



S LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

Now thank we all our God With heart and
hands and voices, Who wondrous things
hath done, In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms Hath blessed
us on our way With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

Oh, may this bounteous God Thro' all our
life be near us, With ever joyful hearts And
blessed peace to cheer us And keep us in His
grace And guide us when perplexed And free
us from all ills In this world and the next!

All praise and thanks to God The Father
now be given, The Son, and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven: The one eternal
God, Whom earth and heav'n adore! For
thus it was, is now, And shall be ever more.

NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD

T.L.H. 36

Give thanks “with heart and hands and voices”

Thanksgiving is so much more than a holiday. It involves our whole life. Martin Rinckart described this nicely in his familiar hymn: “*Now thank we all our God With heart and hands and voices*” (TLH #36).

Our Voices

Thanksgiving certainly involves our voices. We say “thank you.” We sing songs of thanksgiving. Our mouth speaks the praises of our great God for His bountiful goodness.

However, words of praise not coming from the heart are not pleasing to God. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees who “honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”

True thanksgiving comes from the heart. When our heart is full of thankfulness to God, our mouth will sing His praise. Just as King David says: “The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore *my heart* greatly rejoices, and

with my song I will praise Him” (Ps. 28:7).

Our Heart

A heart filled with thankfulness seeks even more ways to express itself.

How many times have you received such a great gift or service of love that you felt that saying “Thank you!” just wasn’t enough? Words simply cannot fully express our thanks and gratitude.

So we seek to express our thanks with our actions and deeds. If that is true when others do things for us, how much more isn’t it true because of all that God has done?

God has given us life and every

Postmaster: Periodicals postage paid at Roseville, MN 55113 and at additional offices. 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 (CLC).

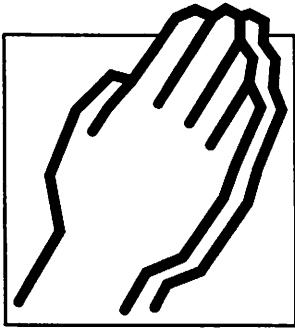
Editor: Paul Fleischer, 710 4th Ave. SW, Sleepy Eye, MN 56085-1232, E-Mail to pgflei@prairie.lakes.com; Assistant Editor: Paul R. Koch; Artist: Matthew Schaser; Staff (Also District Reporters): James Albrecht, Theodore Barthels, David Bernthal, Warren Fanning, Joel Fleischer, Rick Grams (Minnesota), Mark Gullerud (Great Lakes), John Klatt, Paul Krause, Joseph Lau, Delwyn Maas, Bruce Naumann, David Reim, Peter Reim, Rollin Reim (Pacific Coast), David Schierenbeck, John Schierenbeck (South-Eastern), Michael Wilke, (West Central).

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. E-Mail to BSydow01@roseville.k12.mn.us. Individual subscriptions {foreign—U.S. currency only}: \$10.00 {\$14.00} for one year; \$18.00 {\$26.00} for two years; \$26.00 {\$38.00} for three years. Subscriptions sent in bulk to congregations: \$8.00.

Spokesman Internet access: <http://www.primenet.com/~mpkelly/clc/spokesman.html>

Printed in U.S.A.



physical blessing. He has given us an abundance of food and fine clothes, a warm, comfortable home to live in, and so many riches to enjoy. He has given us family and friends. He heals our illnesses. He comforts, encourages, and builds us up. He is a constant and faithful Friend and Father.

These things in themselves are worthy of all our praise and thanksgiving, yet they are the least of God's good blessings. In His infinite love He has given His own Son for us. Jesus has rescued us from eternal death by suffering death in our place and has given us eternal life. "He became poor so that (we) through His poverty might become rich"—eternally and heavenly rich.

Everything—from our daily bread to our eternal salvation—is given purely by God's grace to us undeserving sinners. Mere words are totally inadequate to express our thanks to God who has given us everything.

We can never repay God for His goodness and grace, but we do seek every way to express our thanks to Him. That is why we also want to employ our hands in giving thanks.

Our Hands

The apostle Paul urges us: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by

the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Thanking God with our hands really involves our whole life and everything we do. We want to give our body and life into His service.

We can express our thanksgiving by our works of service in the church and in the home. Our work, no matter how menial, will not seem like a burden, but a joy, if we think of it as our expression of thanks to our gracious God.

Bringing fresh flowers for the altar, cooking and cleaning, visiting the sick, serving one another in love—these can all be meaningful expressions of thanksgiving to our God. Our financial offerings to church and sharing our blessings with the less fortunate are also ways we can use our hands in giving thanks.

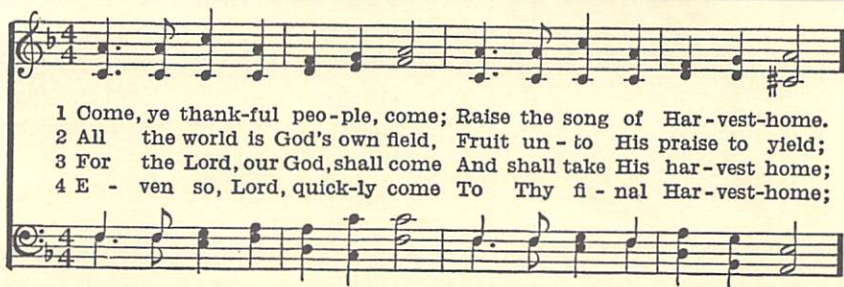
So when there is any need, or work to be done, at home or at church, let us not think of it as something we have to do because nobody else will. Rather, let us see it as an opportunity to use our hands to give thanks to the God who has given us absolutely everything.

Having a day of Thanksgiving may remind us to say "thank you" to God. But only seeing God's abundant grace and blessings in His Word and sacraments will fill our heart with true thankfulness—a thankfulness we express with our hands and our voices. Not only on Thanksgiving Day, but every day.

As King David says: "I will bless the Lord *at all times*; His praise shall *continually* be in my mouth" (Ps. 34:1).

—Pastor David Reim

Appreciating Our Lutheran Hymns



1 Come, ye thank-ful peo-ple, come; Raise the song of Har-vest-home.
2 All the world is God's own field, Fruit un-to His praise to yield;
3 For the Lord, our God, shall come And shall take His har-vest home;
4 E - ven so, Lord, quick-ly come To Thy fi - nal Har-vest-home;

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

A Hymn On Harvest And Thanksgiving
#574 in The Lutheran Hymnal

Thanksgiving Day in the United States commemorates the harvest gathered by the Plymouth Colony in 1621.

After the extreme hardships of the previous winter, the people of the Colony were especially mindful that year that the harvest was a blessing from God. Gov. William Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving, which was celebrated with a feast shared by the colonists and the neighboring Indians.

In our day when fewer and fewer people make their living directly from the land, it is especially important that we be reminded to give thanks for the harvest. We need to remember that our well-stocked foodstores are the result of the Lord's goodness. He is the One who sends rain and sunshine in proper measure to make plants grow and produce. He is the One who preserves the crops from being destroyed by hail and insects.

Our hymn reminds us of these things: "God, our Maker, doth provide

For our wants to be supplied." It is fitting that, though most of us are not farmers, we gather to "Raise the song of Harvest-home."

There is yet another reason that it is good for us to think of the harvest. Jesus used it in a parable as a picture of the Judgment (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).

The gathering of the harvest each year ought to remind us that Judgment Day is coming. Now believers and unbelievers live in this world like "Wheat and tares together sown." But the day will soon come when the Lord will separate them, giving eternal life to those who believe in Jesus and casting the unbelieving into eternal fire. "Even so, Lord, quickly come To Thy final Harvest-home; Gather Thou Thy people in, Free from sorrow, free from sin, There, forever purified In Thy garner to abide. Come with all Thine angels, come, Raise the glorious harvest-home."

—Pastor John Klatt



Genuine Gratitude

You've probably seen them by now. They are small electronic devices that fit into the palm of your hand and make noises similar to those of a touch-tone telephone.

They are called Virtual Pets and are available in a variety of animal sounds—anything from dogs to monkeys to dinosaurs.

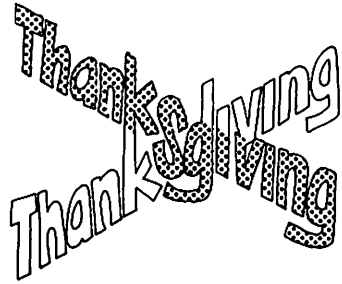
They're actually pretty clever. They give the owner a sense of what it's like to have a real pet. You have to feed and water them. You can play with them and make them do tricks. If you're not careful, they may wake you up during the night. If you neglect them for too long, or the battery wears down, they die. Thanks to the wonders of modern technology, it is now possible to have a pet without really having a pet.

Did you know that it is possible to celebrate Thanksgiving without really being thankful? Of course you did. Is it possible that *you* could celebrate your thankfulness without genuine gratitude? Yes, again. Like the electronic pet, virtual gratitude looks and feels like the real thing. Yet there is as much difference between the two kinds of thanksgiving as there is between a virtual pet and a real one.

It seems incredible that Americans could celebrate thanksgiving with anything but genuine gratitude. After all, so many blessings—so rich in nature, so abundant in number, so varied in kind—have been and continue to be ours.

And yet, strangely enough, prosperity doesn't produce thankful people.

Moses recognized this long before



his people inherited the good land for which they had not labored. With God-given foresight, Moses was moved to record the Spirit's own words: "*When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God . . .*" (Deut. 8:10).

They, too, would be surrounded by blessings. They, too, would be tempted to be superficial in their gratitude. Seeing one's many blessings is easy; remembering where they come from and what they mean is hard.

Finding The Key

So tempting it is to secretly think that many of the things we have are the result of our hard work and our ingenuity. Moses even warned: "*Then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth'*" (Deut. 8:17). That would be virtual gratitude—saying that we are grateful with our lips, but secretly believing that our prosperity is our own doing.

So, while many Americans are trying to "count their blessings one by one," Christians need a different approach.

Better than “What do I have?” or “What good things have happened to me this year?” are the questions, “What have I really deserved?” and “What has God done for me, in spite of my sins?” Then we’ll be ready to stand with Jacob and confess: “*I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and truth which You have shown Your servant*” (Gen. 32:10).

True gratitude is possible only when we understand grace—the fact that God continually gives us what we

don’t deserve.

Therefore the key to genuine thankfulness isn’t found in the Fourth Petition on daily bread, but in the Fifth Petition on God’s grace.

To make ours a real thanksgiving, we need to confess with Luther: “*For we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; but that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment.*”

—Pastor James Albrecht



Fruits In Season

As the summer progresses, those of us who are gardeners eagerly anticipate the different crops that come from our gardens as they are due to bear fruit.

The early crops of lettuce and radishes and peas are relished as much as the later crops of sweet corn and tomatoes. We look for them in their season. We know when we should expect each fruit from the garden. To be deprived of the fruit that we expect as a return from the labor we invested in the garden is a bitter disappointment.

In Scripture the Lord frequently uses this picture of bearing fruit in connection with His kingdom, encouraging us in our faith life. At the conclusion of the parable of the vinedressers, Jesus declared to the unbelieving Jews: “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing fruits of it” (Mt. 21:43).

It is by the grace of God that we, the believers in Christ Jesus, are this

holy nation—God’s own special people, created and called by God to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

He has called us into the light of the gospel. The gospel of God’s love and forgiveness is a reality only because of the investment of the blood of His Son, which God made in our behalf to save us from the unfruitfulness of sin. He made this investment out of pure, undeserved love for us sinners.

The fruit that He desires is that we live in this love and show forth this salvation in word and deed before the world. So the apostle Paul encourages us: “And this I pray, that your love may



about still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Php. 1:9-11).

As we, through the study of the Word, grow in knowledge and Christian judgment, we will be led by the Spirit to be involved in those things which are pleasing to God. These fruits of righteousness appear at different times and in different circumstances in our lives.

At one time it may be the fruit of witnessing the gospel to the unbeliever or to one straying from the faith. At another time it may be kind acts for a

Christian brother or sister in distress, as Paul was encouraging in the epistle to the Philippians. At another time it may be our study of the Word, or our worship, or our prayers of thanksgiving and supplication for others. At another time it may be the avoiding of this world’s sin and fleeing temptation.

Always the fruits of righteousness are to the praise of the glory of God. These are the fruits of faith, the fruits of repentance, the fruits which the Lord anticipates from the vineyard of His kingdom.

Even as we find a certain joy and satisfaction in the fruits of our garden, even so the fruits of righteousness bring joy—a far greater joy—to our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

—Pastor Theodore Barthels



Is The End Near?

A report on the radio told of odds makers taking bets on what might happen in the year 2000.

One can place a wager, for example, on whether the stock market will crash, a world war will flare up, or scientists will finally make contact with space aliens.

But the most interesting wager is the million-to-one shot that the world will end on January 1, 2000. Interesting—because if you won that bet how would you ever collect?

With a new millennium about to dawn, end-of-the-world predictions are multiplying like rabbits. Apart from the gambling crowds, many religious people are “wagering” that planet earth will see its last day in the very near future. Some of these prognosticators

even believe they can tell us the exact day the world will end.

As Christians we may well wonder if the end is very far away. For doesn’t Scripture tell us that in the last days “people will be . . . lovers of money . . . disobedient to parents . . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God . . .” (cf. 2 Tim. 3:2-4)? Doesn’t Jesus speak of earthquakes, wars and rumors of wars as signs of the end (cf. Mt. 24:6-7)? Doesn’t He also indicate that near the end people’s love for the Gospel and for their fellow man will turn cold (cf. Mt. 24:12)? And when we look around, don’t we see all of these things happening today?

But before making predictions on when the end will come, listen to what the Spirit says through St. Paul: “Now,

“ . . . Suddenly, when the world least expects it, Christ will appear! . . . The one who tries to pin-point the day (or even just the year) of Christ’s coming, must be regarded as a false prophet.”

brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:1-2).

The “times and dates” regarding the world’s end are not things we are to try to calculate. We can’t predict when the last day will arrive, for God has chosen to keep that information to Himself. The end will come like a thief. Suddenly, when the world least expects it, Christ will appear!

In fact, the one who tries to pin-point the day (or even just the year) of Christ’s coming, must be regarded as a false prophet. Jesus warns: “At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it” (Mt. 24:23).

But what of all these signs we spoke of earlier? What of the earthquakes and wars? What of the waning love for the Gospel? What of the

declining respect for parental authority? What of the other things St. Paul speaks of in Second Timothy chapter three? How are we to read these signs?

For starters, let’s remember that these signs—disasters in nature, wars, rampant immorality, etc.—have all been present in most every generation. Therefore, these signs aren’t there to tell us *when* the last day will arrive.

Jesus teaches us how to read the signs of the end when He says that earthquakes, wars, and other calamities are the beginning of this world’s birth pains (cf. Mt. 24:8). In other words, they don’t tell us *when* the world is going to end, *but simply that it will end some day*. More importantly they remind us that the suffering of this world will give way to the birth of a joyful new life for all of God’s blood-bought children.

Is the end near? Maybe! And yet “When will Christ come again?” is not really the most important question. The most important question is “Am I ready for His return?”

As we ponder that question, let us cling to God’s promise—the promise that says: “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7).

—Pastor Michael Wilke



Seminary Graduate David Schaller (right front) was ordained and installed on July 11. Participating were Pastor Paul Tiefel, Prof. Paul Schaller, Pastor Walter Schaller, and Pastor James Sandeen (front).

Studies In Ephesians

Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of Christ (See 3:8)

Chapter 2: 11-22

Through Faith In Christ— Full and Free Access To God!

No Admittance. Members Only. Restricted Access.

Notices such as these can touch a nerve when they stand between us and a place we'd like to be. It may be the requirement for a membership card before you can shop at the warehouse store; or the "no hunting" sign posted on private property; or even the curtain drawn between coach and first class on an airliner.

Life is full of situations where we find ourselves excluded from privileged areas, services, and information. Usually it is no more than a minor annoyance, if we notice it at all. At times, though, it can put a person on the defensive, bringing to mind questions such as "Why am I not allowed?", and "What makes those who have access such special people?"

In Bible times questions about the privilege of access had to do with something far more important than mere products and services. The burning question was one between Jews and non-Jews, and it had to do with full and free access to God Himself.

In many ways the Lord had set up the Old Testament system of worship to reflect great privileges for the

descendants of Abraham, the Jews. Although God's plan of salvation in Christ has always included all nations, the Jews were uniquely blessed with the revelation of God's own Word—and a system of laws for everyday living that set them apart from all other people.

The Jews were the only ones entrusted with the organized worship of the only true God. And by God's own plan, the temple itself was designed to keep non-Jewish people at arm's length from the Lord. The site of the temple proper was strictly off-limits to non-Jewish people, who were walled off from coming any closer than the outer "Court of the Gentiles." According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, the inscription on the separating wall said: "Let no foreigner enter inside of the barrier and the fence around the sanctuary. Whosoever is caught will himself be the cause of death following."

Jesus Fulfilled The Law

The whole system of special laws and restricted temple worship became a source of conflict between Jews and non-Jews. After Jesus fulfilled the

Law, died, and rose again, He sent His disciples to proclaim forgiveness apart from the Law. But Jews who had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah found it difficult to imagine how non-Jews could suddenly have full-fledged access to the Lord. Non-Jews, while painfully aware of their pagan and sinful background, could not understand what circumcision, diet restrictions, or a particular stone temple had to do with deliverance from that sinful state.

In Ephesians chapter two, Paul shows that even the more irreconcilable differences are no match for the power found in the Gospel of Christ crucified. He writes: *“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”*

The restrictions of temple worship, severe as they were, are a fitting picture of the wall of our sins that separates us from God. No amount of outward washing, not even countless good works and sacrifices, could grant us the

access to our heavenly Father that we need. But Jesus cleared the way by suffering in our place at the cross, thus paying the full penalty for our sins. Now, through faith in Him, Jews and non-Jews alike have “most privileged” status with the Father. In fact, it goes far beyond free access to the Lord in His temple, since we now *are* that temple!

“ . . . Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”

In many areas of life the saying holds true: “Membership has its privileges.” Such privileges are often wrongly viewed as an inborn right by those who have them, and as an affront by “outsiders.”

Blessed be our Savior, whose Gospel breaks down the walls of personal sin, as well as the walls of mutual distrust! His grace is truly undeserved, which means that no one can claim access to the Father by right.

And far from being the possession of the privileged few, salvation is inclusive to all who receive it by faith in Christ.

—Pastor Bruce Naumann



An ILC Chapel Address—

Coming Into The Light

During the electioneering this month you may recall hearing something about a Wisconsin politician that was not good news. He got reelected. According to some reports, he has come out of the closet.

Coming out of the closet means making public acknowledgement of homosexuality. For some folks, that step is considered good, for it presents the image of a prisoner emerging from the stifling confines of a restricted

lifestyle; it paints the picture of coming into the light from a subterranean hole. Oh, how the prince of darkness parades himself as an angel of light, for he has deluded those souls into telling themselves and the world that, by coming out of the closet, they have come into the light.

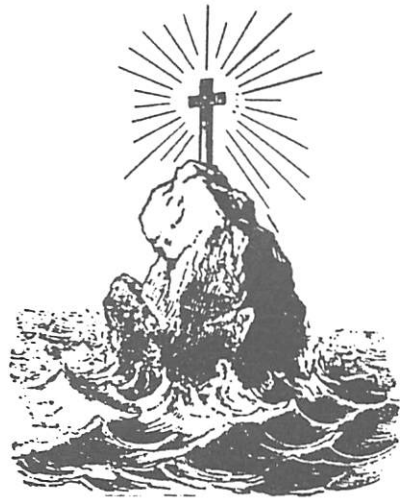
Let us keep our feet on our foundation about light and darkness: "And this is condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:19-21).

The blatant and public boldness of the gay rights movement is not a coming into the light, but rather a renunciation of the light from God in heaven. Coming to God's Light is quite the opposite of coming out of the closet.

God's Light is the gift of seeing clearly the realities of sin and salvation. It gives us the light to see what darkness there really *is* in the human heart that opposes God's will, that turns away from God's presence, that pulls away from God's hand—and then declares it has found fulfillment and enlightenment. Indeed, there are none so blind as those who will not see.

I am not just "gay-bashing," for we had better bash every evil thought, every dark urge, every black impulse, every shadow and shade of ungodliness as part of the darkness into which we also were born.

By right of birth you and I were not children of the light. By our genetic



blood line we were inherently no better than the other perverts. It has taken a miracle of tremendous proportions to bring me and you out of our spiritual graves into the Light. God Himself had to get His hands on us and pull us free from the powers of darkness into which we were born, recreating us to conform to His image.

So what we need to focus on is God's overwhelming mercy, on His over-reaching love, on His over-coming generosity. Those out there who have not come under that power of God's love in Christ Jesus, who have not yet seen the true Light in the face of Christ Jesus—are the reason we go *into* our closets, there in prayer to bring before our heavenly Father those issues that lie upon our hearts. For when our Savior talks about the closet, He presents us with the picture of closeness as we bring our petitions to our Father in heaven. (It is simply amazing that this Christian image of the closet as the place of prayer has been sullied with such a different connotation in this stupid world).

And this passage from John's

gospel, this portion of a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, presents to our attending hearts the truth that escapes many in this world. For the LIGHT that has come into the world is Jesus and all the brightness of heaven that He supplies.

The gay-rights movement is not coming into the Light of God's gift from heaven when its people parade in celebration of their dedication to sin, no matter how the limelight shines on them. That's just darkness disguised as light.

Now our job is twofold: first, we must remain clear in the truth that sin is not a blessed release from conventional morality. Sin is not designed by Satan to be good for his victim. *Sin is meant to backfire.*

Secondly, inasmuch as we have been blessed with the Light of Jesus, our Savior, let us be dedicated to reflecting His image in the ways we

conduct ourselves, both before one another and before the poor soul who has not yet been brought out of his darkness.

That's our work, for which we are happy to serve one another. That's our privilege which we share with the apostles and all God's children through the ages.

Let's pray and work to get somebody a lot further than just out of the closet. Let's actually pull him into the light, where God has already brought us so that one of us here can show the way to Jesus, the true Light that can salvage anybody born into this world.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn. 1:12-13).

—Prof. Em. Paul Koch



Parables Of The Master

Luke 14: 15-24

'For the Jew first and also the Gentile'

In this parable of the Great Supper, Jesus sought to highlight the Jews' rejection of God's gracious invitation, and to warn those who were invited to the banquet not to reject this gracious invitation. "For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper" (Lk. 14:24).

The warning is also there that we do not take for granted God's grace, and in self-righteousness reject the Gospel invitation.

Jesus used this parable of the Great Supper to expose the process of rejection

that already was at work in Israel. The opposition to Jesus, particularly among the religious leaders of the Jews, was increasing (Luke 14:1-6). The time was soon coming when Jesus would set His face toward Jerusalem

on a journey that would end at the cross.

After Pentecost the early church's make-up would shift from being predominantly Jewish to being predominantly Gentile. This is understood in connection with the mystery of God's plan of salvation—to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. God chose the descendants of Abraham, the Jewish nation, as His people. This was an act of grace, not merit. To the Jews God gave the Old Testament prophets and scriptures. To the Jews God gave the promises of the coming Messiah and the glorious kingdom of God. Isn't it then mind-boggling that this special people of God rejected Jesus as their promised Messiah and put Him to death on the cross?!

In Jesus' day banquets were an important part of a village's and family's social life. Not to come to a banquet was a terrible affront to the person who had invited you. This would be especially true if the king or an important person was giving the banquet. So it was that "a certain man gave a great supper and invited many (Lk. 14:16).

However, when this man sent his servant to let those who had been invited know that it was time for the supper to begin, those who had been invited began to make excuses why they could not come. The excuses sound good: "I have to inspect my newly bought property" — "I have to test drive my new oxen" — "I have just gotten married."

The reaction of the master of the house was swift and predictable. He was "angry." These excuses were a slap in his face. It showed that those who had been invited did not think very much of him or his invitation. It would be like a bride and groom whose

"... The sad news is that 'none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' The good news is that there is now room for people like you and me."

wedding invitations are ignored by those who had been invited.

The Application Is Obvious

In the context of the growing opposition to Jesus and His ministry, the application is obvious. Jesus was describing the chosen people of God, the Jews, and their religious leaders who were rejecting Him as the promised Messiah. The people of Jesus' day had all kinds of reasons and excuses not to follow this Jesus. Because of their self-righteousness, they rejected God's gracious invitation to partake of this banquet in the kingdom of God.

However, these words are also written for our learning. In His grace, God has also called us as His particular people, even though we were not a people. There is always the real possibility that with our own excuses we will reject the gracious invitation of the Gospel to follow Jesus.

It is easy for "religious" people—especially conservative Lutherans—to take refuge in their own religiousness. It is easy to become distracted by the things of this world and fail to "count the cost" of discipleship. People ignore the means of grace, the Gospel and the Sacraments, through which God extends His gracious invitation to partake of the banquet of life.

If the chosen people of God, the Jews, rejected Jesus, it is also possible

for us to refuse God's gracious invitation.

However, God's grace will not be frustrated by man's unbelief. When those who were chosen rejected the invitation, the master sent out his servants to bring in the uninvited. He told his servants: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind" (Lk. 14:21).

The master compelled people to come in so that his house would be filled. Here was a banquet that was attended not by the rich and the powerful, but by the unwashed, the homeless, the poor, and the beggars. God has invited even us to His banquet.

These words of Jesus set the stage for the events recorded in the book of Acts. Time and time again, the apostle Paul preached first to the Jews. When they rejected the Gospel message, he

then turned to the Gentiles. The New Testament church was soon filled with the unworthy, with real sinners, with the poor and neglected, with Gentile "dogs" (cf. Matt. 15:26f).

God brings the lowly and humble into the kingdom of God through the Gospel invitation of the forgiveness of sins.

The sad news is that "none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper." The good news is that there is now room for people like you and me.

The Gospel invitation goes out into all the world, as Jesus says, "Come, for all things are now ready." May you realize the power of the Holy Spirit, Who compels you to come in through the power of the Gospel.

This parable illustrates how God's salvation was to the Jew first and then to the Gentile.

—Pastor John Schierenbeck



SMORGASBORD

• TWO SOULS PASSING

(The obituary of Pastor Carl Thurow appears in this issue. The September 19, 1999 worship service bulletin of Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wis. contained the following "comparisons" between one who has just begun and another who has just ended a Christian's earthly pilgrimage.)

September 9th. An important date for two souls in our congregation. For Hunter Cole Diede, the youngest of our members, it was the day of his baptism.

For Carl Thurow, one of our oldest members, it was the day of his stroke, admission to the hospital, and the last week of his life.

Neither would see the other this side of eternity. Yet they are brothers—in Christ Jesus.

Hunter begins a life of promise. Carl begins the promised life.

Hunter starts a journey only God knows how long.

Carl begins an endless reign in heaven.

Hunter is right in the middle of the war, a fierce and deadly struggle with the flesh, the host of evil angels, and a very evil world.

Carl has the complete victory and for the first time enjoys real life in the presence of God and the holy angels.

Hunter sees the promised land by faith.

Carl is in the promised land.

Hunter is in need of daily Bible readings to see Jesus.

Carl sees the Savior for himself.

Hunter needs a lifetime of prayer. Carl needs no prayer.

For Hunter, we seek countless blessings from Jesus.

For Carl, we thank Jesus for countless blessings.

A final thought. There are many who would make Jesus optional. They would say: "Believe in Him if you wish, but you can also believe in other ways of salvation." Both Hunter and Carl remind us that Jesus makes all the difference in the world—this one and the one to come. And some day Hunter and Carl will meet—in heaven, thanks to the work of their brother, Jesus Christ.

• HOW SHALL WE 'TAKE GOD'S WORD'?

(From the September 5, 1999 worship service bulletin of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, West Columbia, S.C.; Vance Fossum is pastor.)

Here at Holy Trinity we offer the unqualified grace and mercy of God in connection with His Gospel message of forgiveness through His Son, Jesus Christ. Because this saving message from God is revealed to us only in His Word—the Bible—we also teach the Bible. And we make no apologies for our unquestioned acceptance of the whole Bible as the divinely inspired and inerrant Word of God. If we did not regard the *whole* Bible in this way, we could not continue to preach the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in Christ without reservations and qualifications.

For this reason, the remark of a local pastor of a large "Christian" congregation (Episcopal) is very disturbing. He was asked: "Do you believe that the creation account of Genesis 1-2 is literally true, and that the miracles of the Old Testament happened exactly

as recorded?" Without hesitation he answered: "*No, I do not take the Bible literally. I take the Bible very seriously.*"

How deep the man is! To take God at His Word is for simpletons, you see. For deep-thinker theologians the *historical* record of Scripture is too confining. Their great intellect sees more than meets the eye. You can bet that God is impressed with those swelled heads who say: "O Lord, I take what you say very seriously, but don't expect me to believe that you mean *exactly* what You say!"

Of course, we recognize that in parts of the Bible God conveys His truth by means of poetry and symbolic visions. But those who regard the Bible as a poetic/symbolic book of myths and parables with hidden meanings, do so not to "find" the truth but to escape it.

They do the same with the New Testament teachings of Christ and the apostles. Wherever the expressed will of God clearly opposes the desires of modern man, the "serious" theologians look for that "other, deeper meaning." Because their proud hearts say of such passages, "I don't want to hear this!" their intellect concludes: "God has not *really* said this!"

How thankful we are at Holy Trinity for the grace to take God at His Word, seriously. For the God who tells me that His universe was *created* in six twenty-four-hour days (Gen. 1), also tells me that He "*gave* His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). May this Savior-God continue to strengthen us through His Word—taken seriously and literally—until His coming in glory. Amen.

Pastor Carl M. Thurow

1914-1999



Note: Below is the obituary prepared and read (itemized Scriptures included) by officiating Pastor Paul Tiefel Jr. at the funeral of the deceased — Ed.

(Psalm 139:13-14,16)

On August 16, 1914 God blessed Theodore and Emma (nee Keller) with His special creation of Carl Martin.

(Ephesians 4:24)

God created a new man in Carl and delivered him from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God through the gracious washing of baptism on August 30, 1914. He later confirmed his baptismal vow through his own confession of faith on July 1, 1928. The LORD developed and trained His servant through schooling which included two years of college at Northwestern in Watertown, Wis. and three years at Wisconsin Synod Seminary in Thiensville. Carl was ordained into the public preaching ministry and installed as pastor of churches in Shirley and Pine Grove, Wis. in 1941.

(Genesis 2:18)

On December 26, 1943 the LORD God brought to Carl the precious gift of a Christian wife, herself a special creation of God, Dorothea Koch. The Lord Jesus became the Head of the new family and blessed them with the creative gift of five children—Carla, Nona, Theodore, Martin, and Paula.

(Ephesians 2:8-10)

The LORD not only called Carl to faith by grace. He also graciously installed in his heart an appreciation for God's grace and a love for His Word. In obedience to the Word of God, Carl left his former fellowship when it began to defend false teaching; Carl was instrumental in the early years of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, serving the synod in a number of ways (Board of Missions, reviewed musical recordings in the *Spokesman*). In addition to his God-created good works as a Christian husband and father, God prepared him to be a Gospel preacher and a Christian gentleman to all. Carl served congregations in Two Rivers, Wis., Lamar, Colo., Fridley, Minn. and Austin, Minn. He retired from the ministry in 1984 and moved to Eau Claire, Wis. where he continued to be God's servant in his life, works, and writings.

(Isaiah 65:17-18)

On September 9 Carl Thurow suffered a stroke and was hospitalized. The LORD gave Carl six days of Bible devotions and constant visits from a loving family before taking his soul home to heaven on Thursday, September 15, at the age of 85 years. Carl's body was buried on September 17 at Prairie View Cemetery in the town of Hallie where it awaits the resurrection on the Judgment Day. Carl was preceded in death by his parents; one son, Martin; and one sister, Ardis Thurow. The victory service of Pastor Thurow was held on September 20, 1999. The sermon text was Psalm 71. •

1999 Seminary Graduates

Note: We thank our graduates for telling us how the Lord led them into the ministry. — Ed.

Meet Pastor David Schaller

David Paul Schaller was born on January 15, 1974 to Pastor Paul and Nona Schaller. He was baptized at St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Hayward, Calif., where his father was serving as pastor. In 1980 his father accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church, Clarkston, Wash. where the family then moved. David was confirmed at St. John's on May 22, 1988.

He attended public schools in Clarkston, through the tenth grade. In the fall of 1990 he enrolled in Immanuel Lutheran High School, Eau Claire, Wis. He graduated from high school in 1992, and continued at Immanuel for college, graduating in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in pre-theological studies.

The Lord led David to enter semi-



Pastor & Mrs. David Schaller

nary in the fall of 1996. While attending seminary he vicared under Pastor Steven Sippert in Valentine, Nebr. and Pastor Delwyn Maas in Golden, Colo. He graduated on May 22, 1999. While going to school in Eau Claire, he also enjoyed being involved with the Immanuel Lutheran tour choir for many years.

In June of this year he was married to Sarah (nee) Lau. Sarah had taught at Trinity Lutheran School in Watertown, S.Dak. On July 11, 1999 David was ordained and installed as pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church at Sister Lakes, Michigan.

Meet Pastor Stephen Sydow

On April 12, 1974 Beth Sydow was serving as organist for Good Friday services at Berea Lutheran Church in Inver Grove Heights, Minn. Stephen was on the way, and was born to Beth and Jim early on the morning of the 13th. He was baptized by Pastor Paul Larsen on April 21, 1974, thus beginning his new life in Christ.

He grew up in Fridley, Minn. with Pastor Daniel Fleischer of Grace congregation as his spiritual shepherd throughout grade school. He went through all eight grades at Grace Lutheran School and soon read all the books in its library. Weekly trips to the



Pastor & Mrs. Stephen Sydow

public library also maintained his interest in reading. Along with piano and cello lessons, baseball and basketball teams, and short-lived guitar lessons, Stephen's parents managed to keep their son out of too much trouble.

In the Fall of 1988, Stephen began his career at Immanuel Lutheran High School and College in Eau Claire, never suspecting that this campus

would be his home for most of the next eleven years. High school years were filled with sports, as well as with tour choir and with acting in musicals and thespian productions. Friends given by God during these years turned out to be the greatest blessing, for they were a constant source of spiritual support and encouragement.

Upon graduation from high school, Stephen enrolled at the University of Minnesota with aerospace engineering as a major. Within a few short months, however, the Lord brought him to realize that was not his calling. After one semester he returned to Immanuel in the Pre-theology program. He was immediately involved again in the Tour Choir and added part-time jobs working in the fieldhouse and coaching. He also worked for Bester Bros.

Moving Company in the Twin Cities off and on for eight years.

During college years Stephen met his future wife, Kelly Wente. In Seminary he served as vicar at Messiah Lutheran, Hales Corners, Wis. and at Faith Lutheran, Coloma, Mich.

Stephen and Kelly were married on June 27, 1998. The new Mrs. Sydow supported her husband during his final year of Seminary through her job as an administrative assistant at Luther Hospital in Eau Claire.

Stephen Sydow received a Divine Call into the public ministry on April 14, 1999 to Grace Lutheran Church of Live Oak, Florida. He was ordained and installed on July 11th—by none other than the pastor who had baptized him, Paul Larsen.



An Anniversary in Watertown, South Dakota—

'Sons of Trinity' Help Celebrate Forty Years



'Sons of Trinity' now in the pastoral ministry: (Back) David Fuerstenau, George Dummann, Norman Greve; (front) Elton Hallauer, John Klatt

On August 15, 1999 Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its 40th anniversary with a special service entitled: "We are all Sons and

Heirs." The 'sons of the congregation'—those men who grew up at Trinity and have since gone on to serve as pastors in the CLC—conducted the

service.

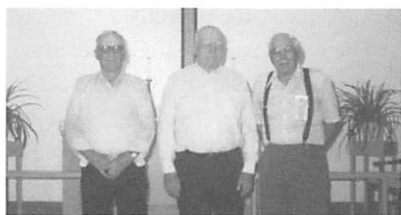
These men did not explain what they had become since they last were members of Trinity. They rather expressed what we all have in common: 1) we are all sons of men, born in sin; 2) we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus; 3) we are all sons of the prophets, called to speak and teach others the Word of Truth; 4) we are all sons of Zion—scorned by the world but loved by the Lord; 5) we are all heirs of everlasting life.

These 'sons of the congregation' include:

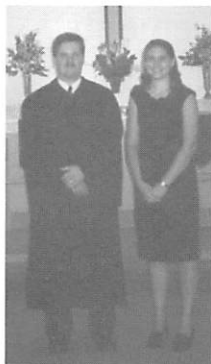
Pastor George Dummann, the son of Paul and Melanie Dummann. George was baptized (1972) and confirmed (1987) as a member of Trinity. He now serves the Lord Jesus as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Valentine, Nebraska.

Pastor John Klatt is the son of Ed and Elna Klatt. John was confirmed as a member of Trinity on June 24, 1962. He currently serves the Lord Jesus as pastor of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Spring (Houston), Texas.

Pastor Elton Hallauer is the son of Arnold and Ella Hallauer, charter members of Trinity. Elton serves the Lord Jesus as His undershepherd of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Morris, Minnesota and Peace Lutheran



Three of the remaining founders of Trinity Ev. Lutheran in Watertown: (l-r) Chester Svarvarl, Ed Klatt, Vernon Fuerstenau



The current pastor at Trinity, Andrew Schaller, is shown with teacher at Trinity School, Miss Vanessa Bernthal

Church in Parkers Prairie, Minnesota.

Pastor David Fuerstenau is the son of Vernon and Hannah Fuerstenau. David was confirmed with John Klatt on June 24, 1962. He now serves the Lord of the Church as pastor of First Lutheran Church in Faulkton, South Dakota and Zion Lutheran Church in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Pastor Norman Greve is the son of Pastor and Mrs. (Lila) Vernon Greve. Norman's father was a former pastor of Trinity. Norman now serves as pastor of Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Eagle Lake, Minnesota.

Pastor Dale Redlin is retired from the public ministry, but still serves periodically as a vacancy pastor in the CLC. Dale might also be considered a son of the congregation because his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Levi Redlin, were members of Trinity.

Pastor Joel Fleischer is the son of Pastor and Mrs. (Barbara) Daniel Fleischer. Pastor Daniel Fleischer is a former pastor of Trinity. Joel might be considered a son of the congregation because he was baptized as a member of Trinity on August 20, 1967. Joel now serves the Lord Jesus as pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church in Marquette, Michigan.

—Pastor Andrew Schaller

Announcements

40th Anniversary

Grace Ev. Lutheran Church of Sleepy Eye, Minnesota will mark its 40th anniversary with a special worship service on Sunday, November 21, 1999. The service begins at 2:30 p.m. with son of the congregation, Pastor Theodore Barthels of Detroit Lakes, Minn., serving as guest speaker. Other events include a slide presentation of the history of Grace at 3:45 p.m. and a potluck supper for all members and guests at 5:00 p.m.

Grace of Sleepy Eye conducted its first worship service on Thanksgiving Day, 1959. Our CLC brethren are cordially invited to join us in thanking the Lord for all His blessings over forty years.

GETSEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH
E. 11315 BROADWAY
SPOKANE, WA. 99206

Complements of

Correction

The October 1999 issue, p. 8, had a sentence which should be corrected to read: "But Lutheranism and Christianity in general need to return to conservatism in the truest sense of the word . . ." We regret the error. - Ed.

Great Lakes Pastoral Conference

The conference took place September 27-29 in Eau Claire, Wis., at the ILC campus as well as at Messiah Lutheran Church. Due to lack of a chairman or secretary, this announcement is being made after the fact. The following items were presented and discussed.

1. The Soul—A Word Study of 'Nepheš' (Old Testament Exegesis) —Prof. John Pfeiffer
2. 150 Reasons To Sing (Psalms in Worship) — Prof. John Reim
3. Encouraging Congregational Involvement in Evangelism — Pastor Paul Tiefel
4. Church History Report: Missionary Efforts of the Christian Church to Western border lands of the Roman Empire — Pastor Philip Matzke
5. Isagogics—Philippians (in sermon form for Trinity 17) — Pastor Walter Schaller
6. Prophecies in Daniel — Pastor Em. Paul F. Nolting
7. New Testament Exegesis: The Reluctant Fool, 2 Corinthians 12:11-21 — Prof. Michael Sydow
8. Discussion held on memorials to

convention, and the committee statement regarding the American Legion.

9. Study: Genesis 3:16, with application to marriage today — Pastor James Sandeen
10. Essay: Evangelical Admonition: To what extent does it proceed from the Law? the Gospel? — Prof. Paul Schaller
11. Sermon Study for Advent 99 — Pastor Michael Eichstadt

Communion Service speaker: Prof. Em. John Lau

—Pastor Mark Gurath, Secretary

A REUNION

The Early Years of ILC-Mankato (1959-1963)

All students, faculty, houseparents, and friends who were involved in Immanuel High School, College, and Seminary during the early years of the school are invited to a reunion in Mankato, Minnesota June 23-25, 2000. More details will follow. (For more information you may contact a Reunion committee member, Prof. Gene Schreyer, at 507-387-7758.)