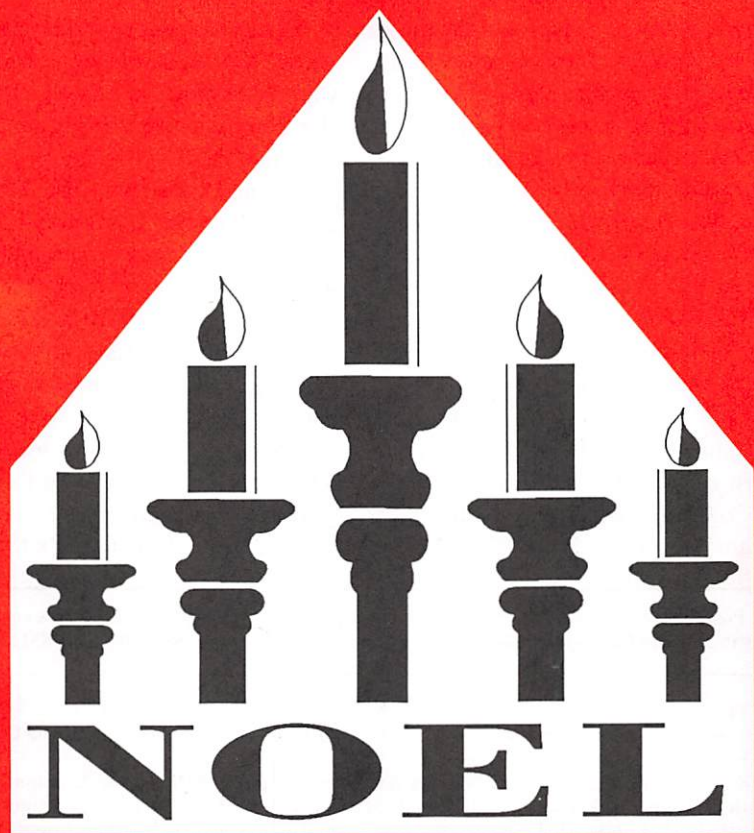


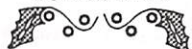
December 1992
Vol. 35 No. 6
(Issn 0024-7537)

Lutheran Spokesman



*Church of the
Lutheran Confession*

In This Issue



- * Christmas Devotions
- * "So Dark The Night"
- * "Christmas Memories"
- * Mission Work In Africa
- * Pastor Joel Fleischer
- * DAILY BIBLE
READING GUIDE-
1993



A Recipe For Christmas Bread



Christmas cookies. Christmas candy. Fruitcake and lefse. Perhaps we all have our favorite recipes for Christmas, together with the sights and smells and tastes that so linger in our memories. Next to the Christmas Eve program and the unwrapping of gifts, my own particular memory was of donuts. Once a year on Christmas Eve morning, mom would make raised donuts. Dozens of donuts. Donuts with myriad kinds of frosting. Enough donuts to satisfy for days.

Donuts and cookies might make wonderful memories, but they really have little to do with the true meaning of Christmas. Therefore, what is offered is another recipe for Christmas baking, an old recipe, an eternal recipe for Christmas Bread that will never fail to excite and satisfy.

The first ingredient for this Christmas Bread is a place—a small town in the hill country of Judah. In the original language Bethlehem means “House of Bread.” In Micah’s

time Bethlehem was small and seemingly insignificant. Yet of it the prophet foretold: *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. (Micah 5:2)*

To my knowledge Micah was not a baker. Yet hundreds of years before Christ’s birth he was already kneading the dough, reiterating and further defining God’s promise of a Savior who would come from the “House of Bread.” Said the Lord later: *I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. (Jn. 6:51)*

Now take the first ingredient and gently place it in the midst of a hungry people. That the people were waiting expectantly can be shown by the wise men from the east who followed the guiding star for many miles to worship at the Christchild’s feet. That

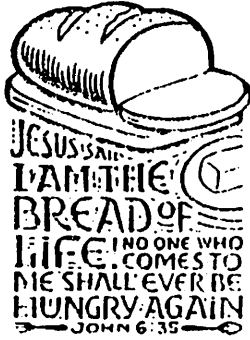
Postmaster: Second Class postage paid at Lake Mills, IA 50450. Send address corrections (Form 3579) to Lutheran Spokesman, 2750 Oxford Street North, Roseville, MN 55113.

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, 238 Nicollet Ave., No. Mankato, MN 56003; Assistant Editor: Keith Olmanson; Artists: W. Bernthal, M. Schaser; Staff (Also District Reporters): D. Bernthal, M. Bohde, D. Fuerstenau (West Central), J. Klatt, D. Koenig, Joseph Lau, R. Mackensen, Bertram Naumann, P. Naumann, G. Radtke (Great Lakes), Rollin Reim (Pacific Coast), P. Schaller, D. Schierenbeck (Minnesota), John Schierenbeck (South-Eastern), M. Sydow.

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 to 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.



the people were hungering for righteousness and deliverance is revealed in the examples of both Simeon and Anna. They were waiting. They sought fulfillment of God's ancient promise. They were fed, and then *gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem (Lk. 2:38).*

The Most Necessary Ingredient

In fact, the whole world was ready, hungering for bread of substance. The gods of the Greeks were always dead; those of Rome were found wanting. *In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son...to redeem those under the law (Gal. 4:4).* The whole world was ready, and at this time came forth the Bread of Life.

To be truly hungry means to recognize our own spiritual bankruptcy and to despair of our sinful condition. It means to seek forgiveness and peace from Him who is Peace. You can't have this Christmas Bread without a hungering spirit.

Finally, add cupfuls of endless love. The theme of every Christmas is love. Even those who are neither Christian nor religious are moved by

the power of this season. Enemies lay down their guns; competitors buy one another gifts; love fills the air. But it is not the love of our recipe. Cupfuls of endless love came wrapped in swaddling clothes in the person of Jesus Christ. Cupfuls of endless and divine love led Him, as our substitute, to Good Friday's cross. It is this holy and eternal love of God for sinners everywhere that caused angels to sing, and sent shepherds to the stable to adore Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Banana bread without bananas is not banana bread. Neither is Christmas bread without Christ Christmas Bread; it is only a "mas" (mess). Cupfuls of divine love in Jesus Christ is a most necessary ingredient.

Have you tasted this recipe? Have you followed the guiding star to the House of Bread? Have you hungered for a perfect righteousness not like your own: filthy and tainted? Has the love of Christ captured your heart? Have you rejoiced in the sure knowledge that you are a sinner forgiven, redeemed by Christ, and saved for eternity by a love and grace that knows no limits? If so, please pass this recipe along to others who haven't.

And if, perchance, you haven't, or if Christmas somehow seems too secular and meaningless, then try this special recipe for happiness and Christmas joy. Take a small village, fold it into a hungering spirit, and pray the Holy Spirit blend the love of Christ generously into your life. You will taste the difference. Eat and be well satisfied.

—David Fuerstenau

Christmas 1992

As this is written we are approaching the elections. As you read it the elections are past. Campaigns are long on promises. It seems that for the most part the promises are seldom brought to completion. Those who promise oft times make promises that are too grandiose. At times they who make the promises are unable to convince those they must to translate the promises into reality. Consequently, skeptical voters take the promises with a large grain of salt.

Of course, broken promises are not unique to politicians. We no doubt have all made promises to another which, for whatever reason, have not been kept. We certainly all have felt the hurt of a broken promise.

This only serves to remind us of how great is our God in His faithfulness. Occasionally the question is asked of what value it is for the believers of the New Testament to study the Old Testament. There are obviously many reasons, not the least of which is the assurance that we receive in recognizing that with our Father in heaven a promise made is a promise kept.

The believers of the Old Testament were won to the Lord by promises. In the garden man trashed the promise of the "good" life. By the time he realized what he had done, it was too late. All that was left for him was to try vainly to hide from God. Yet the offended God, in expression of the greatness of His love, made another promise. In a master stroke, worthy



only of the Father, He turned the tables on the devil. He promised to Adam and Eve that of her the "Seed" would be born who would restore innocence and life.

Ah, what comfort and relief. But note that in the promise of relief for Adam and Eve from the burden of sin and guilt and eternal death, there was simultaneously a "promise" to the devil. In the restoration of eternal life to fallen man, the Seed would crush the head—destroy the power—of satan. Jesus Christ would deal a death blow to the evil foe. The Lord *promised* it! (Genesis 3:15)

The Father nurtured His promises through the Old Testament. He reaffirmed and illustrated His promises through "audiovisual" aids, e. g., the passover. The heavenly Father made promise. He needed consult with no one else. He had the authority to bring His promise to completion.

And so, *When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law... (Gal. 4:4). Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated "God with us" (Mt.*

1:23). This is none other than He who is called *Jesus, (who) shall save His people from their sins* (Mt. 1:21). Now, remember the promise made to satan. God keeps promise for our comfort and for satan's destruction: *(Christ) was manifested that He should destroy the works of the devil* (1 Jn. 1:3).

We can spell "promise": C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S. We can spell "Christmas": J-E-S-U-S. In Him we have promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come! Trust it. *For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God...* (2 Cor. 1:20). Jesus, the Seed of promise, has reconciled us to God by His death and resurrection. Through His poverty He has made us rich—rich in forgiveness, peace, hope, and life.

Ours is an evil day. Christians are tried and tested. The church is beset by foes from within and without. Where is the promise of deliverance?

Keep in mind, our God is not slack concerning His promise. He has delivered us from the grasp of sin, death, and devil in keeping with His promise. He has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church.

Make no mistake. Satan will fight going down, but he WILL go down. Christ, the Seed of the woman—promised so long ago—has obtained the victory on Calvary. For those in Christ Jesus only one promise remains to come to completion: that of reception, in its fullness, of the inheritance already laid up for us. The Lord has promised. AMEN!

A blessed Christmas to you, in Christ, Who is the sum and substance of the Father's promise, and indeed, the fulfillment of promise, and therefore also our guarantor of blessings in time and for eternity.

*In Christ,
Daniel Fleischer*

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

The inevitable glitter and glitz of Christmas is eclipsed by the constant shine of God's unspeakable Gift in the Manger. To each of our readers a blessed Christmas—and a New Year of Peace and Joy in that unspeakable Gift!



IMMANUEL—GOD WITH US

Matthew 1:18-25

The Holy Spirit caused the apostle Matthew to record the birth of Jesus from the viewpoint of Joseph, the man engaged to Mary. While Mary was engaged to Joseph, it was revealed that Mary was pregnant. Joseph could only conclude that Mary had been unfaithful to him.

Joseph was a kind and just man. Rather than making Mary a public example and denouncing her before the law, Joseph had decided to quietly break the engagement and divorce her. Here was Mary, the mother of our Lord, facing public shame and desertion by her intended husband Joseph. Mary did nothing to right the situation but left all things to God's direction.

A Virgin Conceived

As Joseph meditated on these things, an angel of the Lord appeared with unbelievable news. The child which Mary carried was conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. Most people would not have even believed an angel. But Joseph was given the faith to believe this miracle of salvation. In this child to be born of Mary, God became man.

It is important to realize that Joseph's faith rested on the sure and certain Word of God. It was revealed to Joseph and to us that the birth of Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation to His people in the book of Isaiah. The Lord gave King Ahaz of Judah a sign of victory over Syria. This sign was also a confirmation of God's victory over sin and death in the coming Messiah. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall

conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). The fulfillment of this sign became apparent to Joseph in the conception of this special child. All of this was done so that it might be fulfilled as was spoken by the Lord through the prophet.

Precious Names

The promises of God are contained in the names given this special child by God. Joseph was told to call His name Jesus. Jesus means savior—one who delivers God's people from their enemies. This is the precious name given to God's Son in human flesh. This is the name that is above all other names. This is the only name given among men whereby we must be saved. The name Jesus is so precious at Christmas because this Jesus is God's Son who became man to give His life a ransom for many.

But this child is also given the name Immanuel by the prophet. This name Immanuel means God-with-us. This is the heart and center of the Christmas message. In Jesus, the Word made flesh, God is with us. God became man so that He could taste of death for all men and thus finish off the one who had the power of death—the devil.

Jesus is true man, born of the Virgin Mary. God's Son has become

our Brother. God-with-us means that Jesus' death and resurrection joins us to God. The birth of Jesus means that God is on our side. This Christmas we celebrate the birth of God's Son. In the conception, birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God is with us.

Joseph believed the Gospel promises of God. In faith he took Mary as his wife. He named her firstborn Son Jesus. After Jesus is twelve years old, the Scriptures tell us no more of Joseph. It is probable that Joseph died before Jesus began His public ministry. Joseph is an example of a Christmas faith in Jesus—God-with-us.

May God Be With You!

Almost 2,000 years later our hearts are moved and stirred by the good

news of the birth of God's Son. Amidst the troubles and uncertainties of life, we are sustained by the promise that in Jesus, God is still with us.

In its early formative years, the Church of the Lutheran Confession chose the name Immanuel for its high school, college and seminary. This was a commitment to the importance of Christian education and the training of pastors and teachers in this new church body.

It was also a statement of faith. God is with us in Jesus Christ and His saving Gospel. This Christmas season may God be with you. For we celebrate the birth of Immanuel.

—*John Schierenbeck*



Gems From Proverbs—

**“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him”
(Prov. 26:12)**



“Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?”

So spoke the Magi from the east when they arrived in Jerusalem, the capital city of the Jews. We call them “wise men” and so they were, but they were not wise in their own eyes. Their wisdom had brought them to the city of King Herod, and they found no billboards or street signs to help them

to the royal nursery. Now perhaps they had reason to wonder whether their original information was correct.

Nor was there anything to bolster their confidence when they started asking around town for the new-born king. Instead the whole town seemed to become disturbed at their questions, beginning with King Herod himself.

King Herod. Now, there was a man

wise in his own eyes. He knew how to operate a kingdom. He knew how to get things done. He knew how to journey to Rome and ingratiate himself with the emperor, so that he might be appointed king over this portion of "Syria." Herod knew how people did not always say what they meant, and how they could be plotting to take his throne even while they smiled and called him "Father." He knew where to go to find out about the Messiah prophecies, too. The religious leaders, they ought to know where the Messiah was to be born. He knew how to make these strangers from the east serve his purpose, too. He knew how to get information from them that could be used later, if all else failed. He knew just what to do with any new-born Christ, too. With a smile and a fine bow, he would snuff out the young life.

Far be it from Herod, or the others in the court, to follow the directions of the prophet and go to Bethlehem. That was for fools like these Magi from the east.

But the Magi knew they were ignorant by themselves. They depended on the message of the star. Then they depended on the message of the prophet Micah, even though they left Jerusalem alone, without the encouragement of having any of the Messiah's own people join them in their quest.

The fool mentioned in the Proverb is characterized by constantly making the wrong choices. But if it becomes obvious even to him, there is hope that he might be open to some direction from outside. But the man who is wise in his own eyes will not look for help, whether star, or Word, and certainly

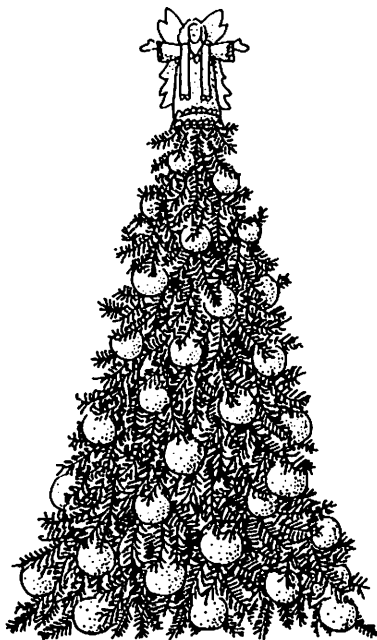
will not kneel down before a poor and lowly baby.

"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him."

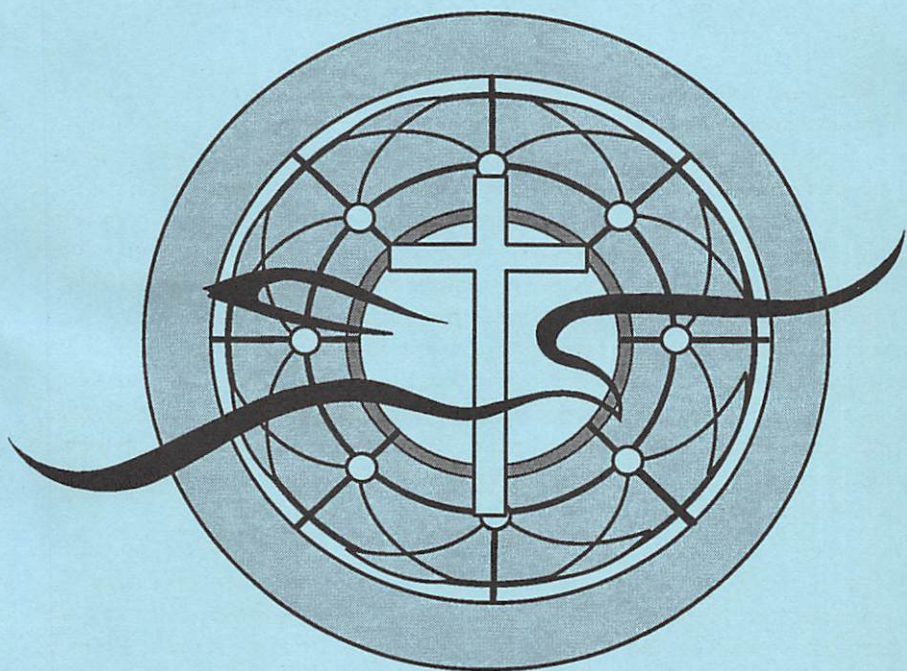
Because of our sinful flesh, we might be wise in our own eyes without even realizing it. How can we tell? We might ask ourselves: "Do we undertake things without seeking God's guidance?" Seeing our own weakness, we see that it is a step *up* to kneel in the dust before the Babe of Bethlehem, who has come to be for us wisdom from God, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

"When you think you're green, you can grow, but when you think you're ripe, you can only get rotten." God grant us this grace in 1993, and even unto the end of the world: to be fools in our own eyes, dependent on His wisdom.

—P. Schaller



the bread of life



daily devotions
booklet #3
calendar year 1993

Removeable Supplement to the *Lutheran Spokesman*

From The Editor:

DAILY DEVOTIONS - BOOKLET #3

Hearty thanks goes to retired pastor Rollin A. Reim for his labor of love in preparing the coming year's daily Bible readings. We leave it to the compiler to choose the direction of the readings each new year. With the 1993 readings, rather than a theme and hymn verse as in the past, the suggestion is given to follow "Luther's way of responding to the Word" including "building a prayer" on the reading according to the ACTS—Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. Along the same lines, maybe the following would be helpful.

Seeking "Something"

We don't remember where we read it, but we do recall reading of an idea—also attributed to Luther—that each Bible reading, even if but a single verse, can be profitably studied by looking for three things: something to confess, something for which to thank God, and something for which to ask God.

We used this method for family devotions for a time when our children were small, and remember their generally eager responses. Take the familiar John 3:16. *Something to confess?*: Lord, I confess that by myself and on my own I deserve to perish in my sins. *Something for which to thank God?*: Dear God, I thank You for Your great love for the world of sinners; for the gift of Your only-begotten Son as Savior; for everlasting life in Jesus. *Something for which to ask God?*: Dear God, through Your Holy Spirit give me the faith to believe in Jesus as my Savior. Similarly, take any Bible passage, single verse or longer reading (such as the 1993 readings), seeking responses to the three "somethings."

"Building" A Prayer

As an encouragement to you to indeed try Pastor Reim's—and Luther's—suggestions for "building a prayer," you may wish to refer to the Collects in *The Lutheran Hymnal* for the Sundays in the Church Year. Most of these Collects follow quite closely the ACTS idea.

For example, see the Collect for New Year's Day:

"Almighty and everlasting God, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift..."—that's ADORATION;

"...we give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits, temporal and spiritual, bestowed upon us in the year past..."—that's THANKSGIVING;

"...and we beseech Thee of Thy goodness, grant us a favorable and joyful year, defend us from all dangers and adversities, and send upon us the fullness of Thy blessing..."—that's SUPPLICATION.

"...through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth..."—He is our only Mediator before the throne.

After each reading and brief study of the 1993 Daily Bible Readings, why not have one of the family members seek to "build a prayer" according to the ACTS. The Spirit bless your devotions!

Daily Bible Reading Guide—Calendar Year 1993

DAY BY DAY

“We like our readings to be *seasonal*,” said one regular user of the *Spokesman* annual Bible Reading Guide. Such comments led to the design for 1993. For each week we have selected readings which relate to the theme for Sunday, the first day.

Since most congregations will follow Series A of the three year plan, we let the lessons of that plan establish the focus for the week, bringing us a precious aspect of the “whole counsel of God.” Your weekday readings will support and extend the theme of the Sunday worship service.

A suggestion for worship at home: Ask yourself (or those with you at table) how the appointed reading relates to the previous Sunday’s service. Then “garland the text” with a prayer that builds its Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (“ACTS”) on the message of the reading.

This was Luther’s way of responding to the Word. It insures that our praying is “according to the will of God.” Do try it!

—Rollin A. Reim

January 1, The Name of Jesus

Friday, Numbers 6:22-27; Saturday, Romans 1:1-7

January 3, 2nd Sunday after Christmas

1 Samuel 2:1-10; Luke 2:39-52; 1 John 5:11-13

January 6, The Epiphany of Our Lord

Wednesday, Isaiah 60:1-6; Thursday, Matthew 2:1-12;

Friday, Ephesians 3:1-12; Saturday, Psalm 72:1-11

January 10, 1st Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 42:1-7; Mark 1:4-11; Acts 10:34-38; Psalm 45:7-9;

Luke 3:15-22; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Matthew 3:13-17

January 17, 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany

Psalm 67; 1 Samuel 3:1-10; John 1:43-51; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20;

Isaiah 62:1-5; John 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

January 24, 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany

Psalm 62:5-12; Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Mark 1:14-20;

1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Isaiah 61:1-6; Luke 4:14-21;

1 Corinthians 12:12-21, 26-27

January 31, 4th Sunday after the Epiphany

Psalm 36; Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Mark 1:21-28;

1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Luke 4:21-32;

1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13

February 7, 5th Sunday after the Epiphany
Psalm 147:1-12; Job 7:1-7; Mark 1:29-39;
1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Isaiah 6:1-13; Luke 5:1-11;
1 Corinthians 14:12b-20

February 14, 6th Sunday after the Epiphany
Psalm 32; 2 Kings 5:1-14; Mark 1:40-45;
1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Jeremiah 17:5-8; Luke 6:17-26;

February 21, The Transfiguration of Our Lord
Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Kings 2:1-12; Mark 9:2-9

February 24, Ash Wednesday
Psalm 51:1-13; Joel 2:12-19; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21;
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:2

February 28, 1st Sunday in Lent
Psalm 6; Genesis 22:1-18; Mark 1:12-15; Romans 8:31-39;
Deuteronomy 26:5-10; Luke 4:1-13; Romans 10:8b-13

March 7, 2nd Sunday in Lent
Psalm 142; Genesis 28:10-22; Mark 8:31-38; Romans 5:1-11;
Jeremiah 26:8-15; Luke 13:31-35; Philippians 3:17-4:1

March 14, 3rd Sunday in Lent
Psalm 19:7-14; Exodus 20:1-17; John 2:13-22;
1 Corinthians 1:22-25; Exodus 3:1-8a, 10-15;
Luke 13:1-9; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

March 21, 4th Sunday in Lent
Psalm 27:1-14; Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21; Ephesians 2:4-10;
Isaiah 12:1-6; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

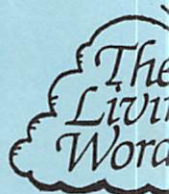
March 28, 5th Sunday in Lent
Psalm 51:10-15; Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 12:20-33; Hebrews 5:7-9;
Isaiah 43:16-21; Luke 20:9-19; Philippians 3:8-14

April 4, Palm Sunday
Psalm 92; Isaiah 42:1-9; Matthew 26:14-25; Romans 5:6-11;
Exodus 24:3-11; John 18:1-19:42; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

April 11, The Resurrection of Our Lord
Psalm 118:1-2, 15-24; Isaiah 25:6-9, John 20:1-18;
1 Corinthians 15:19-28; Exodus 15:1-11; Luke 24:1-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

April 18, 2nd Sunday of Easter
Psalm 148; Acts 3:13-26; John 20:19-31; 1 John 5:1-6;
Acts 5:12, 17-32; Psalm 100; Revelation 1:4-18

April 25, 3rd Sunday of Easter
Psalm 139:1-12; Acts 4:8-12; Luke 24:36-49; 1 John 1:1-2:2
Acts 9:1-20; John 21:1-14; Revelation 5:11-14





May 2, 4th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 23; Acts 4:23-33; John 10:11-18; 1 John 3:1-2;
Acts 13:15-16a, 26-33; John 10:22-30; Revelation 7:9-17

May 9, 5th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 22:25-31; Acts 8:26-40; John 15:1-8; 1 John 3:18-24;
Acts 13:44-52; John 13:31-35; Revelation 21:1-5

May 16, 6th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 98; Acts 11:19-30; John 15:9-17; 1 John 4:1-11

May 20, The Ascension of Our Lord

Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:7-13

May 23, 7th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 133; Acts 1:15-26; John 17:11b-19; 1 John 4:13-21;
Acts 16:6-10; John 17:20-26; Revelation 22:12-17, 20

May 30, Day of Pentecost

Psalm 143; Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 7:37-39a; Acts 2:22-36;
Genesis 11:1-9; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-11; Acts 2:37-47

June 6, The Holy Trinity (1st Sunday after Pentecost)

Psalm 96; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; John 3:1-17; Romans 8:14-17;
Proverbs 8:22-31; John 16:12-15; Romans 5:1-5

June 13, 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 142; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Mark 2:23-28;
2 Corinthians 4:5-12; 1 Kings 8:22-30, 41-43; Luke 7:1-10; Galatians 1:1-10

June 20, 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 28; Genesis 3:9-15; Mark 3:20-35; 2 Corinthians 4:13-18;
1 Kings 17:17-24; Luke 7:11-17; Galatians 1:11-24

June 27, 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 92:1-15; Ezekiel 17:22-24; Mark 4:26-34; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10;
2 Samuel 11:26-12:10, 13-15; Luke 7:36-50; Galatians 2:11-21

July 4, 5th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32; Job 38:1-11; Mark 4:35-41; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21;
Zechariah 12:7-10; Luke 9:18-24; Galatians 3:23-29

July 11, 6th after Pentecost

Psalm 121; Lamentations 3:22-33; Mark 5:24b-34; 2 Corinthians 8:1-14;
1 Kings 19:14-21; Luke 9:51-62; Galatians 5:1, 13-25

July 18, 7th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 143:1-2, 5-8; Ezekiel 2:1-5; Mark 6:1-6; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10;
Isaiah 66:10-14; Luke 10:1-12, 16-20; Galatians 6:1-10, 14-16

July 25, 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 126; Amos 7:10-15; Mark 6:7-13; Ephesians 1:3-14;
Deuteronomy 30:9-14; Luke 10:25-37; Colossians 1:1-14

August 1, 9th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 27; Jeremiah 23:1-6; Mark 6:30-34; Ephesians 2:13-22;
Genesis 18:1-14; Luke 10:38-42; Colossians 1:21-28

August 8, 10th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26; Exodus 24:3-11; John 6:1-15; Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16;
Genesis 18:20-32; Luke 11:1-13; Colossians 2:6-15

August 15, 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 119:89-104; Exodus 16:2-15; John 6:24-35; Ephesians 4:17-24;
Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:18-26; Luke 12:13-21; Colossians 3:1-11

August 22, 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 34:1-8; 1 Kings 19:4-8; John 6:41-51; Ephesians 4:30-5:2;
Genesis 15:1-6; Luke 12:32-40; Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

August 29, 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 34:9-14; Proverbs 9:1-6; John 6:51-58; Ephesians 5:15-20;
Jeremiah 23:23-29; Luke 12:49-53; Hebrews 12:1-13

September 5, 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 34:15-22; Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18; John 6:60-69; Ephesians 5:21-31;
Isaiah 66:18-23; Luke 13:22-30; Hebrews 12:18-24

September 12, 15th after Pentecost

Psalm 119:129-136; Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23;
Ephesians 6:10-20; Proverbs 25:6-7; Luke 14:1, 7-14; Hebrews 13:1-8

September 19, 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 146; Isaiah 35:4-7a; Mark 7:31-37; James 1:17-27;
Proverbs 9:8-12; Luke 14:25-33; Philemon 1-21

September 26, 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 116:1-9; Isaiah 50:4-10; Mark 8:27-35; James 2:1-5, 8-10, 14-18;
Exodus 32:7-14; Luke 15:1-10; 1 Timothy 1:12-17

October 3, 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 119:25-32; Jeremiah 11:18-20; Mark 9:30-37; James 3:16-4:6;
Amos 8:4-7; Luke 16:1-13; 1 Timothy 2:1-8

October 10, 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 135:1-7, 13-14; Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29; Mark 9:38-50;
James 4:7-12; Amos 6:1-7; Luke 16:19-31; 1 Timothy 6:6-16

October 17, 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 119:49-56; Genesis 2:18-24; Mark 10:2-16; Hebrews 2:9-18;
Habakkuk 1:1-3, 2:1-4; Luke 17:1-10; 2 Timothy 1:3-14

October 24, 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 119:73-80; Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Mark 10:17-30; Hebrews 3:1-6;
Ruth 1:1-19a; Luke 17:11-19; 2 Timothy 2:8-13

October 31, Reformation Day

Psalm 46; Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 8:31-36; Romans 3:19-28;
Isaiah 55:1-11; Matthew 11:12-15; Revelation 14:6-7

November 7, 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 126; Jeremiah 31:7-9; Mark 10:36-42; Hebrews 5:1-10;
Deuteronomy 10:12-22; Luke 18:9-14; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

November 14, 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 119:121-128; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Mark 12:28-37; Hebrews 7:23-28;
Exodus 34:5-9; Luke 19:1-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5, 11-12

November 21, Christ the King, Last Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 130; Isaiah 51:4-6; Mark 13:32-37; Revelation 1:4b-8;
Malachi 3:14-18; Luke 12:42-48; Revelation 22:6-13

November 28, 1st Sunday in Advent

Psalm 25:1-9; Jeremiah 33:14-16; Luke 21:25-36; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13;
Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 24:37-44; Romans 13:11-14

December 5, 2nd Sunday in Advent

Psalm 126; Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 3:1-6; Philippians 1:3-11;
Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:1-12; Romans 15:4-13.

December 12, 3rd Sunday in Advent

Psalm 146; Isaiah 12:2-6; Luke 3:7-18; Philippians 4:4-9;
Isaiah 35:1-10; Matthew 11:2-11; James 5:7-10

December 19, 4th Sunday in Advent

Psalm 96; Micah 5:2-4; Luke 1:39-55; Hebrews 10:5-10;
Isaiah 7:10-17; Luke 2:1-20; Hebrews 1:1-9

December 26, 1st Sunday after Christmas

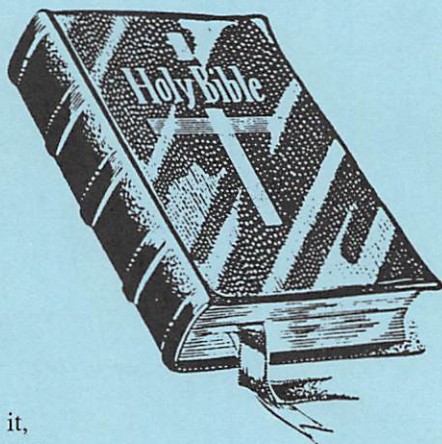
Psalm 111; Jeremiah 31:10-13; Luke 2:41-52; Hebrews 2:10-18;
Galatians 4:4-7; Psalm 121

AND A GLAD NEW YEAR TO ALL THE EARTH!



The Holy Bible

When childhood needs a standard,
Or youth a beacon light,
When sorrow sighs for comfort,
Or weakness longs for might,
Bring forth the Holy Bible—
The Bible! There it stands!
Resolving all life's problems
And meeting its demands.



Though sophistry conceal it,
The Bible! There it stands!
The Pharisees profane it,
Its influence expands.
It fills the world with fragrance
Whose sweetness never cloys;
It lifts our eyes to heaven,
It heightens human joys.

Despised and torn in pieces,
By infidels decried,
With thunderbolts of hatred
By haughty cynics' pride—
All these have railed against it,
In this and other lands;
Yet dynasties have fallen,
And still the Bible stands.

To Paradise a highway,
The Bible! There it stands!
Its promises unailing,
Nor grievous its commands.
It points man to his Savior,
The Lover of his soul;
Salvation is its watchword,
Eternity its goal.

—James Gray



Merry Christmas

So Dark The Night

P. Schallha 1982

1. So dark the night! Oh, who can see A ba - by born in
2. So dark the night! Oh, who will show Towns - men and shep - herds

pov - er - ty? No wealth, no pow'r! What does he bring That we should gather
where to go To find the babe who takes our name And comes to suffer

round and sing: Hal - - le - lu - jah! A - men ! A - men !
all our shame? Hal - - le - lu - jah! A - men ! A - men !

3. So dark the night! And just a word.
But from the angel of the Lord!
It is enough. His Word leads all
To lowly shed and cattle stall.
Hallelujah! Amen! Amen!
4. So dark the night! Yet shines the Light,
And Baby Jesus calms our fright.
The angels tune our hearts again:
Glory to God and peace to men,
Hallelujah! Amen! Amen!

Spiritual Encounters (#9 in Series, Concluded)—John 3:1-21

Witnessing To Those Who Have...

Wrong Loyalties

While the rich young ruler went away sorrowing (see Mt. 19), and we do not know the final outcome of his life, with Nicodemus in this case we are certain. Nicodemus also at first went away and did not follow the Lord. Later we see his faith demonstrated in his work at the burial of our Lord. This example should give us encouragement in that we may not see results at first, though over time and out of our sight the Lord can work.

Nicodemus had been brought up in the work-righteous hypocrisy of Judaism. This has to account for his not understanding our Lord's teaching. But our Lord planted the seeds that the Spirit might later sprout them in Nicodemus' heart. On being born anew—born of water and the Spirit—he asks: "How can this be?" He does not at this point see that a break must be made with his past.

The Lord explains how the bronze serpent prefigured Christ's sacrifice. This is one of the many Old Testament pictures of the Redeemer. To a man like Nicodemus, high in Judaism and therefore familiar with Scripture, this had to leave an impression. Over and over again in the New Testament record we read of how what Christ said or did was to fulfill Scripture. Even if the person to whom we are witnessing is not familiar with Scripture as Nicodemus was, we can still use the prophetic

fulfillments in Christ to point out how He was the Messiah, the Savior. God promised. God fulfilled.

The Lord gives a warning to Nicodemus not to join in with those who reject the Son, the Light. And it is here that we have that best-known passage of the Gospel, John 3:16. Jesus does give Nicodemus the Gospel, deeming him an inquirer and not one of those who came to test and entrap. We have to make a similar judgment with our prospect. We will know by how our witness is received. One honestly questioning should have the Gospel left with him.

There are many who have loyalty to the wrong thing or person. Nicodemus' loyalty was to Judaism and the Sanhedrin. The apostle Paul, in witnessing to Felix (Acts 24:22f), came across a man who had a head knowledge of the Way, while his loyalty was to Rome, power, and money. Paul tried mightily to show Agrippa the truth of Jesus and forgiveness of sins (Acts 26:1f), only to have the king fall back on his power and the Jewish people who had him for king.

It is a matter of "loyalty to Christ or...". So very many will pick the "or...". Only let us not become discouraged, but trust the Holy Spirit to accomplish His will through our witness.

With these examples of spiritual encounters we have surely seen that

there is so much to learn about witnessing to our Lord. Yet one thing stands out starkly: we must do it.

—D. Koenig

(We thank Pastor Koenig for the instructive and inspiring messages he has shared with us in this series.—
Ed.)



What Is This Thing Called Love?

LOVE IS NOT SELFISH

We are living in a world where healthy *self-esteem* is the stated goal of child-reading, of classroom instruction, even of career and vocation. The problems of mankind are attributed to low self-esteem—what people believe about themselves. Experts advise people having trouble in their lives to become Chairman of the Board of ME., INC. The imperatives of *self-love* have stretched their tentacles into every facet of our lives.

The goals seem so admirable. Everyone benefits when people are psychologically healthy. We don't want our children to grow up mental cripples who are unable to function independently.

One of the concerns we have is talking about and labeling the problem accurately. To do that we move from the realm of secular analysis to the Word of God. We first learn that the root of our problems is spiritual in nature. Something is wrong with our relationship with almighty God. He has told us what the problem is and left us the witness of our consciences to testify that the problem is real for each one of us. God calls the problem SIN. "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (I Jn. 3:4).

And one of the basic characteristics of sin is selfishness. A Christian of an earlier time reminded us that the most pervasive false god in the world is not Buddha or Krishna or Tien. It is the perpendicular pronoun idol: I. During the Old Testament era of the Judges "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6). The Bible warns that "in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self..." (2 Tim. 3:1-2). Today's version: do your own thing.

God provided His own solution for our sin problem. He sent Jesus to be the perfect, "just right," payment to take away our sins. His Son's very act of redemption displays the very selflessness which becomes His gift to those who trust in Him. "We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his



neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ **did not please Himself**; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me’” (Rom. 15:1-3; emphasis mine).

The apostle Paul offers the non-selfish solution of love to a congregation which had confused its priorities, and everyone was doing his own thing—right in the worship itself. Paul says: “Love does not seek its own” (1 Cor. 13:5). Love is not selfish. People who love don’t have to have things their way.

The love of Christ is the resource and the model. “This is My commandment, that you love one

another as I have loved you” (Jn. 15:2). “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being” (1 Cor. 10:24).

In this current world of self-this and self-that, is there anything to say about something within oneself to reflect the benefits of Christ’s atoning death? Our Savior does want us to have self-confidence. It is not a confidence in oneself, but within oneself in Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

—M. Sydow



Mission Work In Africa—Still A Need?

“Shouldn’t the 6th and 7th book of Moses be in the Bible?”

“Why isn’t the 6th and 7th book of Moses in the Bible!”

Questions like this quickly make one realize that one is in an entirely different culture, situation, and country, far different indeed from the parish ministry in the USA. It is even more disconcerting, surprising, and shocking when as a missionary—and as a Professor in the Bible Institute and therefore an “expert” on the subject of the Bible—one is hit with such questions. They are asked in all seriousness by students, NCLC members, and inquirers of our teaching and doctrine.

To be knowledgeable and prepared one digs in, finds, and reads some

books that up to this time I have never even heard of, on anything related to the question of canon and text of the Bible. One finds books on the subject of mission work in Africa. One can read all the literature on the transition of the culture, traditions, and religion of the Africans to Christianity. This helps one to learn the background and mind-set of the peoples, their awareness of the Bible and its meaning, thus to be better prepared to answer their questions. (Contact me or your pastor who will be able to direct you to books on foreign mission work, especially work in Nigeria. Northwestern Publishing House has a number of interesting titles on African mission work by E. H. Wendland.)

Is there a need for us and our work,

our continuing presence among the Africans, Nigerians, NCLC peoples? One author quoted an African author as stating that there are over 6,000 indigenous cults in Africa. Another states that there are 250 denominations in the U.S., most represented by missions and missionaries in Nigeria. In addition there are other denominations from other countries that are also represented there. A need for true doctrine among this proliferation of teachings and this overwhelming confusion of voices? YES!!!

After one and one-half years working in Nigeria I came to the conclusion that it is as Wendland states in one of his books: "tradition and religion are inseparable" and "the entire life of the African is by tradition a religious drama or experience." And so what role does Christianity take in their lives? How is it incorporated into their existing philosophy of religious beliefs and their living out of their ancient customs, traditions, practices? How separate can they become from all that they have grown up with, even if they espouse Christianity, when almost everything of daily living is intertwined with their ancient heathen and pagan practice and beliefs? How often are they lured back into some heathen practice by the death, marriage, birth of a "brother" or "sister" of the family—or by some other incident in life that calls for a communal gathering in their village or a neighboring village? Many are the incidents that I have heard of and had to deal with.

Oh yes, there still is a need for us to be there and be involved in

Christian mission work. Indeed, when I looked into the question of the 6th and 7th book of Moses, I knew we had a long way to go. The 6th and 7th book of Moses is nothing but a book of spells and incantations, a book of magical spirit-art complete with seals, signs, and formulas for conjuring up spirits from the nether world to do your bidding. These spirits supposedly can bring you your heart's desire in the areas of pleasure, wealth, knowledge, power, avoidance of misery, defeat of enemies, life.

Pray for them, us, and our work—the spread of the Gospel of Truth, Life, and Salvation.

—*Missionary Paul R. Gurgel*

THIS LITTLE BABE

This Little Babe, so few days old,
Is come to rifle Satan's fold;
All hell doth at His presence quake,
Tho' He himself for cold do shake.
For in this weak unarmed wise
The gates of hell He will surprise.

With tears He fights and wins the field,
His naked breast stands for a shield;
His battering shot are babyish cries,
His arrows looks of weeping eyes.
His martial ensigns Cold and Need
And feeble Flesh His warrior's steed.

His camp is pitched in a stall,
His bulwark but a broken wall;
The crib His trench, haystalks His stakes;
Of shepherds He His muster makes;
And thus, as sure His foe to wound,
The angels' trumps alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in fight;
Stick to the tents that He hath pight.
Within His crib is surest ward;...
This Little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
Then flit not from this heavenly Boy.

—Robert Southwell
(from *Spokesman* archives)



CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

Memories of Christmas past,
Like treasures in our mind,
They beg to be uncovered
And enjoyed just one more time.

The decorations made by hand,
The laughter and the joys,
The snow piled deep most everywhere,
A joy for girls and boys.

The real candles on the tree,
The sleigh bells in the night,
As horses tapped out cadence
In the crisp and clear moonlight.

It's Christmas Eve, the livestock fed.
It's quiet at our farm.
In spirit we are kneeling at
Another manger-barn.

There we behold our Savior-God;
Our hearts are filled with peace.
For we know that He came for us
From sins to give release.

How precious are our memories
Like treasures in our mind;
They beg to be uncovered
And enjoyed just one more time.

(This homemade "Christmas card" including the picture was the greeting last year of Pastor and Mrs. Redlin to their congregation in Mankato, Minnesota.)

The *Spokesman* requested that last Spring's Immanuel Lutheran Seminary graduates, Joel Fleischer and Jay Hartman, submit biographical sketches which would introduce them to our readers. One of these sketches appears in this issue. Fitting nicely with this introduction to our Sem grads is the message of the poem which appears (based on Isaiah 52:7-8), written by Ellen Radichel, a member of Grace Lutheran (CLC), Fridley, Minn.

Beautiful Messengers

Joel Fleischer

How blessed are those who serve the
Lord
By telling others of His Word,
And sharing what they know about
Their Savior's love with those who
doubt.

The pastor in his pulpit stands,
Law and Gospel in his hands,
A "good work" he's been called to do:
To serve his flock words good and
true.

And those who help the shepherd
tend—
By admonishing a Christian friend—
And those who'll tell a passer-by,
"This is my faith...and this is why...."

For little lambs who gladly raise
"Jesus loves me"—songs of praise.
How beautiful! The rafters ring—
God loves to hear His children sing.

How beautiful, these teachers all,
Who hear the Savior's earnest call,
To bring good news and to proclaim
Peace and salvation in Jesus name.

—Ellen Radichel



Joel Stephen Fleischer was born on August 2, 1967 to Pastor and Mrs. Daniel Fleischer in Watertown, South Dakota. He attended high school for four years at Immanuel Lutheran, Eau Claire and graduated in 1985. He then went on to attend college there for four years, completing the B. A. program in Pre-theology in 1989.

Following his second year of seminary, Joel was married to Beth Sprengeler, a native of Cheyenne, Wyoming on June 8, 1991. (The new pastor and wife welcomed the birth of their first child, Leah Abigail, on November 3, 1992.)

Joel went on to graduate from the seminary in May 1992. Through the CLC Call Committee he received and accepted the call extended to him from Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in



Pastor & Mrs. Fleischer

Lamar, Colorado. The Fleischers moved into the parsonage on July 3, and Joel was installed as the pastor of Mt. Olive the following Sunday, July 5. Pastor Michael Sprengeler of Loveland, Colorado, conducted the service, while the new pastor's father performed the installation.

The new family is nicely settled in at the Lamar parsonage, thanks to the warm reception they have received from the members of Mt. Olive.

Exploratory Services

Weekly Sunday services are being held in Columbus, Ohio. Services are held in an office building at 110 East Wilson Bridge Rd., Suite 205, Worthington, OH. Service time is 10:30 a.m. Call first to Paul Tiefel, Sr. (614) 890-8880 (home) or (614) 888-3999 (work). If there are any CLC members or contacts in the Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati area, please contact Pastor Mark Bernthal, 3460 Crestmont Dr., Saginaw, MI 48603.



(From the Feb. 25, 1992 Mankato *Free Press*) Buffalo Bills' rookie defensive end Phil Hansen signed autographs for students at Immanuel Lutheran School. While in Mankato visiting his sister Vickie Schreyer, Phil talked to students about his high school and college days and about playing in the National Football League. He is a member of Prince of Peace, Hecla, SD. (Pastor D. Libby will have a follow-up article. —Ed.)