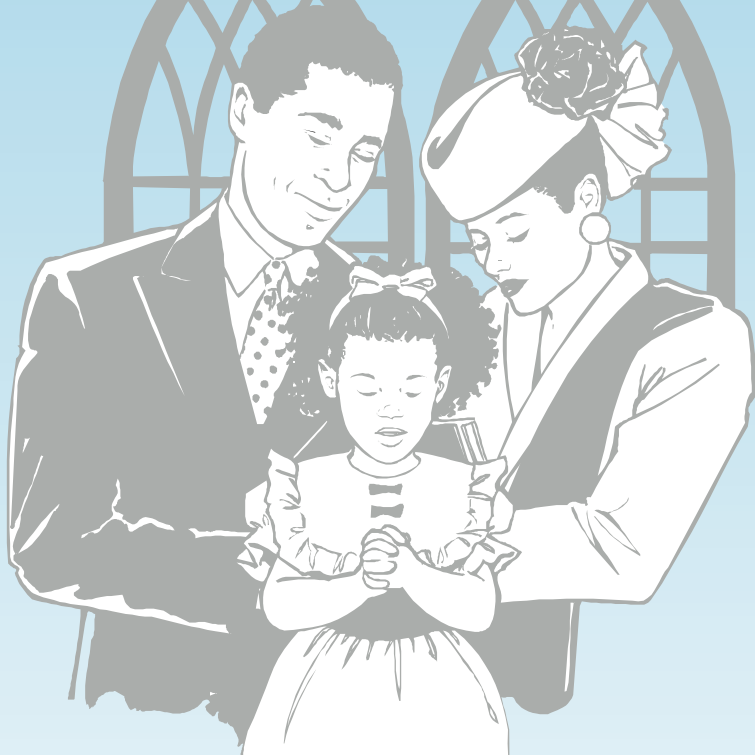


Lutheran Spokesman



¹⁵See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Ephesians 5:17-21

Actions and Reactions in the Gospel

A law of physics states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. We can see a corresponding "law" in us when it comes to the commands of God. When the Lord tells us one thing, there is a strong reaction in us to do completely the opposite. It is not the fault of the Lord, nor is it a malfunction of His Law. The problem lies within our sinful nature.

We read in Romans 7:7, "I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, You shall not covet." Which of us has not lived that? If a parent's instructions to a child leaving a room are "Don't touch that cake; it's for company," then the child will have a hard time not thinking about, much less not touching, that piece of cake.

By nature we react very similarly to our Heavenly Father's instructions—with great vigor we wish to do the very opposite of what is right and good.

Even when it comes to good works themselves, we find ourselves caught in considering them in a way that God did not intend. We are tempted to elevate good works, putting them on an equal footing with the redemptive work of Christ. In doing so, salvation by grace is extinguished. This was the battle that the Spirit fought through men such as the apostle Paul and Martin Luther.

On the other hand, we may downplay fruits of faith to a point where we ignore sin and its consequences. For us as confessional Lutherans this can be a

particularly tough temptation, because—in pulling so strongly against work righteousness—we are susceptible to being pushed toward a faith-killing attitude about sin.

The Holy Spirit used James to write an epistle to quench this fire.

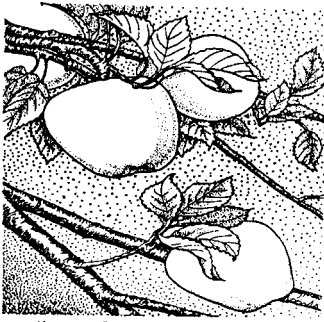
Fed By the Gospel!

The devil is no dummy. He works toward the path of least resistance. He will push, pull, and drag us toward the sin of viewing fruits of faith differently than we ought. It takes going back to God's Word again and again for the purpose of resisting those efforts and properly viewing our Christian sanctification.

The correct view of good works is that though they are not the cause of salvation, they are certainly a Spirit-led reaction to it. Our souls have been cleansed by the blood of Christ; and what is on the inside of a person will be reflected on the outside in his actions. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

These fruits of faith grow when fed by the gospel of Christ. That is the source through which the Holy Spirit will work in a Christian, so that we walk in the Spirit and do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5).

Returning to the Scriptures again and again will steady us, as the devil seeks to throw us off balance. Our Lord has revealed to us not only why



"...each tree is known
by its own fruit."
-Luke 6:44

fruits of faith are important—they flow from faith in Christ, but also what these fruits actually are—they conform to God's will.

Without the message of Jesus we have no idea of God's love, but only

the desire to fight against what is pleasing to Him. Without God's Word our knowledge of what is pleasing to God is incomplete. With the Word of God the Holy Spirit provides both desire and direction.

The action of God's love displayed in the gospel of Christ prompts a positive reaction in a believer's faith-life.

*O my Savior, help afford
By Thy Spirit and Thy Word!
When my wayward heart would
stray,
Keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply
While I live and when I die. (TLH
342:5)*

—Pastor Michael Schierenbeck



Back to School to the Glory of God

It's that time again, when students are resuming their educational training in school after their long summer recess.

The school setting they return to will vary from student to student. For those who are being home schooled, it means sitting at the feet of their parents in the familiar and comfortable surroundings of their family home. For those who have the privilege of attending an organized Christian school of the church, it means gathering in a formal classroom to learn under the tutelage of called servants of the Lord. And for those who attend a public school it means receiving an education from teachers in a facility provided by the state.

The locality where our youth are educated is not as important as what they learn. It is of utmost concern to us as Christian parents—as primary spiri-

tual guardians of our offspring—that our children be fully equipped in body, soul, and mind to use their time, talent, and energy to serve the Lord in His kingdom; and to do that in whatever calling they may have, bringing honor and glory to His name, promoting His eternal kingdom.

And we are ultimately concerned that they be prepared and ready to be received into the eternal, heavenly world. If any would have a question about such an emphasis, Jesus' parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30 or Luke 19:12-17) goes far in helping us in this understanding.

It is earthbound and short-sighted for anyone to think that the purpose of education for the next generation is

solely to make it possible for them to get a good-paying job and have a comfortable life. Consider the parable in which Jesus told of the foolish, prosperous farmer (Luke 12:13-21). This laborer of the field had worked hard and long at his profession so that he was able to retire and enjoy life with a sizeable nest egg.

But because this foolish man lost sight of the spiritual side of life and had no relationship with the LORD—who had created him and had purchased eternal redemption for him—when God ended his retirement through death, the man not only lost all He had worked for, but also eternally lost his soul.

Parents the Key!

Recognizing the importance of a spiritual emphasis in our life's work and the goal of eternal glory, there is no substitute for a Christ-centered education. Jesus Christ is our life, our hope, and our eternal salvation. It is in the LORD our God that we live and move and have our being.

In a Christian home where home schooling takes place, or in our organized church schools, our children are highly blessed in learning the different subjects from a Christian perspective. They also receive on-going spiritual nourishment from the life-giving gospel of Christ, so that their faith is renewed and strengthened. The gospel of Christ, which reveals God's redeeming love, is the motivational resource for the next generation to live their lives unto God and His eternal kingdom.

Since Christ and His teachings are not integrated in the public school curriculum—and since a world-view hos-



tile to the Christian faith is in many cases being promoted in state schools—Christian parents serve their children well by being vigilant, countering any educational philosophy that would undermine the faith of their children.

With the assistance of their church, parents take advantage of the off-school hours to bring Christ into the children's educational training.

Whether our children are being schooled at home, at our Christian schools, or at the public school, what the children learn from their parents through word and example is one of the most powerful influences in their Christian training.

May God bless our parents in bringing up their children in the nurture and training of the Lord. And may God bless this school year so that our children grow up living to the honor and glory of our Savior-God.

—Pastor Mark Gullerud

UNIQUE

Some years ago a so-called Christian film was made which told of an antkeeper. He had an ant farm in which a rebellion took place, with lots of violence, destruction, and death. The antkeeper decided to become an ant in order to solve the problem.

The idea seemed like a good one for a film. But the basic error was that the keeper, in the act of becoming an ant, thereby depicts Christ's State of Humiliation. The review committee deemed the film unsuitable for showing in Lutheran congregations.

The Scriptures do not teach that Jesus' State of Humiliation consists in the fact that He took on human form. Yes, they do teach that Jesus became a man (and still is a man), that God condescends to us, that Jesus "is inferior to the Father as touching His manhood" (Athanasian Creed), and that He took our sin and sins upon Himself.

But His Humiliation consists in the method and manner in which He entered our world and conducted His ministry. He does not always and fully use His divine characteristics or attributes which are available to Him. He sets those aside in order to save us. He comes, not in pomp and glory, but in lowliness and meekness—those two words being key to His entire ministry. He suffers and dies for sinful man and is buried.

The Apostles' Creed shows the steps down and down and down from His conception to burial—and then up and up and up to the coming Day of Judgment. The steps down are the Humiliation, the steps up the Exaltation. And both as a man.

There is a man in heaven. As redeemed we will have bodies in heaven. Having a body is a good thing.

Jesus' Person—and Work—is unique.



This does not mean that it is just highly unusual, rare, or extraordinary. Like the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, it is a "one and only." It is single, singular, sole, with nothing like it or equal to it. The word "only-begotten" in John 3:16 has this sense.

Therefore we cannot find a parallel anywhere in life with which to make a comparison. We cannot make a film or tell a story or give an illustration which perfectly describes who Jesus is and what He does. I like the French expression "par excellence," or their description of a one-way street as "rue a sens unique" (literally, "street with a direction of one only"). But those expressions have their weaknesses.

So the only thing left for us to do is to say what Scripture says. Declare. Tell. Announce. Report. Proclaim. Teach—and let the Holy Spirit create in us what He did in Jesus' disciples, like Peter and Thomas, who confessed Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God!" and "my Lord and my God!"

Now that's something else that is unique!

—Pastor Em. Warren Fanning

A Devotional Study of Matthew 6:24-34

First of three parts of an essay delivered to the June 13-15, 2003 West Central Delegate Conference held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Jamestown, North Dakota. The writer is Mr. Michael Fuerstenau, a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Watertown, South Dakota.

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6:24).

What is God really talking about when He says we cannot serve two masters? Well, one Master is God Himself. He is the One we must trust in to help us through all our troubled times. The other 'master' would include our earthly possessions and wealth, and many other desires.

When our hearts desire something on this Earth, we may place those earthly things before God, serving them and not God Himself. When we desire something, do we desire it so that we can serve our own self-interests or so we can serve God Himself?

Because of our sinful natures, most of the time it is the former. We need to stop and think about what we want out of life. Will we love God above all things, and will we trust Him to provide all that we need for this body and life? Will we question God when He doesn't give us the things we want . . . when we want them? The Lord has given us these words as our guide: "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you"

(Lk. 12:31).

We cannot love both God and mammon. The love of God is good, but loving mammon is evil. The love of God will move us to serve God. The Lord tells us what the love of money can lead to: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10).

The love of God will move us to seek to serve God whether we be rich or poor, for we know that He is always present to help us. God does not condemn wealth or riches, but He is concerned about our attitude toward these things.

God gives wealth to sustain our lives. If we misuse that wealth, is it still being used to serve God? This may show that we do not fully trust in the Lord. The Lord warns us that it is impossible to serve God and mammon, because we will in our hearts choose one over the other. Let us ask God to help us to trust in Him even when we think that we ought to have more. We pray for this because we know that trusting in the Lord is a hard lesson to learn.

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?" (Mt. 6:25)

What does God mean when He says we should not worry about what we

put on our bodies or in our mouths? Should we wait until someone dresses us or puts something in our mouths? Of course not! It is because of sin that we are to work for our clothing and food.

However, God does not want these things to be burdens to us. He would have us labor for them but not worry about them. When we worry about having them, it shows that we lack trust in God to provide. We may have trouble worshipping and serving God if we let these things bother us. If we work, God will provide these things to sustain our lives—perhaps not the way we want, but the way He wants. We need to trust in Him that He will provide these things.

Many times we think we need this or that, when we are really fooling ourselves. God promises to provide those things that we need for life. He doesn't promise us the lap of luxury. The loving of material wealth is a root of all kinds of evil. Think about what you want in this life ... the riches of this world or the insurance that you are going to heaven?! God grant that we not worry about our lives!

"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather

into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Mt. 6:26)

Why did God place creatures on the earth and birds to fly in the air? Why did God create the plants, grass, and trees to grow on the earth? He made us and He loves us with a love beyond any human love.

God shows us that love in the way He provides for the creation. The Lord tells us here to look at the birds of the air and learn from them. The birds do not worry about where food is coming from or where they are going to live. Likewise, if God provides for these creatures, won't He provide for us too? Are we not of more value to God than they?

God created us in His own image. He gave us power over all creatures. Will He not provide for us also? He wants us to love and trust in Him and to keep things in perspective. Our lives do not depend upon earthly possessions that fade away.

So take it from the birds of the air, and let God provide for you. Then you can spend more of your time worshipping and praising God for the things He has given you!

(to be continued)



**Teacher Lane Fischer addresses
Mankato Graduates**



Receiving Line

TESTED BY GOD

Earthly life is filled with trials. Abraham's life was no different.

First, God told him to pack up his household and move from his family and familiar surroundings to a faraway place which God would show him. After the arrival in Canaan, there had been a dispute over grazing rights between Abraham's herdsmen and those of his nephew, Lot. Then family peace had been disrupted because of Abraham and Sarah's plan to use a slave named Hagar as a surrogate mother so that they could have a child. Finally, things had seemed to be going well, as the Lord blessed Abraham and Sarah with a son of their own, Isaac. The family was now prosperous and happy.

But suddenly Abraham's life was turned upside down. God told him, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" (Gen. 22:2).

Can you imagine hearing those words? Even those of us who are not parents can certainly sympathize with Abraham. There could have been no greater test of his love for God. Anything else would have been easier for him to do. He dearly loved Isaac. He had waited and hoped twenty-five years for him. He had watched him play and grow up into young manhood. Besides this, God had promised that through Isaac and his descendants the Savior of the world would one day come. Abraham's whole life and future were wrapped up in this son!

None of us is tested by God in exactly the same way Abraham was, and yet

God does test all of His children. He promises: "If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent" (Ps. 91:9-10 NIV).

But then comes an accident, a severe financial loss, or some other seeming disaster, and our love for God is strained and put to the test. The Lord says, "Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isa. 40:31 NIV). But then a serious illness strikes, or you and your family spend the whole winter battling one cold and flu bug after another, or some other trial leaves you wondering how you can possibly soar like an eagle when it feels like you can't even crawl!

At other times the testing may involve a difficult choice between following God's will in a matter and making someone angry, or ignoring the Word and going along with what others want. Sometimes it may even be a choice between what our common sense tells us and what the Lord says.

All of these can be tests from God in the believer's life.

Can our love measure up to these tests? How can it? Look again at Abraham. It could not have been easy for him. There must have been an agonizing struggle within his heart. Common sense and his feelings screamed, "No! This can't be right!" Reason told him that either God had reneged on His promise, or this command was from Satan.

Abraham did not pass the test by

objectively looking at all the facts and then deciding what to do. He did not trust his own feelings or instincts. Instead, he put God and His Word above all else. God had said that Abraham's family would be counted through Isaac and yet had also commanded that Isaac be sacrificed. Abraham could not understand how these two things could agree, but he trusted that God is always true to His Word no matter what, and that the Lord could accomplish the impossible.

The writer to the Hebrews lets us see what Abraham was thinking: "By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.' Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death" (Heb. 11:17-19 NIV). With that faith he could tell the servants that the two of them would go and worship the Lord, and that they would both return.

Our love too will survive under the most severe testing if it is based on

God's unfailing promises.

Our love is put to the test when we're told by unbelieving teachers, scientists, and experts that the universe exploded into existence through some chance process billions of years ago. We believe otherwise, not because we are more intelligent or can disprove evolution scientifically, but because God tells us that He created the world by the power of His Word in a week's time.

We put the Word above reason and believe that the impossible happened, that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary.

Even though the world seems as though it could go on forever, by faith we know that the Lord is coming back to judge all people, and that then this present Earth will be destroyed. Faith even overrules our sight and emotions when these tell us that death is the tragic end of all life and hope, for Jesus assures us: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (Jn. 11:25-26).

—Pastor Michael Eichstadt



Studies In Philipians

**"Rejoice in the Lord always.
Again I will say, rejoice!" (4:4)**

Chapter 4:8-23

"WHATEVER!"

"Whatever" – the pop phrase of the adult world that matters or requires choice among youth who see little in their attention: "Ben, don't play the

stereo so loud that the neighbors have to listen to it." "Yeah, whatever."

"Whatever" – sadly, it has become a term of indifference; a dismissive "let-someone-else-worry-about-it-put-off-till-tomorrow-what's-the-difference" kind of answer.

But don't be too down on poor little "whatever" – it *can* be quite a work-horse of a word. It can be used expansively, embracing every situation, implying interest, commitment, thoughtfulness – "whatever happens, I'll be right there with you, Love. . . ."

Paul is wrapping up his epistle to the Philippian Christians. He has just reminded them of the steadying, cheering "peace of God, which surpasses all understanding," namely, the peace Jesus supplies those who believe in Him. With that in mind, he goes on to employ that beautiful, all-embracing "whatever": "Whatever things are true ... noble ... just ... pure ... lovely ... things of good report ... virtuous... praiseworthy—meditate on these things."

Christians are often portrayed as negative sourpusses—and all too often we are. Whatever happened to "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for His mercy endures forever"? We can look around and take in the wonders of creation, the joys of life, the pleasures of human society. We can laugh, create art, contribute to the well-being of others, eat and drink, all *to the glory of God*. We can look a little more carefully and charitably at those around us, and see what is noble (that is, courageous, generous, high-minded), virtuous (morally clear and strong), and praiseworthy in our peers.

Teaching and Encouraging

This brings Paul to think about a

special matter to commend among the Philippians—their generosity. This is really his "thank you" note to them after receiving the "gift" conveyed by Epaphroditus (v. 18). He rejoiced that their response to the word of Paul's afflictions was not "whatever" ("that's his problem, not ours"—yawn), but "whatever *can* we do for our brother and shepherd?" Their collected gift demonstrated that whatever obstacles of distance, economy, and culture exist, they cannot diminish the power and unity of Christian love.

Even in his "thank you note," Paul uses the opportunity to teach and encourage: "I rejoiced ... that your care for me has flourished. Not that I speak in regard to need." Translation: "Your gift is wonderful in its own right, but don't think I would have despaired without it." Paul had learned what every maturing Christian comes to know: the Lord provides. Whatever happens, the Lord will provide, and we can learn to serve Him when times are good and when things get lean and hard. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (v. 13).

We are not told the exact nature of the the Philippian gift to Paul— Was it a gold coin? Food? A new robe? But we do know how Paul felt about it: "A sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God." Old Testament imagery there: a reference to the sacrifices made; burnt offerings roasting on the altar, demonstrating peace with God, a celebration of His favor, a thank-offering for His immeasurable goodness. Whatever is done out of love for Christ (even a glass of water, Mt. 10:42) is pleasing in the sight of our loving God.

This same God is ready and able to provide for Paul's brothers and sisters

in faith, whatever arises: "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Note the qualifying "according to"—pointing to Jesus Christ. It is through their faith in Christ that they will find their needs met. Not that they should despise material things or ignore physical needs—but through their faith in, obedience to, depen-

dence on, and peace through Jesus, the Lord (praise be His name!) will provide "whatever."

In every condition – in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
The Lord, the Almighty, thy strength e'er shall
be.

(TLH 427:2)

—Pastor Peter Reim



SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

First in a series

"The wages of sin will surely be paid"

Of all the signs I have seen in front of Houston churches over the years, this is the one that got me to thinking about writing a series of articles on church signs and bulletin boards. Why this sign? Because, when I saw it, I couldn't help but ask myself: Is this the message we would want to leave with the person driving past our church?

Now, granted, a church sign is hardly the vehicle for thoroughly indoctrinating the passerby. There is simply not room for more than a few words. And even if we made room for more, the person driving by could hardly read more than a few words. So everything written in these articles is presented with the understanding that, in many cases, the proper lesson of the sign could not be made without using many more words. Most of the signs I have chosen to comment on are signs

that raised questions in my mind about the appropriateness of the words. But not all the articles will be pointing out errors or failings; some will emphasize the good message of a sign.

The first sign we consider says, "The wages of sin will surely be paid." We are reminded of the passage "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), and we know that means not only physical death (the separation of body and soul) but also and especially the spiritual separation of a person from God when that person is consigned to hell.

That message is certainly needed by the sinner today as much as ever. It says that if a person continues in a life of ignoring God's Word and God's laws, that one will have to suffer the consequences, pay the penalty. The sinner—and this includes everyone in the world—needs to hear such a preaching of the law. And I have no doubt that

the members of the church in front of which this sign was located wanted to prick the consciences of those who are traveling through life without so much as a thought about their relationship with God.

But we also know that the law alone cannot change the sinner's heart, cannot turn the sinner to God. It can awaken fear in the sinner's heart or it can arouse anger, but it cannot provide relief from the effects of sin. For that what is needed is the gospel, the good news that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). The gospel assures us that Jesus took all sins of all people upon Himself and on the cross suffered the full punishment for them. By this redemptive sacrifice "He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus Christ) who knew no sin to

be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

As much as is possible—even in the few words of a church sign—we want to proclaim the message of the gospel in addition to the message of the law. The gospel must always be our primary message to this sinful world. Instead of "the wages of sin will surely be paid," how about at least alternating that with, or following that with, "the wages of sin have been paid." Perhaps that would arouse in someone's mind a question as to how this has happened, and opportunity may be afforded to elaborate further.

—Gene Rutz

The author of this compelling new series is a member of Bethel Lutheran Church (CLC), Houston (Spring), Texas. He also served for a time in the pastoral ministry. — Ed.



"CLOSE COMMUNION" Or: "Who is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper?"

Sixth In A Series

Partaking of the Lord's body and blood is an unparalleled joy in this life.

There is of course a burden and responsibility connected with it, because partaking is not just a mechanical, thoughtless activity. Every Trinitarian Invocation takes you back to Baptism, and reminds you that your Baptism is still vital, still energetic, still essential to our Christian lives. The Communion liturgy involves a continuing renewal of Baptism, and a public confirmation of your position as a believing Christian.



*For as often as you eat this bread
and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes.
— 1 Corinthians 11:26*

—From *MARTIN LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM* (Sydow edition)

CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS

For those who are about to partake of the Lord's Supper:

(From the Editor: the first twelve of these "CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS" appeared in our June 2003 issue. The final eleven appear here.)

13. *Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the sacrament?*
Yes, I believe this.
14. *What leads you to believe this?*
I am moved to believe this from the word of Christ: "Take, eat, this is my body . . . drink of it, all of you, this is my blood."
15. *What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood and in this way receive His pledge?*
We should proclaim and remember the shedding of His blood and His death, just as He taught us, "Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."
16. *Why should we proclaim and remember His death?*
We should do this so that we learn: (1) to believe that no creature could possibly do enough to pay for our sins; only Christ, true God and true man, could; (2) to be frightened by our sins and consider them to be great indeed; and (3) to find joy and comfort in Him, knowing that we are saved through this same faith.
17. *What caused Jesus to die and do what was needed to pay for our sins?*
Christ did all this because of His great love for the Father and each one of us, as the Scriptures teach: John 15:13; Romans 5:8; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:6.
18. *Finally, why do you want to go to the sacrament?*
From this I learn to believe that Christ died for my sin out of His great love for me. I also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.
19. *What should warn and move a Christian to receive the sacrament frequently?*
As far as God is concerned, a Christian should be moved by the command and promise of Christ, the Lord. As far as he himself is concerned, he should be moved by the trouble that lies heavily upon him – the very reason the command, encouragement, and promise were given.
20. *But what should a person do when he or she feels no need and has no hunger and thirst for the sacrament?*
No better advice can be given to such a person than for him to put his hand on his body and feel whether he still has flesh and blood and believe what the Scriptures say about this: Galatians 5:17, 19-21; Romans 7:18.
Next, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say:

John 15,16; 1 John 2:15,16; 5:19.

Finally, he will certainly have the devil to contend with, who with his lies and murder day and night, allows him no inner or outer peace, as the Scriptures picture him: John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8,9; 2 Timothy 2:26.

21. *But what should you do if you are sick and unable to come to the Lord's Supper?*

Then I should ask the pastor to come to me, pray with me, and administer the sacrament to me privately.

22. *When is the proper time to do this?*

I should ask the pastor, not only when death is near, but early enough, before all physical and mental powers are gone.

23. *Why should you do this?*

I should do this to receive the assurance in the Sacrament of the body and blood that our sins are forgiven, and that salvation is ours.

Some older Lutheran confirmation services had the confirmand memorize the following statement, which was publicly to be stated by each confirmand at the altar on the day of Confirmation: "I renounce the devil and all his works and all his wicked ways, and I dedicate myself unto Thee, Thou Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be true to Thee in faith and in obedience unto my end. Amen!"

One can only make such a confession after a thorough teaching of Biblical doctrine. The burden and responsibility is on the communicant. Parents and pastors and teachers assist in the instruction, which creates such a profession of faith. Confirmation—the day itself and the on-going days—is not the pictures, gowns, flowers, relatives, etc, but the teachings that precede.

And why? So that the communicant knows enough to be able to stand before his fellow-Christian's God, voluntarily and freely, and to say, in effect: "I am a most dreadful sinner for whom Christ had to come and die a most shameful death. He has washed me and cleansed me thoroughly from

my sins in Holy Baptism. With my own mouth and out of my own heart I now boldly confess and affirm that I know this true God from His holy Word. I believe Him and take comfort in Him. And I wish to serve Him by His Word and grace all my days. I wish to take this second Sacrament, that of Christ's true body and true blood, in order to continue in His grace and strength for a life of faith and work in the name of Jesus. Amen!"

Not many Christians can make that statement. But you can.

This is really what you are saying when you attend Holy Communion. It is a "Sermon in the Sacrament" (as a Lutheran pastor pointed out some years ago in a tract). Without saying a word, you are really saying a lot of words—words of re-affirmation and renewal! And your words are powered by the Word written, the Word taught and preached and heard in sermon, Bible class, home devotions and study.

And we all agree! After all, are you free from God and His words? Have you risen above God Himself? Do you

think that you know more than God,
more than the pastors whom He has
chosen to send to you, more than your
fellow-Christians around you?

No, we bear the burden and the
responsibility. And we rejoice! That's
our life in Christ.

—Pastor Em. Warren Fanning



Understanding Our Faith

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer
(From a series of bulletin articles)

A PRAYER

*Lord, though the road seems hard and long,
And when I think myself alone,
Renew in me Thy promise true,
"Lo, I am with you to the end."*

*When Satan, world, and flesh entice,
And me with evil would beguile,
Imprint upon my heart Thy Word,
"I am thy Shield and great Reward."*

*In sickness and in health, dear Lord,
In times of loneliness and fear,
Take Thou my hand and lead me
Through life's dark maze to live with Thee.*

*As years pass by, and shadows lengthen,
Increase my love and faith in Thee,
Who for my sin didst all atone,
"Til face to face I Thee shall see.*

*In memory of Thy mercies past,
Lead me to see with eyes of faith
That what befalls in times to come
Is all for my eternal good.*

*Thanks be to Thee, O Savior true,
Who ever ready are to hear
The cries of all who plead with Thee,
"O, Lord, be merciful to me."*

(Submitted by Pastor Fleischer as part of this series; he has indicated that he first wrote the poem in April, 1965. — Ed.)

DEDICATION AT ASCENSION– TACOMA, WASHINGTON

The rafters were raised for the second time as the worshippers sang Pentecost praises to the Savior-God for His gift of a new chapel. CLC President John Schierenbeck addressed the assembly at the morning service on the Sunday's subject, and at the 2:00 p.m. dedication service on the basis of 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 under the theme, *Soli Deo Gloria!* ["Alone to God the glory!"]

Resident Pastor Paul Naumann was the liturgist, assisted by Pastors John Hein, Robert List, Terrel Kesterson, and Bertram Naumann–Em. The joint choirs of the mother congregation, Redemption of Lynnwood (Seattle), and the two Spokane congregations, Trinity and Gethsemane, graced the occasion with the harmony of joyful voices. Redemption organist Thomas Caulton also contributed his considerable talents.

Thinking back on the actual building process, members were especially mindful of and thankful for the carpentering skills of Mr. Jack Mayhew, a member of Grace, Valentine, Nebraska. As he has done for so many CLC congregations that needed his expertise—and continues so to con-

tribute—Jack here served as the one who both knew what he was doing and also cheerfully directed the mostly unskilled volunteer labor force given him to work with.

The good women of Redemption congregation volunteered to cater the noon meal, so permitting especially the women of Ascension to better savor the spiritual aspects of the day. Both the menu and the efforts were exceptional.

Fifty members and visitors attended the morning service; almost one hundred filled the sixty-capacity facility for the afternoon dedication.

In addition to those gathered in person, one felt the intangible presence of the many who sent special greetings, as well as that of the entire synod whose members the Lord moved to supply the money to build. The congregation offers most grateful thanks.

Ascension rafters are by law and design highly earthquake resistant; from the inside on the first Sunday in June they received a worthy and resounding test.

Soli Deo Gloria!

– Ascension member Bert Naumann reporting



**Ascension members
Bruce Buchanan (l.)
and Doran Slater (r.)
with Pastors R. List
and J. Schierenbeck**

Stained Glass Window at Ascension, Tacoma

Comments in explanation of the design for the new stained glass window at Ascension Lutheran Church of Tacoma, Washington.

"Seven Gifts of the Spirit: Romans 12:6-8, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."

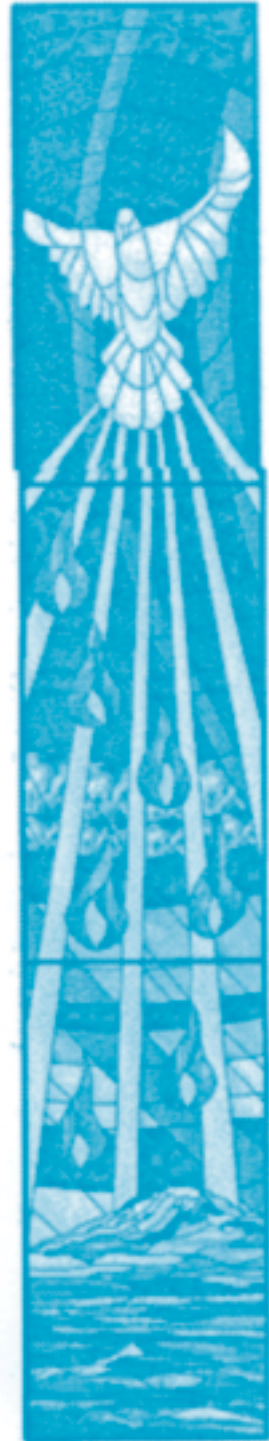
The dove of the Holy Spirit has seven rays emanating from it. These represent the seven gifts of the Spirit (Rom. 12:6-8). There are also seven tongues of fire, which are to remind us of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, as well as the seven lamps burning before the throne (Rev. 4:5), which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 1:4 – "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne."

Revelation 4:5 – "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

Revelation 5:6 – "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

When a call went out for volunteers to help with Ascension's building program, Mrs. Dot Abbott (who had recently moved with husband James from Texas) volunteered to do the stained glass work. Trained in such art at ILC, Eau Claire, Mrs. Abbott expressed her willingness to "return to God's glory whatever talents He has given me." The above is Dot's explanation—and inspiration—for this particular window.



RETIREMENT OF LOWELL MOEN



In the middle of office activities, Lowell Moen (l.) with new CLC Treasurer, Dr. James Sydow

Lowell Moen became the second treasurer of the CLC in 1964 and has been a sturdy member of the ILC family since the fall of 1976, when he arrived from Austin, Minnesota, where he had been business manager for a local financial firm. His wife Rita, sons Kevin, Kermit, and Kyle were on board as they settled into this new venture of service to their Lord. It was then that the newly created positions of ILC Business Manager and CLC Book House manager were added to his (volunteered) position as CLC treasurer.

For ten years his office and the Book House were located in the basement of the girl's dorm, until Northwest Hall was remodeled from a boys' dorm into administrative offices in 1986. His memories of those first years are of long lines on opening day when students bought their books from him—and even longer lines at the end of the year when he would buy them back. His first step into the age of new technology was a Radio Shack computer, as he attempted to manage three ever-growing businesses.

When his office was relocated into Northwest Hall (the present school

office and CLC Book House), he continued to handle all three positions by himself, although he shared the office with the ILC secretary. In 1989, when a managerial position for the CLC Book House and ILC Student Bank was created, Mr. Moen was able to get away from customers in the store and interruptions of the school office.

In December, 1989, his wife Rita was hired to run the Book House and student bank, and after her accident in 1992 she continued on a part-time basis, retiring a few years ago.

Mr. Moen has served faithfully and cheerfully as ILC and the CLC grew



Showing Jim the ropes!

into a million dollar operation. He has expedited both the "seven checkbook" era and the current computer-based system that handles dozens of accounts. He has presided over a staff of one (himself) and progressed to two full-time assistants and several part-time workers. He has served under five ILC presidents and many changes on the Board of Regents and Board of Trustees.

Though Lowell has undergone numerous surgeries and health challenges, in addition to caring for his wife since her accident, no one who works with him has ever heard him complain about the crosses the Lord has placed upon him. His cheerful attitude allowed him to say, "I'll keep on working as long as I have my health."

He and Rita enjoy day-trips to various antique shops in the area—and if there's one thing all his friends know, it is that he is not available for any other business on fishing opener week-ends!

Their sons have brought them daughters in marriage, and he and Rita

have just recently become grandparents of the first girl born into their family circle during almost forty-five years!

May the Lord bless and keep them in their well-earned retirement on Jill Avenue, less than a mile from the school he has loved and served so well for almost forty years! We would like to echo the Lord's own commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Lowell posted the following poem in tribute to the Lord, and in thanks to others, too:

*It was a long and winding road
With many hills and valleys
And a few detours.
But with the help of the Lord,
A supportive wife and wonderful co-workers,
I made it to my destination,
Enjoying every mile.
I thank HIM and all of you
From the bottom of my heart!
(Lowell)*

—Paul Koch, reporter

From the editor: Our reporter wishes to acknowledge that he borrowed heavily from the 2003 *Lance* for this article.



Members and friends of Ascension-Tacoma enjoying a post-service cake and coffee following their Pentecost Dedication Service

Announcements

Great Lakes Pastoral Conference

Dates: Sept. 23,24,25 2003

Place: Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wis.

Agenda:

- 1) Old Testament Exegesis, Continuation of Ecclesiastes 11:9ff. – Pastor Michael Wilke
- 2) New Testament Exegesis, Continuation of Romans 1:8ff – Pastor Mark Bernthal
- 3) Church History: the period of Huss, Wycliffe, Savanarola, (pre-Reformation era) – Pastor David Baker
- 4) Study of terms in Isaiah 53:3-6: Infirmities, Sorrows, Transgressions, etc. – Pastor Mark Gullerud
- 5) Evaluation of recent WELS statements re: fellowship – Prof. David Lau
- 6) Dialogue–Luther/Erasmus, Bondage of the Will–Prof. Michael Sydow and Pastor Walter Schaller
- 7) What the Bible says about the Role of Women in Society–Prof. Paul Schaller
- 8) Carry over: Practical Advice on Dealing with People with "Addictive Behavior" – Pastor Kevin McKenney
- 9) Book Reviews: *Hammer of God* by Bo Giertz – Pastor Matthew Gurath
Let's Illustrate by Eldon Weisheit – Pastor Walter Schaller
Servant of the Word – Pastor Joel Fleischer

Chaplain: Pastor Paul Tiefel

Communion Service Speaker: Pastor Philip Matzke

–Submitted by Pastor Mark Gullerud, Conference Chairman

Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council will meet at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin September 10-11. The boards will meet September 8-9.

South Eastern Pastoral Conference

Dates: September 16-18

Place: Church of the Lutheran Confession–North Port, Fla.

Assignments:

- + Chaplain – Pastor Paul Larsen
- + Communion Service Speaker – Pastor Dennis Rieken
- + Isagogical Study (essayist's choice) – Pastor Todd Ohlmann
- + New Testament Exegesis (Colossians 1:24ff) – Pastor Tom Schuetze
- + Old Testament Exegesis (essayist's choice) – Pastor Nathanael Mayhew
- + The Crusades–Justified or Not? – Pastor Daniel Fleischer
- + How do we understand "Neither Confounding the Person nor Dividing the Substance" (Athanasian Creed) – Pastor Vance Fossum
- + What is the Relationship of Old Testament "Holy Wars" to the Love of God? – Pastor Karl Stewart
- + Book Review (essayist's choice) – Pastor John Schierenbeck

+ Discussion on the benefits of a chapel facility for the ILC campus (Pastor Luke Bernthal, Leader). He will be contacting some of the ILC faculty for their input.

– Pastor Todd Ohlmann, Secretary

Please Note: Deadline Change

A decision has been made to have an earlier deadline for articles and announcements appearing in monthly issues of the *Lutheran Spokesman*.

The deadline has been the first of the preceding month (September 1 for the October issue, October 1 for the November issue, etc. etc.).

A new deadline will take effect beginning with the November 2003 issue. The deadline will be September 15 instead of October 1. For the December issue, the deadline will be October 15, etc. etc.

In other words, all contributors–staff writers and conference secretaries in particular!–are encouraged to think six-weeks-ahead-of-time instead of just one month.

Thanking all for your hearty cooperation.

The Editor

COVER: John Fox