

Lutheran Spokesman

COME, YOUR HEARTS AND VOICES RAISING



*Sin and death
may well be groaning,
Satan now may well be moaning
We, our full salvation owning,
Cast our every care
away*



Where Will Satan Spend Christmas?

There is one very powerful, influential figure whose name is rarely mentioned in many circles this time of year — and that is the devil or Satan.

Eminently successful throughout the year in his efforts to turn the hearts of people away from God, one may wonder where he spends Christmas. At first glance it would seem to be a terrible time of year for him. For each time Satan looks into the manger or hears the Christmas story or a carol proclaiming the infant Savior, he must cringe. When he considers how “big” Christmas has become, there seems little he can do except to retreat into spiritual hibernation until it all blows over.

WRONG! If there is one thing Satan is master of, it is turning an apparently hopeless situation to his advantage. And that is precisely his Christmas strategy. Buoyed by polls indicating fewer Americans than ever even believe he exists, he is more than happy to remain out of the spotlight at

Christmas — so long as our Christmas celebrations miss the mark!

He is happy to see the beautiful Christmas carols secularized, to hear the Christmas story praised as simply a beautiful story. He delights in seeing Christmas commercialized, in seeing people kept busy with all the trimmings of Christmas. He doesn't even mind seeing people being kind to one another, or calling for domestic or world peace, or even going to church or being spiritual — as long as it is only a seasonal ritual, as long as people miss the real meaning of Christmas: why God sent His Son to this earth.

Christmas is a wonderful season, but also one of the devil's busiest. Have a blessed and happy Christmas — but don't forget that the “enemy” has not retreated or let down his guard. Rejoice in the coming of the Christchild and the gift of salvation He brings to you and all mankind.

Make this the focal point of all

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your Christmas activities. For while you will then bring joy to your Father in heaven, you will bring sorrow and remorse to the one and only person you wish to have a truly miserable Christmas.

Have a wretched and unhappy Christmas, Satan.

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1

Jn. 3:8).

“Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Heb. 2:14-15).

—Pastor David Schierenbeck



“ . . . We sympathize with those who experience misfortune at any time of the year, but misfortune should have no influence on Christmas joy . . . ”

True Christmas Joy

“Joy to the world!” Those words of the carol will ring out again this Christmas season. But there will be those who complain that there is little Christmas joy for them — that they just aren’t able to celebrate Christmas this year. Such expressions of woe are prompted by a variety of personal or family tragedies: the home has burned, a loved one has died, a job has been lost, serious illness has struck, etc.

Such complaints give the impression that Christmas joy is dependent upon the quality of life a person is experiencing. Apparently many believe that it is possible to enjoy Christmas only if economic, physical, and social conditions are acceptable. We sympathize with those who experience misfortune at any time of the year, but misfortune should have no influence on Christmas joy.

The people who can find no

Christmas joy under adversity have completely misunderstood the true joy of Christmas. That joy is not found only among those who have a good life. It does not depend upon material blessings.

Spiritual Blessings

The commercialism that has overtaken Christmas has misdirected the attention of many people. They miss the basic reason for true Christmas joy. They do not understand that the joy of Christmas is to be found in spiritual blessings.

The carol continues: “The Lord is come!” It is the coming of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, as a baby in that Bethlehem stable that is to be our source of joy. He came to live and die to bring eternal salvation for all people.

Believing that He has done that for us, we have a joy which no earthly

tragedy should be allowed to diminish. We have before us the most precious thing anyone can have — eternal life.

Jesus left the glories of heaven to become a poor baby in a manger so that we might have joy here and in eternity. The angel told the shepherds, “I bring you good tidings of great joy

which will be to all people.” The tidings? — “There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Even in the face of earthly tribulation we can find our Christmas joy in the sure hope of salvation which is ours through Christ the Lord.

—Keith N. Olmanson



A Christmas Message From Our CLC President —

“ . . . The Father’s faithfulness to His promise of the past is guarantee of His faithfulness to His promises of the present as well as the future.”

FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISE

(Past, Present, Future)

Children enjoy looking through the Christmas toy catalog. They identify what it is that they would like to have for Christmas. Some of the things they desire may not be good for them at their age, if ever. Almost certainly the number of things they would like to have are beyond the budget of the parents. Yet if the parent does not listen carefully to what the child is requesting, he may answer with a casual, “Okay,” or possibly a more non-committal, “We will see.” Sometimes the parent means it; at other times it may be just a response to quiet the child. More often than not the child understands the parental response as a promise. “You promised . . .” When he finds that it was not all that he thought it was the child may enter into negotiations, “I will be good if you

will . . .”

Be careful how you respond. Be careful what you promise! Do not promise more than you mean, or more than you can give.

At Christmas time our thoughts turn to remembrance of the promise kept. Not a promise sought or negotiated, but a promise made with all faithful intent and faithfully fulfilled.

We know many of the divine promises given by the Father in which He promised to send the Savior. The Father made a promise recorded in Genesis 3:15 even before Adam and Eve asked. Indeed, in their fear and fright, as they hid from God, they could not have asked had they even known for what to ask. Yet the Father promised.

Further, the promises of the Father

were hardly non-committal “maybes.” Time and again He promised. “Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come; . . . He will come and save you” (Is. 35:4). Again: “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord” (Is. 59:20). Good promises in substance, as well as credible promises! “God is not man, that He should lie; hath He not said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good” (Num. 23:19).

“And she shall bring forth a Son and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21). Christmas is celebration of a promise kept. “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:11). He whom the Father said would come has come, bringing salvation.

In the midst of darkest sin,
Our faithful Lord His Promise gave;
His own Son would enter in
Our souls from sin and death to save.

What the Father gave is more than we would ever have asked for had we been able to ask. It is the magnificence of divine grace — that He promised and gave because He was compelled by His own love to give us what we in no way deserved or asked for.

In the turmoil of this age, in the world as well as in the church, our minds are so often distracted and our hearts discouraged. In the stress of our day-to-day labors, we — pastors also have them with the same effect — may fail to see the love of God in making promise, and the faithfulness of God in keeping promise. That is unfortunate to say the least, because in



that condition we so often fail to hear the invitation, loaded with promise: “Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest*” (Mt. 11:28).

In heaven is our rest, but we need not wait. The Father invites us this season, and daily: “Return unto thy rest, O my soul” (Ps. 116:7). As we lean on Jesus, the Promised One Who has come, we will this Christmas and as often as we do lean on Him, find that rest, and will acknowledge with thanks: “For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with (us) you” (Ps. 116:7). The Father’s faithfulness to His promise of the past is guarantee of His faithfulness to His promises of the present as well as the future. “And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life” (1 Jn. 2:25).

It remains the single purpose of our church, and the pastors of the CLC, to preach the faithful Word so that you who hear may rest your life and your hope confidently in both the Promiser and the Promised — our God Who shall bring all things to pass even as He has.

As the Word is preached faithfully, may we all hear it faithfully. We know then that all will have a . . .

*Blessed future in Christ
(it’s guaranteed),
Pastor Daniel Fleischer*

Looking Back
in the
*Lutheran
Spokesman*

From December 1965 —

GO! - A favorite topic for debate in educational circles involves the age-old question: Which is more important in the training of teachers, instructing them in *what* to teach, or *how* to teach it? Both, of course, are recognized as important. Should the chief emphasis, however, lie on the subject matter to be taught or on the method of teaching it? State teacher training schools are increasingly stressing methods over subject matter.

The Bethlehem shepherds remind us that it should not be so in the task of teaching others the Good News about Jesus. No teachers on earth have had as good a methods course as these shepherds received in one night. They had the rare privilege of seeing how an angel of the Lord preaches the Gospel. And this superb demonstration was given them against the setting of a mass angel choir making the vault of the heavens ring with the finest anthem this earth has ever heard.

Yet we find that the shepherds did not consider themselves properly prepared to make known the message entrusted to them until they had seen the *Child*. Since their preaching was to be a *witnessing*, another “go” had to prepare them for the mission “Go!” And so we hear them say, “Let *us* now



go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass.” Then the point is specifically made that it was not until “*they had seen it*” that “they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.”

Thus the pattern has been set for all Gospel heralds. The aged Simeon waited a lifetime to make his great testimony, until he himself had held this Child in his arms and could say “*mine* eyes have seen thy salvation.” That gave him something to witness to others.

Preachers, were you hard put to find a fresh approach to the familiar Christmas story this year? Don’t throw away that book you bought on sermon methods used by great preachers. But do not let it rob you of the time needed to look with fresh eyes at the Child whose name was called Jesus, because He was to save the people from their sins. Do not let the search for better techniques interfere with your searching the stable and the manger for details about this wondrous birth that may not have caught your eye on previous visits.

Church School teachers, do get what help you can from *Teaching*

Little Amalee Jane and similar How To books, but remember that you are not really ready to tell the little ones what this holy Infant means for them until you have well digested the personal significance of those blessed words: "Unto YOU is born a Savior."

Canvassers, take heart! No one is asked to face the chilly reception the world gives the Gospel message without having first been well fortified by the warmth and love and strength to be found at the manger.

Our King bids no one go into all the world to preach the Gospel who has not first received the gracious

invitation "Come unto Me." There is the heart and core of our training. First we eat at the feast our King has prepared for us. Then, filled and strengthened, we are ready to tell others how good it tastes and invite them to the banquet hall.

Can you imagine the shepherds telling one after another that the Messiah had come before they themselves had seen that holy Child who fulfilled all the ancient prophecies?

On the other hand, can you imagine those same shepherds saying nothing to others after they *had* seen HIM?

(*Norbert Reim*)



Gently Lay the Infant Down

P. Schaller - 1994

<p>1. Gently lay the 2. Wrapped in swaddling 3. Shepherds kneeling 4. Christians, one and</p>	<p>infant down, clothes he lies, in the dust, all, draw near</p>	<p>Tiny in a Who a robe and Do not fear this Him who all your</p>	<p> manger dear. crown should wear. Lord and King. trouble knows.</p>
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<p>Darkness, cover Angels praise Him In this Child you Calm your trembling,</p>	<p>Beth-le'm town, to the skies, well may trust, cease your fear,</p>	<p>Guard the baby Lying in the Peace with God He See what love the</p>	<p>Savior dear. stable there. comes to bring. Father shows.</p>
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5. Now ring out in joyful sound,
Bells of heaven, chimes of earth.
Trumpets, organs, flutes resound,
Sing the song of Jesus' birth.

6. Glory be to God on high,
Peace on earth, forgiveness, rest;
God's goodwill to man draws nigh,
In his Son, the world is blest!

LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

“That We Might Have Hope” (Rom. 15:4)

Genesis Chapters Thirty-two Through Thirty-five

A FAMILY REUNION

Family reunions are a welcome occurrence in many families. They provide an opportunity for family members to reacquaint themselves with each other. However, family reunions may also be a time of anxiety for some. Perhaps over the years relationships have become strained for a variety of reasons. Perhaps differences within families make getting along difficult. These problems may prove difficult, but are usually not life-threatening. The focus of this article will be on the family reunion of Esau and Jacob, one in which Jacob did fear for his life.

Esau And Jacob

Why was Jacob afraid of this reunion? As you may recall, Jacob had used deceit in getting his father Isaac to bless him instead of Esau. Jacob then hastily left for his uncle Laban's house after becoming aware of Esau's threat to kill him. Now over twenty years had passed since they had seen one another, and Jacob was not sure how Esau felt toward him. Would he still bear a grudge and seek vengeance?

Should Jacob have been afraid of the reunion? Even after all God had done for him, Jacob still had difficulty

putting his confidence solely in his heavenly Father. Think of how God had protected him in the past. He allowed Jacob to escape Esau's wrath the first time. He blessed Jacob with a vision of angels ascending and descending on the ladder, assuring him of His promises. He also blessed Jacob's every endeavor at his uncle Laban's, despite Laban's ill-treatment of Jacob. He provided Jacob with great wealth and a large family. He granted him a peaceful departure from Laban. Finally, He instructed Jacob to return to Canaan and promised to be with him.

God was aware of Jacob's weaknesses and again strengthened him by providing a visible host of angels for his assurance. Still, Jacob felt a need to "test the waters" before meeting Esau directly. So he sent servants before him to tell Esau that "thy servant Jacob" wishes to find grace in the sight of his "lord." No doubt Jacob chose these expressions of humility in an attempt to block out any memories Esau had of the "stolen" birthright. In reply, Jacob only received the news that Esau and four hundred soldiers were coming to meet him. Jacob was aware of Esau's recent military victories in the land of Seir and feared now

1996 *Daily Bible Reading Guide*

“And He said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.’ So I ate it, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness” (Ezekiel 3:3)

A THOUSAND SERVINGS

It is generally agreed that we realize the greatest measure of spiritual growth by opening our hearts and minds directly to the Word. Seeing with our eyes and hearing with our own ears.

So we offer, once again, Bible selections for each day of the year for us to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. They are chosen to extend the kingdom truth which you likely enjoy hearing at church on a Sunday or festival. For they embrace the thematic design of the popular THREE YEAR LECTONARY. Over three years you will enjoy a thousand servings of the Bread of Life well balanced to the needs of our spiritual nourishment.

Most of us do benefit from the reflections and applications of trusted teachers of the Word, also in our personal devotions. We have some suggestions for that.

For Families

In his retirement years Professor C. M. Gullerud, now deceased, applied himself to writing gospel-centered devotions with children especially in mind. His grandfatherly heart and theological acumen qualified him well for the task. Three volumes of the Family Devotion Hour can be secured from the CLC Book House (ILC, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, WI 54701). Unit costs from \$6.25 to \$9.00.

For Adult Readers

Day by Day We Magnify Thee has many loyal users, and it is still available. But those who relish sampling the sturdy writings of Martin Luther will be delighted with a new collection, Daily Readings from Luther's Writings (available from the Book House in paper for about \$20.00). Editor Owen has made a fresh selection from the contemporary translations of Luther's Works and from What Luther Says, Vol. III. Arranged by topics. Daily each week in the four seasons.

Reader Response

Last year a user of the daily Guide expressed her appreciation by telling how she was helped. She had been offered a high prestige administrative position. Very attractive career advancement. But it would leave little for the rest of life with church and spouse and family. The day she needed to decide she read the scheduled selection. From Ecclesiastes. "Vanity, vanity . . . All is vanity." You know what her decision was after that pointed reminder!

January 1, The Name of Jesus

Numbers 6:22-27

Tuesday: Luke 2:25-40; Wednesday: Colossians 3:12-17;

Thursday: 1 Samuel 2:18-26; Friday: Luke 2:41-52

January 6, The Epiphany of Our Lord

Ephesians 3:2-12

January 7, The Baptism of Our Lord

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

Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:15-22; Titus 3:4-7

January 14, 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 21, 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany

Psalm 62:5-12; Jonah 3:1-5,10; Mark 1:14-10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31;

Isaiah 61:1-6; Luke 4:14-21; 1 Corinthians 12:12-21, 26-27

January 28, 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 4:20-32; 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13

February 4, 5th Sunday after the Epiphany

Psalm 103; 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 11, 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; 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20

February 18, The Transfiguration of Our Lord

Psalm 148; 2 Kings 2:1-12; Mark 9:2-9

February 21, Ash Wednesday

Psalm 51:1-13; Isaiah 59:12-20; Luke 18:9-14; 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

February 25, 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 3, 2nd Sunday in Lent

Psalm 73; 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 10, 3rd Sunday in Lent

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

March 17, 4th Sunday in Lent

Psalm 38; Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21; Ephesians 2:4-10;
Isaiah 12:1-6; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

March 24, 5th Sunday in Lent

Psalm 143; Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 12:20-33; Hebrews 5:7-9;
Isaiah 43:16-21; Luke 20:9-19; Philippians 3:8-14

March 31, Palm Sunday

Psalm 24; Zechariah 9:9-10; Mark 11:1-10; Philippians 2:5-11;
Exodus 12:1-4; John 19:17-30; Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

April 7, The Resurrection of Our Lord

Psalm 118; Isaiah 25:6-9; Mark 16:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:19-26;
Exodus 15:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

April 14, 2nd Sunday of Easter

Psalm 16; Acts 3:12-20; John 20:19-31; 1 John 5:1-6;
Acts 5:12,17-32; John 20:19-31; Revelation 1:14-18

April 21, 3rd Sunday of Easter

Psalm 139:1-12; Acts 4:8-12; Luke 24:36-49; 1 John 1:1-2:2;
Acts 9:1-19; John 21:1-14; Revelation 5:11-14

April 28, 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 5, 5th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 67; Acts 8:26-40; John 15:1-8; 1 John 3:18-24; Acts 13:44-52;
John 13:31-35; Revelation 21:1-6

May 12, 6th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 98; Acts 11:19-26; John 15:9-17; 1 John 4:1-11

May 16, The Ascension of Our Lord

Acts 1:1-11; Luke 24:44-53; Ephesians 2:16-23

May 19, 7th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 8; 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 26, The Day of Pentecost

Psalm 51b; Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 14:25-27; Acts 2:1-21; Genesis 11:1-9;
John 15:26-27, 16:4b-11; Acts 2:37-47

June 2, The Holy Trinity (1st Sunday after Pentecost)

Psalm 150; Isaiah 6:1-8; John 3:1-17; Romans 8:14-17;
Numbers 6:22-27; John 16:12-15; Romans 5:1-5

June 9, 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 126; 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 16, 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 30; Genesis 3:8-15; Mark 3:20-35; 2 Corinthians 4:13-18;
1 Kings 17:17-24; Luke 7:11-17; Galatians 1:11-24

June 23, 4th Sunday after Pentecost

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

June 30, 5th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 46; Job 38:1-11; Mark 4:35-41; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21;
Zechariah 13:7-9; Luke 9:18-24; Galatians 3:23-29

July 7, 6th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 30; Lamentations 3:22-33; Mark 5:24-43; 2 Corinthians 8:1-14;
1 Kings 19:14-21; Luke 9:51-62; Galatians 5:1, 13-25

July 14, 7th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 66; 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 21, 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 78; Amos 7:10-15; Mark 6:7-13; Ephesians 1:3-14;
Deuteronomy 30:9-14; Luke 10:25-37; Colossians 1:1-14

July 28, 9th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 23; 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 4, 10th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 84; 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 11, 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 145; 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 18, 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 25, 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 1; 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 1, 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 71; Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18; John 6:60-69; Ephesians 5:21-31;
Isaiah 66:18-24; Luke 13:22-30; Hebrews 12:18-24

September 8, 15th Sunday 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 15, 16th 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 1:1, 10-21

September 22, 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

September 29, 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 31; Jeremiah 11:18-20; Mark 9:30-37; James 3:13-18;
Amos 8:4-7; Luke 16:1-13; 1 Timothy 2:1-8

October 6, 19th Sunday after Pentecost

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

October 13, 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 139b; Genesis 2:18-24; Mark 10:2-16; Hebrews 2:9-11;
Habakkuk 1:1-3, 2:1-4; Luke 17:1-10; 2 Timothy 1:3-14

October 20, 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 90; Amos 5:6-7,10-15; Mark 10:17-27; Hebrews 3:1-6;
Ruth 1:1-19a; Luke 17:11-19; 2 Timothy 2:8-13

October 27, Reformation Sunday

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 3, 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 126; Jeremiah 31:7-9; Mark 10:46-52; Hebrews 5:1-10;
Deuteronomy 10:12-22; Luke 18:9-14; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

November 10, The Last Judgment

Psalm 90; Malachi 4:1-2a; John 5:19-24; Hebrews 9:24-28;
Jeremiah 26:1-6; Luke 19:11-27; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

November 17, The Saints Triumphant

Psalm 118; Daniel 12:1-3; John 5:25-29; Hebrews 10:11-18;
Isaiah 65:17-25; Luke 20:27-38; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5

November 24, Christ the King, Last Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 45; Daniel 7:13-14; John 18:33-37; Revelation 1:4b-8

November 28, Thanksgiving Day

Deuteronomy 8:1-10; Luke 17:11-19; Philippians 4:6-20

**(Note: The following coordinate with
Series B of the *Three Year Lectionary*)**

December 1, 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 8, 2nd Sunday in Advent

Psalm 24; 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 15, 3rd Sunday in Advent

Psalm 130; Zephaniah 3:14-17; Luke 3:7-18; Philippians 4:4-7;
Isaiah 35:1-10; Matthew 11:2-11; James 5:7-10

December 22, 4th Sunday in Advent

Psalm 85; Micah 5:2-5; Luke 1:39-55

December 25, The Festival of the Nativity

Psalm 98; Isaiah 52:7-10; John 1:1-14; Hebrews 1:1-9

December 29, First Sunday after Christmas

Psalm 111; 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Luke 2:41-52

**LET US THANK OUR GOD, THEN, FOR
ANOTHER YEAR OF HIS GRACE!**

Editor's note: Former pastor Rollin A. Reim continues to minister to God's people as he finds opportunity to do so. One way is by putting together these annual daily Bible readings for the *Spokesman* — and for you. The opening "A Thousand Servings" are also his good suggestions. With all of you we say: "Thank you, Rollin!"



Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

—John 5:39

that Esau's army would conquer him.

Jacob's first reaction was to divide all of his possessions into two groups, so that if Esau conquered the one half, the others may have time to escape. Jacob then prayed to the Jehovah God, reminding Him of the promises He had made to him regarding his safety and his descendants. Jacob then delivered a huge gift to Esau in "successive droves." He was hoping to appease his brother through his generosity.

The night before their scheduled reunion, Jacob chose to be alone. Scripture tells us that throughout the entire night a Man wrestled with Jacob. Because He could not prevail against him, the Man displaced Jacob's hip. But Jacob, demanding a blessing from the Man, refused to let go of Him. The Man then gave Jacob a new name, Israel, which means "prince of God." Jacob had prevailed as a prince in his struggle with the Lord.

Now Jacob was ready to meet Esau. After sending his wives and children before him, Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother. But Esau ran to meet Jacob and they embraced and kissed and wept. Jacob then introduced Esau to his large family. Esau attempted to return the gift to Jacob, but Jacob insisted that Esau keep it as an assurance of the peace between them. Shortly later the joyous reunion ended.

Lessons For Us

What can we learn from this account? The most important lesson we can learn is to rely on the promises

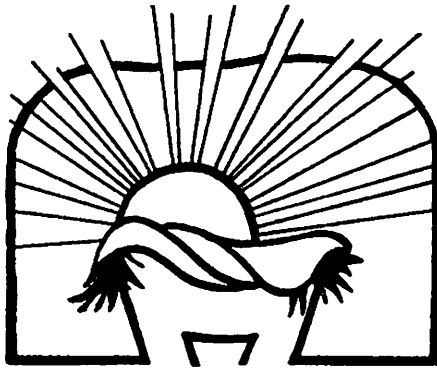
of God — they will come to pass!

It may be easy for us to see how foolish it was for Jacob to fear his brother. How weak his faith must have been after all God had done for him. Stop a moment and think. Don't we too sometimes find ourselves doubting our salvation or God's own love for us? Or how often have we become much more concerned over something much smaller in our lives? How often have we fretted over our health, a job interview, a relationship with a friend, financial concerns, or even something as trivial as a bad haircut? Don't we have the same promises of protection and salvation from our heavenly Father as Jacob did?

God tells us in His Word that He will never leave us or forsake us, and that all things will work together for our good. He tells us to cast our care upon Him, and to ask, seek, and knock in times of trouble. In Romans chapter 8 we are told: "if God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." *Nothing* "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Jacob learned to hold fast to the promises of God when he wrestled with God. Let us approach God's throne with the same confidence, being assured of Jesus' saving work on our behalf. Let us "wrestle" with God, knowing that His promise to take us to heaven to be with Him will come to pass. That will be the best family reunion of all.

—Teacher Joseph Lau



“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” Isaiah 9:6

**The soft white blanket covers all
The temperatures grow cold
There is no doubt for each one
knows
And no one must be told.**

**The wintry season has begun
With mittens and the caps
The boots and shovels all are
found
The coats, the scarves, the wraps.**

**But with these usual yearly preps
Our hearts and minds begin
To think about our Savior’s birth
‘Bout Jesus Christ and sin.**

**How God’s own Son comes down
to us
To hearts all dead and cold
And covers them with wraps of
love
As Scripture has foretold.**

**That though our sins as scarlet
are
They shall be white as snow
Though they be red like crimson,
yet
In Christ they’re white as wool.**

**So in this wintry season when
The snow has covered all
And temperatures drop down a
bit
Come to God’s cattle stall.**

**There you will find a peaceful
rest
You’ll hear the angels sing
As you kneel down and there
behold
Your Savior and your king.**

**For unto you is born this day
A Savior from your sin
In Him you’ll find God’s warm
embrace
Fear not to enter in.**

**He is the One who’ll warm your
heart
And lift your spirit high
And in the midst of cold and
snow
Your every need supply.**



*— A congregational Christmas greeting of
Pastor & Mrs. L. Dale Redlin, Immanuel,
Mankato, Minn.*

The Origin Of Life

One of the most fundamental axioms of biology is that all life comes from pre-existing life. Still, until the later part of the 19th century, life was believed to arise from non-living matter by a process called "spontaneous generation." Ancient Egyptians, for example, thought mice arose from the mud of the Nile. In 1600, J. B. Helmont even reported "proof" for the spontaneous generation of mice claiming that if wheat, cheese, and soiled linen are placed together in a jar, mice will eventually appear! This idea of the spontaneous generation of life from non-life was so deeply ingrained in biological thought that it took nearly 200 years of experimental evidence to completely disprove it.

In 1650 Francesco Redi, an Italian physician, proved that maggots come from living flies and not from lifeless meat as was widely believed. This was a serious blow to spontaneous generation, but when bacteria were later discovered, it was thought that at least micro-organisms might arise from non-life. This notion too was finally laid to rest in 1864 by the great scientist (and creationist) Lewis Pasteur, who demonstrated that bacteria can only come from living bacteria. When Pasteur reported his results before the French Academy he confidently declared that, "never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation arise from this mortal blow." Pasteur never dreamed that the widely discredited evolutionary ideas of his contemporary, Charles Darwin, would

one day become widely accepted by the scientific community, reviving once again the notion of spontaneous generation. In his book, *The Origins of Life*, evolutionist Cyril Ponnamperuma said: "It is, perhaps, ironic that we tell beginning students in biology about Pasteur's experiments as the triumph of reason over mysticism, yet we are coming back to spontaneous generation, albeit in a more refined and scientific sense, namely, to chemical evolution."

Most evolutionists are dead certain that life evolved by chance (without divine intervention) from non-living chemicals through a process called "chemical evolution." Some evolutionists even insist that life must have independently evolved more than once on earth. Most evolutionists are confident that life has evolved many times in many other places in the universe. Although Darwin spoke longingly of the chance origin of life from simple chemicals in some "warm little pond," there has never been evidence that anything remotely like this has ever happened. In fact, the evidence for chemical evolution is so embarrassing, some evolutionists insist that the whole idea of the origin of life is not even a part of the theory of evolution but rather is a creationist plot to discredit evolution!

Evolutionists speculate that life gradually evolved from mere hydrogen in a series of stages. The first stage began about 15 billion years ago with the "Big Bang" which produced an expanding cloud of hydrogen gas



Dr. David Menton

— all else was void. With time and energy, hydrogen transformed into all the other chemical elements. Then, about 4 billion years ago, the earth's atmosphere consisted of methane, ammonia, hydrogen and water, from which life would inevitably evolve.

During stage two it is believed that simple chemicals from stage one formed the small *organic molecules* essential to life such as sugars, amino acids, and nucleotides. In 1953 Miller and Urey claimed to “stimulate” the evolution of some of these organic molecules from methane and ammonia using apparatus and conditions designed to achieve the desired result.

Stage three in chemical evolution is supposed to have involved the stringing together of small organic molecules into long chain-like molecules called *polymers*. The most important biological polymers are starches (polymers of sugars), proteins (polymers of amino acids), and DNA (polymers of nucleotides). In another “evolution stimulation” experiment, Sidney Fox produced protein-like molecules by heating pure-dry amino

acids at high temperatures. When this material was allowed to cool in water it formed small globules which he called “microspheres.” Although these microspheres are stone dead, evolutionists refer to them as “protocells,” implying that they represent an early stage of living cells. In fact, about the only similarity between microspheres and living cells is that they are, as their name implies, small and spherical.

The final stage of chemical evolution involves the chance transformation of organic molecules and polymers into the unfathomably complex machinery of living cells. Here evolutionary speculation is so unrestrained by evidence, or even plausibility, that it fails to merit serious consideration. The biochemist Dr. David Green pretty well summed it up when he said in his book *Molecular Insights into the Living Process*: “the macromolecule-to-cell transition is a jump of fantastic dimensions, which lies beyond the range of testable hypothesis. In this area all is conjecture. The available facts do not provide a basis for postulating that cells arose on this planet.” Evolutionists have tried to get around this problem by invoking long periods of time in the hope that, given enough time, virtually anything is possible — except, of course, special creation.

Now even some evolutionists fear that time and chance may not be the answer. The Nobel laureate Dr. Francis Crick (co-discoverer of DNA), in his book *Life Itself*, insists that the probability of life's chance origin simply defies calculation. Crick, an atheist, says: “What is so frustrating for our present purpose is that it seems almost impossible to give

Evolutionists, who must essentially invoke miracles without God, have no other choice than to believe in chance events so improbable they undermine the statistical foundation on which modern science rests.

any numerical value to the probability of what seems a rather unlikely sequence of events....An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that, in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle." Incredibly, Crick concludes that the first living organisms on earth may have been "seeded" in our oceans by intelligent beings from another planet!

Sir Fred Hoyle, father of the "Big Bang" theory, has recently concluded that the origin of life by chance is an absurd idea. In his book *Evolution From Space*, Hoyle insists that it is obvious that the complexity of life demands an intelligent designer, possibly even (heaven forbid!) God. According to Hoyle: "Once we see, however, that the probability of life originating at random is so utterly minuscule as to make it absurd, it becomes sensible to think that the favorable properties of physics on which life depends are in every respect deliberate. ... It is therefore almost inevitable that our own measure of intelligence must reflect ... higher intelligences ... even to the

limit of God ... such a theory is so obvious that one wonders why it is not widely accepted as being self-evident." In a recent address at Cal Tech, Hoyle said that no amount of time now being considered by evolutionists is even remotely adequate to accomplish the formation of a higher living organism by chance. Such an event, he said, would be comparable to the chance that "a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from materials therein"!

Evolutionists, who must essentially invoke miracles without God, have no other choice than to believe in chance events so improbable they undermine the statistical foundation on which modern science rests. In his book *Origins: A Skeptic's Guide to Creation of Life on Earth*, evolutionist Robert Shapiro abandons all skepticism and lamely argues: "One escape hatch yet exists for spontaneous generation. Why need the event have been probable? We can just stare at the odds, shrug, and note with thanks how lucky we were. ... After all, improbable events occur all the time." Think of it, with an unquestioning faith like this in *God*, we Christians could move mountains!

—Dr. David N. Menton

*May the joy and peace
of a Christ-filled
Christmas be with each
of you now and through
the coming year*

—the staff of the
Lutheran Spokesman



Parsonage, School, And Church

St. John's, Okabena, Minnesota —

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

In 1995 St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Okabena, Minn. has been observing its 100th anniversary. Pastor and people feel like Peter did when he beheld the Lord's glory on the Mount: "It is good for us to be here!"

It is good for us to behold the grace-glory of our Lord as we review His merciful ways with our church during the past century. It is good for us to speak of how He has preserved His saving Word and Sacraments among us in spite of the weaknesses of pastors and people.

The Lord's Gracious Working

When our Lord invited those three disciples down from the Mount of Transfiguration, it was not to stay or to quit the work, as if all was finished and they had attained the blessing intended for them. Neither does He

intend that those whom He has brought to celebrate one hundred years of His grace should sit and quit. We have not all attained the heavenly glory He desires for all the sheep of His flock. We have not even seen "all the sheep" of this flock! Others are yet to be added to us and to the invisible sheepfold of Christ's Church through Word and Sacrament. Much work remains!

The fraternal insurance issue took many children and several young families from the congregation in 1979-1983. It appeared to some in the community that St. John's membership was becoming "old" and outdated as its Bible doctrine. However, since 1983 nearly 30 members have been transferred by our Lord to heaven's glory while almost 50 children have been brought into His kingdom through baptism.

There is more evidence of the Lord's gracious working among us. Over the past 40 years adult Bible Class attendance has increased from 25-30 per Sunday to 40-45 per Sunday. In 1964 our communicants attended the Lord's table an average of four times per year. By 1994 that number had doubled. Ten miles was a long way to ride a horse-drawn sleigh or buggy on a Sunday morning in 1895. In 1995 more than half of our membership live at least eight miles from church, and 20-30% of the congregation travel from 15-50 miles nearly every Sunday.

Church, Bible Class, and communion attendance all demonstrate the continuing activity of our Savior's Word of grace among us. The dedication of our Sunday School and VBS teachers, church officers and committees, organists, janitors, choir members and directors, etc. shows the power of Christ's Word to move our people to joyful service in the church through the years. The resolve of St. John's membership to reestablish a Christian day school in its midst (one was operated in the years 1904-1908, and again in 1912-1916) indicates the high value placed upon the thorough instruction of their children in the Word of Truth.

Looking To The Future

For all of the above, and much more, we give most humble thanks to our God. We boast of nothing in ourselves. Neither is it our desire as pastor or people to sit on this mountain in the tents of self-satisfaction, just remembering the past. Our Lord went down from the mountain because there was work to be done for the sal-



Voters' Assembly

vation of sinners — a work of terrible suffering on His part before the victory and eternal glory. When the three disciples wanted to sit in religious comfort on the mountain top and choose their own works for Christ ("We will make tents!"), the Father's voice thundered from the cloud: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Mt. 17:4-5)

There is one work for St. John's *Evangelical Lutheran Church* in the next century as in the last — the hearing and sharing of Christ's Word. It is true that rural America is shrinking in population; many of our members have left the area over the years. Furthermore, in a small community like ours it is especially hard for a church to defend the "hard sayings" of our Savior's Word (Jn. 6:60) without being falsely accused or labeled as a "strict" or "unloving" people. There is no place to hide.

On the prairie flats of southwest Minnesota our God has made us a "city set on a hill, that cannot be hidden" (Mt. 5:14). Rejoicing that we cannot be hidden, let us not hide! The same light of life we have so freely received must be shared with others of our community, that they too may be saved. We need to go out with the gospel if we want them to come into

Compliments of:

S FOR

the Body of Christ.

To share the Gospel for the salvation of sinners, that is why the Lord and His three friends came down from the mountain. Neither the Son of Man nor His disciples had finished their work or attained the eternal glory that awaited them. Nor is it time for us to sit, quit, or hide. "It is good for us to be *here!*" But it will be far better *there*, when our work is done. So help us, Lord, by Your enabling Word!

—Pastor Vance Fossum



Installations

On August 19/20, 1995, with the knowledge of President Fleischer, I installed Bethany Tiefel as afternoon teacher of grades 5-6 at Messiah Lutheran School, Eau Claire, Wis.

—Pastor Paul Tiefel

On September 9/10, 1995, with the knowledge of President Fleischer, I installed Mark Gullerud as the second full-time pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wis.

—Pastor Paul Tiefel

On October 15, as authorized by President Daniel Fleischer, I installed Jerome Barthels as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Ballwin, Mo. (St. Louis County).

—Roland A. Gurgel

In accordance with 1 Cor. 14:40 I installed the Rev. Paul G. Naumann into the pastoral ministry of Ascension Lutheran Church of DuPont, Wash. on July 16, 1995. On August 13, 1995 I likewise also installed Principal Quinn T. Sprengeler into the teaching ministry at Redemption Lutheran School of Alderwood Manor, Wash.

—PCPC Visitor B. J. Naumann

As authorized by President Fleischer, I installed Mr. Kurt Koenig as lower grade school teacher of Gethsemane Ev. Lutheran School, Saginaw, Mich. on August 13, 1995. Kurt's father, Pastor David Koenig, preached the sermon.

—Pastor Mark Bernthal

As authorized by President Daniel Fleischer, I installed Rev. Michael Roehl as pastor of St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, Bismarck, N.Dak. on

Sunday, October 15, 1995. Assisting in the installation were pastors Paul Krause, Walter Schaller, and Michael Schierenbeck.

—Pastor Paul Larsen

Change Of Address

Kurt Koenig
912 N. Bond St.
Saginaw, MI 48602
Phone (517) 752-7239

Nominations

The Board of Regents for Immanuel Lutheran College announces the following nominations to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Prof. Dean Carstensen:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Tom Caulton | Leif Olmanson |
| Timothy Cox | Ross Roehl |
| Kevin Hulke | Gene Schreyer |
| Lane Fischer | Alvin Sieg |
| Daniel Gurgel | Michael Sippert |
| Joseph Lau | Robert Snell |
| David Lundin | James Sydow |
| Karl Olmanson | Theodore Thurow |

All comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these nominees should be in the hands of the undersigned before January 6, 1996.

Pastor Mike Sydow, Sec.
Board of Regents for ILC
Rt. 2, Box 664
Markesan, WI 53946