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FORWARD IN CHRIST

March 2002

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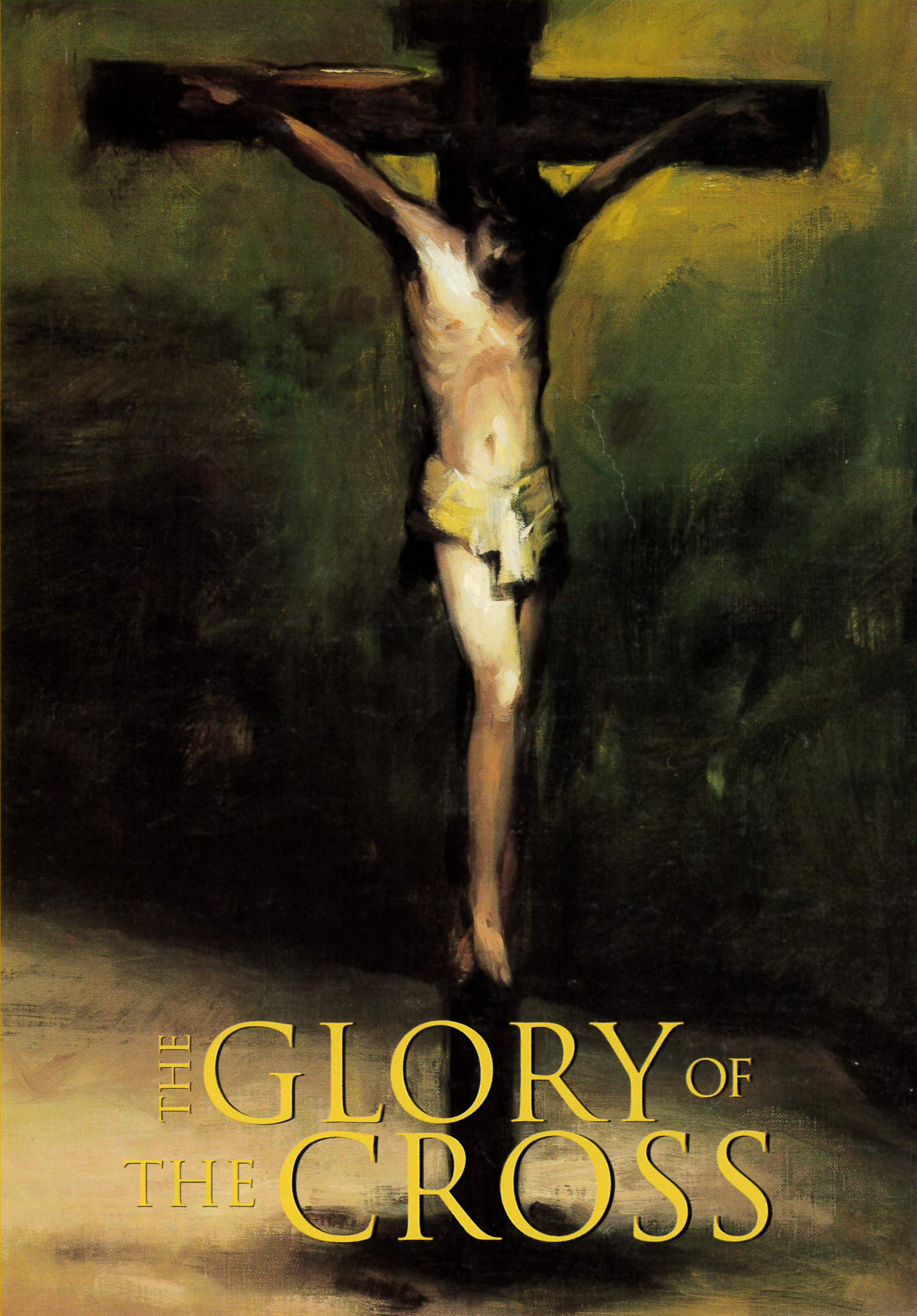
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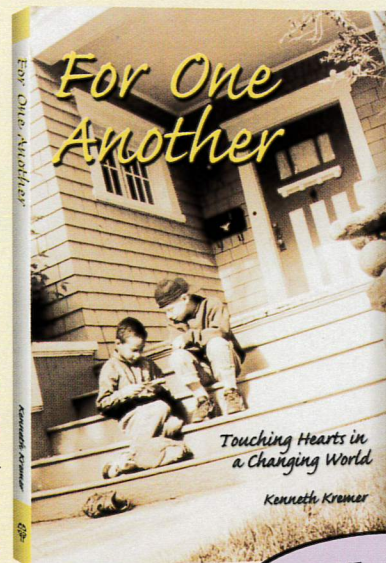


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Rescue workers

*For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.
2 Corinthians 5:14,15*

Thomas A. Westra

The horrific events of Sept. 11, 2001, reminded us of the evil residing in human hearts. The acts brought heart-rending tragedy to the lives of tens of thousands.

The stories of heroism and sacrifice that followed the disaster, however, reminded us of the compassion and courage residing in human hearts. As the image of the collapsing towers of the World Trade Center will live in our memories, so also will the image of the New York City firefighters simply doing their job, risking their lives to save others.

The heroism of rescue workers

Syndicated columnist Peggy Noonan, in Lower Manhattan just days after the tragedy, tells of witnessing a convoy of trucks filled with rescue workers—police officers, emergency medical technicians, construction workers, and firefighters. She describes it as a parade of celebrities going by, with onlookers clapping and cheering for them.

Noonan writes:

I looked around me at all of us who were cheering. And saw who we were. Investment bankers! Orthodontists! Magazine editors! In my group, a lawyer, a columnist, and a writer. We had been the kings and queens of the city, respected professionals in a city that respects its professional class.

And this night we were nobody. We were so useless, all



we could do was applaud the somebodies, the workers who, unlike us, had not been applauded much in their lives. . . . I was so moved and, oddly I guess, grateful. Because they'd always been the people who ran the place, who kept it going, they'd just never been given their due. ("Welcome Back, Duke," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 12, 2001)

The sacrifice of our Savior

During Lent I am reminded of the evil that resides in my heart. The impure thoughts, the gossip, the unkind words, the wicked acts spawned in my sinful mind, have brought grief to my life and the lives of others. However, the full impact of my disobedience—and yours—can only be seen as we witness the agony of our Savior on the cross. We see the sinless Son of God made guilty of our vile sins, separated from his Father's love, bearing the consequences of our rebellion.

As we see him there—knowing this was his choice—we are reminded of the compassion and the love that resides in his heart. This is the sacrifice he was willing to make, the work he was willing to do, to rescue us from the deathtrap of our sin.

Now he has placed his love, by his Spirit's power, into our hearts. "We love because he first loved us," John writes (1 John 4:19). So, when I read Noonan's description of the rescue workers, I thought of the Sunday school teacher and the elder, the lady who sets up the Lord's Supper and the gentleman who cuts the church's lawn, the neighbor who checks in on a shut-in and reminds him of Jesus' love, the mom who teaches her two-year-old to pray, and the dad who leads his family in devotions. They are not applauded much in their lives. We are more impressed by doctorates and six-figure salaries. But these are the people who keep it going—the rescue effort, that is.

For as Jesus rescued us from sin and death by giving his life, so he continues to work through his people to rescue us one by one. He brings us out of the darkness of unbelief and into the light of faith, and keeps us there until we join him in glory.



Thomas Westra is pastor at Beautiful Savior, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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Editorial office
Forward in Christ magazine,
WELS, 2929 N Mayfair Rd,
Milwaukee WI 53222-4398
FAX, 414/256-3899
<fic@sab.wels.net>

Editor
Rev. Gary P. Baumler, 414/256-3230
<garyb@sab.wels.net>

Senior Communications Assistant
Julie K. Wietzke, 414/256-3231
<juliew@sab.wels.net>

Communications Assistant
Nicole R. Moline, 414/256-3232
<nicolem@sab.wels.net>

Seminary Consultant
D. P. Leyrer

Contributing Editors
J. D. Buchholz, K. A. Cherney, D. J. Engelbrecht,
R. L. Gurgel, E. S. Hartzell, R. K. Hunter,
P. M. Janke, P. L. Kieselhorst, M. J. Lenz,
A. J. Panning, T. A. Westra, P. E. Zell

Art Director
Paul Burmeister

Graphic Designer
Carianne Ciriacks

Photographs and Illustrations
Mrs. Kevin Scheibel Photography, p. 3; Glenn Harrington, p. 8; Laura Warmuth & courtesy of David Wietzke, p. 10; Bill Frauhiger & Zastrow Studios, p. 12; courtesy of Richard Gibson and Robert Klindworth, p. 14; Comstock Images, p. 16; PHOTOdisc, p. 18; Rubberball Productions, p. 20; Tom Nachreiner, p. 22; Punch, p. 36

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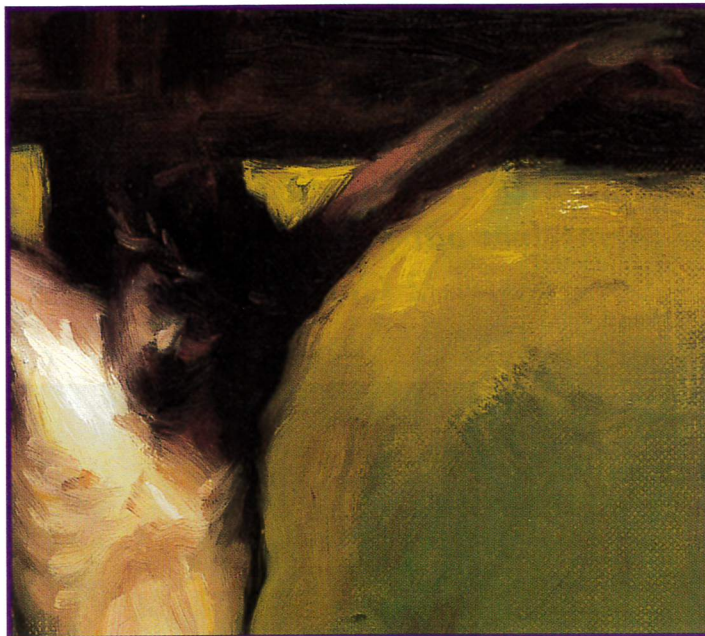
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On the cross, Jesus received God's justice for you, and you received the love of the Father for his Only Begotten Son.

8


Cover illustration by Glenn Harrington


bits & pieces


 Lent is a time of conflicting emotions—love, hate, sorrow, joy. . . .

- “The glory of the cross” (p. 8) talks about another conflict of Lent—how justice and mercy can both be accomplished in the one glorious act of Jesus’ death on the cross.

- John Parlow talks about the conflict between looking at salvation as a “can-do” attitude and as a “has-been-done-for-you” gift (p. 36).

 Did you know that in the United States alone, five to 10 million adolescent girls and women and one million boys and men struggle with eating disorders and borderline conditions? A special two-page “whatever” shows the struggle that one young woman had with an eating disorder and the relief and hope she found in Christ (p. 20).

 Most WELS members know that our pastors finish their training at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon. A new three-part series will give you more insights into the students and special programs at the sem. The first article focuses on vicaring—the year-long practical experience in a WELS congregation given to third-year seminary students (p. 10). In upcoming months, find out about second-career seminary students and a program that prepares second-career minority men to enter the seminary.

 When you think of Jonah, do you only remember something about a big fish? Well, there’s much more to the story than that. Our new Bible study, written by Paul Zell, will examine the intricacies of this minor prophet’s book. Don’t miss his first article, “Wrong-way messenger” (p. 30).

—JKW

features

LENT

8 The glory of the cross

The cross of Jesus is glorious because it is where God's justice and mercy meet.

Wayne A. Laitinen

PASTOR TRACK

10 Exploring the life of a vicar

Three Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students reflect on their experiences as vicars.

Laura C. Warmuth

EVANGELISM PIE

12 Worship welcome

How do we make visitors to our worship services comfortable?

Charles A. Westra

WELS HIGH SCHOOLS

14 Twenty answers

Can you guess which area Lutheran high schools are being described?

Nicole R. Moline

A CLOSER LOOK AT LUTHERANISM

16 Lutherans are liturgical

Our musical discretion is marked by careful attention to the content of the praise we offer God.

Wayne D. Mueller

LADIES' AID

18 Changing for changing times

As the world and women in the world have changed, so has the Ladies' Aid organization.

Linette Scharlemann

WHATEVER

20 A second chance at life

A 17-year-old struggles with an eating disorder.

INSIGHTS

22 Spirituality: have you got it?

Don't be taken in by shallow, self-centered forms of spirituality.

Robert F. Raasch

LENT

36 Heaven sent

Entrance into God's kingdom is too great to be earned, too precious to be purchased.

John M. Parlow



departments

3 THOUGHT FOR TODAY
Rescue workers

6 READERS FORUM

7 EDITORIAL COMMENT
Victims' rights

23 WELS NEWS

28 WORLD NEWS

29 BULLETIN BOARD

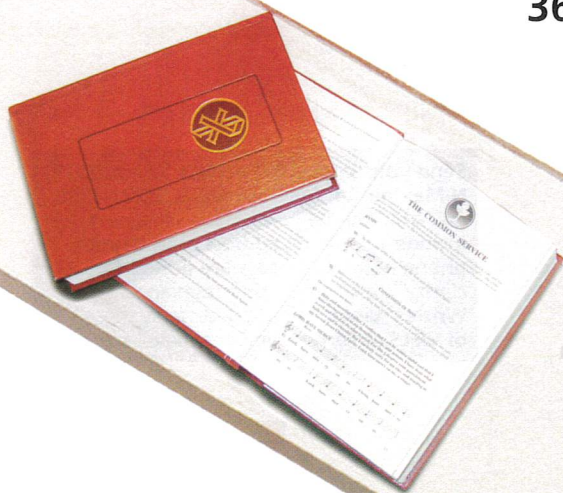
30 BIBLE STUDY
Wrong-way messenger

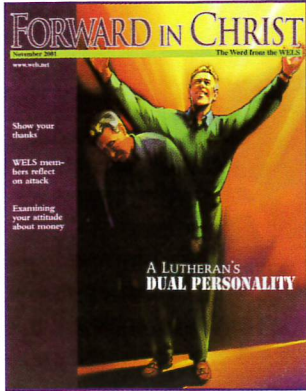
31 INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDY

32 IN THE CROSS HAIRS
Living God-pleasing lives

33 POTLUCK

34 EDITOR'S PEN
Read this





I want to compliment you on an excellent job in the November 2001 issue. The whole issue was well put together and really

put into perspective how God in his infinite wisdom can work a disaster like [Sept. 11] to his glory.

Articles I especially found of personal interest include "In the cross hairs" by Pastor Gurgel. Since my brother and I have been on opposing sides of the fence concerning the military action the United States has taken against these terrorist attacks, the article clarified many issues for me.

Likewise, "The Word among us" by Pastor Buchholz shows Jesus not as a wimpy, free-love, huggy-feely person who only lived a really good life, but as a Savior who definitely did not mince words when any of his peers needed to be put in their place.

Pastor Baumler's article also provided some observations that were relevant to me. I can remember as a child growing up in the bomb shelter areas in the neighborhoods I lived in where a Communist attack was a real possibility. His observations on how far our society has progressed over the years certainly are poignant!

Thank you very much for this issue of *Forward in Christ*. It provided some relevant answers for my own life and showed how God certainly does fit all the pieces of life together!

Laura V. Borchin
Flower Mound, Texas

In regard to the article, "Now I see clearly" [Aug. 2001] and Paul Fanning's comments in the October issue: Jesus commanded his followers to preach the gospel to

all people. There are people who attend a funeral service who never attend church. When a pastor refuses to conduct a service for a non-member he is turning down an opportunity to reach souls with the law and the gospel. In God's sight is this policy as important as the soul of even one sinner who might have been led to repentance and salvation? Jesus ate and drank, walked and talked with publicans and sinners, as well as with his disciples.

Esther Fretwell
Leesburg, Florida

When we do not have confessional assurance that the person who died trusted in Jesus, the gospel message at the funeral necessarily becomes muted, and the practical result often is an angry reaction by the survivors who come looking for comfort.—ed.

I liked the article "I heard the bells before Christmas Day" [Dec. 2001].

Here is another excerpt from the Longfellow poem: "Then pealed the bells more loudly still, 'God is not dead nor does he sleep. The wrong must fail, the right prevail. With peace on earth, good will to men.'"

Geraldine Boelter
North Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

Re: Pastor Berg's article, "Pizza, patriotism, and Luther" [Jan.].

Let us honor and be grateful to Luther for his achievements. But let us recognize Luther's intolerance of the Jews as one of his human failings.

Let us not defend the indefensible.

Walter E. Klann
Surprise, Arizona

Re: a readers forum letter about the name Northwestern [Jan.].

Shakespeare once said through Juliet, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." And though this great writer was not an

Evangelical Lutheran, he presents a point that is still valid.

There is indeed a good point to preserving history and heritage, especially in WELS. It is necessary to remember where we came from and how we got to where we are today. But I think that it also needs to be pointed out that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Lost names of synodical operations, colleges, high schools, etc., do not mean a loss of synodical confessionalism. As a student in the pastor track at Martin Luther College, I am willing to bet that 70 percent or more of our student body do not know what "Northwestern" exactly means.

This is a new era for our synod. We have a new hymnal, new amalgamated schools, and a new overall theme. We have these new things for one important reason only, so that we may be better focused and prepared to tell others about Jesus.

We must take seriously the history of our church body. I myself do since my father and both grandfathers attended Northwestern College. After all, "God's Word is our great heritage." But, whatever way will best help us to continue that heritage and bring more people to faith, be it changing of names, hymnals, etc., that way must be followed. Let Jesus be the focus as we remember our past, yet move forward in Christ.

Phil Huebner
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Send your letters to Readers forum, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398; FAX, 414/256-3899; <fic@sab.wels.net>. Include full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters are edited for clarity, conciseness, and relevance. Writers' views are not necessarily those of WELS or *Forward in Christ* magazine.

Victims' rights

Armin J. Panning

We live in an age much given to lawsuits. Perhaps that is not surprising, because an ever increasing number of advertisers are urging us to get compensation for injuries, real or imagined. One doesn't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out the reason for the ads: the advertiser offering his services is sure to be compensated before the victim.

But what about the general principle involved? Is it ever right to take someone to court? Does Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 forbid it? Note that in writing to the Corinthians Paul is speaking to Christians dealing with Christians. In fact, Paul credits them with being able on judgment day to judge the world (v. 2). Hence the apostle strongly urges them to settle their differences "in house." Christians, operating in the spirit of Christ's love, will be able to settle their differences much better themselves than any secular court could ever do for them.

But what about other situations? Paul's advice does not categorically rule out all legal redress. There are certainly cases where defective products and dangerous work conditions have done serious harm. In the current setting it's hard not to think of substandard tires and vehicles or hazardous and unsafe workplaces. In many cases an injured or disabled breadwinner will need compensation to provide for those for whom the Lord has given him or her responsibility. In such cases legal recourse is certainly justified. It may even be necessary, because significant insurance claims often will not be addressed without a court decision determining the size of an award.

Much more difficult to evaluate are those cases that involve the use of legitimate things having the capacity to harm.

Included here are not only such notable (and notorious) cases as getting burned with hot McDonald's coffee, but also the suits involving health hazards from long (and sometimes excessive) use of such things as alcohol and tobacco. Deceptive and seductive advertising intended to addict people is a separate issue, but surely individual users also have an obligation to employ good judgment when using potentially dangerous things. In many cases it could be argued that the user is as much a perpetrator as a victim. To seek compensation for one's own indiscretion seems a highly dubious practice at best.

Finally, a few forms of legal activity are not just dubious, but can fairly be branded as always wrong. Bringing a frivolous suit intended solely to gain money at someone else's expense is always wrong—as is taking someone to court to gain revenge. Particularly in the latter case, Christ's directive to "turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:38-42) and Paul's advice to "leave room for God's wrath" (Romans 12:17-21) apply.

A fair, even-handed legal system is a great blessing from God. We need to thank him daily for it. As with so many other good gifts, however, it's a gift that needs to be used with discretion and mature Christian judgment.

Armin Panning, a member at St. Matthew, Port Washington, Wisconsin, is a professor emeritus at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

The legal system is a gift that needs to be used with discretion and mature Christian judgment.

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

The cross of Jesus is glorious because it is where God's justice and mercy meet.

Wayne A. Laitinen

Tucked inside the story of our Savior's sufferings is the account of Jesus praying out loud in public and the Father answering his prayer (John 12:20-36).

This episode is not part of our midweek Lenten readings. In fact, when we read it, it seems mysterious. In the same breath, Jesus talks about glorifying God's name and dying a horrible death. At the same time, his heart is filled with trouble and with the steely resolve to meet "the hour" head-on. When we come to passages like this, it is easy to furl our brows and move quickly to the more familiar drama of swords and spears, traitors and statesmen, high crimes and crucifixions. Today, let's slow down and learn from this passage.

The atmosphere in and around Jerusalem was charged with excitement and jealousy because Jesus had recently raised Lazarus from the dead. Shortly after Jesus' triumphant ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, some Greek converts to Judaism told Philip, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus."

That foreigners asked to see Jesus must have been unusual for Philip. Until now the Savior had told him only to go to the lost sheep of Israel. So Philip consulted with Andrew, and they decided to go to the Savior directly.

Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (v. 23,24).

The time had come when Gentiles like these Greeks were pounding on the door seeking the



Savior. This was a sure sign that Jesus' crucifixion was also knocking at the door. The glory of wheat is that it must shrivel and be buried before it can spring up and produce fruit. So the glory of the holy Son of God is that he must die and be buried, and so fulfill God's justice against sinful Jews and Gentiles. But when he rises from the dead, he will raise an abundant harvest of believers—including Greeks and foreigners.

Glory at the gallows

"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" (v. 27,28). This prayer was spoken on the heels of that heady Palm Sunday procession. After one and a half years of declining popularity, it seemed that there might be a movement to make Jesus king. His ministry had the potential to become vital, dynamic, successful, and popular—so much so that the church officials feared the crowd's reaction if they had Jesus arrested. Just a word from Jesus could energize and mobilize the masses.

However, Jesus sees things the way they really are. The Father's ultimate glory was not found in the accolades of the crowds or the success of the moment. What was glorious was the very thing that troubled Jesus' heart the most: the bitter cup that God's justice distilled from our iniquities. For the love of sinners, the Father was about to unleash on his sinless Son, the Son whom he loved, the full fury of the powers of darkness. Then the Father would turn his eyes away from the carnage and close his pitiless ears to Jesus' loud cries, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" What was vital for our salvation was the very reason

Jesus might be tempted to say, "Father, deliver me from this hour."

For every eye to see, Jesus' death was a dismal failure. It's the sort of thing that makes crowds disperse, women weep, disciples flee, and Peter renounce him. But the cross is the precise thing Jesus prayed for: "Father, glorify your name."

It is as if Jesus was saying, "Father, you are holy and just. You cannot abide sin, and you must punish the sinner. Nevertheless your greatest glory is to have mercy on sinners. Help me to do what I came for. Treat me as the sinners you must punish. Give me the power to endure the cross so that all the world will rejoice in our forgiveness and glorify your mercy."

The cross of Jesus is glorious because it is where God's justice and mercy meet. On the cross, Jesus received God's justice for you. You received the love of the Father for his Only Begotten.

The glory that receives a Father's "Amen!"

"Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again'" (v. 28).

This is one of those rare occasions when the Father speaks from heaven. At Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, God also spoke from heaven. Like bookends at the beginning and end of Jesus' ministry, the Father reassured us that Jesus is his beloved Son and that he is pleased with Jesus. This is how we know that Jesus is the perfect Lamb of God. He is the only blood sacrifice that God will accept as full payment for our sins.

Here, the Father says an "Amen" to his Son's prayer: "I have glorified it . . ." How true! When God's Son was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, the Father's plan of salvation was set in motion.

Then the angel proclaimed the birth to the shepherds, and the heavenly hosts glorified God in the highest. When Jesus submitted to God's law of circumcision and shed his first blood, God's law was being fulfilled for us and God's name was glorified. By identifying with us in the sinner's sacrament of baptism, he fulfilled all righteousness, and God's name was glorified. When he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast and be tempted by the devil, he became the second Adam. By his perfect obedience, Jesus removed the sin we inherited from the first Adam.

"And I will glorify it again." That is the Father's way of saying "Amen" to Jesus' cross. Later Jesus tells the crowd that these words were spoken for their benefit, not his. In other words, "You are going to be appalled at what you see. But listen to the Father. He calls my death a glorious victory. And this victory is yours."

Some were so proud that they didn't hear God's words. "The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered" (v. 29). Those who have given no thought to their sins can only regard the message of the cross as a meaningless noise.

"Others said an angel had spoken to him" (v. 29). When the gospel is preached others sense something godly is happening. They feel that it is good to be in church and hear these things. But they miss the fact that the Father's words were meant for them. So they leave the way they came: without the comfort of the cross.

As we examine the story of our Lord's Passion we fall down before the cross in humble awe, "Jesus' cross is your glory, Father! . . . and my salvation!"

Wayne Laitinen is pastor at St. John, New Ulm, Minnesota.

EXPLORING THE LIFE OF A VICAR

Three Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students reflect on their experiences as vicars.

Laura C. Warmuth

“We had a member who had just been getting over open heart surgery. . . . He was special to me because, in those early days of the vicar year when I went and visited him in the hospital, I’d stay for a long time and just sit and talk to him. He was finally getting back on his feet after that surgery when I got a call on a late Friday afternoon in mid-December that he had been in a bad car accident,” says Thomas Ehnert, vicar at St. Matthew, Benton Harbor, Mich., in 2000-01.

“You see, we had a really bad winter with snow piled high along the roads. Someone pulled out to see if a car was coming, and our member smashed into this car. . . . I went up to see him in Kalamazoo on the day after Christmas, and things were looking up for him. . . . Then I got a call a few days later that he had taken a turn for the worst and was going to die in the next 24 hours. So I rushed up to Kalamazoo and had a devotion with him. He was not awake, but it’s said that people can hear when they’re in a coma. The next day I got up there again, only to find out that he had died 15 minutes earlier.

“Even though from a human standpoint this was a great tragedy, God’s good and gracious will was done. This faithful servant of the Lord, who served St. Matthew in so many ways for so many years, was in heaven now. It was so memorable because it was the first time I experienced what it must be like for a pastor when a member with whom he is close passes away.”

Vicar. It’s a title that most of us are familiar with, but do many of us really know what the term encompasses?

A student studying to be a pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, spends his third year of study at a WELS congregation, learning from experience and from his supervising pastor (bishop). Vicars preach, lead worship, teach catechism and Bible classes, lead and attend various church meetings, and visit hospital patients and shut-ins. Each vicar has a unique learning experience.

Ehnert says, “If there is one thing that will always stay in the front of

my mind, it is the love of a pastor for his congregation and the love of the congregation for its pastor.”

How does a vicar grow from being the new guy in town to being so involved with and connected to a congregation? Two other 2000-01 vicars—David Wietzke, who served St. John, Hastings, Minn., and Nathan Ericson, who served Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz.—join Ehnert in sharing experiences.

Welcomed and adopted

“My congregation was warm and welcoming right from the start,”

says Ericson, “and there were frequent social events, from Arizona Wildcat parties to poolside barbecues to nights at the Tucson Rodeo. Still, some Friday nights I ended up at the Video Update rental store.”

On their own for the first time, many vicars discover the joys of cooking, cleaning, and ironing. But they aren’t alone in their efforts. “A retired couple who lived next door ‘adopted’ me as their grandson and showered me with neighborly care and delicious home cooking,” says a grateful Ericson. “Members of the church kept my refrigerator stocked with goodies,

including a Christmas cookie spread that would put Martha Stewart to shame.”

Arizona wasn't the only place that treated its vicars well. Three times during the year Ehnert did not have to go grocery shopping for six weeks straight!

Ehnert also notes that “ironing was a bit of a challenge.” He'd never done it before, but with the advice of his bishop's wife, he only burned two shirts during the course of the year.

Challenged

Although ironing was high on the list, the vicars faced many other challenges. Ehnert preached in English and German. “The first time I translated my sermon into German, it took me 14 hours,” he says. With the guidance of member Elli Maas, Ehnert cut that down to three.

Of teaching Bible information class, Ericson says, “I gained a greater appreciation for our church's clear biblical teaching as I saw people receive answers to questions that they had been wondering about for a long time—people seeing how free their salvation is, people knowing how certain their salvation is, people asking to have their children baptized.”

Humored

Through all the changes and challenges, the vicars couldn't help but see the comic side of life. “Our choir director tricked me into volunteering to sing a solo by explaining, ‘All the vicars have done this every year’ (I was the church's 13th vicar.)” Wietzke says. “By the time I realized she was kidding, I had



(From left) Nathan Ericson, David Wietzke, and Thomas Ehnert gather after their Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Christmas concert.



Vicar David Wietzke performed his first baptism at St. John, Hastings, Minn. He is pictured with baby Magen Diane Arndt, daughter of Steve and Kelly Arndt.

already agreed to sing the part.”

Ericson can now laugh at his cordless microphone woes. “I found out that it detracts from the flow of your sermon when your battery pack falls off its belt clip, tumbles to the floor, and yanks your microphone from its place near your throat to somewhere within the folds of your gown,” he says. “Thankfully, our members were forgiving.”

Taught well

All three vicars treasure the knowledge and experience they gained. “My bishop is kind of like a second father to me, a father in faith. I still write him and ask for advice,” Ehnert reflects.

Ericson recalls chats with his bishop in the office and over pizza about ideas and strategies for ministry.

From preaching and meetings to barbecues and youth group, the life of a vicar can be busy indeed. “Sometimes you get so busy with all the activities in a large congregation that it's possible to forget to take the time for personal devotion and study of the Word,” says Wietzke.

He concludes with good advice for future vicars and all Christians, “When you do take the time to do this [personal devotion], the benefits will show up in all the rest of your work.”



Laura Warmuth, a junior at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, works part-time for WELS Communication Services.

Worship welcome



When I moved to Columbia, Tenn., over 11 years ago, I was introduced to “Southern hospitality.”

One of my first nights in town I checked out a local restaurant. Keep in mind that I was not yet married then. A waitress came to my table and exclaimed, “Honey, what can I get you to drink?” I placed an order.

Soon she was back with my drink and another question: “Dear, what would you like to eat tonight?”

My first thought was that this woman might be interested in me. My bubble was burst when she said the same thing to the couple at the next table. I was simply being introduced to “Southern hospitality.”

That was not the last time. I soon became accustomed to merchants saying, “Come back, now” as I left their place of business. It did not take long to feel comfortable in my new surroundings.

Intimidating churches

Have you ever thought about what it is like to be a first-time visitor to one of your worship services? For the person that is not familiar with church life (dare I even say WELS life), it can be an intimidating proposition.

A recent visitor to a service at our church confessed that her visit was actually the third time that she had been to our church. The first time she drove into the parking lot but could not muster the courage to get out of her car. The second time she got out of her car and made it all the way to the door. She just could not come inside. The third time she made it through the doors and into the service.

OUR FIRST POINT OF CONTACT WITH MANY “PROSPECTS” IS OUR WORSHIP SERVICE. BUT HOW DO WE MAKE THESE VISITORS COMFORTABLE?

Charles A. Westra

Looking through the eyes of a visitor, I can imagine that our services can be intimidating. A visitor often comes in at the last possible minute. Lutheran churches seem to fill up from the back to the front. This means that the only seats left for visitors are in the front. More likely than not, visitors are not familiar with the worship format. Everyone else in the building (all seated behind them) seems to know when to stand and when to sit, but they don't really understand. The visitor may even have a difficult time following our order of service.

You might be thinking that our worship service is not designed for the visitor. It is designed for a Christian who understands worship principles. Pastors are likely to say that they would like to have "prospects" come first to Bible information class. There they can learn to understand and appreciate our worship format. I don't disagree.

The truth is, however, that our first point of contact with many "prospects" is our worship service. So it is important that we strive to make the visitor as comfortable as possible.

Welcoming our visitors

We can keep some simple things in mind as we work toward this goal.

The visitor's experience may start at the road. Do you have a church sign? What message does that sign communicate to the visitor? A sign may not be the place to cut budget in the church building project. It may be the first impression your church offers the community.

What does a visitor find in your parking lot? Is there adequate room to park? It goes without saying that you cannot seat people if you cannot park them. Our members may be

willing to park two blocks away on a side street, but we don't want to put visitors in that position. It may be wise to have special parking places reserved for visitors. It sends a message. They are important. We expect them. We have gone out of our way to make things convenient for them.

Without intending to convey it, we might be telling people that they are not welcome in our church.

It is important for visitors to be able to navigate their way through our facility. We can ask some simple questions to test our preparedness. Would a visitor know which entrance to use to enter our facility? Would they have clear directions to the sanctuary? If they needed to use the restrooms, would they have trouble finding them? Could a handicapped person negotiate these same routes? Without intending to convey it, we might be telling people that they are not welcome in our church.

It is safe to say that most visitors would like a warm reception. They would like to be greeted. Whether that greeting comes from a "formal greeter" or a friendly member trained to watch for visitors may not be all that important. The important thing is that a visitor is noticed and acknowledged. We hope this becomes natural. Pastors and members will recognize an opportunity to share God's good news with a visitor. They will see



that person as one for whom Christ has shed his blood in payment for sin.

That makes every visitor to our worship services worthy of special attention. It only makes sense that we, as congregations, will go out of our way to provide a warm and caring atmosphere for our visitors.

We also want to make it as easy as possible for the visitor to follow our worship services. I am not suggesting changes in our service format. I am suggesting the possibility of providing a road map for our visitors to follow. That road map could come in our bulletin, an insert in our hymnals, or perhaps through regular verbal announcements. Our worship leads us to continually confront our sin and travel to the cross. That is a worthwhile path for any visitor.

What are visitors really looking for when they come through our doors? One pastor put it this way: "They are looking for people that are friendly and a message that relates to their lives." God has provided the message. The message of sin and a Savior relates to people's lives. Understanding that message can motivate us to provide a warm atmosphere Sunday after Sunday.

Charles Westra is pastor at Christ Our Savior, Columbia, Tennessee.

20 answers

Can you guess which area Lutheran high schools are being described?

You've heard of "20 Questions," right? You think of something and the person you're playing with can ask 20 questions to discover what object you are thinking of.

This article is similar to that game, but I've already asked the questions of students, teachers, or principals at each of the two area Lutheran high schools featured in this article. See if you can guess which high schools the following answers describe. (No cheating!)

School #1

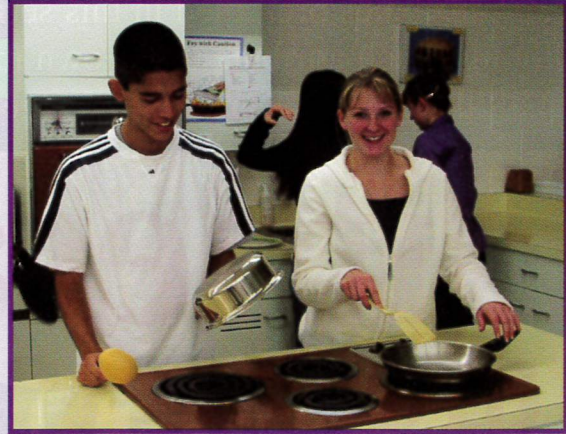
1. **First year in operation?** 1979
2. **2001-02 enrollment?** 302
3. **Number of teachers on staff in 2001-02?** 22 full-time, one part-time
4. **As a student, what makes you most proud of this school?** "Even though we are small, we are still able to excel so much in everything we do. From sports teams finishing on top, to ACT scores and grades and all aspects of high school life. We come out on top in a lot of things," says Kristy Reagles, senior.
5. **Enrollment trends?** 30 percent increase since 1991
6. **Comments on enrollment trends?** "We are looking at leveling enrollments for the next decade with slightly more or slightly less than 300 students," says the principal.
7. **What percentage of graduates pursue post-secondary education?** 86 percent
8. **What difficulty is the school experiencing?** "We are challenged to provide equitable compensation to our faculty and staff without taxing our parents with constant tuition hikes," explains the principal.
9. **As a teacher, what makes you most proud of this school?** "The students," says Rollin Timm. "We have a large number of students who are focused on succeeding academically, and they do. Also, they understand the ministry, and many further their education at our worker-training schools."
10. **How many teachers hold advanced degrees?** Six
11. **What is the school's mission statement?** "[This school] exists to assist area WELS/ELS congregations and their families in equipping their youth as disciples of Christ by developing their spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional skills and values necessary in order for students to serve their Savior by serving others in their families, congregations, and communities."
12. **What is the most important thing you learned at this school?** "Over the course of freely discussing issues of faith and by being strengthened every day, I am left with a confident feeling that I could strongly witness for Christ any day, anywhere," says senior Christi Schuh.
13. **School colors?** Columbia blue and navy
14. **How many congregations make up your school's association?** 19
15. **School mascot?** Chargers
16. **As a principal, what makes you most proud of this school?** "Our faculty and student body are Christ-focused with academic quality being a high priority."
17. **As a student, what is the most exciting thing that happened at school this year?** "The volleyball team had an awesome season this year, and all of the games were really exciting to watch," says Jacob Jaeger, senior.
18. **Principal's name?** Robert Klindworth
19. **What makes your school unique?** "We are unique in that we are in a rural setting with a stable student pool," says Klindworth. "We are located between Martin Luther College and Bethany Lutheran College. Both schools are excellent partners to us in supporting our mission."
20. **Located in?** New Ulm, Minn.



Sunny Jung (right) is an international student from Korea at school #1. Here she studies with Tom Park, a Korean pastoral student at Martin Luther College.

School #2

1. **First year in operation?** 1958
2. **2001-02 enrollment?** 393
3. **Number of teachers on staff in 2001-02?** 26 full-time, one part-time
4. **As a student, what makes you most proud of this school?** "That I can go up to any student and share my faith with them and not be afraid of being ridiculed or mocked for my belief," says Will Schaefer, senior.
5. **Enrollment trends?** 76 percent increase since 1991
6. **Comments on the enrollment trends?** "Our enrollment increases have come because of several things," notes the principal. "The Lord allowed us to purchase a different building in 1992, one that has ample room and more facilities. During the last 10 years, our 11 Lutheran elementary schools have increased enrollment. We have seen an increase in the number of students from those schools. We have also seen an increase in students from our community."
7. **What percentage of graduates pursue post-secondary education?** 90 percent
8. **What difficulty is the school experiencing?** "It has been difficult keeping up with the staffing and program needs of a rapidly increasing enrollment," explains the principal. "By God's grace we have provided for our students, but it takes careful planning and God's blessings."
9. **As a teacher, what makes you most proud of this school?** "[It] is blessed with dedicated faculty and staff members, willing to go the extra mile and help wherever help is needed, whether it is with students or with other staff members," says Rachel Grev.
10. **How many teachers hold advanced degrees?** 13
11. **What is the school's mission statement?** "Educating the total student—spiritually, intellectually, and physically—in a caring Christian family community."



Seniors John Leppla and Erin Ward explore the ins and outs of cooking in Food Class at school #2.

12. **What is the most important thing you learned at this school?** "I learned that even though other people might not believe in God, I can still show my faith to them and spread God's Word," says Schaefer.
13. **School colors?** Red and white
14. **How many congregations make up your school's association?** 28
15. **School mascot?** Crusaders
16. **As a principal, what makes you most proud of this school?** "Our students sharing their faith with other students. Because 30 percent of our students are not WELS, and one-third of those are international students, the Lord has allowed students and staff a unique opportunity to share the message of law and gospel to students right here in our school."
17. **As a student, what is the most exciting thing that happened at school this year?** "Playing football for Coach Lange and Coach Pearson. Last year we went 1-6, while this year we went 5-3, winning five games straight," says Matt Schmidt, sophomore.
18. **Principal's name?** Richard Gibson
19. **What makes your school unique?** "We have the largest dormitory of any area Lutheran high school. The international program provides an opportunity for world mission work here at home," says Gibson.
20. **Located in?** St. Paul, Minn.

Have you figured out which schools are being described yet? School #1 is Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, and school #2 is St. Croix Lutheran High School. Although only 100 miles apart, each school has attributes that make it unique. You will also notice that many answers could apply to either school or that some answers are quite similar. Although repetitive, it is a blessing to see that all our schools share a similar mission and focus.

Thanks for playing my version of "20 Questions." Make sure to tune in next month to see which high schools are featured.

Nicole Moline is communications assistant for Forward in Christ magazine and WELS Communication Services.

The 12 attributes presented in this series reflect what makes Lutherans unique. Although each attribute on its own may be shared by other religious groups, when all the attributes are studied together, a uniquely Lutheran image emerges.

Lutherans are liturgical

Our musical discretion is marked by careful attention to the content of the praise we offer God.

Wayne D. Mueller

The Lutheran church is the singing church. No doubt that reputation is rooted in Martin Luther's attitude. "Music is an outstanding gift of God," he wrote, "and next to theology I would not want to give up my slight knowledge of music for a great consideration. And youth should be taught this art; for it makes fine, skillful people" (*What Luther Says* [WLS], p. 979).

Apart from the clergy, few people in the church of Luther's day were involved in singing. Most music was confined to monasteries, cloisters, and the liturgical intoning of the mass. But Luther was a man of the people. He not only brought the theology of the Bible to the laity with his Bible translations and catechisms, he brought Christian music and singing back to the pews.

When Luther urged music and singing in the church, he faced pressure from both extremes of the theological spectrum. Roman Church tradition kept lay involvement and response to a minimum. On the other

hand, Reformed and Anabaptist (present-day Baptists) radicals rejected music for another reason. They felt that it was too secular and distracting for Christian worship. Luther responded: "I am not satisfied with him who despises music, as all fanatics do; for music is an endowment and a gift of God, not a gift of men" (WLS, p. 980).

The Lutheran church retains its distinction as the singing church because of the content of its hymns.

Praise with discretion

Today, of course, almost all churches make use of instrumental and choral music. Yet the Lutheran church retains its distinction as the singing church because of the content of its hymns. Martin Luther had a good ear for the quality of musical accompaniment, but he was even more keenly attuned to the content

of Christian songs. Luther would not appreciate much of what passes today as "Christian" music.

Luther, too, had plenty of church music available to him but considered most of it unsuitable for singing by Christians committed to Bible truth. So he used the good music but changed the bad words. He wrote: "They indeed possess many admirable, fine musical compositions and songs, especially in the cathedral and parish churches. But they have adorned them with many foul, idolatrous texts. Therefore we have removed these idolatrous, dead, and nonsensical texts, have divested them of the fine music, and have used this for the living, holy Word of God" (WLS, p. 981).

Lutherans are still discretionary with their music. Like Luther's, our musical discretion is marked by careful attention to the content of the praise we offer God. We would rather sing about God's great deeds than about what we do and how we feel about it. When we go to weddings we want to hear how Jesus'

love binds us to each other, not what wavering emotions we feel at the moment. We are not satisfied with music that praises a generic god whom even non-Christians can salute as creator and lord of the universe. We demand music that glorifies the God who sent Jesus to be our Savior from sin.

Liturgical

Luther was a reformer, not a radical. He changed what was wrong with the Christian music of his time and revived singing in the church. He did much the same with the Roman order of worship. He corrected the abuses of the Roman Catholic mass, but retained the liturgical approach to worship.

The main abuse of the Roman Mass was the Lord's Supper. Rome said that the saving power of the Supper came from a divinely given power of the priest to bless the elements. Luther taught from Scripture that the power of the Supper was in Christ's own instituting words, not in the hands of the priest. He also eliminated the elevation of the host, an idolatrous practice in which Romans believed they were praising the actual body and blood of Christ.

Luther replaced man's ritual with the power of God's Word. Because the spoken word conveys the same forgiveness as the sacraments, Luther ended Rome's practice of making

every worship service a celebration of the Lord's Supper. He made worship more meaningful to people by offering it in their language. In every country, Rome's priests spoke the mass in Latin, but the first order of worship Luther wrote was called the German Mass.

Holding on to what is good

Luther, however, preserved Rome's liturgical approach to worship. Liturgy literally means "the work of the people." Luther restored meaning to that term in a number of ways. Besides allowing worshipers to hear the whole liturgy in their own language, he emphasized preaching and the reading of Scriptures. He involved the congregation in responses, psalms, and the singing of hymns.

Lutheran churches continue to use liturgical worship to bring praise to God. Liturgies in various forms have survived not only because of their long Christian tradition. The variety and order of our liturgies reflect what God tells us about himself in the Bible. Our revolving selection of readings and psalms presents the whole life and work of Christ and all major teachings of Scriptures every year.

Liturgical worship invariably begins with a confession of sins and the announcement of forgiveness. That's because our worthiness to come before God depends on our right relationship to him in Christ. Then God speaks his

word to us in the readings, psalms, and sermon. We affirm our faith and respond to his grace with prayers, confessions, praise, offerings, and responsive amens.

In the singing church, instrumental music of all kinds invites our spiritual reflection before, during, and after worship. Hymns wrap the truths from God's words and our prayers into memorable phrases. The blessing sends us home with the smile of God's grace. Nobody leaves without knowing Jesus a little bit better.

That the church that most highly prizes the pure gospel should also be the singing church is only natural. Lutherans greet each new day with the miracle of God's forgiving grace in Jesus Christ. What can they do but sing a new song. Luther put it this way: "A new miracle deserves a new song, thanksgiving, and preaching. The new miracle is that God through his Son has parted the real Red, Dead Sea and has redeemed us from the real Pharaoh, Satan. This is singing a new song, that is, the holy gospel, and thanking God for it. God help us to do so. Amen" (WLS, p. 982).



Wayne Mueller is first vice president of WELS.



CHANGING FOR changing times

As the world and women in the world have changed,
so has the Ladies' Aid organization.

Linette Scharlemann

Ladies' Aid—what images do these words evoke in the mind of a longtime WELS member?

A changing look

Perhaps you think of the meetings Mom looked forward to. She would mark the date on the calendar and set her hair the night before. In the morning the smell of cake baking would warm the house. Then Mom would put her Mite Box in her purse, right next to the box of crayons that she brought to keep you quiet. After a few squirts of perfume, you'd head over to the church basement, where potlucks and shut-in visits were hot topics of conversation.

Or perhaps you think of the group of ladies in your congregation today: the ones who serve the food at funerals, organize bake sales and church picnics, polish the communion ware, and dust the woodwork on the altar.

Either way, the words "Ladies' Aid" are synonymous with dedication and hard work.

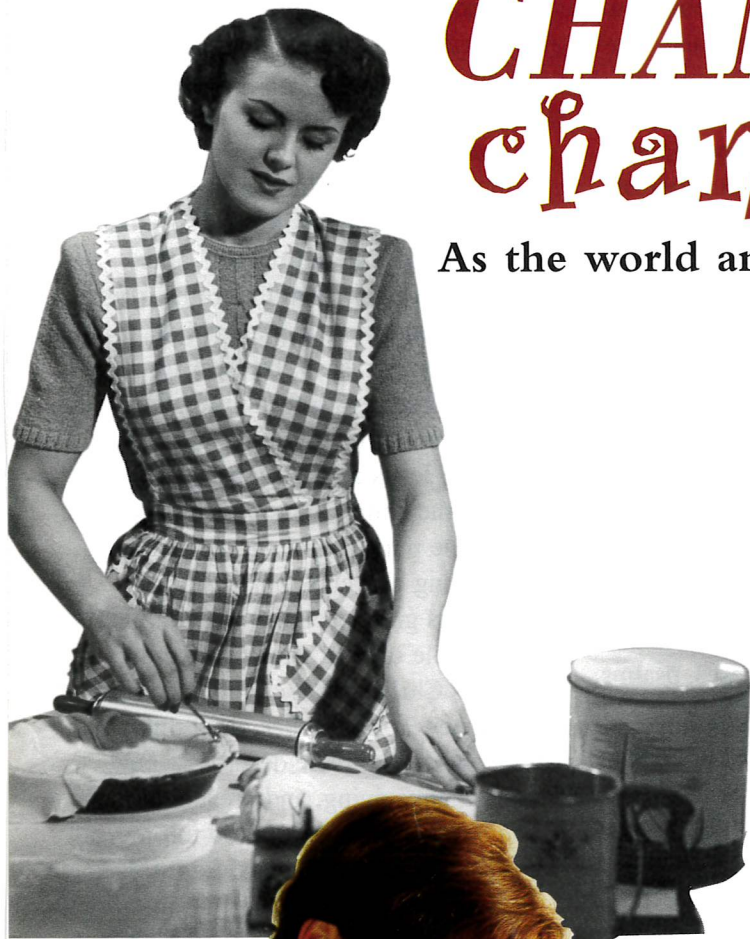
But just as the world has changed from what it was a generation ago, so too has this long-enduring organization witnessed a slow, yet irrefutable change. Where a multitude of women once represented various ages and stages of life, now in nearly every Ladies' Aid group in WELS, the elderly make up the majority of its members.

Where are the young people? Working.

For whatever reason, economy or personal preference, many adult women are employed either full- or part-time. These women couldn't get to an afternoon meeting of the Ladies' Aid if they wanted to.

This brings up another point. What appeal is there in this era of shopping malls and tanning salons to make a middle-aged woman want to spend her afternoon discussing altar flowers and Aunt Erma's arthritis?

Our Ladies' Aid groups are facing many challenges in today's world. These organizations are aware of the obstacles, and many are making changes to address them.



A changing organization

The most obvious change is moving the meetings into the evenings so that those who work during the day may attend.

Although this may seem like a simple solution, few Ladies' Aid groups have made this change and for good reason. Rescheduling meetings to the evenings causes many long-time members to stop attending because they prefer not to go out at night.

Therefore, a popular trend in our WELS churches has been to form a separate, though often connected, branch of the Ladies' Aid, which meets in the evenings.

At our church—St. John, Sleepy Eye, Minn.—such a group was formed in 1987. The Evening Circle is made up primarily of working women, who find both the evening meeting time and peer group more suited to their busy lifestyle.

Although our Circle is a branch of the Ladies' Aid and we do help out with potlucks and altar flowers, we also select our own projects. As in many groups of this kind, attendance fluctuates, and it is sometimes difficult to find a person who is willing to be Circle Leader. Even so, the Evening Circle provides a means through which today's working woman can serve her church and her Savior with other like-minded Christians.

Example of change

But what happens when the enthusiasm for groups like these wanes to the point where no leaders can be found and attendance diminishes until only a handful of women are left? This happened to St. John, Redwood Falls, Minn.

St. John's Vesper Guild was established in 1956. This group met once a month in the evenings and provided such services as setting up and cleaning the communion ware; serving for

funerals, weddings, and other celebrations; making banners; and providing baby layettes for world missions.

Sadly, this once active group has all but disbanded. As one former member explains, "I'd plan on going to the meetings at 7 PM, but by the time 7 PM rolled around, I just wanted to stay home with my family."

This is a common sentiment voiced by many WELS women today. On top of working an eight-hour day, there's supper to put on, homework to supervise, laundry, and—maybe, if she's fortunate—a little time to head over to the shopping mall or tanning salon for a little R & R.

It's all about time. Just look at a woman's pocket calendar, and you'll see what I mean. Time has become a precious commodity. Attending a church meeting has become more of a burden than a social event. As a result, enrollments are down.

St. John's Vesper Guild nearly broke up as a result. "We were at the verge of folding the organization," says Deb Wormer, a long-time member, "but decided to try revamping how we do things. Rather than officers, a Planning Committee organizes special activities periodically during the year. We seem to have success and a better turnout with these short and sweet, one-time events, rather than something where they have to commit to showing up once a month all year long. We try to make our events special with a theme and decorations. . . . It gets people talking—'What's this thing coming up? What's it all about?'"

The Vesper Guild has changed a great deal. But its original purpose remains: to support WELS missions and be a service organization to the congregation.

Changing service groups

Another trend is the increasing presence of service groups in WELS con-

gregations. Traditionally, the responsibility to provide and serve the food at gatherings has been left to the Ladies' Aid. But recently, through the establishment of service groups, all women of the congregation are being asked to help. Larger churches form 12 groups, one for each month. In smaller congregations four to six groups serve on a rotating basis. The success of these groups depends greatly upon faithful leaders. Generally speaking the congregations who use service groups are pleased with the results.

Most of the service groups in our WELS churches today are made up solely of women, but even that trend is beginning to change. Congregations are recognizing the necessity and benefits of assigning all members of the congregation—men, women, and children—to serve the Lord through service groups. As one WELS member puts it, "Men can learn to make coffee just as easily as women."

Some things never change

Changing times have put a strain on the traditional Ladies' Aid. Some of these groups have had to close their books due to a lack of members in recent years. But that does not mean that Christians are any less willing to serve than they were a generation ago.

The changing times have caused our congregations to reevaluate, restructure, and carefully repackage their ladies' groups to accommodate and attract today's busy women. With God's help and continuing focus on our mission, this can and will be accomplished.

Regardless of how your church has organized its women's groups or service organizations, one element remains constant—Christians want to serve.

Linette Scharlemann is a member at St. John, Sleepy Eye, Minnesota.



WHATEVER

A second chance at life

A 17-year-old struggles with an eating disorder.

There once was a young lady who appeared to the rest of the world to live a perfect life. She had, it seemed, everything anyone could ever desire.

Little did anyone know the troubles she was going through. Behind her picture-perfect life, the young lady struggled. She struggled with issues that many cannot comprehend nor would ever dream could be happening to her. She always seemed happy and confident.

The confidence was a mask to cover the problems and lack of self-worth that lay deep within the young lady's conscience. As more and more incomprehensible problems occurred in her life, she quickly lost control. Not knowing how to deal with the world that she couldn't control, she turned to the one thing she knew that she could control—her weight.

The happy and confident young lady slowly became the victim of an eating disorder. Starting out simply not eating, moving to attempts at bulimia, she finally found her control in the hypocritical comfort of diet pills. The diet pills were a means to lose only a certain amount of weight—but pounds that really didn't need to be lost.

By the time that weight was lost, it was too late. The picture-perfect young lady had become dependent. Knowing the danger, she confided in a select few of her closest friends, who immediately did their best to rid her of the habit. One friend even, with permission, threw the pills away. However, in her heart the young lady had no desire to give up this measure of control. In a couple of days, she bought more of the addiction, and, like an old friend, she was glad to have them back.

The diet pills became most of her life, and she slowly began increasing the dosages. In time she no longer

even knew the amount she was taking. She simply took as many as she felt like.

One night before bed, the young lady took three times the allotted pills for the entire day all at once. This might not have been a problem. She had been doing that for a while, but she hadn't thought about the harm building up in her system. She also forgot that she had already taken more than she should have earlier in the day.

Soon the young lady was experiencing extreme shortness of breath and felt as though someone was stabbing her in the chest and heart. Not wanting to destroy her picture-perfect image, she refused to call for help and simply went to bed with the fear that she was not going to awaken in the morning. Falling asleep was not easy, with the incredible pain and inconceivable fear, sadness, and turmoil within her, but eventually she drifted off.

And by the grace of God she did wake up, although still with the incredible pain. When she woke, something was different in her. She was so happy to be alive and immediately thought of her younger brother, who idolized her. She looked into the mirror and suddenly realized for herself everything that her friends had been telling her. She had been fooling herself the whole time as her measure of control took control of her. Then she remembered and took to heart that God doesn't place people on this earth to be perfect in the eyes of people. All believers are already perfect in the eyes of God because of Jesus, and people are placed on this earth to show the love that God first showed the world.

MORE ABOUT EATING DISORDERS

There are three main types of eating disorders. Some people struggle with a combination of the three:

- Anorexia—starving oneself
- Bulimia—binging and purging
- Compulsive overeating

Warning signs of anorexia:

- Unhealthy body image (sees self as fat)
- Overexercising
- Undereating
- Ritualistic with food
- Secretive about amount of food eaten
- Proud of control over food

An eating disorder is an addictive behavior that can cause permanent bodily harm or even death. If you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder, get help from the following people:

- Medical doctor—an eating disorder can cause serious health problems.
- Counselor—eating disorders are emotionally related.
- Family and friends—the person with the eating disorder needs love and support.
- Pastor—so he can show how much God loves this person and that God is there for this person. God can help overcome the eating disorder.

The WELS Careline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for people who need to talk. Call 800/422-7341.

Information provided by Joan Dickerson, a counselor at Christian Family Counseling, a ministry of Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Services, Inc. Dickerson has been a therapist for over 26 years.



With this great feeling of love for God, others, and finally herself, the young lady disposed of the remainder of her addiction. Ridding herself of the problem

was not easy. However, there was a small seed of love for herself, and she wanted to do it. So with the love of her friends and reminding herself of the horribly revealing night, the harmful habit was slowly broken. Now the young lady can love again.

I am a 17-year-old high school senior. I've been the lead in theatre productions, I dance, I have generally good grades, and many have recognized me for many accomplishments. The morning of this needed epiphany happened to be Sept. 11, the day of the terrorist attacks. My conscience has since been bothered and comforted by this fact. Bothered because I was trying to destroy my life, when others had theirs forceably torn from them. Yet I am comforted because I believe there is some reason God chose to keep me alive in a time of turmoil. One answer may be to share my story openly and honestly to help others who are struggling.

I know what it means to feel lonely, trapped, unloved, and without hope. I have learned that these feelings are lies that Satan is telling you. If you would trust a friend who lies to you, then continue letting these feelings conquer and destroy your life. The truth is, there is hope and love in Jesus the Savior. I am a living example of this.

This article is written by a student at one of our area Lutheran high schools. Due to the personal content of the article, she wishes to remain anonymous.

chance

Spirituality: have you got it?

Don't be taken in by shallow, self-centered forms of spirituality. Go to the source of all life. Go to God and his life-giving Word.

Robert F. Raasch

Suddenly everyone is talking about it, developing it, sharing it. A person can hardly watch one episode of *Oprah* without hearing something about spirituality.

But what do people mean by the term? It seems that spirituality, in its newly fashionable usage, refers to anything having to do with the development of the "inner" self: thoughts, attitudes, feelings, self-worth, empowerment, meditation. To many, "remembering your spirit" means everything from reading an inspirational poem to performing a random act of kindness.

But exactly what is a person's "spirit?" How does a person develop a spiritual life? Are all methods of spiritual growth created equal? God's Word provides an answer to these legitimate questions.

Everyone has a spirit. Every human consists of body and soul (sometimes called "spirit"). When God breathed into Adam "the breath of life," he gave Adam a soul. A lump of clay became a living human being. The human soul, therefore, constitutes the immaterial component of man. It is the seat of one's emotions. It is what houses the personality, the self-consciousness, the ego.

Everyone has a natural knowledge of God. The human soul comes equipped with what theologians call "the natural knowledge of God." In other words, from birth, everybody



knows that there is "somebody up there." Some call it God, or the Force, or the Meaning of Life, or Divine Harmony—deep down, everyone is looking for it. Everyone wants to be in sync with it even if they can't fully understand or define it.

Everyone wants to be right with God. The natural desire to be in fellowship with the divine (i.e. "at peace with one's self" or "at one with the universe") leads humans to practice every form of spiritual discipline from Asceticism to Zen Buddhism, from Transcendental Meditation to Tai Chi, from prayer and fasting to following the Golden Rule. These various paths all have the same, if unstated, goal: life in harmony with God, now and forever.

Not all forms of spirituality are equal. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Proverbs 16:25). Most of what passes for "spirituality" today is nothing more than a man-made attempt to appease the human conscience by performing kind deeds.

Such a "do good, avoid evil" mentality may serve to outwardly improve a person's behavior, but it won't enable people to live the kind of lives that puts them at peace with God.

Only Jesus gives true spiritual life.

Jesus declared, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). Since our innate sinfulness separates us from God and his peace, to have peace and life with God, our sins must be removed. Only Jesus can do that. By offering his perfect life in our place on the cross, he removed the guilt of our sins forever. He brought us into fellowship with the only true and living God. In so doing, Jesus gives us true spiritual life.

Are you looking to develop the spiritual dimension of your life? Would you like to discover the true, meaningful life God has for you? In his Word, Jesus declares, "I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Don't be taken in by all the shallow, self-centered forms of spirituality out there. Go to the source of all life. Go to God and his life-giving Word. As God once breathed life into the first human being, so he can and will give true life to you!

Robert Raasch is pastor at Mount Olive, Appleton, Wisconsin.

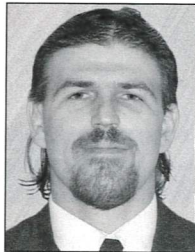


Martin Luther College graduates

On Dec. 20, 2001, 11 students graduated from Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.



Katherine S. Christensen
Rochester, Minn.
B.S. in elementary education



Richard D. Fischer
Weyauwega, Wis.
B.S. in elementary-secondary education



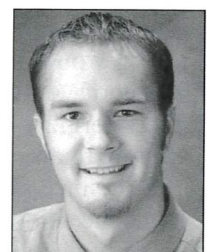
Bradley W. Grass
Tucson, Ariz.
B.S. in elementary education



Jessica L. Hawley
Appleton, Wis.
B.S. in elementary education



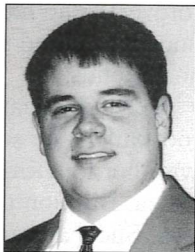
Elizabeth K. Herlich
Manito, Ill.
B.S. in elementary education



Aaron T. Heyn
Moorpark, Calif.
B.S. in elementary-secondary education



Julia M. Moldenhauer
Jackson, Wis.
B.S. in elementary-early childhood education



Nathan P. Nolte
Manitowoc, Wis.
B.S. in elementary-secondary education



Stacie L. Raymond
Mitchell, S.D.
B.S. in elementary education



David R. Schulz
New Ulm, Minn.
B.S. in elementary education



Tiffany D. Tilbury
Fort Worth, Tex.
B.S. in elementary education

Assignments for MLC graduates:

Schiebel, Matthew
(December 2000 graduate), to Cross of Christ, Coon Rapids, Minn.

None of the pictured graduates were assigned at this time.

Financial stewardship 101

Financial stewardship is a sensitive topic. Because of this, many Christians ignore it. Yet, as David Valleskey, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary president, explains, “[It] is a part of a Christian’s life of sanctification. . . . [Sanctification] includes everything a Christian does in grateful response to God’s grace and mercy in Christ” (“A Christian’s Stewardship of Money—Compelled by the Love of Christ,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Winter 1990, Revised 2001).

During Feb. 8-10, almost 300 men will meet in Chicago to discuss ways to talk about financial stewardship in a God-pleasing way. “The objective of the ‘Work While It Is Day’ seminar is to equip teams to bring

a stewardship message and encouragement to synod congregations,” says Ron Roth, administrator of the Commission for Communication on Financial Support (CCFS).

Seminar attendees include district officers, circuit pastors, CCFS district and synod committee members, lay Synodical Council members, and faculty representatives from Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Those present will hear presentations on

- a Christian’s stewardship of money,
- the synod compensation program being implemented in June 2003,
- WELS’ financial status, and
- plans for a synodwide stewardship emphasis.

The information gained at the seminar will help attendees as they travel in teams of two to all WELS congregations, sharing available stewardship opportunities and materials. These visits will be carried out from February through June of 2002.

Financial stewardship is not a topic that can be fully taught in a weekend seminar, though. As Roth cautions, “This seminar is part of a process, not an event.”

Jon Flanagan, WELS’ administrator for human resources, concurs: “After walking away from Chicago, we should feel that the job has just begun, not that it is finished.”

Meet the editorial staff—uncut

Ever ask yourself, “Who are these people who write for Forward in Christ magazine?” Through this series you can find out. Read on:

A bundle of energy

Small, energized, always on the go.

If I would have mentioned pink, many of you would have thought of the Energizer bunny from the TV commercials.

But since pink wasn't mentioned (and she seldom wears pink), we, in communication services, think of our communications assistant, Nicole Moline.

Five-foot-tall Moline even thinks of herself that way: “I try to attack whatever I'm doing with energy—whether it's work, a hobby, church, or a relationship. If I believe in something enough to commit time to it, I believe I should attack it with energy.”

Moline, a 1999 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, began working for the commission and *Forward in Christ* magazine immediately following her graduation.

“My favorite part about working for CSC and FIC magazine is that I believe in what I'm doing,” says Moline. “I believe that spreading God's Word, delving deeper into it, and applying it to our lives is important. In my work, I can help with that, and that is special to me.”

This job keeps Moline on the go—especially in 2001. She says her biggest challenge last year was “juggling so many work commitments,” including editing the *Book of Reports and Memorials*, coordinating WELS Tech 2001, reporting from the synod convention, moving offices, and keeping the magazine going.

On top of that, Moline went “on location” for the first time—to New York City. She accompanied a group from WELS Kingdom Workers who went to help victims of Sept. 11.

“Personally, the trip was a big accomplishment because it helped me get over some of the fears I had about sharing my faith,” says Moline. “Spiritually, I grew in so



Nicole Moline takes a break with her furry friend.

many ways as I was surrounded by strong Christians who were eager to serve.”

When Moline needs a little relaxation (even the energized can't go forever!), she likes to read a good book and spend time with her family and friends.

You'll also catch her playing in foosball (table soccer) tournaments with her longtime boyfriend, Rob Balza. But don't let her size fool you. She's a tough competitor, winning her first mixed doubles tournament this year.

Just like the Energizer bunny. She keeps going and going. . . .

The choir heard round the world

A 40- to 50-person choir based out of Portland, Ore., will soon be heard around the world.

No, it's not going on a world tour, but its music is. The Cascade Lutheran Chorale is donating compact discs (CDs) of its past concerts to WELS home and world missionaries.

“Our recordings have grown into a ministry,” says Joy Williams, director. “We have realized that God has used these recordings to bless and comfort people in their spiritual needs.”

These CDs will also give missionaries a connection back to the United States. People listening to the CDs aren't the only ones who feel a connection, though. The singers get that same vibe.

“Music is just the vehicle,” says Williams. “The worshiping of Christ and the fellowship is what brings us together. It's so inspiring.”

Members from 11 Oregon and southwest Washington churches participate in the chorale, which Williams started after attending the 1999 WELS national worship conference. Some members travel up to two hours one-way to attend rehearsals every other week. The chorale gives two concerts each year.

“Too often we struggle alone rather than acknowledging and benefiting from our community of congregations in the Portland area,” says Williams. “The chorale provides an opportunity for people to come together, sharing



Joy Williams, director of the Cascade Lutheran Chorale, keeps the chorale on tempo. Fellowship is a huge benefit of being involved in this choir.

their common faith in Christ and interest in music.”

Where are they now?

In *Forward in Christ* magazine, we report the news but aren't always able to follow up. "Where are they now?" is our way of giving you the rest of the story.

Cheryl Barber wrote an article for the September 1997 issue reflecting on her daughter's experience at a predominantly Mormon public elementary school in Utah.

Here's a recap:

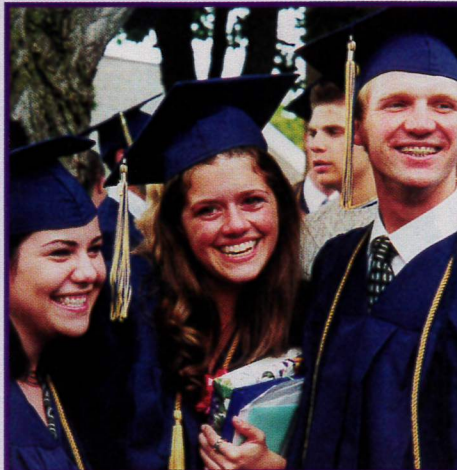
It was difficult for Cheryl to see the frustrated tears of her daughter, Carly, who felt left out at school because of what she believed. She saw the fear in her little girl's face after being told that her mommy and daddy wouldn't be in heaven because they drank coffee. But Cheryl also watched as Carly's desire to learn more about her faith and her ability to share that knowledge with her classmates grew. When we left them, Carly's parents were sending her to Luther Preparatory School (LPS), Watertown, Wis., as she pursued her goal since third grade of becoming a WELS teacher.

So, where is she now?

Four years later, Carly is a freshman at Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, Minn., beginning the next step to becoming a WELS teacher. From the barriers of faith she faced in Utah's public schools to the comfort of a circle of Christian classmates, Carly's experiences have molded her into an ambitious young Christian.

Carly recalls entering the sanctuary of a Watertown church for the first time. "I remember tears filling my mom's eyes. We were both in awe that such a beautiful and elaborately decorated church could be Lutheran!"

It was also quite an adjustment to attend a school where the majority of the people had attended large WELS schools and churches all their lives. "To worship in such beautiful churches with hundreds of people didn't phase them at all," Carly remarks.



"I have had a deep admiration for teachers since I can remember and, strangely, have loved school," Carly Barber says. Here she is pictured between friends Lisa and Tim on their graduation day from Luther Preparatory School.

Now at MLC, Carly is enrolled in the Secondary Teacher Education Program in English. She keeps up with piano, organ, choir, and theatre as she did at LPS. Carly says, "At no other school would I be able to attend chapel twice a day with all my classmates, take a Bible history class, or pray with my roommate." What a contrast between grade school religious debates and roommate prayer time.

Even though she wants to teach in WELS schools, Carly does not wish her old school days away. She says, "Attending public schools surrounded by Mormons forced me to constantly be studying Scripture. It hits close to home when your closest friend or the nice family across the street are Mormons, and you realize that they need to know their Savior if they are going to share eternal life with you."

What a blessing that Carly will bring this mission mindset into WELS schools.

Laura Warmuth

Helping congregations do their Father's business

Pastor Elton Stroh and his wife, Gail, have been through quite a few changes in the last two years. Both of their children were married, their first grandchild was born, and Pastor Stroh accepted a call to be a parish consultant for Parish Assistance through the Board for Parish Services.

Stroh served Peace, Sun Prairie, Wis., for 17 years. In January he began his work as a parish consultant. Stroh saw the value of parish assistance in action when Peace used the service a few years ago.

The parish assistance motto is: "Helping congregations do their Father's business." Stroh fits into that role well. He says, "People tell me that the Lord has blessed me with organizational skills, creativity, and commitment. I'm counting on my 23 years of parish ministry to give me insights into helping church leaders see God's abundant blessings, identify local opportunities for ministry, and (re)organize themselves around God's eternal plan to save the lost and nurture the saved."



(From left, front row) Elton Stroh and his family—wife Gail, son John, granddaughter Grace, and daughter-in-law Rachel. Back row: daughter Andrea and son-in-law Brett Valerio.



District news

Dakota-Montana

St. Paul, Rapid City, S.D., won first place for its float entry in the Rapid City Parade of Lights. The award was for "Best Music" in the non-profit organization category. St. Paul's adult choir was also invited to sing at the lighting of the city Christmas tree.

North Atlantic

Grace, Charlotte, N.C., opened its day-care, Lambs of Grace, on Dec. 10, 2001. Grace also dedicated its new building in January.

Ascension, Jacksonville, N.C., is starting a support group for parents of children with special needs.

The Hudson-Delaware Circuit welcomed Lic Canot as a WELS pastor through colloquy. Canot is from the Dominican Republic and is serving a Spanish-speaking congregation in Fort Lee, N.J., made up largely of people who also emigrated from the Dominican Republic.

Dakota-Montana

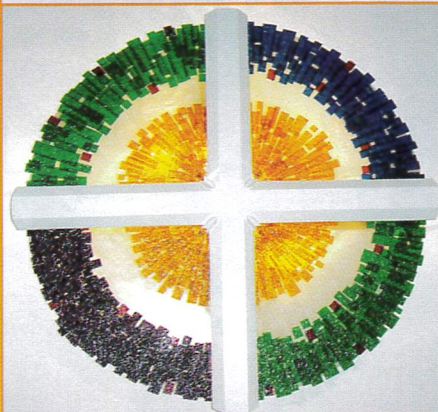


Briana Johnson, a member at Mountain View, Great Falls, Mont., marched in the Macy's Parade with the Montana State University marching band on Thanksgiving Day. Johnson notes, "As we marched down the street, the crowds were thrilled to see us and even chanted, 'Montana!' as we went by."

Southeastern Wisconsin

In December 2001, NSYNC's foundation, Challenge for the Children, donated \$25,000 to Calvary Academy in South

Western Wisconsin



St. Andrew, Middleton, Wis., dedicated its new church, school, and offices in May. The glass art shown here was the work of artists and craftsmen at St. Andrew. The design represents the entire church year with all of its liturgical colors. The cross and sunburst become apparent, reminding viewers of Jesus' triumph over death and the "yet more glorious day" that awaits believers.

Milwaukee, Wis. The money was used to enhance the school's student services.

On Nov. 10, 2001, the Lutheran Pioneers buried a time capsule at its national office in Burlington, Wis., to be opened in the year 2051. Placed in the capsule were a current Boy's Handbook, emblems, clothing, a video, and a variety of informational and historic sheets.

Happy Anniversary!

SA—On Jan. 20, members at Emmanuel, Zephyrhills, Fla., celebrated the church's 25th anniversary.

WW—Luther Preparatory School professors Orville Breikreutz, Kenneth Taylor, and Robert Huebner celebrated their 25th anniversaries in the teaching ministry in a special service on Oct. 21, 2001.

These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: DM—David Wendt; NA—Kevin Schultz; SA—Mark Haefner; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Martin Baur.

WELS news briefs

Commission on Adult Discipleship
414/256-3278

The commission is featuring a stewardship emphasis for 2002 called "Discovering My Spiritual Gifts/Work while it is day." This three-part program will explore God's definition of spiritual gifts, invite us to discover what spiritual gifts God has blessed us with, and use our gifts by identifying where we can serve the Lord in our own congregation. It will include bulletin inserts, litanies, expanded sermon outlines, a spiritual gifts discovery tool, time and talent templates, and more. For information, call 800-567-8669 or visit <www.wels.net/sab/firm-cad.html>. To order, go to <www.shopwels.net> or call the number above.

Commission for Communication on Financial Support
414/256-3214

Once commitments and gifts in process from the Forward in Christ thank offering are completed, its total will exceed \$10 million for synodical work, plus many more dollars for congregational projects. The synod in convention directed that seeking gifts to support unfunded portions of thank offering projects continue. This will occur over the next two years.

Obituary

Sharon Treder
1948-2001

Sharon (Loehr) Treder was born Sept. 27, 1948, in Campbellsport, Wis. She died Dec. 3, 2001, in Madison, Wis.

A 1970 graduate of Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., she served at Our Savior, Wausau, Wis., and Holy Cross (ELS), Madison, Wis.

She is survived by her husband, Jerry; two sons; one granddaughter; her parents; three sisters; three brothers; and many nieces and nephews.

Life-changing experiences

It's being said everywhere: "Life hasn't been the same since Sept. 11." For me, though, life did not really change until I went to New York City and met the people most affected by the disaster. Before that I was upset, but I was not involved. It was being involved that changed my life.

I first became involved when I traveled to New York City with seven other WELS Kingdom Worker (WKW) volunteers from Nov. 13-17, 2001. The eight of us became certified by the Red Cross to counsel victims of the Sept. 11 attacks, and each of us treasured the opportunity to put our Christian love into action. Putting faces and names to the tragedy changed me and the way I looked at the events of Sept. 11.

Dec. 17-23, 2001, I returned to New York City with a group of 14 WKW volunteers. The original eight volunteers from the first group returned, indicating that their lives were changed, too. Our mission this time was different than the first. Rather than work through the Red Cross, we sponsored three days of free Christian counseling at the Marriott Marquis in Times Square. We advertised for the counseling and staffed the counseling center with WELS volunteers.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday we distributed a total of 10,000 postcards throughout the city. This, too, was life changing for those of us who have always been nervous about sharing our faith with strangers.

"I didn't know I could approach strangers in subways and parks with words of the gospel until I did it. It was exhilarating to find out I could," writes Lois Kluender, a member at Christ Redeemer, Trumbull, Conn.

About a dozen people were counseled during the free sessions offered on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Many who came in struggled with financial, emotional, and spiritual problems that many of us have never had to consider. As the Holy Spirit works in their hearts, I hope their lives change, too.

In some cases we learned from those who came to us for help. Pat Schlosser, a member at St. Paul, Menomonie, Wis., talked with a 10-year-old girl whose mother was being counseled.

"We were talking about being content with what we have (I already knew she didn't have any Christmas gifts—and didn't expect to get any), and I asked her if she had a tree or any decorations. She replied, 'No, but I have Jesus in my heart, and that's all I need.' What a statement coming from a child."

Schlosser adds, "This [trip] was the most incredible, awesome, inspiring experience of my life."

Becoming involved in New York City. Putting our faith into action there. Life changing, indeed.

Read more about this trip in the Spring 2002 issue of Mission Connection.

Nicole R. Moline



An area for children was set up at the makeshift WELS counseling center in New York City. Here Pam Wilke arranges gifts donated by WELS children in Wisconsin for children in New York.

Working together

Members of Sure Foundation, Woodside, Queens, WELS' home mission in New York City, joined volunteers when they passed out postcards in subway stations and parks. The postcards not only invited readers to the free counseling sessions offered, but also invited people to Sure Foundation's Christmas Eve Service.

Fifty-one people attended the service, including 12 prospects. The prospects found out about the service through the postcards that were distributed. Two of them attended a Sunday service at Sure Foundation on Jan. 20.

Funding for the WELS Kingdom Worker volunteers, the postcards, and the counseling facility came from the WELS Committee on Relief's Attack on America Fund.

DEFINING RELIGION

Lent: the season of repentance and preparation beginning on Ash Wednesday, 40 days before Easter (excluding Sundays). The term seems to be derived from the German word "Lenz" (the spring season).



WELS President Karl Gurgel (right) and Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) representative Jim Fischer share a light moment amid serious business. Fischer came to Milwaukee in December 2001 to present WELS with a check for nearly \$385,000 for relief to Sept. 11 victims. The money was collected from WELS members through AAL branches, and a portion of that was matched by AAL. As of Jan. 15, a total of over \$765,000 has been donated to the Committee on Relief's Attack on America Fund.



Anglicans, Methodists consider reuniting—A proposal to reunite the Church of England and the Methodist Church is starting to be discussed by the two church bodies, with ratification hoped for in the summer of 2003.

If the proposal is accepted, each church would recognize the other as a true church and would recognize each other's baptism, communion, and ministry. The two churches would also then consider moving into full communion, with the interchangeability of ministers, and ultimately to full visible unity.

These churches split in the 18th century. Previous attempts to unite these churches have failed. The proposals will be officially put before the church bodies in July 2002.

By the numbers—

- According to the United Nations, the AIDS epidemic is growing fastest in countries of the former Soviet bloc, including the Ukraine, Russia, and other countries of the former Soviet Union. An estimated 1 million people were infected with the AIDS-causing HIV virus at the end of 2001. The report found that Latin America and the Caribbean rank as the second-most affected region of the world, with some 1.8 million people living with HIV/AIDS. China and countries in Africa are also greatly affected.

- The number of mosques in the United States increased 42 percent between 1990 and 2000, with at least 1,200 in the States, according to a "Faith Communities Today" study, a survey of 41 religious denominations by Hartford Seminary. Of the 416 mosques surveyed, 60 percent reported at least a 10 percent increase in membership between 1995-2000.

- Fewer death sentences are being issued, according to research from the U.S. Justice Department. Figures show that the 214 death sentences in 2000 were a 29 percent decrease from 1998. By the end of 2001, the

number dropped 32 percent compared to 1999. Half of the death sentences in 2001 came from five states—Texas, California, North Carolina, Florida, and Pennsylvania.

Poll: Study on pre-Sept. 11 and post-Sept. 11 religious beliefs and behaviors—

A recent study by Barna Research Group explored how people's faith has changed after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11. Not many big differences are seen.

Results from pre-Sept. 11 and post-Sept. 11 research provided the following comparisons:

Perspective	• Summer 2001	• Fall 2001
I consider myself to be a Christian.	86%	84%
I am absolutely committed to Christianity.	42%	44%
I read from the Bible in the past week (other than church).	39%	39%
I attended a church service in past week (other than a special event).*	42%	48%
I prayed to God in the past week.	84%	85%
The Bible is totally accurate in all it teaches (strongly agree).	43%	40%
My religious faith is very important in my life today (strongly agree).	69%	68%
The devil is not a living being but is just a symbol of evil (strongly agree).	28%	23%
God is the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator.	72%	68%
I made a personal commitment to Christ, which is important in my life.	68%	68%

The data is taken from telephone interviews with a nationwide random sample of 1,010 adults conducted in late October and early November. Pre-attack research was from 1,001 adults, conducted in late July through

mid-August. Sampling error is ±3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

[“How America’s Faith Has Changed Since 9-11,” <www.barna.org>; Nov. 26, 2001]

*Nationwide church attendance increased by about 25% immediately after the attack, but now has sunk back down.

Most news reported in this section is derived from Religion News Service. Items do not necessarily reflect the views of WELS or Forward in Christ magazine.



So, God, what about ... ?

Want God's advice, but you're not sure where to look? We'll get you started with the basics. Remember these verses—and share them!

Life in a sinful world brings its share of sorrow, and at times we feel little or no comfort (cf. Psalm 77:2). But there is comfort with the Lord.

- Psalm 55:22: “Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.”
- Psalm 94:19: “When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.”
- Isaiah 40:1,2: “Comfort, comfort my people, says our God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for.”
- Matthew 5:4: “Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.”
- John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

On your own

Look up the following passages for more on our true comfort:

- Psalm 119:72-76
- Isaiah 51:1-6
- Lamentations 3:19-33
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-7



CHANGES IN MINISTRY

Pastors

- Gunn, Jeffrey W.**, to director of Native American Missions
Hankwitz, Robert P., to St. Peter, Chilton, Wis.
Kuske, Norman C., to St. Mark, Leesburg, Fla.
Loescher, Waldemar O., to retirement
Muetzel, Ronald M., to Thoughts of Faith, Inc. (ELS), Oregon, Wis.
Zittlow, Paul R., to St. Paul, Moline, Ill.

Teachers

- Carver, Richard D.**, to St. Philip, Milwaukee
Fischer, Jamie, to Sola Fide, Lawrenceville, Ga.
Godish, Tamara, to Amazing Grace, Milwaukee, Ore.
Graf, Terrence A., to Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn.
Hein, Jennifer M., to Peace, Hartford, Wis.
Hill, Scott R., to Mt. Olive, Las Vegas, Nev.
Hoff, Deborah L., to Morning Star, Jackson, Wis.
Jenks, Lisa M., to St. Paul, Slinger, Wis.
Koepsell, Jean M., to St. James, Prairie du Sac, Wis.
Krause, Gayle A., to St. John, Lake City, Minn.
Micheel, Sarah J., to Christ the Lord, Brookfield, Wis.
Miller, Patrick L., to St. John, Jefferson, Wis.
Nelson, Joel A., to Commission on Youth Discipleship administrator, Milwaukee
Roecker, Darrell F. Jr., to Trinity, Waukesha, Wis.
Saatkamp, Susan M., to St. Jacobi, Greenfield, Wis.
Schaper, Blair D., to Wisconsin LHS, Milwaukee
Schultz, Jason J., to St. Lucas, Milwaukee
Scrifer, Paul B., to Shoreland LHS, Somers, Wis.
Zubke, Valerie J., to Calvary Academy, South Milwaukee, Wis.

The synod administration building will be closed: Mar. 29, Good Friday; Apr. 1, Easter Monday. Callers may leave voice mail messages, 414/256-3888.

ANNIVERSARIES

- Layton, Utah**—Light of the Valley (10). Mar. 17. Service, 3 PM. Dinner to follow. Previous members unable to attend are invited to send a letter reflecting their memories. 1074 N Fairfield Rd, Layton UT 84041.
- Sarasota, Fla.**—Ascension (25). Apr. 7. Service, 3 PM. Dinner and program to follow.
- Sanborn, Minn.**—Zion Lutheran School (100). Apr. 14. Service, 10 AM. Catered meal and program to follow. RSVP, 507/648-3332.
- Centerville, Ohio**—Resurrection (25). May 19. Service, 4 PM. Dinner to follow.
- Milwaukee, Wis.**—Mt. Lebanon (75). Service, 9:30 AM. Dinner, 11:30 AM. Dave Hein, 414/461-1563.
- Apr. 14—Reunion of former teachers
 - May 29—Graduates' service, 7 PM; dinner, 6 PM
 - June 23—Confirmation reunion picnic
 - July 21—Rededication of church/organ
 - Aug. 18—Reunion picnic
 - Sept. 15—"To All People"
 - Oct. 13—"In our Heritage"
 - Nov. 3—"His Grace Alone Saved"
 - Dec. 1—"His Grace for All Time"

COMING EVENTS

- Minnesota District Councilmen's Workshop**—Mar. 16. 9 AM to 3 PM. Belle Plaine, Minn. Paul Schmeling, 715/425-6598.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary chorus tour and spring concerts—

- Mar. 20—Grace, Milwaukee, Wis., 7 PM
- Mar. 28—Holy Trinity, Des Moines, Wash., 7 PM
- Mar. 29—St. Paul, Tacoma, Wash., 1:30 PM; Faith, South Hill, Wash., 7 PM
- Mar. 31—Grace, Kenai, Alaska, 11 AM; Faith, Anchorage, Alaska, 7 PM
- Apr. 1—Christ, Juneau, Alaska, 7 PM
- Apr. 2—Calvary, Bellevue, Wash., 8 PM
- Apr. 3—Redeemer, Yakima, Wash., 7 PM
- Apr. 4—Cross of Christ, Boise, Idaho, 7:30 PM
- Apr. 5—Grace, Portland, Ore., 7:30 PM
- Apr. 6—Christ the King, Bremerton, Wash., 7 PM
- Apr. 20—St. Paul, North Mankato, Minn., 7 PM
- Apr. 21—St. Peter, St. Peter, Minn., 10:30 AM; St. John, New Ulm, Minn., 2 PM
- May 21—Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Commencement Concert, 7:30 PM

International Girl Pioneers Convention—Apr. 5 & 6. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Also open to Christians outside Girl Pioneers. Convention fee: \$20 for adults, \$10 for Girl Pioneers, banquet not included. Workshops on outdoor cooking, teaching anybody about anything, the new LGP handbook, communication, true beauty comes from within, the role of the caravan counselor, LGP on a mission, and more. Diane Jabs, 952/492-2540.

WELS-CLO meeting—for the church librarian's organization. Apr. 13. Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Joanne Weber, 414/256-3222.

Spiritual Renewal Weekend for Women—Apr. 12-14. Radisson, Rochester, Minn. Bev, 507/931-3945.

WELS Handbell Festival—Apr. 21, 2 PM. Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee. Cheryl Diener, 715/258-7203.

Women's Day 2002—May 4-5. Mighty Fortress, Red Deer, Alberta. Carol, 403/346-4140.

Mortgage burning service—Our Savior's, East Brunswick, N.J. May 18, 3 PM. Meal to follow. 732/254-3910.

Summer camps—Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. Summer camp programs for youth K-12. June 19-Aug. 14. Family camping also available. Call 920/787-3202 for a brochure.

LWMS National Convention—June 27-30. Las Vegas, Nev. LWMS central office, 414/321-6212.

National OWLS convention—July 9-11. Ramada Convention Center, Wausau, Wis. Lester Ring, 507/354-4403.

Regional youth rally—Minnesota District. Aug. 4-7. St. Louis, Mo. 507/232-3938.

AVAILABLE

High school musicians—available to enhance your summer worship. Katherine Thompson, 920/348-6482.

Altar clothes and silver communion set—free for the cost of shipping. Marcella Rediske, 608/269-4318.

Church items—26 Gothic-style oak pews, chandeliers, and other church items. Free for the cost of shipping. Larry Geidel, 262/689-6759.

NEEDED

Bible history books—for primary and intermediate levels for international VBS and Bible classes. Barb Gurgel, 920/648-3398.

Pair of candleholders—brass or silver/single or multiple. John Gensmer, 850/383-1125.

Volunteer health care staff—RNs, doctors, or EMTs to work as health care directors for one week or half-week summer camp sessions at Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. Jason Wiechmann, 920/787-3202.

Translator—needed to translate sermons and articles from English to Dutch. <mariajonsson@home.se>.

Actors/actresses—for the pilot episode of a WELS-produced television series titled "Fifth Pew from the Front." All ages welcome to audition. Send a headshot, resume, and if possible, a video of a performance to Steven Zambo, WELS Media Communications Director, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222. <stevez@sab.wels.net>. Photos and videos will not be returned.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Teach English in a foreign country—Has the Lord ever laid on your heart a desire to share Jesus with people of a foreign country? If so, this may be the opportunity you are looking for. We have English language teaching positions open. Airfare, housing, health insurance, and an in-country livable wage will be paid. Main qualification is a desire to serve Jesus and share your faith. WELS people with teaching degrees and teaching experience preferred but not required. Husband/wife teams okay. One-year commitment minimum. <asia-usa@juno.com>.

Summer paid staff—Camp Phillip, Wautoma, Wis. May 28-Aug. 14. Counselors, head lifeguard, adventure coordinator, Bible study leader, and junior staff director. Jason Wiechmann, 920/787-3202.

SERVICE TIMES

Arcadia, Wis.—Bethel, 401 W Main St (driver's licensing building). Saturday worship, 6 PM. Bible class and Sunday school, 7 PM. Nathan Strutz, 608/526-2285.

Safford, Ariz.—Grace, 225 E Main St. Worship, 10:30 AM. Bible class, 9:45 AM. Paul Schulz, 928/428-7620.

NAMES WANTED

Artists—for the National Conference on Worship, Music, and the Arts. July 21-24. Carthage College, Kenosha, Wis. Display works of art. Assist in the development of art for conference worship. Send contact information with description of artwork or portfolio to Worship Arts Subcommittee, c/o Peter Schaeewe, 1014 S Main St, Jefferson, WI 53549; 920/675-0219.

Arcadia/Independence/Whitehall, Wis.—Nathan Strutz, 608/526-2285.

Lakewood Ranch/Ellenton/Parrish/East Manatee County, Fla.—Daniel Witte, 941/747-5564.

McAllen/Harlingen/Brownsville/South Padre Island, Tex.—Joel Sauer, 956/968-5228.

To place an announcement, call 414/256-3210; FAX, 414/256-3899;

<BulletinBoard@sab.wels.net>. Deadline is eight weeks before publication date.

Wrong-way messenger

Our remarkable God can do much with a reluctant messenger.

Paul E. Zell

In 1938 Douglas Corrigan filed a flight plan for California and took off from a Brooklyn airfield. Twenty-nine hours later he landed his tiny, single-engine plane in Ireland. Asked to explain why he flew east instead of west, the pilot claimed that his compasses had failed. New Yorkers laughed and gave “Wrong-Way Corrigan” a tickertape parade down Broadway.

What was Jonah’s excuse, and can we find it equally amusing?

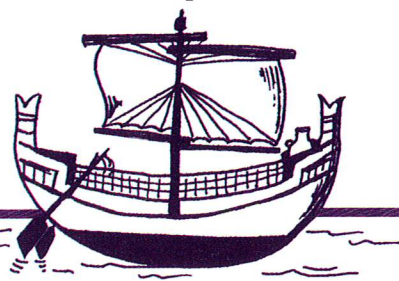
Going our own way

The Lord called his prophet to go to Nineveh and “preach against it.” Nineveh was an important and formidable audience. Its king was notorious for his cruelty, its citizens for their pride, its armies for their atrocities on the battlefield. Nineveh controlled a vast empire that threatened to swallow up Jonah’s homeland, the puny kingdom of Israel.

But Jonah went the wrong way. He didn’t head east to Nineveh. He hiked west to the Mediterranean coast. Then he boarded a ship bound for a port several hundred miles even farther to the west.

The prophet wanted “to flee from the Lord.” Certainly he knew better. “‘Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?’ declares the Lord. ‘Do not I fill heaven and earth?’” (Jeremiah 23:24). It wasn’t ignorance that had this reluctant messenger on the run. Nor was it dread of God’s

punishment or fear of the Ninevites. It was his concern about God’s compassion and grace. Jonah worried that if he preached God’s mighty Word in Nineveh, its citizens would repent of their terrible behavior. Then his “gracious and compassionate God”



BIBLE READING

Jonah 1:1-4,7

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

³But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

⁴Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.

⁷Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

would spare the city that held sway over Israel (Jonah 4:2).

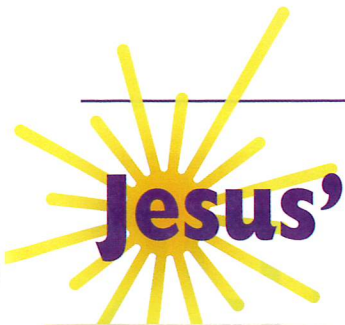
When we see Jonah pulling a “Wrong-Way Corrigan,” we don’t laugh. We cringe at his behavior and at similar childish actions of our own. Each of us is God’s messenger. Each of us is commissioned to preach against the godless deeds of sinners as well as declare the gracious deeds of the Savior. Yet too often we turn our backs on opportunities to witness. Too often we find other things to do. Too often our worries have us running the other way.

Going God’s way

Yet look at what a remarkable God can do with a reluctant messenger. He hurled a great wind onto the sea. He used superstitious sailors. He employed a game somewhat akin to rolling dice to grab Jonah’s attention and disrupt his wrong-way plans.

How remarkable that God should use various occurrences to disrupt the lives of reluctant messengers even today! How compassionate of him that he should forgive us our wrong ways because of the right ways of his Son! How gracious of him that he should turn us back in the direction of others that they might hear his mighty Word and repent!

Paul Zell is pastor at Messiah, Alpharetta, Georgia.



Jesus' miracles: PORTRAITS OF REDEMPTION

Mark J. Lenz

INTRODUCTION

- Think of a wedding you have attended. What stands out?
- Jesus speaks of himself as the Bridegroom and believers as his bride. How does your understanding of weddings and marriage help you appreciate that picture?
- The Bible speaks of heaven as a wedding banquet. What makes this a beautiful picture for you?
- Jesus performed his first miracle at a wedding banquet. What Jesus did brought joy to that wedding couple and their guests, but what Jesus has done for us brings joy in an infinitely greater sense.

TEXT—JOHN 2:1-11

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from 20 to 30 gallons.

⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, ⁹and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

QUESTIONS

1. To what does "the third day" refer (John 1:43)?
2. What problem did Jesus' mother bring to his attention?
3. When Jesus addressed his mother as "dear woman," he was not being distant or disrespectful. This was a common way to address your mother. When else did Jesus

QUESTIONS, CONTINUED

- address Mary as "dear woman" (John 19:26,27)?
4. "My time has not yet come," Jesus said. Under what circumstances did Jesus speak these or similar words (John 7:6,8,30; 8:20)? What did Jesus mean (John 12:23,27; 13:1; 17:1)?
5. What details confirm that this was a real miracle and not a magic trick? How does the dialogue underscore that this was a miracle? How does John 4:46 confirm that a miracle took place?
6. John refers to Jesus' miracles as "signs." What purposes did his "signs" serve (John 1:14)?

APPLICATIONS

1. Jesus ate and drank, he allowed himself to be doused with perfume, and he was concerned about wine at a wedding. What does this tell us about Jesus' humanity and his attitude toward human activities and customs?
2. Jesus honored marriage as God's institution. How can you do the same?
3. Do you think Christians enjoy life more or less than people generally? What do Jesus' words in John 10:10 suggest regarding the Christian life?
4. The Bible does not forbid the use of alcohol. What does Psalm 104:14,15 suggest as to its use? What warnings do Proverbs 20:1 and Ephesians 5:18 give?
5. Jesus' miracles can be thought of as "Portraits of Redemption." What in the miracle at Cana pictures for you God's plan of redemption?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, by changing water into wine you revealed your glory as the Son of God. Thank you for loving your bride, the church, unto death, even death on a cross. Thank you for providing a heavenly wedding banquet for me and all believers. As you brought joy to the wedding at Cana, so fill my heart and life with happiness. Daily let me find ways to be your instrument in serving others by sharing my joy with them. Hear me for the sake of your redeeming love. Amen.

IN THE CROSS HAIRS

Richard L. Gurgel

TOPIC: LIVING GOD-PLEASING LIVES

Question: In Ephesians 5 Paul expects a high degree of holiness from Christians. In verse 3 he says that “there must not even be a hint of sexual impurity” in us. That’s quite a statement to make! Certainly we want to live God-pleasing lives, but doesn’t this hold up an impossible standard for us?

Answer: For 15 centuries, Christians have spoken the following words during Morning Praise (Matins): “O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight.” For centuries Christians have begun the day by praying that there be not a hint of impurity in them.

That is not a foolish prayer. The freedom from sin that Christ has won for us by his life and death is not only freedom from the guilt of sins committed, but it is also freedom from sin’s power over us. Jesus, not sin, owns us. As Paul puts it: “You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness” (Romans 6:18). The same power that raised Jesus from the dead has been ours ever since we died and rose with Christ in baptism. “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:6). In Philippians Paul puts it this way: “It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (2:13).

Taking hold of such promises of God’s gracious power, Christians have prayed in the morning that they do not fall into sin and that all they do is right in God’s sight.

But notice what words for 15 centuries Christians have spoken at Evening Prayer (Vespers): “Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from you. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give.”

Notice that as evening comes, the Christian acknowledges that all good done that day was due only to the power of God’s grace at work within him. But did you notice also the next statement? The Christian prays for “peace which the world cannot give.” That is the peace of conscience that knows all sins are forgiven. For even though no sin owns us anymore, yet because of our sinful nature, the day will never come this side of heaven where we will perfectly grasp that truth. There never will be a day when, as we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we can omit the fifth petition (“Forgive us our sins . . .”).

Where does that leave us? We begin each day trusting in the Spirit’s power to live holy lives just as we have been declared holy in the blood of Jesus. Such a daily striving after holy lives keeps us from deadly spiritual complacency that grows comfortable with sin. And yet each day ends with seeking at Jesus’ cross that peace of forgiveness, which the world will never know. That comfort protects us from despair and allows us to lay our heads on our pillows at peace with God.

Richard Gurgel is a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.

Have a question you want answered? Send it to 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; <fic@sab.wels.net>.

**Jesus,
not sin,
owns us**



Picture this

Send pictures to *Picture this*, Forward in Christ magazine, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398. On a separate sheet, give us information about the photo. Those whose photos are chosen will receive a small gift.



Revelation, a singing group from Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, helped St. John, Montrose, Colo., with its 2001 vacation Bible school. Revelation taught classes, sang for and with the children, and lent willing hands wherever there was a job to do. "The blessings of the Word in song and story were passed on to little ones, many of whom come from unchurched families," says Jan Koepsell, a member of St. John who submitted the pictures.

Our substitute

He who is the bread of life began his ministry hungering.

He who is the water of life ended his ministry thirsting.

Christ hungered as man and fed the hungry as God.

He was weary, and yet he is our rest.

He paid tribute, and yet he is the King.

He was called a devil and cast out devils.

He prayed, and yet he hears prayer.

He wept, and he dries our tears.

He was sold for 30 pieces of silver and redeemed the world.

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and is the Good Shepherd.

He died and gave his life, and by dying destroyed death.

—author unknown

"A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing."—Martin Luther

Time for the Lord

I recall a story a church elder told me. Years ago he visited newlyweds that hadn't been to worship. When he encouraged them, they said that once they got into their married routine, he would see them at church.

Throughout the years, the elder, several pastors, and others called, wrote, and visited them. On one visit, the elder learned that the couple been blessed with two children. They said they'd be in church when their toddlers got a little older.

On another visit, the couple had moved into a beautiful newly built home. When they got settled in, they said they'd be in church.

When the children were teenagers, the parents were busy transporting them to their various activities. But when their schedule calmed down. . . .

A few years later the elder found that couple busy spoiling their grandchildren, but when they got older. . . .

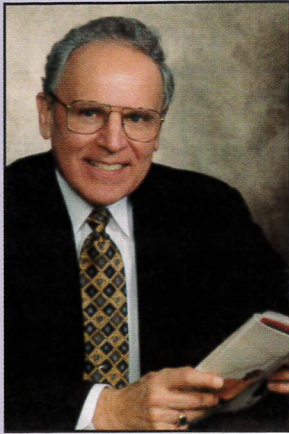
On yet another visit the elder found the couple retired. Now they were busy traveling and engaged in other hobbies. But soon they'd have time for the Lord.

A couple years later both died, and their families wanted them buried in church. The elder wondered why, since they had almost never been there while they were living.

Mark Eckert

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. . . . So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (Matthew 24:42,44).



Gary P. Baumler is editor of *Forward in Christ* magazine and WELS Director of Communications.

There is a book that tells us all about life—how to get it and how to live it. . . . It is The Good Book.

*You can order the publications suggested in this editorial from Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 414/475-6600; 1-800-662-6022; <www.wels.net/nph> or <www.nph.net>.

Read this

Have you read any good books lately? Have you read any books at all? Some will tell us that people don't read much any more. But how, then, do we account for the hype for Harry Potter? *Dreamcatcher: A Novel*? *The Prayer of Jabez*? Why do mega-bookstores continue to pop up around us and attract mega-customers? Who is reading all those books on the bestseller lists?

And why, if people don't read any more, are you reading this? (Please, don't stop.)

Reading habits probably have changed over the past 20 years, but reading still happens, sometimes at a surprising rate.

What are we reading? Do New Age wanderings wow us? Do wily wizards fill us with wonder? Does the wisdom of what-to-do books lead us to wile away some time? Are we fascinated with fiction?

Does *Money* magazine make its mark on us? Do we find time for *Time*? Do we like to probe the lives of *People*?

Reading can be fun. If you aren't doing much of it lately, try it. You'll like it.

Oh, I can hear you. You *really don't have time* to read. By the time you do sit down to read, you're more ready to fall asleep. How I hear you! The excuses echo in my being.

What, then, do you have time for? Do you have time for television? Time for making money? Time for riding your favorite hobbyhorse? Do you have time to live and time to die?

Does the last question strike you as strange? Am I making reading a matter of life and death? It can be.

There is a book that tells us all about life—how to get it and how to live it. It also tells us about death—how to avoid it. It's a good book. It is *The Good Book*. It has words that lead us to the Word, Jesus Christ. It is his book, and when we continue in his Word, we learn the truth, and the truth makes us free (John 8:31,32).

How can we continue in Jesus' Word and live in his Word if we don't read it?

Think of it this way: If the president of the United States invited you to a lavish dinner with him, would you go? Probably, yes, even if you didn't vote for him. Now the King of heaven invites you to feast with him and receive the very bread of life. Do you turn away and say you have no time?

- No time to learn again of how flawed our lives really are?
- No time to hear what God has done to save us from our flaws?
- No time to hear anew and personally apply the message: be cheerful, your sins are forgiven you?
- No time for quiet time with God, for life and love and faith and hope?

Take time now. Go into your Bible and go to some of the books* and magazines* that will help lead you into the Bible and its teachings for our lives. Two recent books suggest themselves. Do you want some good, practical family devotions? Read *At Home with the Psalms*, edited by Kenneth Kremer. Do you want to learn more about the meaning of Christian living? Read *For One Another: Touching Hearts in a Changing World* by Kremer. His reflections on real people's lives help bring the message to life.

Read *Meditations* daily. Read every two months about what it means to be a *Lutheran Parent*. Continue, and invite others to go *Forward in Christ* with us each month.

If you don't read, you won't know what you're missing, at least for now. Read good stuff now, and don't miss God's message.

Gary P. Baumler

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HEAVEN SENT

Entrance into God's kingdom is too great to be earned, too precious to be purchased.

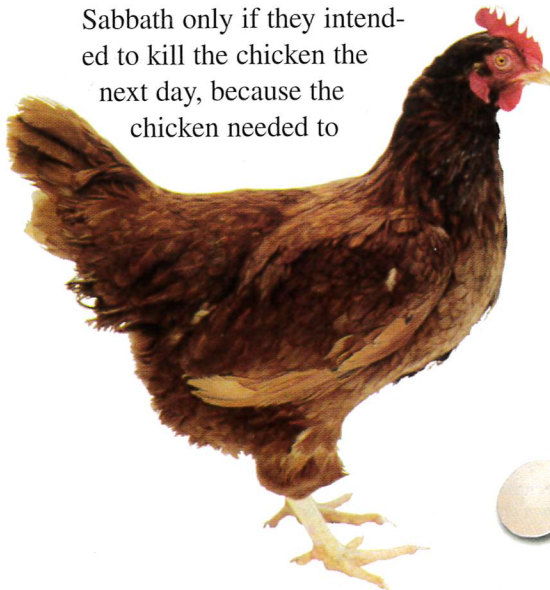
John M. Parlow

“I can do anything!” Rugged individualism characterized Americans as they traveled West in covered wagons. Such a “can-do” attitude enabled many settlers in the 1800s to survive harsh winters, devastating plagues, and Indian attacks.

A “can-do” attitude

Such rugged individualism also helped shape the religious scene on the western frontier. Newfound religious freedom, coupled with a “can-do” attitude, formed many denominations listed in the yellow pages today. Those denominations taught that American rugged individualism plus the grace of God equaled a “can-do” salvation.

This “can-do” salvation, however, is not the invention of the American frontier. Jesus saw it already in the Pharisees. They taught that you could work your way to heaven. They lived as religious exhibitionists with a “holier-than-thou” attitude among the public. They followed some of the craziest man-made laws and traditions in an effort to earn merit in God's eyes. For example: they could eat an egg that a chicken laid on the Sabbath only if they intended to kill the chicken the next day, because the chicken needed to



be punished for laying that egg on the Sabbath. They thought they would get to God by keeping the law. But they kept all their little laws and let God's main ones go. It's a lot easier to not eat an egg laid by a chicken on the Sabbath than it is to love your neighbor.

A “has-been-done-for-you” gift

Jesus saw this “can-do” spirit in Nicodemus. Nicodemus needed to start all over, be “born again”—or “born from above.” Entrance into the kingdom of God comes from above; it's all God's doing. It's heaven sent. Such saving faith comes as a gift of God's grace, not a result of man's effort. The very phrase “born again” points to salvation being entirely the work of the Holy Spirit.

It's a lot easier to not eat an egg laid by a chicken on the Sabbath than it is to love your neighbor.

Jesus has seen the same Pharisaical “can-do” spirit in us. We all at times think that we can earn Brownie points with God. But we can't. Whether it's serving on the building committee, helping an old lady across the street, unclogging your neighbor's toilet, giving God the firstfruits of your checkbook, or making cookies for your pastor, those actions in no way help you gain entrance into God's kingdom. Entrance into God's king-

dom is too great to be earned, too precious to be purchased.

A missionary became a good friend of an Indian pearl diver. The two spent hours discussing salvation in Christ, but the Indian could not understand anything so precious being free. Instead, in preparing for the life to come, this Hindu diver was going to walk 900 miles to Delhi on his knees. He thought that this would buy him entrance into heaven. The missionary struggled to show his friend that it is impossible to buy entrance into heaven because the price would be too costly. Instead Jesus had died to buy it for us.

Before he left for his pilgrimage, the Indian gave the missionary the largest and most perfect pearl he had ever seen. The missionary offered to buy it, but the diver became upset and said that the pearl was beyond price, that his only son had lost his life attempting to get this pearl. The pearl was worth the lifeblood of his son. As he said this, suddenly the diver understood that God was offering him salvation as a *priceless* gift. It had cost God the lifeblood of his only Son. The diver believed and understood at last.

Salvation is a gift, not a goal. It's too precious for money, too lofty for rugged individualism. It has nothing to do with a “can-do” attitude; rather it has everything to do with a “has-been-done-for-you” gift nailed to a cross. It's heaven sent.

John Parlow is pastor at St. Mark, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

