tongue?	363
28	3:13-18	Where does jealousy and selfishness come from? What does God produce in us?	423:1
29	4:1-10	What is the source of conflict among people in the church? What are two reasons for not receiving what you want?	459:1-2
30	4:11-12	Are you critical of others?	429:2
31	4:13-17	Are you making plans for the future without considering God's will?	420

November 1992

1	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
2	5:1-6	What is the future of the wealthy who are without Christ?	425
3	5:7-11	What is the outcome of patience?	586
4	5:12	Should we swear an oath (except in court)?	40
5	5:13-18	Are you suffering or sick? What should you do? What should you be asking from God that seems impossible?	557
6	5:19-20	Should we do anything when a fellow believer starts to fall away from the faith?	331:1-2

The First Epistle Of Peter

7	1:1-2	What does the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit produce in our lives?	270
8	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
9	1:3-12	What does suffering do for your faith?	352
10	1:13-21	Set free from our old life by the blood of Christ, how can and should we live?	141
11	1:22-2:3	What should we long for as newborn babies?	291
12	2:4-8	Why do unbelievers stumble? What are you as a believer according to v. 5?	361
13	2:9-10	As a member of God's chosen people, royal priesthood, and holy nation, what should you be doing?	118
14	2:11-12	Why should we live as strangers in this world?	586:1
15	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
16	2:13-18	How will your life as a Christian citizen silence the ignorance of foolish men?	579
17	2:19-25	Are you suffering unjustly? Is your response to that suffering God-pleasing?	144
18	3:1-7	If you are a wife, are you like Sarah? If you are a husband, what will interfere with your prayers?	624
19	3:8-17	Who is the Lord of your heart?	115
20	3:18-22	What does baptism do?	
21	4:1-6	What kind of response can a new believer expect from	528:11-12

non-Christian friends?

- 22 (Sunday) *The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.*
- 23 4:7-11 What has God given to each of us to use in serving fellow believers in the church? Who gives us the strength to serve? 438
- 24 4:12-19 If we suffer for the sake of Christ, how should we and can we respond by God's grace? 219
- 25 5:1-4 What instructions does God give to pastors? How can you help your pastor to serve with eagerness? 483
- 26 5:5-6 How does God treat the proud and humble differently? 275
- 27 5:7-14 Why should we go to the Lord with all our worries? Who seeks to devour us? After we have suffered for a little while, what will God do? 413

The Second Epistle Of Peter

- 28 1:1-15 What characteristics should every believer have? (v. 5-7) 422
- 29 (Sunday) *The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.*
- 30 1:16-21 How should we pay attention to God's Word? 290

December 1992

- 1 2:1-22 Can we expect to be confronted by false teachers? (What has God given us so that we can learn the truth and recognize the false?) 260
- 2 3:1-18 How many people does the Lord want to come to repentance and be saved? What will Judgment Day come like? 612

The First Epistle Of John

- 3 1:1-6 What kind of evidence was John's testimony based on? 271
- 4 1:7-2:2 If we confess our sins to God what will He do? If we sin, who pleads with the Father for us? 155
- 5 2:3-11 How are we sure that we know God? 287
- 6 (Sunday) *The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.*
- 7 2:12-17 If you love this world and the things of this world, what does that say about your love for God (v. 15)? 430
- 8 2:18-28 Where do antichristian and false teachers who claim they are Christian come from (v. 19)? 130:6
- 9 2:29-3:10 Every person is a sinner, but if you willingly practice sin, whose child are you? What is the characteristic of children of God? 417
- 10 3:11-24 How do we know that we have passed out of death into life (v. 14, 24)? If we really love God, what will we do? 441
- 11 4:1-6 Why does the world listen to false prophets? Whom do we listen to? 100
- 12 4:7-21 What is real love (v. 10)? What does God call one who claims to be a Christian but hates unbelievers? 397
- 13 (Sunday) *The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.*
- 14 5:1-12 What does real love for God produce in your life (v. 3)? What is God's personal witness to us (v. 11-12)? 416
- 15 5:13-20 If we pray according to God's will, can we be sure that we will receive what we pray for (v. 14-15)? 228:4
- 16 5:21 Whatever we place above the Lord is our idol. What is a common form of idolatry in the United States (see Eph. 5:5)? 270

The Second Epistle Of John

- 17 1:1-6 What is love (v. 6)? When we do sin, who will give us grace, mercy, and peace? 207
- 18 1:7-13 Is departing from biblical doctrine serious (v. 9)? 292

The Third Epistle Of John

19	1:18	What made John glad (v. 3)? Would you make John glad? is supporting of missionaries God-pleasing?	496
20	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
21	1:9-10	What was Diotrephes' problem? Can this be a problem in the church today?	175:1
22	1:11-15	What should we imitate?	134

The Epistle Of Jude

23	1:1-2	Who loves believers?	242
24	1:3-4	How should we respond to those who live in sin and justify it by saying they are saved by grace?	472
25		Use the sermon text for Christmas and a Christmas hymn.	
26	1:5-7	Of the Israelites who came out of Egypt, who did God destroy? What does God's Word teach us about the outcome of immorality and homosexuality?	359
27	(Sunday)	<i>The sermon text and one of the hymns from your worship service.</i>	
28	1:8-16	What are some characteristics of false teachers here?	260
29	1:17-19	What do unbelievers and false teachers in the church follow after? What does a worldly-minded person lack?	227
30	1:20-23	How should we respond to weak unbelievers?	264
31	1:24-25	Who alone is able to keep you from stumbling in your faith and make you stand blameless in God's presence with joy?	392



Major Christian Festivals — 1992

Epiphany — January 6
Ash Wednesday — March 4
Easter — April 19
Ascension — May 28
Pentecost — June 7
Trinity — June 14
Advent — November 29
Christmas — December 25

“NOW MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING, THAT YOU MAY ABOUND IN HOPE BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT” (ROMANS 15:13).

Included in his divine call is the responsibility to help you guard against Scripture twisting.

The supreme Teacher, however, remains Him through whom we were made epistles in the first place: the Spirit of the living God. Of Him Jesus said: "...the Helper, the Holy Spirit,...will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (Jn. 14:26).

Epistles of flesh are often the only Bible an evil world will read. May the "print" it reads not be blotched or smeared. May the world receive a true reading of Christ and the Christ-life as they observe your daily life and mine.

Herewith then—epistles for epistles! Thank You, Lord! Thank you, Pastor Bohde! God bless the reading of both epistles!

—Paul Fleischer



Must God Forgive Our Christmases?

How preposterous you say!

But indeed He must when this celebration of a holiday (really, "holyday") becomes just another excuse for a drunken party...

Or when people cave in to the dreaded, "I want..." syndrome...

Or when beautiful decorations become a selfish trigger for compliments rather than an opportunity to express Christmas worship through an art or craft...

Or when the added preparations of edible delicacies crowd time for sharing the joy of Christ's birth in worship and people-fellowship...

Or when folks don't have time for the extra Advent services—or wouldn't miss the Christmas Eve worship but never are around for the celebration the following morning...

Or when Santa Claus doesn't become "unreal" until children wonder whether you're lying about the manger cradle of our Savior...

Or when the world of trinkets, toys, and other things seems more important than the Gift of love left in Bethlehem

a few centuries back...

Or when our spiritual attention peaks at this time of year but is in a rather deep valley of indifference the rest of the time...

Yes, we are tempted with busy-ness, materialism, secularism, fantasy, misguided emotions, and spiritual indifference. There are so many extra things we do at this time of year. The distractions seem to accompany every well-intentioned plan.

Yet, God will forgive our misspent Christmases. He does this through the very Gift which is causing all the fuss in the first place. His Son Jesus came to overpower the distractions of sin, the powers of self-interest, and the lure of Spirit-replacing secular ideas, attitudes, and things.

"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:11).

TO YOU-that's personal!

THIS DAY-that's present!

A SAVIOR- that's precious!

—M. Sydow



She gave birth to her first
swaddling clothes and laid

Answer To A Popular Song

Popular Song: "Why Can't Ev'ry Day Be Like Christmas—
What a Wonderful World This Would Be. . ."

*Yes, oh why can't each day be like Christmas
With its peace and its joy and its love,
With all hearts filled with happy rejoicing
With the message which comes from above?*

*Now the question indeed is a good one —
And the answer, mark well, gives a clue
As to what lies behind all the sadness
Such as threatens to 'ngulf me and you.*

*In the Bible are reasons we're seeking,
Why this world's in a pitiful state.
There we're told of what happened in Eden:
Of the source of man's death, of his "fate."*

*Man was made in God's image—that's holy,
Ne'er to die or live under a curse;
But the devil came into the picture
With rebellion, temptation, and worse.*

*See, it's not that our God dare be faulted
For this fallen world's trouble and din,
For its hate, war, pain, misery, problems—
Ev'ry day was like Christmas till sin!*

*Yet the message this holiday brings us,
If it's heard midst commercial allure,
Tells the world of God's gracious provision,
And how from all sin's woe there's a cure.*

*In the Bethlehem stable, as promised,
There is given, says God, what we need:
He who lies there in flesh is the Savior;
He is God's Son—oh mark and take heed!*

orn son and wrapped him in
l him in a manger . . . Luke 2,7



*He's the Christ Who is mankind's Redeemer;
He's the Wonderful, Counselor, Prince
Of true Peace; He's God's perfect Solution
To what happened in Eden—and since.*

*In the life which Christ brings, which He offers—
Free good will to all people on earth—
In His suffering, His death, resurrection,
All men find their redemption, their worth.*

*What this world then alone cannot offer;
What the ornaments all hide from view,
Is the best of God's gifts of the season:
A dear Savior Who makes all things new.*

*So you see, it depends where you're looking
To find answer, reply to our song.
If you're looking to mere outward trappings,
And to "things" — well, you've got it all wrong.*

— Paul Fleischer



*A Blessed
Christmas
To All From
The
Lutheran
Spokesman*

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe" (Prov. 18:10).

CHRISTMAS—The Name Means Everything!

"Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go!" When all the running is done we want our Christmas to be "cozy." A "white Christmas" is best, we think. Family and friends from near and far want to gather beneath the Bethlehem Star to snatch a moment from that Silent Night and remove life's cares from their anxious sight.

The shepherds also did some running that first Christmas, but not for a moment of manger magic. They ran, not to be cozy, but safe! They ran not to the shelter of a home, but to "the Name"—the Name which "the Lord has made known to them" when He announced: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord."

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe." But what's in a name? Is not a god by any other name just as strong? Never. "LORD" in this verse is the translation of the Hebrew JAHWEH (read: YAHWAY), which is a form of the Hebrew verb "to be" and means "the eternally existing and unchanging one."

When Israel cried for deliverance from Egypt and mortal Moses was called to lead, the pre-incarnate Son of God revealed Himself from the burning bush as JAHWEH. Moses trembled: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh," and "what shall I say to the children of Israel when they ask who

sent me?"

"I AM WHO I AM," the Lord answered; "Tell Israel, 'I AM' (JAHWEH) has sent me to you." (Ex. 3) Again and again God revealed Himself as the "I AM" who is the eternal and unchanging Savior of Old Testament Israel; and the faithful ran to the name of JAHWEH for safety.

The name was everything also for the shepherds who trembled before the "glory of the Lord" that shone around them, revealing their sins. They ran for safety to their "Savior, Christ the Lord." The name was everything to fearful Joseph. He took Mary as his wife because the angel had said: "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; and she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS ("JAHWEH is salvation") for He will save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:20-21).

Years later this same JESUS confronted the Jews with the "mystery of godliness" when He declared His eternal name and divinity, saying: "Before Abraham was, I AM." At the death of Lazarus JESUS comforted Martha by the power of His eternal name: "I AM, the resurrection and the life. He who



Gems
From
Proverbs

believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live!”

This is the Christ of Christmas! If we also must run and dash about this Christmas season, let us make haste in

repentance and faith to the “name that is above every name” (Phil. 2:9-10)—the name of JESUS—our “strong tower”!

—Vance Fossum



The Gospel, the Power of God— Studies in Romans

TO THE GENTILES

“I will call them My people, who were not My people” (Romans 9:25).

There was a time when the apostle Paul, God’s chosen missionary to the Gentiles or non-Jews, thought that he was better suited to be a missionary to the Jews. In fact, when the Lord Jesus told Paul to leave Jerusalem because the Jews in Jerusalem would not listen to him, Paul at first disagreed with the Lord. He said: “Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him” (Acts 22:19-20).

Paul was a Jew. He wanted to preach the good news of Jesus to his own people. Since he had been such a self-righteous, work-righteous Pharisee, he thought he was particularly qualified to speak to his own people. After all, he had been one of Jesus’ enemies, one of the chief persecutors of the Christians. Would it not make a great impression on his Jewish brothers and sisters if he now testified in favor of Jesus and declared Him to be the Christ? Would they not recognize the

power of the risen Jesus since He had turned Paul’s life around and changed him from bitter enemy to zealous preacher of Jesus as the Christ?

But the Lord was not about to change His mind in response to Paul’s appeal. He said to him very plainly: “Get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me....I will send you far from here TO THE GENTILES” (Acts 22:18,21).

The other apostles recognized that Paul was Jesus’ chosen missionary to the Gentiles. As Paul wrote to the Galatians: “they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me” (Gal. 2:7). As we know from the book of Acts, Paul was a zealous missionary, being the first Gospel preacher in such pagan centers as Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth. The Lord blessed his work, and in every place that he preached congregations of Christians came into existence. It was probably not very long before the Gentile Christians outnumbered the Jewish Christians.

By the time Paul wrote his letter to the Christians in Rome, he had been a

missionary for many years. Now it was time for him to reflect on what God had accomplished through him in bringing all of these many Gentiles to faith in Jesus as their Savior. Was it not rather strange that the majority of Jesus' own brothers and sisters in the flesh, His fellow-Jews, rejected Him and His claims, whereas so many non-Jews called Him their Lord and Savior? What was going on here? Had something gone wrong with God's plans for His people?

God's Plan

In chapters 9, 10, and 11 of his letter to the Romans the apostle Paul considered this question of the relationship of Jews and Gentiles to God's plan of salvation. What did the Holy Spirit move Paul to say concerning this question? Let us here summarize some of the main points presented in Romans 9.

1. *It was God's will from the beginning to invite and persuade non-Jews to enjoy the salvation of His people.* For the prophet Hosea had written: "I will call them My people, who were not My people," and "in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God" (Rom. 9:25-26).

Why should anyone find fault with this desire of God to show mercy to persons who had not descended from Abraham? After all, God said to Moses: "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion" (Rom. 9:15). What a glorious thing it is that God determined in advance to call Gentiles into His kingdom of grace!

We especially have reason to thank

and praise God for this mercy. For most of us are not physical descendants of Abraham. We are most likely descendants of Japheth or Ham, rather than of Shem, from whom the Christ was born. Yet God in His love for us laid on Jesus, His Son, all of our sins as well as the sins of the Jews. Jesus died for all, even for us Gentiles. After His victorious resurrection our Lord directed his disciples to preach "repentance and remission of sins...to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:47). According to God's merciful plan His Gospel has come to Chicago and the Twin Cities and Mankato and Eau Claire and Nigeria and India and all the other places where His gracious name is proclaimed. He is showing mercy to us because He wants to show mercy, "and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame" (Rom. 9:33).

2. *God always has a remnant from the Jewish nation as His people.* After all, Paul himself was a Jew and he was included in God's chosen people. The Lord in His mercy had called Paul from the idolatry of Pharisaical work-righteousness to faith in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. What God did in His mercy for Paul He did for many other Jews as well, for example, Peter, James, and John, and the Jews in Berea, of whom it is written: "They searched the Scriptures daily...Therefore many of them believed" (Acts 17:11-12).

The prophet Isaiah wrote: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved" (Rom. 9:27). It is good to know there will always be "a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5). For even though "they are not all Israel who are of Israel" (Rom.

9:6), some of them from Israel will always be God's true Israel, the true seed of Abraham, the true children of God, believing in Jesus as their father Abraham did.

3. *Those Jews (and Gentiles) who seek salvation by the works of the law rather than by faith in Christ will not attain salvation.* God gave His Israelites "the promises" (Rom. 9:4). The only right way to respond to God's promises is to believe them and trust in them. The way of salvation by faith was declared already to Abraham. For it is written: "He (Abraham) believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

But the majority of Abraham's de-

scendants did not walk in Abraham's faith. "They did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law" (Rom. 9:32). That self-chosen way of attaining God's favor and His salvation has always been disastrous, and it remains so to this day. Whoever believes in himself and his own works is hardening himself against God and His mercy, and God may well decide to harden that one who has hardened himself, as He did the Pharaoh of Egypt in days of old. "Whom He will He hardens" (Rom. 9:18). But "whoever believes on Him (Jesus) will not be put to shame" (Rom. 9:33). May God continue to have mercy on us!

—David Lau



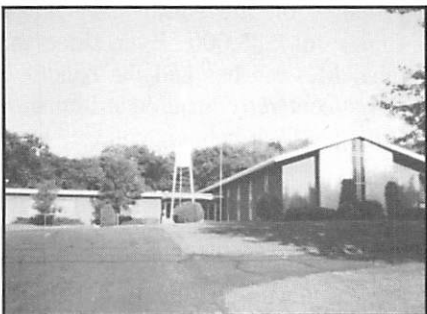
Partners in the Gospel . . .

Messiah Lutheran Church Eau Claire, Wisconsin

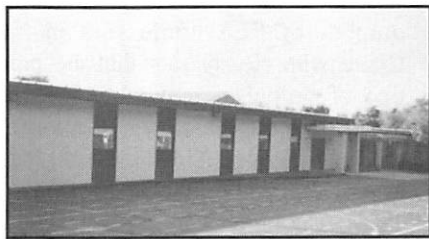
"The Zeal Of The Lord Of Hosts" In Eau Claire

"The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this" (Isa. 37:32). So spoke the Lord's prophet concerning His people

in the days of King Hezekiah of Judah, about 700 years before the birth of our Savior. The Lord in His loving zeal for His people and for all people saved Jerusalem from the Assyrian armies. He



Messiah Church and Part of the School Wing.



New Addition—Fellowship Hall.

did it "for His own sake," He said, "and for His servant David's sake." He did it, not because of the goodness of the people, but because of His own goodness. He did it, not because of the people's faithfulness, but because of His own faithfulness to the promise he made to David concerning the coming Savior. In His zeal to save His people and keep His word, the Lord sent an angel to destroy 185,000 Assyrians in one night. Read Isaiah 37.

The record indicates that our Lord's zeal has also been active in behalf of the remnant of His people in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. In the late fifties it looked as though Eau Claire's Lutherans were on their way to being overwhelmed by the false teachings and the unionistic practices of the time. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), represented in Eau Claire by three congregations, had made a valiant effort on the side of God's truth by suspending its fellowship with the error-tolerating Missouri Synod in 1955. But when the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) later in 1955 failed to follow the fine example of the ELS, the ELS was too weak to carry out its 1955 suspension resolution by breaking all ties with the Synodical Conference, of which the Missouri Synod was the largest and dominant member.

The Lord, however, raised up a number of ELS confessors in Eau Claire who clearly saw that the practice of unionism inevitably leads to doctrinal indifference and the loss of the pure Gospel. Pinehurst congregation of Eau Claire declared in May of 1959: "Scripture warns us clearly and emphatically against the entangle-

ments with errorists, Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10; I Timothy 6:3-5...Therefore be it resolved that the ELS sever relations with the Synodical Conference in this year of our Lord 1959 and take a stand of unadulterated doctrine that will benefit our children and their heirs for generations." A member of Ascension congregation of Eau Claire sent a 45-page letter to ELS officials spelling out in detail the dangers of unionism and the need to act at once in obedience to Scripture.

The ELS did not listen to these pleas, however, nor did the majority of the members of Pinehurst and Ascension congregations. By means of Scripture the Lord led a small minority out of those congregations to form a new congregation in December of 1960. This congregation became known as Messiah Lutheran Church, and through the years since that time the Lord has revealed His zeal for the remnant of His people in some very remarkable ways.

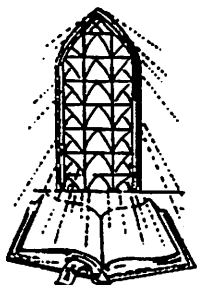
Item: The Lord enabled the small group to buy property and build a church, which was dedicated in 1962.

Item: The Lord guided the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) in January of 1963 to take advantage of a stupendous offer to buy the Ingram property on the south side of Eau Claire for \$85,000. Ever since that time, Messiah has had the benefit of Christ-centered education at Immanuel College (high school, college, seminary).

Item: The Lord moved the growing congregation to open its own elementary school in the fall of 1963 and has blessed it with continuing growth (28 students in 1965, 43 students in 1978,

A Star Shines Bright

1.) *A star shines bright in Eastern skies,
A brighter Star in manger lies:
God's answer to His people's cries.
Hallelujah! Amen!*



2.) *A wise man sees from distant land
The signal sent by God's command,
Redemption's day is now at hand!
Hallelujah! Amen!*

3.) *Led by God's promise, from afar
The Gentiles come to find the Star
Whose splendor sin will never mar.
Hallelujah! Amen!*

4.) *Shine in our hearts, O Savior bright,
Deliver us from sin's dark night,
Against temptation for us fight.
Hallelujah! Amen!*

In recent years we have shared with our readers a Christmas hymn, with music, composed annually by Pastor Paul Schaller. This year we print only the four hymn stanzas. Any who might be interested in the musical score may be in touch with the pastor.

78 students in 1990).

Item: The Lord has provided growth in the number of members, not only through transfers from other CLC congregations, but also through many adult educational opportunities (184 members in 1965, 364 members in 1978, 533 members in August of 1991).

Item: The Lord has provided the means and the strength for three building additions: one in the sixties, one in the seventies, and one in the late eighties.

Item: The Lord has provided dedicated workers on all levels for all the various projects and activities of the congregation.

Item: Although there have been doctrinal struggles and other serious problems, the Lord has thus far preserved the basic unity of the congregation and enabled the members to work together for the cause of the Gospel.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts has done this among us, and we pray that His zeal for us will never fade or falter, and that His zeal for us will move us to respond with zeal for Him and His

Word and the spread of His Gospel. Remember always: The Lord does what He does for His own sake and not because of our goodness. May the abundance of our Lord's blessings to us not move us to indulge in the vanity of selfish pride.

For the record the full-time teachers of Messiah School from 1963 to the present have been Shirley Wendland (1963-68); Mrs. Valborg Radichel (1968-74); Paul Eserhut (1970-71); Constance Bernthal (1971-72); Miriam Duhlmeier (1973-80); Mrs. Eunice Roehl (1980-81); Ann Sprengeler (1981-88); Mrs. Renee Wuerch (1984-85); and our present full-time teachers, LeRoy Hulke (from 1974); Mrs. Barbara Hulke (from 1984); and Mrs. Carla Pelzl (from 1988). A half-time kindergarten teacher was called to begin work in January of 1987: Mrs. Carla Pelzl. Mrs. Betty Oster is the kindergarten teacher at present. Joseph Lau and Mrs. Marion Dommer are part-time teachers.

Pastors serving the congregation on a regular basis have been Keith Olmanson (1960-62); Arvid Gullerud (1960-69); Lester Schierenbeck (1962-82); and David Lau (1982-91). The present pastor of the congregation is Paul Tiefel, Jr. who began his ministry at Messiah on August 11, 1991.

— *David Lau*



Change Of Address

Pastor James A. Albrecht
66325 N-152 W.
Dowagiac, MI 49047

Michael Thom
1716 E. Kemp Ave.
Watertown, SD 57201
Phone (605) 886-2976

Installation

Authorized by President Daniel Fleischer, I installed Miss Beth Johannes as teacher at Trinity Lutheran School of Watertown, South Dakota on August 11, 1991.

— *Michael Thom*

Wanted:

Christian Day School Materials

Messiah Lutheran Church, Hales Corners, Wisconsin has resolved to start a grade school in the fall of 1992. We are interested in purchasing used textbooks, reference materials, etc. A more complete list of items needed is available from the school board chairman, John Mueller (Phone 414-544-2033). Thank you.

Correction

The statement was made in the August *Lutheran Spokesman* that Jesus died "because He was under the power of sin" (p. 4). Since this manner of expression has not generally been used in the church and has been understood by some readers to imply either that Jesus was a sinner or that He did not give Himself into death willingly, I wish to retract the statement. The following can be substituted: "Why did Jesus die? Because God transferred our sin from us sinners to Him."

— *D. Lau*