

December 1992

Christmas—grace
on display p. 404

Merry-mournful
Christmas p. 413

NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN



Oh, come, all ye faithful,
triumphantly sing;
Come, see in the manger
our Savior and King!

This Christmas we will be reminded again that people are being shot, blown up, gassed, and starved. But we will also hear that God has declared peace on sinners.

An amazing birth announcement

by Richard D. Balge

No single author of the Old Testament has more to say about Christ, says it more clearly, says it in more detail than did the prophet Isaiah. He has been called the evangelist of the Old Testament. Here, 700 years before the event, he delivers an amazing birth announcement.

Born to rule

The boy is born to rule: The “government”—the emblem of authority—is on his shoulder. The sign that he has authority to take charge is there for all to see. There are rebels everywhere in God’s good world. The devil and his brood are on the loose. Every human being is born a rebel, an enemy of God, at war with his neighbor. This child was born to remedy that.

It does not look as though the government were on his shoulder. What is on his shoulder are scourge marks. What is on his shoulder is a crossbeam to which he will be nailed. What is on his shoulder are my sins—all my selfishness and thoughtlessness and lovelessness.

He goes to die. But in his death he destroys him who had the power of death, who is the devil. He appears to more than 500 of his disciples at one time, alive from the dead—all our sins are gone! Now he rules in our hearts with his mercy, his love, his peace.

Equipped to rule

His names tell us he is equipped to rule. Oriental people gave their kings titles like that, but that didn’t

make them appropriate. Jesus is called these things because they are fitting. His names tell what he will do. He is called a wonder of a Counselor. He has a marvelous plan to rescue the human race from eternal death. He is called the mighty God. That is not a mere honorary title, that is who he is. The work of redeeming the lost world is divine work. This child is divine and he will grow up to do it.

He is called the Everlasting Father. That does not mean that he is the first person of the Trinity. It does mean that he is eternally our loving, benevolent guardian, acting as a father to us. He never

gets tired. He never grows old. He never stops doing what he was born to do. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

He is called the Prince of Peace. This Christmas we will be reminded again that people are being shot, blown up, gassed, and deliberately starved. But, we will also hear that God has declared peace on sinners, that Christ is our peace, that he won that peace for us on the cross, that being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have peace in our hearts and we will live at peace with

one another and we will go on sharing God’s peace. On Christmas Day and every day, that will be our response to this amazing birth announcement.



Richard Balge is dean of students and teaches church history and homiletics at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6,7).

May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave us
nor forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57

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FORWARD

■ Is your Christmas shopping finished? Are your cards mailed? Gifts wrapped? Do you still have to decorate the house and do the Christmas baking? Are you tired of the traffic and crowds and long lines at the post office? And are you beginning to think "Bah, humbug" about Christmas? Then sit down, put up your feet, and enjoy this issue. You won't want to miss Richard Balge's "Amazing birth announcement," Mark Braun's

"Christmas—grace on display," Jim Woodfin's "Christmas lights," Paul Kelm's "Merry-mournful Christmas," President Mischke's "Joy! Joy! Joy!," Victor Prange's "Christmas comfort," or Paul Tullberg's "About Xmas." Follow them up by reading Luke 2, and we guarantee a cure for "bah-humbug" blues. And from all of us at NL, a blessed Christmas.

DJS



CHRISTMAS

Grace on display

by Mark E. Braun

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good (Titus 2:11-14).

In my corner of the world, a bad joke has it that there are two seasons—winter and construction. Winter is longer. It can snow in mid-October, it usually has snowed by Thanksgiving, and it might still snow in April.

The great intermission in our long cold winters is Christmas—everything about Christmas.

Always winter, never Christmas

Can you imagine if it were "always winter, and never Christmas"? C.S. Lewis wrote a series of children's books called the "Chronicles of Narnia." In one of them, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, four children stumble into a make-believe world on the other side of a wardrobe where it is "always winter, and never Christmas."

The "Chronicles of Narnia" are make-believe, but the good news Paul told us is for real. He helps us understand what we're celebrating in this special season: God's grace is on display.

When you and I think of a land under Satan's power, we probably think of someplace hot, not cold. The world those four children accidentally entered in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* was terribly cold. Hot or cold, life without God can never be what our creator meant it to be.

Yet in Narnia, there were hopes and promises that when a powerful lion named Aslan appeared, winter

would be over and life would be good again:

Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have
spring again.

Something wonderful has happened

You and I rejoice because something wonderful has happened to our world. For centuries God's people waited; they lived on hopes and promises. We live on the flip side of the miracle. Paul captured the Christmas good news perfectly: "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."

Don't let that helpless little baby body in the feed-box fool you. He's the designer of the universe. Our great God chose to wrap himself in our kind of flesh and blood. He's our Savior, come to redeem us, to trade places with us. The baby grew to be a man, and as a man he gave his Father the perfect life we failed to live. Then he died to pay for the sins we've done. As Nikolaus Hermann's great hymn put it, "He undertakes a great exchange," puts on "our human frame," and gives us "his realm, his glory, and his name."

"Just say no"

What would it be like to live in a world where it was always winter, and never Christmas? What would our past be? A messy trail of guilty deeds and broken promises. Our present? A few cheap toys and a few still cheaper thrills. Our future? To stand in front of God and hear him say, "You're guilty. Go away. Forever!"

But that's not going to happen. He came to save us. He came to set us free.

The four children who went through the back of

You know what a lot of people say about Christmas: "You hang tinsel on a tree; you sing songs about reindeer; you spend too much. When it's all over, nothing's changed." But grace changes things. It makes people good—people like you and me.

the wardrobe into Narnia were Lucy, Sally, Peter, and Edmund. Edmund was the crabby one, from the moment he first opened his mouth. He didn't always tell the truth, and he hated to admit he was wrong. He was bad before he ever went to Narnia, but he grew much worse after he got there, after he ate some "Turkish Delight" the wicked White Witch gave him. After that he turned even more selfish, and he believed the witch's lie that she could make him a king.

What a powerful picture of ingrown sin! Sins aren't merely some minor, isolated things we do wrong. Sin poisoned our whole nature. It's pointless to ask angry rebels like us, "Why don't you just try harder?" It's pointless to tell us, "Just say 'no' to sin." The problem is in the word "just." We "just" can't.

But Paul said God's grace "teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions." Oh, sure, the law tells us to say "no." It threatens us with all the bad things that'll happen to us if we don't say "no." Sometimes it even shames us into doing the right thing, if only for the wrong reasons. But God's law can't give us the strength inside to say "no." Luther once said the law tells a man he must run, but it gives him no legs.

Only God's grace teaches us to say "no" from the heart. It equips us "to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age." Grace says, not only, "Son, I forgive you," but also, "Daughter, I empower you!" God's grace has formed a people that are God's very own, "eager to do what is good," with the reason, the energy, and the resolve to do what pleases Jesus.

That's good to hear at Christmas, because you know what a lot of people say about this holiday. "You drag a pine tree into your house and hang tinsel on it; you sing songs about reindeer and chestnuts and fat guys in red suits; you spend too much, maybe you

drink too much. When it's all over, what have you got? Nothing's changed."

Grace changes things

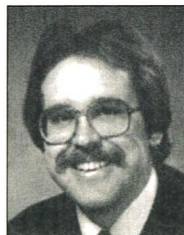
But Christmas is God's grace on display, and grace changes things. It puts crumbling marriages back together; it turns scared men and women into faithful parents; it creates honest workers and fair bosses; it makes people good—people like you and me, people like Edmund. By the end of the story, after Edmund was rescued by Aslan, he was different, better, changed. In real life, God's grace does that.

At Christmas we look back, but we also look ahead. We "wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." Now we live in that "in between" time, after Jesus came once as our brother, but before the time he'll return, still our brother but with the glory of a king.

And that's what will really make heaven heaven. It won't be that we can eat and drink anything we want, or that we get to have fun all the time, or even that we're going to live forever and never die. Seeing him will make it heaven. God's grace, the same grace that saved us and that changes us, will keep us till that glorious appearing occurs.

Right now we have Christmas, to interrupt our long winters, to celebrate the generous gift that arrived at Bethlehem. But some day, one day, his grace will appear again, in power, in glory.

And then, it will be "never winter, and always Christmas."



Mark Braun is director of spiritual programming and instructor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee.



Christmas lights

by James R. Woodfin



A series of advertisements for a popular motel chain uses the tag line: "We'll leave the light on for you."

The motel/light/Christmas analogy is just too good to leave alone.

When Mary—nine months pregnant and riding for miles on a jolting, lurching donkey—and Joseph—on foot the whole trip—arrived in Bethlehem, they would have been overjoyed to find a motel with clean comfortable rooms and a beckoning neon "vacancy" sign. Instead, they were directed to the only shelter available: an animal-occupied stable, where, by the glow of a flickering lantern, Jesus Christ, the light of the world, was born.

It's interesting to note that while Jesus Christ, King of kings, Son of God and Savior of the world, was denied even a corner of a cheap room when he arrived, he has given us guaranteed advance reservations for luxury accommodations when we arrive. "In my Father's house are many rooms . . . I am going there to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Talk about leaving a light on.

In the course of his earthly ministry, Jesus imputed this title "Light of the world" to his followers. "You are the light of the world," he told us, and he went on to direct that we let our light shine.

Unfortunately, a lot of us don't. Some of us shine only sporadically. Others give off only a sort of dull glow. And with still others it's almost necessary to strike a match to see if the light is on at all.

When the light fails it isn't because the main power source is experiencing technical difficulties. Evangelistic enthusiasm fades, godly witness dims, and works of faith are reduced to single digit wattage when we let the cares and involvements of life and the resultant spiritual apathy block out the Son.

During this season when, with the display of enough Christmas lights to illuminate the world, we celebrate the arrival of the Light, it seems only appropriate that we dust off our own "Christmas lights" and let the love-charged, hope-giving gospel shine out through us into a sin-darkened world.

By our lives, our words, and our actions, our continual message to the world should be "2000 years ago, Jesus Christ came to light a dark and needy world and to offer hope and help to the spiritually homeless.

The offer still stands. The door is still open; your clean and comfortable room is waiting. You don't need reservations. Just believe it, and come on in.

We'll leave the Light on for you."



James Woodfin is a member of Redeemer, Huntsville, Alabama.

Of pew potatoes and unrealistic expectations

by Robert Raasch

One thing that can “bruise” the body of Christ rather than build it is unrealistic expectations members have of their pastors. That can be illustrated by what my wife and I often experience in our present occupation—commercial vegetable gardening and selling at the open-air farmers’ market. We sell sweet corn, peppers, melons, tomatoes, green beans, cukes, strawberries—good fresh homegrown produce at a reasonable price.

But that same day we are at the farmers’ market, the Jack and Jill grocery has a special on sweet corn, Super One features melons, Jake’s special is strawberries, and Red Owl has tomatoes and cukes priced below cost. Each one’s prices on their other stuff are about like ours. But when customers come out to our stand, they remember the one featured price each of the stores has and judge us to be uncompetitive.

Take my pastor—please!

That’s a little like what pastors face. One member recalls the rich tones of Robert Schuller on TV. One heard of the great youth program at another church; another remembers a previous minister who had a gift for outreach. Another pastor’s family was such a

blessing to the church. One’s sickbed manner was so comforting; another was a healing counselor. Just like our produce stand, it’s hard to compete with the best feature of everybody. Maybe Bo Jackson and Deion Sanders can excel in two sports for awhile, but few others can really have more than one or two great skills.

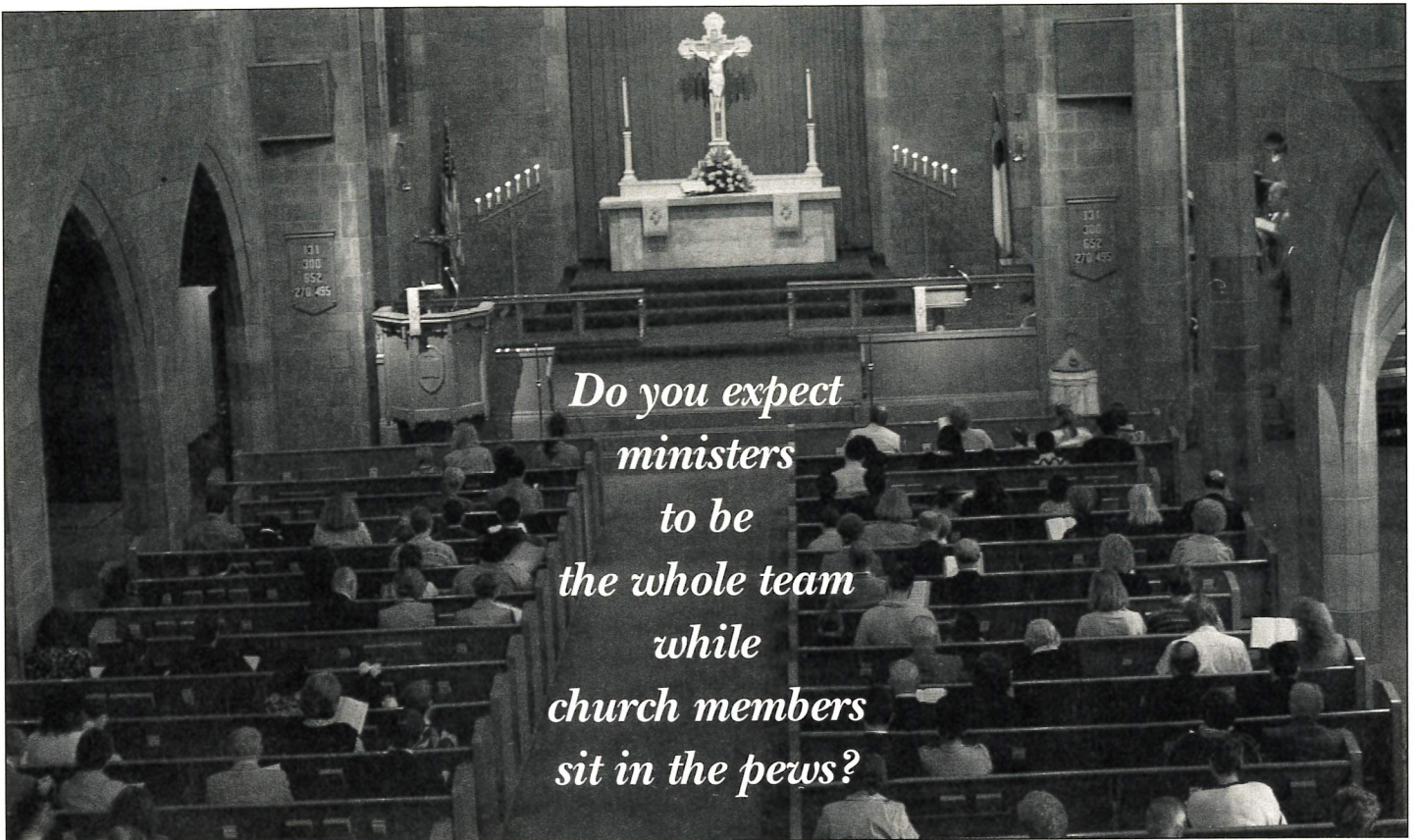
Yet that’s what is often expected from a pastor, and the same is true of teachers—they’re expected to be excellent organists, choir directors, youth models, musicians, creative artists, counselors, athletic directors, and, of course, inspiring teachers.

Take it from me, when some people go on about the others’ produce prices, it’s sure great to hear some regular customers express appreciation for what we’re selling. Friends, don’t forget to do likewise to your dispensers of a much more precious product.

Body building is a team sport

Naturally, the above example only pertains to those few who believe ministers are the whole team while church members sit in the pews. Oops, we may just have stumbled on another body-bruiser and morale buster, the pew potato.

Psychologists tell us that people learn the most and



*Do you expect
ministers
to be
the whole team
while
church members
sit in the pews?*

work together best when they have a problem to solve. One of the problems in body-building is that people often don't realize there is a problem, or don't acknowledge it as their problem.

Is there a problem?

Is there a problem? There is if many members hardly get past the justification stage and into the good works stage of sanctification. There is if many people are so impressed, as was I, by dire warnings about work-righteousness that they get a little uneasy about good works altogether. Does that misguided distrust of good works call to mind the old saying "A cat that jumps on a hot stove will never again jump on a hot stove—or a cold stove"?

Is there a problem? There is if our pew potatoes don't know the joy of ministering, serving, encouraging, comforting, admonishing, and reaching out, and may not even miss it.

Is there a problem? There is if you see building the body of Christ as somebody else's job. There is if confirmation continues to be the last responsibility of parents and confirmands. There is if 10 percent of communicants are involved in ministry, 50 percent don't want to get involved, and 40 percent want to get

involved but aren't, as a recent Gallup poll indicated. There is if leaders have low body-building expectations of their members, or if congregations have low body-building expectations of themselves and their leaders.

There is a problem if our part of the body of Christ we call the Wisconsin Synod loses almost as many souls as it gains every year. It reminds me of the big coal ship that was built to haul coal between China and Australia. It turned out that it took all the coal it could hold just to power the ship that far.

But let us not beat each other over the head with the law or the gospel. Let us not, as Paul Kelm says, "should" each other to high guilt feelings. Let us enrich the lives of the new people in Christ with the word. But let us also use every other appropriate tool the good Lord has given us. I truly believe that stress and low morale are mighty scarce commodities on a team which has high body-building expectations and efforts and resources to match.



Robert Raasch, a retired business executive, is a member of Christ, Brainerd, Minnesota, and the WELS Board for Home Missions. This series is adapted from an essay he delivered at the 1992 Minnesota District convention.

DMLC granted continued accreditation

In 1980 Dr. Martin Luther College, where the synod's teachers are educated, was granted accreditation "at the bachelor's degree granting level" by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In 1984-85 an evaluation team reviewed the status and recommended continuing accreditation.

In April of this year, another evaluation team visited the campus. On the team were Dr. Bob R. Agee of Oklahoma Baptist University; Dr. Keith R. Bell of MidAmerica Nazarene College; Dr. Marguerite Bennett of Mount Vernon Nazarene College; and Dr. Kathleen Owens of Lewis University.

The team was required to judge how well DMLC fulfilled North Central's criteria for accreditation on the basis of DMLC's mission and goals. "We are highly encouraged by the strengths observed by the team," observed Dr. Wayne Borgwardt, WELS administrator for worker training, "but we are also challenged by the team's concerns, most of them financially related."

In its evaluation, the team cited a

number of strengths, some of which follow.

- There is a clear understanding of and focused commitment to the stated mission by administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

- A dedicated, loyal, hardworking faculty, staff, and administration are deeply devoted to the institution, its mission, and the sponsoring church body.

- A close relationship exists between the college and its sponsoring church body accompanied by a strong commitment from the church body to provide significant financial support.

- The WELS congregations and school system provide a readily available source of prospective students and a place of employment for graduates of the college.

- Students' exceptionally high level of involvement in campus and collegiate activities contribute to and enhance their personal and professional development.

- The college enjoys a strong close working relationship with the New Ulm community, and college

personnel are highly regarded by community leaders.

The evaluation team also expressed a number of concerns.

- The compensation of faculty at DMLC is well below the national average.

- The teaching load of the faculty (15 hours per semester) leaves little time for professional development or personal time.

- The current budgeting system of the synod inhibits long range planning.

- The current budget process will result in serious deterioration of campus facilities if not addressed in the near future.

- The library budget for acquisitions, especially periodicals to support the secondary education program, is inadequate.

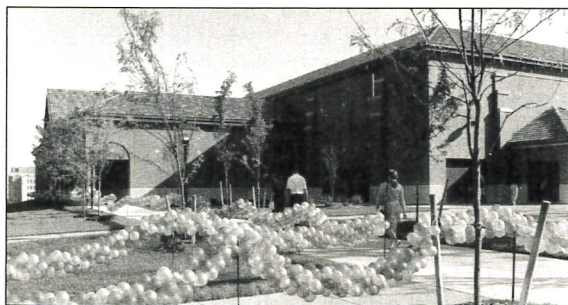
On the basis of the visiting team's report, North Central granted DMLC continued accreditation until the next regular review, scheduled for 1998-99. An interim report on the synod's proposed amalgamation of DMLC and Northwestern College is requested in 1995.

Wisconsin Lutheran College dedicates recreation center

On Sept. 12 members of the Wisconsin Lutheran College family—and about 1500 of their friends—celebrated God's goodness by dedicating the campus' newest addition, a recreation complex, informally known as the REX.

The dedication service was followed by lunch, an art exhibit, musical performances, campus tours, and Schwan ice cream treats. The celebration was underwritten by Aid Association for Lutherans.

Visitors wanting a closer look at the 80,000 square foot facility were able to tour all three levels. The lower level provides underground



parking and also houses the campus' new heating plant. The middle level includes a large multipurpose room and an adjacent kitchen. A strength training room, a fitness center, a martial arts room, six locker rooms, a training room, meeting rooms, classrooms, coaches' offices,

storage, and laundry space are all additional features of the complex's middle level.

The upper level's spacious front lobby will be used for receptions and social gatherings. The gymnasium contains three full size college basketball courts and bleacher seating for approximately 2500.

Wisconsin Lutheran College is a four-year liberal arts college founded in 1973 and affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. It has 325 students and is located in Wauwatosa, a western suburb of Milwaukee.

—Vicki Hartig

WELS Lutherans for Life holds national convention

On October 16-17 more than 400 people gathered at St. John Lutheran Church in Burlington, Wis., for the annual national convention of WELS Lutherans for Life. Under the theme "Love life," those in attendance participated in more than 20 workshops.

Approximately 100 children attended a special children's convention. Along with being entertained, children learned through presentations and projects on life issues.

Pastor Wayne Mueller, spiritual advisor to the national board of WELS LFL, spoke at the opening service.

Dr. Janet Lindemann, medical advisor to the national office of WELS LFL, delivered the keynote address. Dr. Lindemann emphasized the importance of patients' and doctors' religious convictions. She noted, "I recommend that you,

as patients, search for a doctor who shares your faith." She shares her own faith in her medical practice in pointing out to patients "as they walk through the valley, it is only the shadow of death—because we know that death is not the end."

The 200 people who attended the evening banquet heard Pastor Tony Schultz use humor from everyday life to illustrate Biblical truths. Using stuffed animals, fruit, and other props, he entertained and enlightened the audience on the importance of God's word and Christian living.

Pastor Robert Fleischmann, the national director, reported that in 1991 WELS LFL pregnancy counsel-



Dr. Lindemann

ing centers saw nearly 8,000 clients, 19 percent of whom had no religious affiliation. He announced the anticipated opening in late winter or early spring 1993 of "New Beginnings—A Home for Mothers" in Colorado. This home will provide a place for single mothers to participate in a one-year program of spiritual, academic, and vocational training. He also announced that more than 10,000 copies of "My Christian Declaration on Life" have been distributed. The medical directive statement, produced by WELS LFL, helps Christians witness to their faith and provides direction for their medical care.

The 1993 national convention, which will observe the tenth anniversary of the national organization of WELS LFL, will be held October 8-9 at Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee.

—Robert Fleischmann

Florida hurricane damage lingers

The pre-dawn hours of August 24 have become a memory for Northerners, but the damage of Hurricane Andrew is still with Dade county communities in Florida.

At the end of October, Bud (Henry) Plehn, president of WELS Cutler Ridge Lutheran Church of Miami, said he did not "know of anyone who has house or church repairs completed. Most have not even started. Insurance adjusters and contractors are overwhelmed. Supplies are scarce. It is difficult to convey the magnitude of the problems here."

These past weeks, Plehn reports, "our lives have become entwined with convoys. The left lane of the southern portion of the Florida Turnpike has been reserved only for convoys and emergency vehicles. Convoys of dump trucks and front-

end loaders continue to pick up the estimated 3.1 million cubic feet of trash that used to be our homes, churches, schools, libraries, parks, and trees."

Churches, Plehn said, became focal points in the community. "Every church that could open a building or raise a tent did so to receive and distribute supplies. As soon as possible we at Cutler Ridge took boxes of supplies to areas not within walking distance of a church. As terrible as it was in these areas, people still asked where these supplies came from. Evangelism at its best, wouldn't you say?"

Plehn said that the parable of the good Samaritan "has taken on new meaning for us. Your gifts, love, prayers, and support have helped sustain us through this crisis."

Pastor Kenneth Strack, chairman

of the synod's Committee on Relief, reports that more than \$135,000 has been received for Hurricane Andrew relief. "But what was also heartwarming was the concern shown by people. I was flooded with telephone calls, and our Florida churches rose up to lend a helping hand."

WELS Connection videotapes

December topics:

- *Christian Worship:*
A Lutheran Hymnal
- President's Christmas message

January topics

- Emanuel, St. Paul, Minn., ministry to the Hmong

For more information, contact CCFS, WELS Administration Building, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. Cost of a year's subscription is \$48.



Luther statue dedicated

It took 28 years for a Martin Luther statue to be erected on the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary campus. The first donation for a statue was given in 1964, but the fund grew slowly until a Luther statue committee was organized in 1988.

A "silent" fund drive, with no general solicitations, gradually resulted in adequate funds to erect the statue, which is located in a courtyard east of the seminary tower.

The seven-foot bronze statue, designed by Luis Mendizabal of the Conrad Schmitt Studios in New Berlin, Wisconsin, and sculpted by Franze Demetz of Pante Studios of Ortisei, Italy, stands on a granite-faced base which is etched with selected quotes from Luther.

The statue was dedicated at a festival service Nov. 1 which also commemorated the Reformation and the 100th anniversary of the federation of the Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota synods.

Southeastern Wisconsin District news

Salem on 107th, Milwaukee, celebrated 25 years in the teaching ministry of **Marie Berger, Bruce Bintz, and Marie Sprengeler** on October 25. . . . Kettle Moraine LHS hosted the 26th annual national WELS Lutheran **high school choral festival** in November. Individual choral groups presented a secular concert on November 6 and the combined groups sang a sacred concert on November 8. . . . On November 8 **Zebaoth, Milwaukee**, celebrated its 75th anniversary. Pastor Richard Winters, a son of the congregation preached. . . . The **OWLS, St. John, Burlington**, conducted a senior Sunday on September 20. Senior members of the congregation served as ushers and greeters, played the organ, piano, and handbells, and sang in a choir. The seniors displayed woodcrafts, handwork, and various collections.

—Robert A. Sievert

Western Wisconsin District news

Martin Luther Prep School, Prairie du Chien, saw a significant increase in enrollment this year in the freshman class (74 students). Students this year come from 28 different states. Since the school's opening in 1979, students from 41 of the 50 states have attended. . . . **Helen Berger Schultz** was honored at St. John, Juneau, May 12, at her retirement from a 30-year teaching ministry. . . . **St. Paul, Lake Mills**, began a year-long centennial celebration in worship services on August 16. The second celebration event was held in early November. The final celebration will come in July of 1993. Members are gathering a thankoffering for local projects and for the Apache mission of the WELS, also observing its centennial. . . . **Our Savior, Wausau**, celebrated its 50th anniversary with a confirmation reunion Sunday on June 28 and anniversary services on September 20. . . . **Hope, Belvidere, Ill.**, celebrated its 25th anniversary on September 27. . . . **St. Peter, Schofield**, celebrated four anniversaries: the 15th of its Lutheran elementary school and the 10th of the school building on Oct. 4, and the 90th of its founding and the 50th of its church building on Nov. 1. . . . **Zion, town of Rib Falls.**, celebrated its golden anniversary on October 11. . . . **St. Mark, Eau Claire**, climaxed a year-long observance of its 25th anniversary year on October 8. Anniversary year activities began with participation in fall, 1991, in Living Free in Jesus Gospel outreach in the Chippewa Valley. The congregation then committed over \$30,000 to Lift High the Cross. A new Allen organ was the congregation's lasting local gift to commemorate the quarter century of grace.

—Elton C. Stroh

Obituary

Loretta M. Schlicht 1931-1992

Loretta Mae Schlicht, nee Manthe, was born in Pemberton, Minnesota, May 8, 1931. She died in Rochester, Minnesota, July 7, 1992.

She attended Dr. Martin Luther College and served in the teaching ministry at Belle Plaine, Minn.; Lannon, Wis.; and Neillsville, Wis.

She is survived by her husband, Robert; sons Stephen (Kathy) and Daniel; brother, Paul Manthe; sister, Irene Voigt, and four grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Trinity, Belle Plaine, Minnesota.

We mourn for the wickedness around us,
but we look forward to Christmas-to-come,
when Jesus will turn gory news
into glory news.

Merry-mournful Christmas

by Paul E. Kelm

Christmas is the saddest happy time of the year. Bartenders and psychologists will confirm that. It is that in nursing homes, where Christmas carols awaken a flood of memories which make loneliness more acute. It is that in empty homes, from which a spouse has fled, to which the children don't return, in which a solitary soul cries for what once was. It is that in homeless shelters, where escape from the cold recalls the shelter of a stable for the newborn Savior of the world.

A sad-happy Christmas

Yet that story of the Christ-child's birth brings joy and hope to the victims of sin for whom the baby was born. And through their tears they sing "Joy to the world. The Lord is come."

The first Christmas was a sad-happy time. It was sad that Mary and Joseph were spending Christmas away from home. It was sad that Mary's heart would chill to hear Simeon conclude his Christmas sermon: "And a sword will pierce your own soul, too." It was sad that Judean mothers had to weep for babies executed because of the God-baby, who would one day be executed for them. Yet angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." And shepherds out in the cold were warmed by the message.

A sad-happy life

Christmas mirrors life's sad-happy paradox. In Romans 8 Paul illustrates the nature of life in this world as one giant labor pain. When Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the ground. Nature was thrown out of sync. Weeds grew and hurricanes blew and things died. With the coming of Christ, God righted the wrong that sent nature into chaos. Now nature is like an expectant mother struggling to give birth to the "new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness." And that is a sad-happy experience.

Adam and Eve's disobedience meant also that human nature is out of sync. It envies instead of

enjoys. It lusts and leers instead of loves. It rebels rather than reveres. It rides an emotional roller coaster of pride and shame. Thank God, Jesus came to take away sin with the one death that could atone for disobedience, the one life that could please God. Jesus came to sign the adoption papers that make us the children of God.

But Paul says it's as though we're sitting in the orphanage waiting for our Father to come for us. And all the fears and frustrations of life in this orphanage called earth are accentuated because we've tasted belonging, the "firstfruits of the Spirit." It's a sad-happy experience.

Mourn—and be merry

Peter describes Lot as "a righteous man who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men. . . living among them day after day, [he] was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard." Listen to the lunch-hour conversations at work, then turn on the evening news, and you will understand that soul-sadness of a Christian living in Sodom and Gomorrah. Don't ever get used to all that wickedness. Mourn!

Then hear the rest of the story: "The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment." The apostle looks forward to Christmas-to-come, when Jesus will turn gory news into glory news. Life is a sad-happy experience.

Don't let people tell you that there's something wrong with being sad, that the "real" Christians are the ones with the plastic smiles, the saccharine clichés, and the rose-colored glasses. You should be sad when you look around. Look up for your happiness.

Life is looking up!



Paul E. Kelm is administrator
for the Commission on Adult Discipleship.

Joy! Joy! Joy!

Remember the Christmas carol in which we sing, “Joy, joy, joy”? Is it possible the composer had just finished reading Isaiah 12? Isaiah eagerly awaits the day when God’s people will erupt in a hymn of unrestrained joy, a day when they will say to God, “Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away.”

God had reason to be angry with his creatures. He had made them in his own image, holy and sinless. But they had listened to the tempter’s voice. And God is holy. God is just. His anger is real. His anger is terrifying. It threatens to punish sin eternally. But Isaiah confidently awaits the day when God’s anger will be turned away.

What Isaiah had as a promise, you and I have in fulfillment. What Isaiah had in hope, you and I have in reality, ever since an angel told a group of startled shepherds, “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

When that day comes—and you and I are living in that day—Isaiah bids us give thanks to the Lord, to shout aloud and sing for joy. We can certainly use that encouragement in the decade of the 90s. Maybe we’re suffering from election year blues. We can listen to gloom and doom only so long before we start to believe it. And joy is so little evident in our lives.

The mood of the country also invades our synod and its individual congregations. Things that are not going well, or that someone perceives are not going well, dominate our agenda. The blessings that God has given and continues to give are overlooked. What a shame. What a loss.

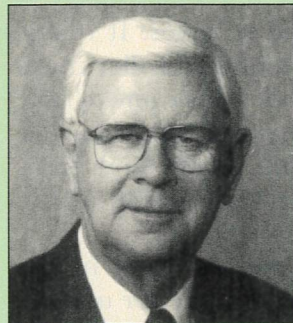
God’s people are joyful people. They’re the only ones who have anything to be joyful about. We know that God’s anger has been turned away. We know that he loves us in Christ, that he directs all things for our good. How can we possibly move through life with a frown? And in doing so turn people away from Christ instead of having them ask, “Why are you always so joyful?”

So let’s go to Bethlehem this year with a song in our hearts that is heard from our lips and seen in our lives. But let’s not stop with that. The prophet adds, “Make known among the nations what he has done.”

There are still lots of people who are not singing, “Joy, joy, joy.” And with good reason. They don’t know that God’s anger has been turned away. Some of them live in our neighborhood. You’ll find them in your circle of friends and acquaintances. It isn’t always a matter of not knowing. Just as often it’s a matter of not caring. They’ve become indifferent.

No, we can’t jar them out of their lethargy. Only God can. But we may be the one he has chosen to use. And if we should have the privilege of being God’s instrument to bring one of them back into the fold, there’ll be a new joy in our heart. And among the angels in heaven too.

Carl H. Mischke



*Pastor Carl Mischke
is president of the Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Synod.*

**We're no longer under sin's control;
we're under God's control.
In Jesus we can triumph
over the sin in our lives.**

Dead to sin, alive to God

by James A. Aderman

"It is absolutely impossible that a person who is in a state of grace should be ruled by sin." So wrote C.F.W. Walther, one of the most highly regarded Lutheran theologians, in *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. That's the way Romans 6:1-14 portrays our place in the Son.

Paul begins with a question he anticipates because of something he wrote in Romans 5:8: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Since God shows his love for us by forgiving our sins, shouldn't we sin all the more so God can show greater grace?

"By no means," is Paul's answer. The reason? "We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (v. 2). Our baptisms are the proof. The faith-producing power of baptism links us with Jesus' death. But there's another side to being linked with Jesus. "If we have been united with him . . . in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection" (v. 5). When Jesus died, he broke the power of sin to rule over us. When Jesus rose to life, he guaranteed us a position under the rule of our gracious God.

We can say no to sin

Because the benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection are ours, we Christians now are able to "count (our)selves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (v. 11). No more than a dog owner can receive obedience from his dead pet can sin any longer receive obedience from us. "Sin shall not be [our] master" (v. 14).

Being dead to sin but alive to God happens on two levels. Every believer now stands before God without a hint of sin, ever. Even while we struggle with sin in this life, God views us through Jesus as entirely forgiven, even for the sins we have yet to commit. That's

why the Bible calls each Christian a saint (holy one). That's why Christians are described as without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless in Ephesians 5:27. That's why Jesus describes us in John 3:36 as already now enjoying eternal life.

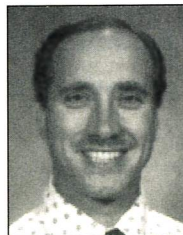
But we are "dead to sin [and] alive to God" in another sense. Since Jesus has died and risen again, we are now empowered to refuse to "offer the parts of [our] body to sin . . . but rather [we are enabled to] offer [our]selves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life" (v. 13). By the power of God's grace we can say no to sin and its demands or allurements. By the power of God's grace we can live his way in his world.

We don't say no on our own

But don't misunderstand. We don't stand against sin's power on our own. As we were saved through Jesus by grace, we also live here through Jesus by grace. Paul put it this way, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

In Jesus we can triumph over the sin in our lives. We're no longer under its control; we're under God's control. That doesn't mean that we'll be sin-free, but it does make it true that it is absolutely impossible that a person who is in a state of grace should be ruled by sin.

You are dead to sin and alive to God—in this life and the next. That's your place in the Son.



James Aderman is pastor of Fairview, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Christmas comfort

Christmas means many things to many people. To the department store merchant, Christmas is that time of year when perhaps one third of all sales are made. To the eight-year-old, the excitement of Christmas is a new doll or truck. To the homemaker, Christmas means baking and shopping and decorating. Most everyone finds in Christmas something special, something not experienced at any other time of the year.

That was certainly true for Mary, mother of our Lord. Luke tells us that "Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." The Greek word translated "pondered" means literally "throw together." For nine months Mary's life had been one surprise after another. Now after the birth of her child, she threw all these events together; she reflected on what it all meant. Few have been better followers of Mary's example of meditation on the events of Christmas than Martin Luther.

Nearly half a century ago Roland Bainton, a famous Luther scholar, published a thin volume titled *The Martin Luther Christmas Book*. Bainton wove together into a consecutive narrative selections from Luther's sermons ranging over thirty years' time. Like Mary, Luther treasured up the events of Christmas and pondered them in his heart. One cannot fail to be impressed with Luther's emphasis on the true human nature of Christ. Luther's words as compiled by Bainton: "He was a real human being. . . . He was a true baby, with flesh, blood, hands, and legs. He slept, cried, and did everything else that a baby does, only without sin. . . . I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify man. Inexpressible majesty will crush him. That is why Christ took our humanity, save for sin, that he should not terrify us, but rather that with love and favor he should console us."

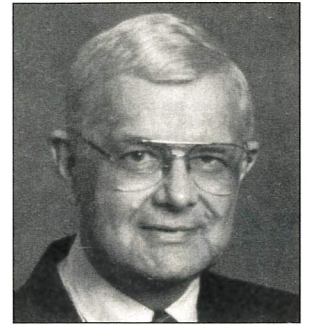
Luther never wearied of marveling at the astounding miracle that the creator of all the world had become fully human and lay in a stable. As the church sings in one of his Christmas hymns:

All praise to you, eternal God!
Now clothed in human flesh and blood,
You took a manger for your throne
While worlds on worlds are yours alone. Hallelujah!

Christmas means many things to many people. To Martin Luther Christmas meant great comfort. Once more his words as compiled by Bainton: "To me there is no greater consolation given to mankind than this, that Christ became man, a child, a babe, playing in the lap and at the breasts of his most gracious mother. Who is there whom this sight would not comfort? Now is overcome the power of sin, death, hell, conscience, and guilt, if you come to this gurgling Babe and believe that he is come, not to judge you, but to save."

In the midst of all the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, don't miss this Christmas comfort.

Victor H. Prange



Victor Prange is pastor of Peace, Janesville, Wisconsin.

The deadline for submitting notices is five weeks before the first of each month.

A chair

"A word of caution to WELS drivers" (9/15) is certainly not an uplifting article. Dr. William J. Thorn is a "chair?" A chair wrote a chapter in a book? A chair motored to class? NL is not a secular magazine. Why this namby-pamby gender bashing? Is Dr. Thorn a male "chair"?

*Arthur E. Brandt
Mesa, Arizona*

The telegraph

Morton Schroeder must have never watched any of the old TV westerns where the outlaws cut the telegraph line before taking over a town. By the time our three synods formed a federation in 1892 ("Three become one," 10/1), not only was the telegraph already invented, it was commonplace.

It was in 1844 that Samuel Morse transmitted over a 40-mile-long cable, "What hath God wrought!" (Note how he properly gave God the glory.) Transcontinental telegraph communications began in 1861, and by 1865 a successful transatlantic telegraph cable was laid.

*Mark S. Bergemann
West Allis, Wisconsin*

Morton Schroeder replies:

Please be assured that I know about the pioneer work of Samuel Morse. However, I was referring to the work of Guglielmo Marconi. Somewhere along the way from source through file card and word processor to manuscript, the word "wireless" was dropped. For this I am sorry. The sentence should have read, "The wireless telegraph was yet to be invented."

Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus, missionary? (10/1). Look at his faith. Columbus said, "I am a most unworthy sinner, but I have cried out to the Lord for grace and mercy, and they have covered me completely."

Look then at his works. Pride, greed, approving the sale of human beings into the slave markets of Spain. I think if WELS Native Americans

were asked if anything good comes from Columbus, you'd get a resounding "No!"

While I won't sit in judgment of the man's soul, I will remind myself today of the words of Scripture, "Faith without deeds is dead" (James 2:26).

*Keith Tullberg
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

MLS enrollment

The Michigan District news (10/15) reported incorrectly that the opening enrollment at Michigan Lutheran Seminary was up 15 over the previous year. This year's student body of 325 is 45 above the 280 students with which MLS opened each of the last two years. Please join us in praying that a significant number of these young people will become the Lord's answer to our prayers for more pastors, teachers, and missionaries.

*John C. Lawrenz
President, MLS*

School consolidation

While all of us who are alumni of Northwestern College or Dr. Martin Luther College have misgivings about seeing our alma mater become history, it is more important to look at what is best for preaching the word as we move into the 21st century.

It doesn't make a lot of sense to combine the schools in New Ulm, when 57 percent of our communicant membership and 40 to 60 percent of NWC and DMLC graduates come from the three Wisconsin districts.

If combining the schools in central Wisconsin is the best alternative in the long run, let us work to make it happen. Perhaps DMLC can be retained as a junior college.

*Alan Ross
Manitowoc, Wisconsin*

In the interest of conciseness, letters are subject to editing. Full name, address and daytime phone number should accompany each letter. Names will be withheld only under unusual circumstances. Letters cannot be acknowledged, nor can all letters be used. Address your letters to *READERS FORUM, Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N Mayfair Road, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.*

REQUEST FOR COLLOQUY

David Baker, formerly a pastor in the Church of the Lutheran Confession who served in Nebraska and New Mexico, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of entering the pastoral ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Correspondence relative to this request should be addressed to the South Central District president, Pastor Vilas R. Glaeske, 4410 S Kirkwood Rd, Houston TX 77072.

PASTOR'S DESK DIARY

The AAL Pastor's Desk Diary for 1993 has been sent out. The diary contains the pericopes, names of Sundays and other festivals, and colors as they will be found in the new WELS hymnal *Christian Worship—A Lutheran Hymnal* to be released by Northwestern Publishing House in summer, 1993. Pastors and seminary students who have not received their new diary should contact an AAL representative.

(Notices continued on the next page.)

January '93

- 1. 2 Corinthians 6:11—7:16
- 2. 2 Cor. 8:1-15
- 3. 2 Cor. 8:16—9:15
- 4. 2 Cor. 10
- 5. 2 Cor. 11:1-21a
- 6. 2 Cor. 11:21b—12:10
- 7. 2 Cor. 12:11-21
- 8. 2 Cor. 13
- 9. Micah 1 and 2
- 10. Micah 3:1—4:7
- 11. Micah 4:8—5:15
- 12. Micah 6:1—7:6
- 13. Micah 7:7-20
- 14. 1 Timothy 1
- 15. 1 Tm. 2
- 16. 1 Tm. 3:1-13
- 17. 1 Tm. 3:14—4:5
- 18. 1 Tm. 4:6-16
- 19. 1 Tm. 5:1—6:2
- 20. 1 Tm. 6:3-21
- 21. Titus 1
- 22. Tit. 2
- 23. Tit. 3
- 24. 2 Timothy 1
- 25. 2 Tm. 2
- 26. 2 Tm. 3
- 27. 2 Tm. 4
- 28. Leviticus 1
- 29. Lev. 2 and 3
- 30. Lev. 4:1—6:7
- 31. Lev. 6:8—7:38

One of the marks of God's people is their love for his word. Many have said, "I will start at Genesis and read the Bible through to the end." But the project is soon abandoned. These proposed readings—5 to 10 minutes each day—will take you through the entire Bible systematically and with variety. The next month's readings will appear in the next issue.

THROUGH MY BIBLE IN THREE YEARS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS Dr. Martin Luther College

With the concurrence of the Board for Worker Training and subject to funding by the Coordinating Council, the Board of Control of Dr. Martin Luther College requests the voting constituency of the synod to nominate candidates for three professorships on the Dr. Martin Luther College faculty. The first is to replace Prof. Gerhard Bauer, who is retiring at the close of the 1992-93 school year. The second and third positions are needed because of increased enrollment at the college.

Education: Nominees should be qualified to teach professional education courses and supervise off-campus student teaching (Prof. Bauer's replacement).

Education: Nominees should be qualified to teach professional education courses and supervise off-campus student teaching.

Religion/social studies: Nominees should be qualified to teach religion and history, especially western civilization.

Nominations with pertinent information should be in the hands of the secretary by January 5, 1993. A complete list of nominees will be available upon request from the secretary, Pastor Robert A. Bitter, 173 Waupun St Box 277, Oakfield WI 53065.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS Martin Luther Preparatory School

Voting members of the synod are invited to submit nominations for the impending vacant professorship at Martin Luther Preparatory School due to the retirement of Professor Herbert Jaster. Teaching responsibilities are in the field of ancient and modern history, together with some coaching duties (basketball and track).

Send nominations and pertinent information by December 25 to Mr. John Schultz, RR 3 Box 96, Goodhue MN 55027.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS Northwestern Preparatory School

The Board for Worker Training has authorized Northwestern Preparatory School to request nominations for two professorships. The actual calling process will not begin unless funding is granted by the Coordinating Council.

Nominees for the first position should be qualified to teach mathematics and/or science on the secondary level. Co-curricular responsibilities will include coaching in girls' sports as well as some supervision of the girls' athletic program in general.

Nominees for the second position should be qualified to teach history (world history or western civilization) and/or religion. The nominee will also be asked to assume extensive responsibilities in the area of curriculum development, academic planning, and faculty development.

Both candidates should possess the aptitude to teach and work evangelically with students on the secondary level, have a commitment to the importance of worker training, and be willing to seek professional growth through continuing formal education.

Names of qualified candidates, as well as any pertinent information, may be sent to Northwestern Preparatory School, Office of the President, 1300 Western Ave, Watertown, Wisconsin 53094.

A complete list of nominees will be available from the secretary, Pastor Kenneth Gawrisch, NPS, 1300 Western Ave, Watertown WI 53094.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch has informed the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Board of Control of his intention to retire effective June 30, 1993. Therefore the Seminary Board of Control, with the authorization of the Board for Worker Training, requests the voting constituency of the synod to nominate qualified candidates to teach systematic theology and Old Testament.

Nominations, with pertinent information, should be in by January 4. A complete list of nominees will be available upon request from the secretary, Pastor Paul A. Manthey, 8419 W Melvina Street, Milwaukee WI 53222.

ITEMS AVAILABLE

The following are available for the cost of shipping.

Mission furnishings—Portable altar, baptismal font, free-standing mail box, hymn board, candlestick holders. Contact Living Hope Lutheran, 4823 S 168 St, Omaha NE 68135; 402/896-3284.

CHRISTIAN THERAPIST NEEDED

Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service has a position available in the Twin Cities area for a full time Christian therapist. Basic requirements include a master's degree in the field, direct counseling experience, and the ability to apply Biblical truth in individual, family, and group therapy programs. Contact Joanne Halter, Director of Social Services, PO Box 23980, Milwaukee WI 53223, 414/353-5000 ext. 33.

DMLC EXTENSION COURSE

Dr. Martin Luther College will offer the following extension course for people seeking synodical teacher certification: Rel 6001, History of Israel; Mondays, 6:30-9:15, January 18-May 10 at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Appleton, Wis.; 3 credits, \$230.

This course will apply toward preschool, kindergarten, elementary, and secondary synodical certification. People who wish to take the course for credit must be accepted into the certification program before registration. For more information or application forms write or call Special Services, DMLC, 1884 College Heights, New Ulm MN 56073; 507/354-8221.

OUR FAVORITE HYMNS

Three sets of audio-cassettes with 58 hymns sung by the DMLC mixed choir and seminary male chorus are available. These might especially be appreciated by shut-ins. Cost for each cassette is \$5.00 postpaid. Send orders to Martin Albrecht, 315 Highland Dr, Grafton WI 53024.

NOTICE FOR CONGREGATION TREASURERS

The cutoff date for Synod Mission Offering receipts in the synod's post office lock box is the last business day of each month. December 1992 lock box offerings will be credited as 1992 receipts through January 11, 1993, as long as they are received in the lock box on or before that date and are clearly labeled as December offerings on Form 220. Please note that offerings must be mailed to the lock box rather than delivered to the synod offices.

Randy Matter, Controller

ITEMS NEEDED

For Twin Cities campus ministry—Carousel slide projector, overhead projector and cart, screen, small altar, lectern, communion ware, vacuum cleaner, 88-key keyboard, TV set, VCR. We will pay shipping. Pastor Joel Lintner, 612/378-1346 or 612/770-6532.

Hymnals—For Apache mission schools. Missionary Ted Bodjanac, Gethsemane Lutheran Mission, PO Box 66, Cibecue AZ 85911; 602/332-2454.

Hymnals—Mission in Fort Worth, Texas, needs 30 hymnals. We will pay postage. Contact Pastor Bill Werth, 817/294-9303.

NIV Bibles—for Camp Phillip. Steve Huhn, Program Director, RR 3, Box 190, Wautoma WI 54982; 414/787-1085.

EXPLORATORY SERVICES

to determine the potential for establishing a WELS mission in the area. Services are held on Sundays.

Litchfield-Goodyear-Avondale, Arizona—Resurrection. Services held at 7 pm at Tucker Funeral home; 926 S Litchfield Rd in Goodyear. Call 602/253-9739 for more information.

Lakeland, Florida—Peace. Evangelical Lutheran Synod mission. Contact Pastor William Mack; 813/647-2351.

CHANGE IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Conradt, Elroy V., from Apostles, Billings, Mont., to St. Michael, Fountain City/Zion, Alma, Wis.

Enderle, Michael P., from Willow Lake, Willow Lake, S. Dak., to Trinity, Clear Lake, S. Dak.

Johnston, Timothy L., from Christ, Bison, So. Dak., to Mountain View, Great Falls, Mont.

Lehrkamp, Robert W., from St. Paul, Lomira, Wis., to Grace, Indianapolis, Ind.

Olson, Lawrence O., from Peace, Loves Park, Ill., to Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm Minn.

Starr, Richard D., from mission coordinator, Brazil, South America, to Grace, Muskegon, Mich.

HANDBELL FESTIVAL

The western region handbell festival will be held April 24-25 at Luther High School, Onalaska, Wis., and hosted by St. Matthew, Winona, Minn. For additional information contact Sandy Graves, 507/452-8515 or Julie Haessig, 507/454-6283.

JUNIOR CHOIR FESTIVAL

You are invited to a concert by 1000 children January 17 at 2 p.m. at Wisconsin Lutheran College, 8800 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee. Children from Milwaukee area WELS schools and the concert choir from Dr. Martin Luther College will participate.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Arndt, Steven, PO Box 125, Waco NE 68460

Biga, Spencer G., Hwy 28W Box 36, Bruce Crossing WI 49912

Gurgel, Richard., 2770 David's Star Dr, Jackson WI 53037-9700

Huebner, Charles, RR 3 Box 301H, Springdale AR 72762

Janke, Martin, N140 W19542 Cedar Ln, Richfield WI 53076

Kroll, Daniel R., PO Box 71424, Ndola, Zambia, Africa

Kujawski, Robert P., 3105 Meadow Ln, Manitowoc WI 54220

Laitinen, Wayne A., 8300 NW 79th St, Oklahoma City OK 73132

Quandt, Roger S., RR 1 Box 86, Dakota MN 55925

Smith, Dennis, Kastanienstrasse 11, 6501 Klein Winternheim, Germany

Spaude, Martin P., 324 N Morrison St, Appleton WI 54911

Thompson, Glen, 1407 Bay St, Saginaw MI 48602

Waldek, Paul, PO Box 900, Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa

Wordell, Bradley S., 123 W Oak St, Lake Mills WI 53551

Zehms, Roger R., 1407 Elizabeth, Crete IL 60417

Zindler, Ronald F., 6645 B Westview Dr, Columbia MO 65202

TEACHERS:

Arndt, Joan, 404 N 3d St, Marshall MN 56258

Bowe, Keith R., 921 S 114th St, West Allis WI 53214

Collyard, Larry S., 1221 N 2d St, Watertown WI 53094

Diener, Annette M., 1515 Hickory Ct, Port Washington WI 53074

Fleischman, Ronald, 311 W Washington St, Balaton MN 56115

Goessner, Gary L., 1002 W Wisconsin Ave, Oconomowoc WI 53066

Gurgel, Ann, 1816 Birch St #3B, White Bear Lake MN 55110

Gurgel, Wendy S., 7232 Crain St, Niles IL 60714

Hintz, Kathryn L., 3417 Victorian Dr, Racine WI 53406

Johnson, Karen, 20720 Forest View Dr, Lannon WI 53046

Keller, Kevin, 5935A N 41st St, Milwaukee WI 53209

Kolbow, Coralee, 21075 A W Good Hope Rd, Lannon WI 53046

Kuehl, Daniel J., 145 Franklin St, Lake Mills WI 53551

Kurbis, Jeffrey D., 9422 Tacoma Ave S, Tacoma WA 98444

Loersch, Mark, 2419 Hengel Ct #3, LaCrosse WI 54601

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As this year draws to a close, it goes out on a high note —Christmas. Christmas, along with Easter, is the vast diapason of the church year. It penetrates the secular halls of the country. It seeps into homes where God's name is never heard in blessing. It penetrates rooms that haven't the foggiest notion what Christianity is all about. So powerfully rooted in the heart of people is the idea of hope, of selfless giving, of innocence lost, that crashing through heathen barriers are hints and fragments of the joy we Christians have at the birth of our divine Savior. It's a light that cannot be hid, a miracle of which even the stones may sing.

We know that in the 180,000 or so homes in the synod, not all is well this Christmas. A list of woes is almost endless: unemployment, fear of job loss, sickness, tension, anger, death, wandering sons and daughters, divorce, separation. Whatever evil there is, it will worm its way into pious hearths as well as the homes of the pagans. Our hearts go out to those who mourn and sorrow these days. Yet can they sing: "That whate'er betide me /My Savior is at hand."

At hand is the hand that knew sorrow, the hand that was "nailed to the tree." It will pick us up, brush us off, wipe away our tears, and whisper, "It's all right. It's all right." So to all of you, dear readers, a blessed Christmastide.

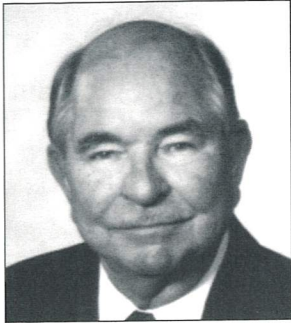
As the new year dawns, we have several things we want to share with you. For January we begin a new Bible reading schedule (page 417). The last one in 1991 led the reader through the Bible in 365 readings. On the basis of anecdotal evidence, we believe that in these days, when speed readers are infrequent, it is better to adopt a three-year cycle with smaller bites. If one fell behind in the one year cycle by several days, it was a daunting task of catch up.

The new readings come to us through the courtesy of Rev. David Rinden, editor of *Faith & Fellowship*, official publication of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. And a warm thanks to Editor Rinden! We are hopeful that the new readings are more in tune with the reading habits of our readers, and urge you to give it a try. A few minutes with your Bible each day will bring you closer to your God and Savior—guaranteed!

You are reading the final issue of 1992, and it closes another chapter of Northwestern Lutheran history. January 1 will unveil a monthly Northwestern Lutheran of 36 pages, four pages short of the two issues a month count. But trouble not yourselves: the year's total in 1993 will be 432 pages instead of only 420. The reason for the switch is simple: economics. Both postage and production costs will be lower. The Editorial Commission approved the change and recommended it to the District Presidents, who approved it in their October meeting.

We believe that when you get used to the new size and schedule, you will approve the decision. The additional pages will give us more latitude in the design and layout of the magazine than we have presently. You will, we hope, notice the difference. See you—please God—next year!

James P. Schufes



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About Xmas

by Paul A. Tullberg



MRS. KEVIN SCHEIBEL

X—about the only time you hear about X anymore is at Xmas time. That's when the whole world seems to stop and celebrate the birth of Baby X. Most people never even think about this X business. They figure X must be some kind of sales gimmick stores use once a year. Or at the very least, it must be a secret code Santa uses when he talks about presents with his elves, right?

Some people don't like it one bit when you say Xmas. They think the big X is being used to cross out the name Christ. But that's not what happened at all. As with most things at Xmas, this mystery is solved with a little history dust. This time the dust goes back to the Greek language about 2000 years ago.

Nowadays, only people from Greece seem to speak Greek, plus a few professors tucked away in colleges and seminaries. But about 2000 years ago (give or take a couple of decades) the whole world talked in Greek—because American English wasn't even in the vocabulary books.

Anyway, in the Greek language the word Christ starts with the letter X. So the way I figure it, someone, somewhere, got tired of writing out

the whole "Merry Christmas" greeting on his stack of holiday cards. Since he didn't want to shorten his list of friends and family, he started using X to stand for Christ. Everybody knew what it meant and the idea caught on.

After a while people stopped talking in Greek. (Aren't we all glad about that!) But they kept using the Xmas during the holidays. After all, Xmas was really a nifty way to get your attention. It was like a secret code that everybody knew. So the X stuck.

And that's why in December, Xmas signs seem to pop up in every store window in America, even though today most people don't know that X stands for Christ.

Many Xians (followers of X) get high blood pressure in December. They think the big X is trying to get rid of Christ. So every December, you see well-meaning people making signs that say "Keep Christ in Christmas." But X is in Christmas. Always has been and always will be. Maybe most people in the world won't know what this X business is all about, but from this Xmas time on, you will know.

This Xian and his family pray that you and yours have a truly blessed Xmas.

Paul Tullberg is pastor of Hope, Belvidere, Illinois.