

NOVEMBER 2007

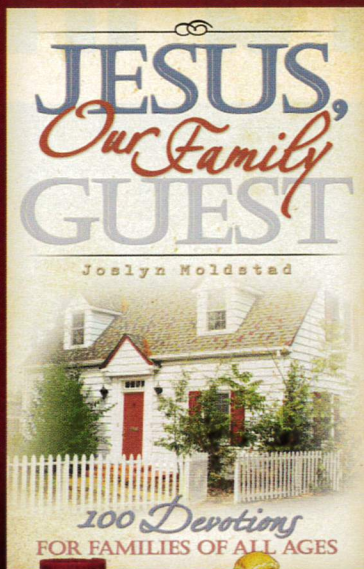
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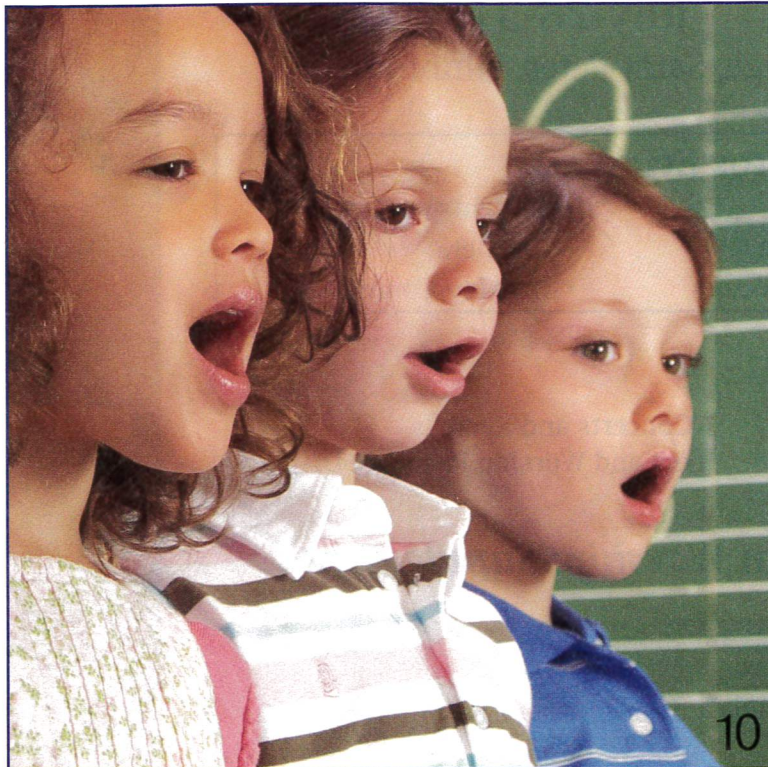
Northwestern  
Publishing House

1250 North 113th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53226-3284

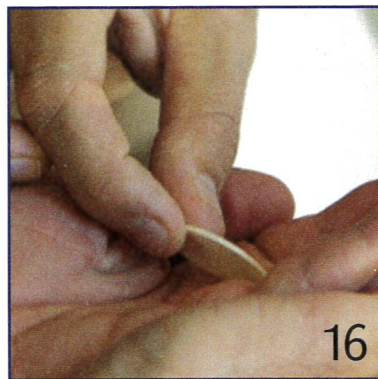
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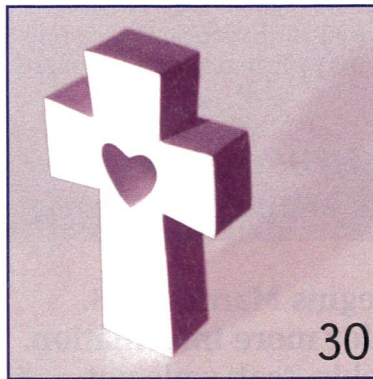
“What am I especially thankful for this Thanksgiving? I’m thankful for music and singing.”



PUNCHSTOCK



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## Forward in Christ

✝ The official magazine of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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MAY HE NEVER LEAVE US  
NOR FORSAKE US.  
*1 Kings 8:57*

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**POSTMASTER**

Send address changes to Forward in Christ, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284.

Forward in Christ (ISSN 1541-8936) is published monthly through Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284. Periodical postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

Individual: USA—\$14; Canada—\$14.98; all other countries—air mail \$45.20. Postage included, payable in advance to Northwestern Publishing House. Contact Northwestern Publishing House for multi-year, blanket, and bundle rates. Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N 113 St, Milwaukee WI 53226-3284; 800-662-6093, ext. 8. Milwaukee area, 414-615-5785. www.nph.net/periodicals.

**ON AUDIO**

Mission for the Visually Impaired, 375 Bridgepoint Dr, South St. Paul, MN 55075; 651-291-1536.

# NOVEMBER

## WHAT'S INSIDE *by Julie Wietzke*

Hymns stir up different memories for all of us. I will always equate “Abide with me” with my grandmother’s funeral. Whenever I hear it, memories come rushing back of that snowy day in December.

Two authors this month share memories of their own. In “Songs of thankfulness and praise” (p. 10), Prof. Mark Lenz not only reminisces about the one-room school he attended but also reminds us of the importance of music and singing in the worship of our Lord.

Jane Schlenvogt reveals how comforted she and her students felt while singing during a storm at school (back page). Schlenvogt felt comforted because she was singing Easter hymns—hymns full of the message of Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

That gospel message is often prevalent in the hymns we sing—and it should be. According to Pastor Michael Schultz, sound doctrinal content and the application of the gospel were important components in the hymns chosen for the new hymnal supplement (p. 12).

So what’s your favorite hymn and what memories does it awaken? This Thanksgiving, praise God that he has given us such a wonderful gift in music.

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**SALVATION**

When someone asks a question like, “Can I lose my salvation if I don’t repent of sins that I’m not aware that I committed?” [Aug.], I think it’s important to state plainly that we are not saved because we repent of our sins. We are saved only because Jesus died for all our sins, which includes the sins we are not aware we committed. This is how the Holy Spirit moves us to repentance and makes us eager to live for Jesus out of thankful love for all that he has done to save us.

*Robert A. Bitter  
Oakfield, Wisconsin*

**STAPH, NOT STAFF**

I had to laugh when I read “Clean up your faith!” on the back page [Sept.]. Having worked with medical malpractice before I retired, I know just enough about medical terminology to be dangerous! “Staff” is not a terrible infectious disease—but staph (short for staphylococcus) is! The intent of the article was good, but the core word was a mistake.

*Susan Sullivan  
Edgerton, Wisconsin*

*We received many letters alerting us of our error. We are embarrassed that we missed it. Thanks for your sharp eyes.—ed.*

**REMEMBERING ROSA**

Professor Hartwig’s article entitled “Rosa Young: Lutheran missionary” [Sept.] immediately caught my attention and interest. In 1931, Rosa Young made a lecture tour in Nebraska and another primarily in Minnesota. I remember hearing her speak at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, where I was a student in the high school department.

The Wisconsin Synod had a direct interest in her and the mission work among the blacks in the South since this was a mission conducted and supported by all the synods of the former Synodical Conference.

*Armin Schuetze  
Watertown, Wisconsin*

It was summertime 1932, and I was six years old. My family and I lived in a country parsonage in southwestern Minnesota. We were looking forward to a special concert by a male quartet from “a black college, way down south of us.”

The evening religious concert was good and well attended. But what I remember more vividly were the spirituals they sang as they stood on the church steps after the concert. Man, the rhythm—and that bass singer!

When they finished singing, they and their chaperone (matron?) came to our house for snacks.

I do not know where the men stayed that night, but the lady chaperone, a small energetic person, stayed at our house. I especially remember because my mother had to “rig up” a bed with a prone kitchen chair wrapped in a blanket so that she could lie at a 45 degree angle when she slept.

And—I distinctly remember her name. It was Rosa Young.

Thanks for bringing back a happy memory from my childhood.

*Helen Radtke  
Hayward, Wisconsin*

In the early to mid-thirties Rosa Young was promoting her mission efforts in mid-Minnesota. My father’s church in rural Renville was centrally located. She came by train and stayed with us for about a week. My father took her to the various churches for her presentation. Because of heart problems, she could not sleep lying down. She had us put a chair under the mattress with the top resting on the middle of the spring and the feet pointing upward at the head of the bed. In this way she could sleep in a semi-sitting position. She made a lasting impression on us. We were especially fascinated about how she had to sleep and why.

*Herb Kuske  
Saginaw, Michigan*

**LIVING CLOSER TO GOD**

Pastor Engelbrecht, in his editorial

“Live closer to God” [Sept.], made an important point—“If you would live closer to God . . . closer to his Word—you wouldn’t have to pray so loud . . . you would be more confident that your future is in his hands.” I couldn’t agree with him more. But what does living closer to God mean for us? . . .

May I suggest the following: Getting spiritually closer to God’s Word means allowing the Holy Spirit more access to our hearts and minds. God’s Spirit has chosen to work only through the gospel in Word and sacrament—theologians call these the “means of grace.” . . . Being spiritually closer to God’s Word means hearing, reading, AND studying that Word. . . . People often believe that they are close enough to God’s Word by simply being present at a worship service. Being present and attentive at a worship service is a good and spiritually beneficial thing. . . . But there is more God wants us to know and understand from his Word. . . .

It is every Christian’s responsibility to give the Holy Spirit access to their heart and mind by reading and studying God’s Word. . . . The advantages of Bible study don’t minimize the importance of worship, but they do point out the importance of studying the Bible at home and at church.

So what does living closer to God mean for us? I hope the answer for every WELS member is to diligently study the Bible. Study all of Scripture, not just a few favorite parts. In this way, give the Holy Spirit the access he desires to your heart and mind. Grow closer to God by knowing him and his will better. The benefits of this effort will be a spiritual maturity in both our personal and corporate lives.

*Dan Rebers  
Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin*

Send your letters to **Feedback**, *Forward in Christ*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; fic@sab.wels.net. Letters between 100 and 200 words are preferred. Include full name and address. Letters are edited for clarity, conciseness, and relevance. Not all letters received can be acknowledged or used. Writers’ views are not necessarily those of WELS or *Forward in Christ*.

# A Father's gift

*Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? . . . Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. Hebrews 12:7,10*

Stephen H. Geiger

I don't recall the exact words. What I remember is crying out from a piano bench to a parent upstairs at the top of my voice: "I don't want to practice the piano!"

Making music can be fun. But there were days when it was something less than pleasant. I didn't escape the piano bench that day, and I'm thankful. Discipline brings to children great blessing in the end.

Not all children sit on piano benches. But all who pass through childhood recall parental discipline. The use of discipline appropriately applied is a rich gift from God, given to children through parents.

Is God done disciplining you yet?

While you no longer may be a child under the authority of your parents, you remain very much a child in the kingdom of your heavenly Father. A Father who loves his child disciplines him.

But what does discipline from the Father look like?

As the book of Hebrews reminds us, our Father's discipline can even be connected to occasions when Christians have honored God in their actions.

## God forgives our sins

When considering a particular action, we often choose between imagined pleasure and possible pain. Will I surrender to temptation and have more earthly fun, or will I struggle against sin and risk a very hard life? Will I keep my mouth shut and remain popular with my friends, or will I humbly point out sin and risk ridicule?

Our flesh longs for the easy life. We first can love temporary pleasures and only later the treasure that is true. So often we don't honor our Father. We forfeit obedience because the price might include pain. What shame we bear before our Father. Frightened children might expect the relationship to be over.

Yet our Father didn't walk away. Instead, he gave his Son to be the target for the just punishment all deserved. Our Father stretches out his arms in loving forgiveness. The heart of a child leaps for joy. He wants to hug him, follow him, serve him.

And so you, a Christian, choose by the Spirit's power to do right. Like those addressed in Hebrew 12, you struggle against sin, not giving in.

## God disciplines us for our good

Then suddenly you discover that such obedience can bring rejection, weariness, even tears. Your enthusiasm dampens. You consider how easy it would be to give up on obedience and give in to sin.

Yes, rejection and weariness and tears are hard. But see what God is doing in such pain. He is working blessing. He uses this suffering as discipline. While such suffering may flow from the actions of the wicked, he will use the hurt for your good. His discipline will produce in you a harvest of righteousness and peace.



He promises that you will be better off for it.

Suffering that follows obedience becomes a chance for Satan to discourage you. He whispers, "Your boldness to obey has gotten you nowhere. From now on, disobey."

How different is the truth. Yes, pain may be present, but be brave. Be brave to obey. For in the suffering that can follow, your Father will do something special through his loving discipline.

*Contributing editor Stephen Geiger, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, is a member at Risen Savior, Milwaukee.*

# Land of tension

Thomas J. Jeske

Morning took us off for a day-trip in the countryside. We toted bottled water and pita-bread sandwiches with cucumbers and tomatoes. Someone from the hostel took us up into the highlands. As we moved out through streets of flat-roofed buildings, little kids with nut-brown faces, white teeth, and flashing black eyes watched us.

Northern Israel has hills like broad shoulders. The region's "must-see" is a big sparkling body of fresh water. Locals call it Kinneret (Kin-air'-ett). Tourists point cameras at it. You and I know it as the Sea of Galilee.

Tiberias, with its palm trees and white plastered buildings, sits above the water on the western shore. You'll find dockside cafés, red buses at the station, and a crappie-sized keeper some locals identified as "St. Peter's fish."

But now to these highlands, the north and east. For an area that qualifies as an international heritage site, something sure seemed out of place.

The earth was absolutely torn apart. There seemed to be two long trails, exactly parallel. What fearsome force ripped those huge cuts in the dirt? Then someone recalled that we were in contested territory. A hostile border was not far from where we stood.

Later in the day over a cup of coffee, our guide passed along the news that the tracks were made yesterday by the army. *Merkava* is Hebrew for "chariot," and it happens to be the name of the main battle tank of the Israel Defense Forces. To know such titanic things exist and are marshaled in your favor must bring a strong sense of security. Maybe.

While in the heights we found something else. As puffing hikers gained the high ground, flowers dotted the grass. They were the size of a crumpled tissue, the color of a kleenex soaked in blood.

A friend of ours preceded us to the highlands of Galilee. He was not a day-tripper but on the assignment of his life. Jesus of Nazareth served and prayed, healed and obeyed up here. Jesus' challenge was to make the insecure and vulnerable little people listening to him understand the concept of real security. Wise eyes that had seen two worlds looked around up here and lighted on the wildflowers in the grass of the field. What a color. Why, great Solomon, one of the wisest and richest king this tired globe has ever seen, couldn't dress like these. That son of David with all his staggering wealth could not import or produce fabric such as the scarlet clothes these flowers wore.

What kind of a father delights to cover fragile creatures that cannot even labor at a spinning wheel? If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today but tomorrow is stepped on by a tired hiker or torn by a military vehicle, what will the King do for his children, adopted at the breathtaking price of the blood of the Christ?

Insecurity is a weed of our sinful nature. Worry is unworthy of the men, women, teens, and children walking through unsafe places with the Lord Jesus. All around others are worrying about protecting their borders, maintaining alliances, studying the enemy. Unfaith. Worry is to be left behind in the hills of Galilee.

Where does my help come from? I lift up my eyes to the hills—to a little blood-red bloom.

"If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:30).

**Worry is unworthy of the men, women, teens and children walking through unsafe places with the Lord Jesus.**

*Contributing editor Thomas Jeske is pastor at Living Hope, Omaha, Nebraska.*





at the foot of the cross. Richard L. Gurgel

## TOPIC: Hell

**A friend insists that God is love; God loves all people; God wants all people to be saved; and that when Jesus died, he died for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, Jesus is Savior for all, not some. He maintains that if only some go to heaven and the rest spend eternity in hell, then God is limiting Jesus and the Holy Spirit. If hell were for eternity and without end, Jesus would not be an effectual Savior of all people. He also insists that if hell doesn't last forever, that is better in keeping with the character of God as the God of all grace. How can I show that hell is eternal from the Bible?**

Before proving from the Scriptures that hell is forever, it's wise to make sure your friend knows where you agree with him. When he says that God loves all and desires all people be saved, he is correctly summarizing 1 John 4:16, John 3:16, and 1 Timothy 2:4. We not only agree that Jesus died for the world's sins (1 John 2:2), we even proclaim that God declared the entire world not guilty in Jesus (Romans 5:18).

But while your friend is correctly sharing some scriptural truths, he is, perhaps unknowingly, omitting others.

Your friend isn't alone. Many Christians feel that God's reputation as a gracious God is forfeited if we don't modify the historic confession that hell is conscious, eternal suffering for everyone who dies in unbelief.

Our task, however, is not to make God sound palatable to cultural sensibilities. Yes, Scripture is clear that Jesus is Savior of all and that he desires the salvation even of those who do not acknowledge him. His tears for the unbelievers in Jerusalem were genuine (Luke 19:41).

Yet Jesus talks about hell more forcefully, frequently, and fully than anyone. He tells us that the broad and busy superhighway leads to hell, not heaven (Matthew 7:13). It is Jesus who vividly portrays the conscious, eternal suffering

of the damned as he tells us about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). It is also Jesus who coins the most common description of hell: the place where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12, 13:42, 13:50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30).

If we inquire how long this "weeping and gnashing of teeth" continues, he tells us in Matthew 25. After Jesus pronounces judgment on the sheep and goats (believers and unbelievers), he announces the result: "Then they [the unbelievers] will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Matthew 25:46).

Is God foolish by not compelling everyone into heaven by irresistible grace? Human philosophy might assume so, but God was "pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those whose believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). Can God justly condemn those who never heard the gospel? Human judgment may cry, "Foul!" Yet God will make the justice of his judgment clear to a world that turns a deaf ear to the incessant pleading of nature and conscience to find the true God instead of counterfeits.

God revealed this so that we thank him for teaching us to trust him who suffered hell in our place. God revealed this so that we recognize the true urgency of witnessing to others. The night of judgment is coming. But this is still the time to say: "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

*Contributing editor Richard Gurgel, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, is a member at Calvary, Thiensville.*

Have a question? Send it to **Q&A, Forward in Christ**, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; [fic@sab.wels.net](mailto:fic@sab.wels.net). Look online at [www.wels.net/jump/qa](http://www.wels.net/jump/qa), for more questions and answers.



*A* dusty, gravel road . . . a green metal lunch pail . . . crisp autumn mornings giving way to beautiful sunny days . . . the ground ablaze with fallen leaves . . . somewhere the smell of burning leaves—the organ’s intonation of the melody stirs up these memories.

Then the congregation sings, “We praise You, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator,” and more memories come flooding in: close to 40 students in eight grades all in one classroom, a teacher in her first year, the boys dressed in bib overalls and white T-shirts, the girls in flower print dresses, the rich smells of the country—even in the classroom.

### **Explaining and modeling gratitude and praise**

How lovingly, how gently Miss Tietz drilled the words of that Thanksgiving hymn into our young minds. “We praise Thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator, In grateful devotion our tribute we bring; We lay it before Thee, we kneel and adore Thee, We bless Thy holy name, glad praises we sing” (*The Lutheran Hymnal* 568:1). But she didn’t just drill; she explained. God is our Creator, she reminded us. God made us and all creatures, giving us our bodies and souls, our eyes, our ears, and all the members of our bodies, our reason, and all our faculties. How easily she made the words of Luther’s Small Catechism sound as if they were her very own.

Little by little our mouths learned to form more words from the hymn: “Thro’ life’s storm and tempest our Guide hast Thou been . . . Thy strong arm will guide us, our God is beside us . . .” God is also our preserver, Miss Tietz reminded us. Richly and daily he provides us with clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home. He defends us against all danger and guards and protects us from all evil.

But more than anything, Miss Tietz wanted us to know that God is our Redeemer. Jesus Christ, true God and true man, came to this earth to redeem us, she said. We were lost and condemned creatures, but Jesus purchased and won us from all sins, from death, and from the power of

the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death. Miss Tietz didn’t just drill; she didn’t just explain. She modeled what she taught. As we listened, as we learned, as we observed, we came to understand something about the love of Jesus.

Then she had us sing the words—all three stanzas—in the classroom and later in a church service. As all of that was happening—the drilling, the explaining, the modeling, the singing—the Holy Spirit was awakening expressions of gratitude in our young hearts.

Over the years Miss Tietz taught us many more hymns such as “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come” and “Songs of Thankfulness and Praise.” Each Friday morning we stood in the front of the classroom reciting and singing hymns, hymns that are still in the memory, hymns that are still precious.

Later, in the upper grades, Miss Frank continued what Miss Tietz had begun. Music and songs of praise regularly combined to fill the air in her classroom too, and the joy and enthusiasm she displayed as she went about her daily calling suggested that serving the Lord in the public ministry must be a most pleasant and gratifying way of life.

### **Making music a part of a lifetime of praise**

It wasn’t the first time songs and words of thankfulness and praise were wedded together. Years earlier a father had soothed his one-year-old colicky son by playing and singing hymns of praise at the piano while balancing that little baby in his arms. Throughout the impressionable years of that child’s life, a mother and father played and sang hymns and created an atmosphere where music and praise to God seemed natural companions.

Grade school wasn’t the last time either. At a stage in life when teenage minds were often preoccupied with baser things, daily chapel services at a Lutheran high school gave regular opportunities for songs of thankfulness and praise, as did singing in a choir. And so it con-

Music and singing are precious ways to offer God our thanks and praise.

Mark J. Lenz

# *Songs of thankfulness*



tinued along the path laid out to prepare young people for service in the public ministry.

Believers have long used music and song to express their gratitude and praise. Following their miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites sang, "The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation" (Exodus 15:2). Then Moses' sister Miriam sang a postlude, "Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea" (Exodus 15:21). After their return from Babylonian captivity, God's people rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and joyfully celebrated the dedication with "songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres" (Nehemiah 12:27). Two choirs, walking in opposite directions on top of the wall, sang praises as they made their way to the house of God.

Jesus and his disciples sang hymns together (Matthew 26:30). The apostle Paul encouraged the new believers in the congregations he established: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God" (Colossians 3:16). "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). The apostle James says, "Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise" (James 5:13). The Scriptures are filled with such admonitions. Clearly God intends music and singing to serve as vehicles of praise and thanksgiving.

#### Expressing thanks for music

So what am I thankful for this Thanksgiving?

I'm thankful for music and singing, delightful gifts from God that find their noblest expression in praising his name. Such things are precious blessings from God that Luther considered second in importance only to theology.

I'm grateful for choirs that sing concerts of praise with titles such as "The Gospel in Song,"

"Beautiful Savior," and "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," and for choir directors who select music that beautifully proclaims the message of the gospel.

I'm thankful for Lutheran elementary schools and high schools, and for our entire system of ministerial education, where dedicated teachers like Miss Tietz and Miss Frank teach God's Word to their students and bring the message of the gospel into every subject they teach; where they model what they teach; and where music and singing regularly become the way by which children and young people learn to praise and thank their gracious God.

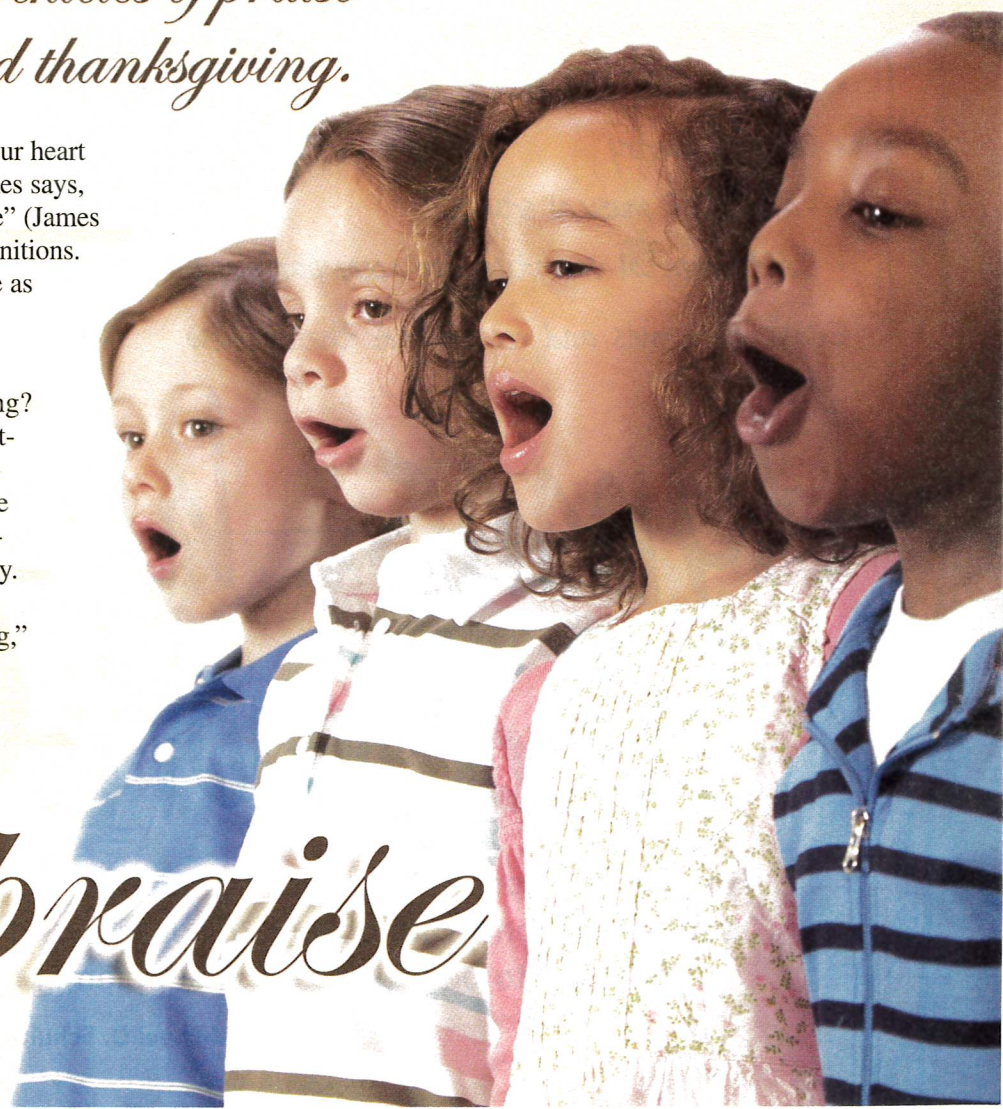
I'm grateful for Christian fathers and mothers who create an atmosphere of thanksgiving and praise in their homes and who lead their children by word and example to love their Savior and to use music as an instrument of praise.

And I'm thankful too for the memories that Thanksgiving hymns stir up every time I hear them.

*Mark Lenz, a professor at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, is a member at St. John, New Ulm.*

*God intends music  
and singing to serve  
as vehicles of praise  
and thanksgiving.*

*and praise*



**I**n the years the Lord has allowed me to serve as a pastor, I can say that it's happened only once. After her death and prior to her funeral, while meeting with her family in her home, I found a member's personal hymnal. In it a piece of paper indicated her favorite hymns. We sang those hymns at her Christian funeral service.

I have only one definite hymn choice for my funeral service. It would be "Lord, You I Love with All My Heart" (*Christian Worship* 434). While I will be hearing and seeing inexpressibly greater things in heaven, it is satisfying for me to think of how family members and fellow Christians at that service would hear the organ swell for the second half of stanza three and of how they would hear and join the assembly in singing, "And then from death awaken me That my own eyes with joy may see, O Son of God, your glorious face, My Savior and my Fount of grace."

### *Adding new hymns for God's people to sing*

A favorite hymn is an entirely subjective matter. Were a person to go through the 660 hymns in *The Lutheran Hymnal* and the 623 hymns in *Christian Worship* (CW) and the hundreds of hymns in other hymnals, who knows what would lead him or her to select a favorite hymn from all those choices? The Hymns Committee for the soon-to-be-published *Christian Worship: Supplement* experienced something similar over the past four years. It was not, however, a matter of selecting favorite hymns but of identifying good hymns.

While that also may be viewed as a subjective process, the subjectivity faded rather quickly as hymns were initially reviewed by a committee of five, then reviewed by a full supplement committee of 10, and ultimately

reviewed by our synod's Commission on Worship. Strong and accurate doctrinal content that makes use of the Word of God, application of the gospel message, quality poetry, a variety of musical styles, and availability of instrumental variation for accompaniment were some of the key standards employed.

The committee members were struck with the great number of hymns set aside at the review process. Several thousand hymns from several dozen sources were reviewed

### *Criteria for Lutheran hymns*

- *Strong doctrinal content*
- *Proper application of the gospel*
- *Quality poetry*
- *Variety of musical styles*
- *Instrumental variation for accompaniment*



*Evaluate hymns and recommend; then review.*

# Hymns, hymns and more hymns

The Commission on Worship evaluated thousands of hymns from dozens of sources and chose 86 to be included in a supplement.

Michael D. Schultz

ILLUSTRATION: TERRY HERMAN

and trimmed down to 86 hymns that will be included in *Christian Worship: Supplement*. They are a variety of old and new, familiar and unfamiliar. Will these hymns quickly fall into the favorite hymns category of WELS Christians? Who's to say?

But first the hymns had to be evaluated for their doctrinal content. In worship we proclaim the gospel. It is moving to hear that Horatio Spafford wrote "When Peace Like a River" after receiving word of the death of all four of his daughters at sea, his wife "saved alone." But it is marvelously powerful gospel proclamation to know that "It is well with my soul" because "my sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more." It is worth noting that Keith Getty and Stuart Townend's "In Christ Alone" appears on YouTube and now is being sung internationally by choirs and congregations. But it is also crystal-clear good news from God to sing, "Till on that cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied; For ev'ry sin on him was laid. Here in the death of Christ I live."

Musical tastes and preferences certainly vary. The tune *Thaxted* has been used at all of the WELS national worship conferences to carry the text of the hymn that closed each conference, "Jerusalem the Golden." We introduced that tune at our congregation over the past few years. One worshiper came out of church, pointed at "Jerusalem the Golden" sung to *Thaxted*, and said matter-of-factly, "People are going to love that song." A second time the tune was used, a dear elderly woman came out of church just as excited, saying just as emphatically, "What happened to the old tune for 'Jerusalem the Golden'?" Our musical preferences vary.

### *Sing the gospel to God's glory*

One would expect that a supplement continues along the path of the original. Musically, *Christian Worship: Supplement* travels in a similar direction as its parent *Christian Worship*. Users of the book will find some hymn arrangements composed specifically for piano rather than organ. Hymns with verses and refrain form a significant percentage of *Christian Worship: Supplement* hymns. These hymns lend themselves well to gradual introduction to the congregation. A small group or choir can sing the verses while the congregation first learns the refrain. When the entire hymn has been learned by all, options for antiphonal singing are numerous.

Five Holy Communion hymns and five End Time hymns will increase these CW categories. MIDI files will be available for congregations still waiting to be blessed with a keyboardist, as well as an accompaniment edition that includes background information and performance suggestions for all the hymns. In the future, an upgrade to the HymnSoft program will also include the hymnody of the supplement.

Hymns, hymns, and more hymns! What should we bear in mind as we look at texts, tunes, several years of committee work, the work of worship planners in your congregation, hundreds of hymns in hundreds of hymnals, and thousands more available online and printable under licensing programs? "A good hymn lyric has flow and direction, and keeps its quality as it unfolds. An outstanding lyric may even 'mend in length' as [George] Herbert puts it, meaning that it improves as it goes on.

It takes us somewhere as it tells a story, paraphrases Scripture or develops a theme" (Wren, *Praying Twice: The Words and Music of Congregational Song*, p. 253).

The hymns in *Christian Worship* and its supplement mean to take us somewhere, to that holy birthplace and that holy night where "A Stable Lamp Is Lighted." They mean to tell a story, a story of the mind-numbing love of Christ

that leaves us asking "What Grace Is This?" They paraphrase or quote Scripture as they bring Christ's words to bear on anxious souls—"Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled." They mean to develop a theme as we personalize the Savior's words and sing "Your Kingdom, O God, Is My Glorious Treasure."

As WELS worship planners consider the endless number of hymns available, it is the confident hope of the Supplement Committee and the Commission on Worship that a good number of the hymns in this new publication will find their way into the body of Christian hymnody that is regularly used by Christ's people as through their singing they proclaim Christ's gospel to Christ's glory.

Maybe the title of one or two of these "new" hymns even will find its way onto a small piece of paper in your personal hymnal at home. If so, don't forget to let a few people know in advance where to look for it.

*Michael Schultz is pastor at Sola Fide, Lawrenceville, Georgia.*

*In worship  
we proclaim  
the gospel.*

# A different kind of BUILDING

A behind-the-scenes look at the work of the women of Builders For Christ.

Linda R. Buxa

Usually when you see a picture of Builders For Christ (BFC) members, you see the men using hammers and nails to build a church.

You rarely see their wives—the women who do important building of their own.

Though all the work these women do doesn't get much publicity, BFC builder Martin Leyrer shares how vital they are: "The women are 90 percent of the group," he says. "We men are just 10 percent of it."

Unlike the men, who follow a specific blueprint to build a church, the women simply take advantage of other opportunities to help build the church.

## Building buildings

Often at the beginning of a project, as the foundation is laid and walls go up, the women don't play a major role. But once that is done, the wives take action, helping wherever needed. After Hurricane Katrina, they painted walls and installed wood flooring in the parsonage and fellowship hall at Crown of Life, New Orleans.

On most projects, in addition to painting, the women do the majority of the wall insulation. "I have done finishing work my whole life, and I just love it," says Rose Leyrer. "Several work right along with the men on the roof," she

adds, "but not many of us are as adventurous."

For all the big ways they help, sometimes it's the little things that matter, says Rose, who with her husband, Martin, has worked at more than 30 sites. "If we don't do anything else but listen to our husbands, pull slivers, soothe aching muscles, and give moral support, that's still important."

## Building relationships

When they aren't helping with construction, you can find them building relationships within the congregation by working with the members. They fold bulletins, stuff inserts, and prepare flyers. They play the organ for a church with no organist and find sales to stock the new church's kitchen. "Sometimes we do crafts, or make quilts and children's clothes," says Rose, a member at Grace, Muskegon, Mich. "And often we donate those items for the Central Africa Medical Mission."

Jerilyn Kramer, a member at Trinity, Elkton, S.D., remembers a time in Rib Mountain, Wis., where the BFC wives volunteered to teach vacation Bible school in the park. "When we showed up, it was so cold. We saw the moms trying to teach while also trying to entertain their own children," she says. "We said, 'You don't need help with Bible school; you need babysitters.'" So the women went back to the warm parsonage with the little ones and—for a while—didn't miss their grandchildren quite as much.



When Builders For Christ worked for months in New Orleans, student crews from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Martin Luther College rotated in weekly. Sue Eidler and Judy Mehne spent their weeks taking care of the students. Besides keeping an eye on them and providing snacks, the women did the students' laundry twice a week. "We washed and folded it all again just before they left, so they could take clean clothes home," says Eidler, a member at Trinity, Caledonia, Wis.

After each crew left, the women cleaned the students' trailers and washed the bedding. Even after innumerable loads of laundry, Eidler cheerfully says, "That's the part I liked, working with the young people."

For the multitude of ways they help, Kramer points out that something else might be their most important job: "Maybe we're there just to be witnesses to the congregation, to encourage new or young Christians," she says. By attending every worship service and Bible study, they lead and encourage by example.

### Building bridges

The women involved in Builders For Christ know, however, that they

can't keep this witness confined to the church campus. They also build bridges for the church by making the most of their opportunities in each community.

In Kenai, Alaska, the husbands and wives walked in a parade and handed out invitations to vacation Bible school.

They also canvass neighborhoods. Kramer enjoys it because "you never know whom you are going to meet." She readily admits that not everybody is glad you stopped by. Still, the possibility that someone may believe in Jesus keeps her going. "You may talk to someone who never contacts the church. But do they read the Bible or join a different church? You just never know until heaven," she says.

While working in Georgetown, Texas, the women took a walk down a nearby driveway. There they found a newly-opened home for unwed mothers. While one BFC member corrected papers at the home's charter school, the others volunteered to work with the new moms. As the women taught the girls how to scrapbook and crochet, they also listened to the girls' stories and shared God's love with them.

Other opportunities to witness arise unexpectedly. "When we were on a site for a couple of months, we needed a

haircut. So I found a place to go," says Kramer. "The girl who cut my hair obviously needed to talk—and the more she talked, the more she cut."

Kramer, who ended up with a short haircut, saw it as an opportunity for God to reach someone through her. "Maybe it's the hairdresser. Maybe it's telling someone about a mission church while you're at the laundromat. You just don't know whose life God wants you to touch at that particular moment."

While the financial savings of helping a congregation build a church can be measured, there is no way to measure the worth of listening to hurricane survivors' stories, praying for struggling members, or sitting with assisted-living facility residents. That work—and all the other ways the women serve—is simply priceless.

To learn more about Builders For Christ and how it provides workers to build facilities at a reduced cost, go to [www.welskingdomworkers.org](http://www.welskingdomworkers.org), or contact Dale Mueller at WELS Kingdom Workers, 2323 N Mayfair Rd, Ste 400, Wauwatosa WI 53226; 800-466-9357; [bfc@wkw.wels.net](mailto:bfc@wkw.wels.net).

Linda Buxa is a member at St. Mark's, Citrus Heights, California.

## HOW CHURCHES GIVE BACK

For all they give to help start, enlarge, or repair a church, "we all feel that we are way more blessed than the church members are," says Jerilyn Kramer, a 19-project veteran. At each site, they receive something unexpected—a tour, service, or friendship.

At one congregation, a member wasn't able to help with the construction. Instead, as an eye doctor, he offered eye exams to the builders.

In Alaska, their blessing was more recreational. One member took the builders halibut fishing. "Other members took us on hikes we never would have found by ourselves," says Kramer.

In New Orleans, Crown of Life's music


director, Chris Driesbach, would sing for them. "He lost his home—the whole bottom floor was flooded—yet he came to sing for us," says Sue Eidler.

The biggest blessing is becoming part of the congregation's family. In 2004, while on a project in Goodyear, Ariz., they visited Trinity, Sierra Vista. There, Eidler noticed the bulletin board in the entryway. It read "Our builders" and showed pictures of the BFC members who constructed the church—in 1991.

When she mentioned it to some members, she said, "That was a lot of years ago."

"But it's still our church," they replied. "We are still thankful for those builders."





# Connected to JESUS

John A. Braun

**M**onday morning again! The alarm wakes us for another day at work. The weekend is only a memory. For most, Monday will be just like every other day: we get up, go to work, eat, sleep, and then repeat. Each day comes with its own set of challenges. But at times it seems like the same old same old.

We often view life through the lens of our own activities, and our lives and routines are not that interesting to others. If you doubt that, simply start talking about your life to someone else. In my experience, two things happen during those conversations. Either you'll see eyes glaze over and perhaps a suppressed yawn, or the conversation will shift to the events in the life of the person you're talking to. Exceptions do occur. Some are genuinely interested in your life—those are our friends who care about us.

#### **Assurance in life's routine**

As believers, we have learned that Jesus is our great friend. He promises

to be with us every day in all the ordinary events. We have a sense of his presence at times, but most often we rely on his promise to be with us "to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). But the routines of life sometimes even cause our eyes of faith to glaze over, and we develop a kind of spiritual amnesia about God's promises.

The Lord Jesus knew the kind of lives we would lead. He knew that we would need more than just words to sustain us along life's familiar roads. It was one of the rea-

Life is most often a series of routine days. Sometimes life also becomes a bumpy ride. At all times, the Lord's Supper connects us to Jesus and his unchanging love and forgiveness.

sons he gave us the Sacrament of the Altar.

His Supper is a special and wonderful blessing. We cannot see Jesus standing next to us each day. But our weekends are more than just a break from the routine of work, sleep, eat, and repeat. We come to hear the gospel, and we have the opportunity to come to the Lord's Table. When we come to his Table, as Lutherans, we believe his words and receive his body and blood, given and poured out for us for the forgiveness of sins.



Why is this so important? The Sacrament is a guarantee that Jesus loves us constantly and fully even when life is a series of habitual events. He doesn't stop loving us when we experience the same old same old every week. He loves us and forgives us with the same deep love every day. His body and blood are a visible and physical promise of that. It's more than just words.

As we come forward to the altar and receive the Sacrament, we hear no angel choir. Lights do not flash to call attention to what happens at the altar. We simply come forward and receive. Sometimes we don't even feel any emotional surge when we take the wafer and the sip of wine. It appears so common and ordinary, yet the Sacrament connects us with Jesus. It's God's small little thread that ties us to him and his blessings.

#### **Assurance that we are forgiven**

Daily life may be routine, but we also know there are bumps along the way. Every day we wander a little from God's law. We speak angry words. We know there are lapses in our love to those we care about most. At times our thoughts wander into lust, greed, envy, and hatred. We have so many faults in the course of a single day that we can't name them all.

Our friend Jesus has given his body and blood for our forgiveness. His work is complete and perfect. He said so on Good Friday: "It is finished" (John 19:30). He gives us his body and blood in the Sacrament so we would not be in doubt. We have his full forgiveness. We simply receive what he has done. That's the way Lutherans have always considered God's gifts. They are gifts completed and finished by his grace and received by faith.

So as we confront the sins of our daily lives, we find joy and comfort because we have received his body and blood, given and poured out for us for our forgiveness.

His steadfast love and forgiveness become especially important when our lives are filled with trouble, worry, uncertainty, and frustration. At other times we experience disappointment and feel depression. When we face such days or when we are worried because someone dear to us faces

## **The Sacrament is a guarantee that Jesus loves us constantly and fully even when life is a series of habitual events.**

trouble and difficulty, the Sacrament assures us that God has not deserted us. He gives us the same body and blood that has achieved our forgiveness. His love and forgiveness does not change when life's road gets bumpy and rough. His constant love comes to us in more than just words—we have the visible gospel of his body and blood in the Sacrament.

#### **Assurance in the darkest hours**

Lutheran Christians treasure the Lord's Supper. I remember Ruth, a woman I ministered to who had a great deal of pain because of cancer. Radiation had become ineffective, and pain medication was not always helpful. She experienced a great deal of pain often. She treasured the Sacrament in her last days. I asked her why and she said, "Because it's more than just words. It is his body and blood." In those difficult days, Jesus assured her in a special way that his love did not change. Even her severe pain could not change his love. She eagerly received his body and blood for comfort and strength on her difficult road.

How many other believers have turned to the special comfort of the Lord's Supper at such times! When faced with the end of their own lives, the Sacrament assured them of Christ's changeless love and his forgiveness. They knew that "where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation" (Second part of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Luther's Small Catechism). They received the Lord's body and blood that he intended for them personally. Jesus said it was "given and poured out *for you* for the forgiveness of sins" (Third part of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Luther's Small Catechism).

Jesus knew his disciples would face ordinary life, sins too numerous to count, and trouble along life's way. He doesn't always explain why things happen, but he does make a wonderful connection with each of us when we receive the Sacrament. It's more than just words. We receive his body and blood with the bread and wine.

Through it Jesus lays hold of our hearts and strengthens them. As the Holy Spirit strengthens us through this means of grace, we lay hold on Jesus. Simple as it may seem, the Lord's Supper is the way God connects with us here in this world. We renew our faith. Yes, we strengthen the connection with the Savior's suffering and death for our forgiveness. When we have that forgiveness by faith, we also have life and salvation.

*John A. Braun is the executive editor of Forward in Christ.*

*Read more about Holy Communion in Lord's Supper: The Lamb's High Feast, an NPH publication written by Arnold Koelpin. Find a related Bible study on this topic after Nov. 5 at [www.forwardinchrist.net](http://www.forwardinchrist.net).*

# WHATEVER

## Understanding God's plan

Many times as humans we fail to see the spiritual part of God's plans.

Kelly Adams

I couldn't quite understand what she had done wrong to deserve this. She had everything in the world going for her, and I just didn't get it. So many questions. The biggest of them all was why. Why did it happen to her? Why not anyone else in the world? Why did he let this happen to someone that he called his child? I just didn't get it!

**A few years ago my cousin was killed in a car accident.** I still remember the phone call. Certain words stuck out like, "Rene. Dead. Head-on. Ejected." The pain I felt was unbearable. It hurt me so bad that all I could do was scream. At that moment I felt my stomach drop and my heart beat in my throat. I could only think, "Why my cousin?" Didn't God see all the good things she was doing for people? She was a sixth-grade teacher. Those kids needed her and so did we. I looked up to her. She was everything I want to be—smart; beautiful; loving; funny; and, most of all, a woman of good virtue. I just couldn't understand it.

For a long time after the accident I found it really hard to look to God. I just didn't understand. I didn't get why she had to die so young and why it had to be her. And the biggest question was, "How could God let her die if she was one of his children?" I just kept thinking, "What kind of Father does that?"

For a while I was upset with God. It bothered me, and even though everyone constantly told me not to turn my back on him, I can't say I didn't want to. I guess he never let me go because he loves me so much. I guess I didn't understand because I didn't see love in the midst of this tragedy. I didn't realize it until after the tragedy. Then it became clearer. Simply, it is not for us to understand but to accept and be content.

**Many times as humans we fail to see the spiritual part of God's plans.** My cousin

had come into contact with lots of people in her life, including her sixth-grade students. She set an example to them by constantly reminding them to keep Jesus in the front of their minds and he would direct them. But Rene also had friends that were not Christians, and one thing I failed to see was God's much larger plan for their salvation. God can take one person to save a multitude if he wants. After her death, many that she knew have become wholehearted believers in the faith. They completely and genuinely thank my cousin for her example in life and for never letting them down as a friend.

To this day, I still struggle with my cousin's death. I don't think I will ever be completely content with it. But I have accepted what God has done. It all happened according to God's plan. I guess that as humans we just wish that our plans and God's plans were the same. But in situations like these I found that nothing will be able to comfort you like the love of Christ.

I miss my cousin every day. I don't think that will ever change. But what has changed is my understanding of God's much larger plan.

Kelly Adams is a senior at Illinois Lutheran High School, Crete, Illinois.

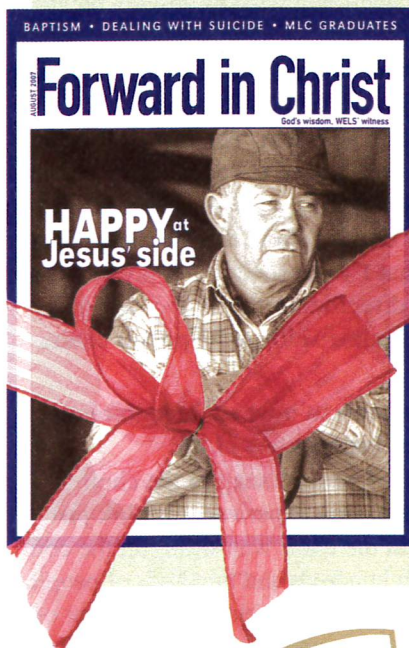


# questions

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## READ THROUGH MY BIBLE IN 3 YEARS

DECEMBER 2007

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 2 Peter 3:1-10  | 17. Dan. 11:2-20     |
| 2. 2 Pet. 3:11-18  | 18. Dan. 11:21-12:13 |
| 3. Jude 1-16       | 19. Psalm 139        |
| 4. Jude 17-25      | 20. Ps. 140, 141     |
| 5. Daniel 1        | 21. Ps. 142, 143     |
| 6. Dan. 2:1-30     | 22. Ps. 144          |
| 7. Dan. 2:31-49    | 23. Ps. 145          |
| 8. Dan. 3          | 24. Ps. 146          |
| 9. Dan. 4          | 25. Ps. 147          |
| 10. Dan. 5         | 26. Ps. 148-150      |
| 11. Dan. 6         | 27. Revelation 1:1-8 |
| 12. Dan. 7         | 28. Rev. 1:9-20      |
| 13. Dan. 8         | 29. Rev. 2:1-7       |
| 14. Dan. 9:1-19    | 30. Rev. 2:8-17      |
| 15. Dan. 9:20-27   | 31. Rev. 2:18-29     |
| 16. Dan. 10:1-11:1 |                      |

## Obituaries

**Lorraine Adrienne Kolosovsky**  
1925-2007

Lorraine Kolosovsky (nee Quade) was born April 9, 1925, in Sauk City, Minn. She died Aug. 30, 2007, in Sheboygan Falls, Wis.

She taught at St. Paul, Cudahy, Wis., for 22 years.

She is preceded in death by a daughter; a brother; and two sisters. She is survived by her husband, Daniel; four sons; two daughters; 26 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

**Frederic Henry Tabbert**  
1916-2007

Frederic Tabbert was born Aug. 30, 1916, in Mishicot, Wis. He died Sept. 10, 2007, in Osceola, Wis.

A 1942 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., he served at Redeemer, St. Croix Falls, Wis.; Calvary, Thiensville, Wis.; Gethsemane, Milwaukee, Wis.; and Trinity, Osceola, Wis.

He is preceded in death by a sister. He is survived by his wife, Arlene; one son; two daughters; two sisters; six grandchildren; and a great-grandson.

## DISCOVER WHAT'S NEW ON Streams

### Listen to music online on Streams radio

Tired of listening to the same old songs on the radio at work? Tune into Streams radio. Whether it's choral or instrumental, contemporary or traditional, you can find religious music to your liking. Just a few of the groups included are

- Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary;
- Koine, a contemporary Christian band from Milwaukee, Wis.;
- United Voices of Praise, an inner city gospel choir from Milwaukee;
- Harpist Eileen Stindt;
- Pianist Dawn Gehlhar; and
- In His Service, a duo of trumpet and keyboard.

Also newly added to Streams radio is music from singer Mike Westendorf. His song "Climb the Mountain" was recently released to national radio.

<http://streams.wels.net>

## Q&A with Kate Wolfe, WELS musician

*Katherine Wolfe, member at Shepherd of the Hills, Lansing, Mich., is an accomplished vocalist and is studying music at the graduate level. Wolfe is involved with several choirs, including one at Shepherd of the Hills. Recently Wolfe sat down with Forward in Christ to talk about her musical education and how she is using it to serve her Lord.*

**Question** – Tell me a little bit about yourself.

**Answer** – I'm finishing my master's degree right now in choral conducting at Michigan State University. I did my undergraduate degree at Michigan State, and I taught junior high choir for three years at the public schools in Battle Creek, Mich. I was at St. John's in Battle Creek and served as their choir director and started a children's choir for them. Then I stopped teaching to come back to school full time. Now I'm with Shepherd of the Hills in Lansing and doing their children's music.

**Question** – As a choir director, how do you get people in the congregation involved with music?

**Answer** – You really have to actively seek out participation instead of just having the same people doing everything all the time. I think it's especially important to try to involve the new faces and the young people of the congregation. . . . I'm really passionate about reaching out to people of all ability levels and inviting them to be involved in whatever way they feel comfortable. I think everyone has a voice to praise God, so I really like to encourage people. I'm kind of a cheerleader for choir. I tell people, "Come on. Sing in the choir! You know you want to!"

**Question** – Do you think there's a preconception in congregations that you have to be an excellent musician to be involved?

**Answer** – I hear that all the time as I'm recruiting for my choir. People tell me, "When I was in elementary school, someone told me to lip sing because I wasn't any good." I hear all these horrible stories . . . I think singing is one of the most glorious ways to praise God, especially in the context of a worship service. But I think it has to do with people feeling safe, so they don't feel singled out and put on the spot. If you can help people feel comfortable and supported and educated, they'll want to be involved.

**Question** – How do you choose the music the choir sings?

**Answer** – I work with the pastor and organist so the music supports the theme for worship. I'm also look-

ing for music that has text that is theologically sound. There's a lot of bad church music out there that doesn't support Lutheran doctrine, so you really have to pick through that. Then I'm looking for something that's musically sound, something that's of musical quality. Then I need to find something that fits the needs and the talents of the congregation.

**Question** – The National Worship Conference is coming up next July. How are you involved with that?

**Answer** – I'm presenting a session. The title isn't nailed down yet, but the session is going to focus on rehearsal techniques for getting extraordinary sounds out of ordinary singers. I'm really excited about that because it's an opportunity to bring what I've learned in my professional degrees to some choir directors in the synod and give them a bag of tricks and some skills to help their choirs sound better.

**Question** – Have you been to a worship conference before? What were your impressions of it?

**Answer** – At the last conference I sang in the choir at the services. It was an amazing experience. I think just as powerful as singing in the choir was sitting in the congregation and being with hundreds and hundreds of people who believe what you do. Just the sound of that large of a congregation with the organ and the choir—it was just some of the most inspiring worship I've ever been to. It absolutely changed my life. I was brought to tears in every service. . . . [The conference] is inspiring, and it's not just for choir directors and pastors and organists. It's really for laypeople as well who are passionate about worship.

*To see more questions and answers with Katherine Wolfe, go to [www.forwardinchrist.net](http://www.forwardinchrist.net). Wolfe will be presenting at next year's National Worship Conference, July 28-31, in St. Peter, Minn. For more information about the conference, visit [www.wels.net/jump/worship](http://www.wels.net/jump/worship) or e-mail [worship@sab.wels.net](mailto:worship@sab.wels.net).*



Kate Wolfe

## Encouraging prayer

When God gives a command, how do his people respond?

In Ephesians 6:18, God commands: “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” While our God commands us to pray, it is also a great honor that he gives us permission to speak to him directly. The WELS Prayer Institute exists to encourage members of the synod to carry out the instruction to pray.

The WELS Prayer Institute was introduced in November 2004. It seeks to promote prayer throughout WELS in a variety of ways. Members pray for the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ around the world. They connect WELS prayer leaders to one another. They pray for synod leaders, church leaders, ministries, and institutions as well as local pastors and churches. The institute also seeks to provide confessional Lutheran prayer materials.

“We are in the process of searching for those people whom God has called to encourage prayer ministry at this time in WELS,” shares Steve Witte, pastor at Beautiful Savior, Green Bay, Wis., and cofounder of the institute. “People get involved by word of mouth. Sometimes we ‘run into’ a WELS member who is passionate about prayer. We ask them to check out our simple Web site, to call us on the phone so we can discuss their personal or local church prayer ministry, or to attend our next event.” The next event for the WELS Prayer Institute will be a prayer conference on Nov. 9-10 in Menomonee Falls and Sussex, Wis.

One prayer at a time, the WELS Prayer Institute is working to “turn up the volume on the voice of prayer in the body of Christ”—motivated purely by the gospel of Christ.

For more information about the WELS Prayer Institute and its upcoming conference, visit [www.welsprayerinstitute.com](http://www.welsprayerinstitute.com) or call Pastor Steve Witte at 920-499-7405.

## Target 10%—a new collaboration

Although Martin Luther College (MLC) and the 22 area Lutheran high schools (ALHS) of the synod have been partnering for decades on recruitment for ministry, they are now collaborating to reach a new goal: enroll 10 percent of the area Lutheran high school graduates at MLC each year.

In recent years, about seven percent of ALHS graduates enroll at MLC in New Ulm, Minn., the synod’s ministry training college for pastors, teachers, and staff ministers. Typically, ALHS grads make up just more than 50 percent of the MLC freshman class. Roughly 40 percent of each class comes from the two synod prep schools—Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, Wis., and Michigan Lutheran Seminary, Saginaw, Mich. The other 10 percent comes from public schools.

With Target 10%, “each area Lutheran high school has developed a plan, unique to its school, to recruit for the public ministry,” says Phil Leyrer, MLC vice president of enrollment management. “In addition, the high schools have been divided into four groups of five to six schools, each under an ALHS mentor who will help

coordinate and encourage the school’s individual plans.”

At Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis., Pastor Brad Wright leads recruitment efforts with a 15-step plan. “Teacher for a Day,” a pastoral luncheon, and a trip to Martin Luther College are yearly events. He also coordinates visits from MLC recruiters and from MLC students who are Winnebago Lutheran Academy alumni.

Pastor Clark Schultz at Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis., emphasizes a few important ingredients of all the plans: holding formal discussions about the public ministry in religion classes and finding informal teaching moments to “let the students know that they have the gifts to be a good pastor, teacher, or staff minister.”

As part of this initiative, MLC also has added an on-campus admissions director and more traveling admissions counselors, each assigned to a smaller group of high schools. Visiting fewer schools more often allows each counselor to develop deeper relationships with students. The counselors also visit elementary schools to talk about what it means to be a pastor, teacher, or staff minister.

In addition to personal contact, MLC publishes a quarterly recruitment magazine, *KnightWatch*; a weekly e-publication, *MLC Update—High School Edition*; and various other print pieces to inspire young people.

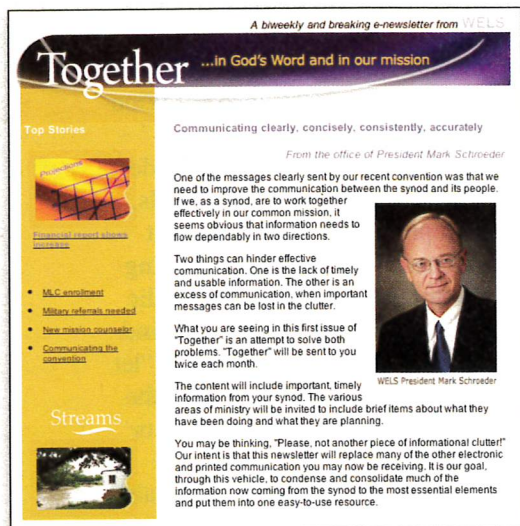
But recruiters from the college and the high schools admit that no matter how much work they do, sometimes the most effective recruiters for ministry are still the people in the pews. Says Leyrer, “Perhaps the best encouragement a young person can receive is a tap on the shoulder from a parent, friend, called worker, or church member who says, ‘I think you’d be an excellent pastor or teacher. Why don’t you give it some thought?’”



These MLC students from Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School, and Lakeside Lutheran High School are just some of the hundreds of students from area Lutheran high schools studying to be pastors, teachers, and staff ministers.

## E-newsletter is first step in coordinating communications

In an effort to provide clear, concise, and consistent communication to WELS members, Communication Services has developed "Together," a biweekly and breaking e-newsletter that will provide news about the work of the synod.



The first issue of "Together" came out in mid-September and included a financial update, MLC enrollment numbers, and an update on flood relief. "Together" is sent directly to called workers, but laypeople are encouraged to subscribe. Issues can be found online at [www.wels.net/jump/together](http://www.wels.net/jump/together).

"What makes this different from the other online newsletters we have

is that it is more comprehensive," says Joel Hochmuth, WELS' director of communications. "We're taking a look at all of the synod's entities and every two weeks providing the most essential information."

Until now, every area of ministry essentially was responsible for putting out its own news. "There was no one unified voice electronically coming from the synod," says Hochmuth. "What we're trying to do is consolidate so that our people on the user end aren't inundated with seemingly unrelated bits of communication from the synod." As a result called workers won't be receiving as much electronic communication from individual areas of ministry. Instead that information will be included in "Together."

The e-newsletter concept is in keeping with a resolution that was passed at the 2007 synod convention calling for the "director of communications to work toward streamlining communications between the synod administration and the congregations" (2007 *Proceedings*, p. 36).

"The goal is to communicate what the people in the pew and called workers need to know to most effectively work together and carry out our ministry," says WELS President Mark Schroeder.

"Together" is just the first step in that process. "We have to look at everything and evaluate what works and what doesn't work," says Hochmuth. "We have any number of communications that are working. The question then becomes how do they all fit into an integrated whole. But we still have work to do."

Another area that will be examined in upcoming months is the synod's Web site, [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net).

Schroeder considers improving communication "one of the top priorities." He says, "[Communication] enables all the other main things we have to do to be done more effectively. For example, if one of our main goals as a synod is to encourage people to look to the Word more deeply, well, we need to communicate that and encourage it. If one of our goals is to expand our efforts in home and world missions, well, we need to be communicating not only that goal but also the blessings that God gives us as we do that."

He continues, "Communication is what enables us to facilitate, coordinate, and gain support for all the other things that we're doing."

"Together" will be e-mailed to subscribers the first and third Mondays of each month. To subscribe, go to [www.wels.net/jump/togethersignup](http://www.wels.net/jump/togethersignup).

## WELS news briefs

**Board for World Missions**  
414-256-3233; [bwm@sab.wels.net](mailto:bwm@sab.wels.net)



Pictured are Elyc da Costa Storck (left), the first national pastor of the Igreja Luterana Brasileira (Brazilian Lutheran Church), and Missionary Charles Flunker, who has served for 20 years in Brazil (full time and now as a volunteer in his retirement). At the end of

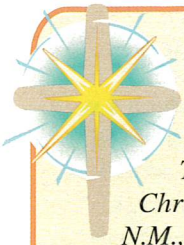
October, Storck finished the colloquy program at the seminary in Brazil. He will be installed in November. Originally from Uruguay, Storck came to Brazil to study at another Lutheran seminary, and served as pastor with that church before leaving because of doctrinal differences. He and his

wife Noeli became communicant members at the WELS mission church in Gravataí three years ago.

The Brazilian Lutheran Church has two organized congregations in the cities of Dourados and Gravataí, but there have been requests for spiritual guidance in at least three other cities. Two other nationals are studying to become pastors and hope to graduate in 2009. For more information about the WELS mission in Brazil, go to [www.wels.net/jump/brazil](http://www.wels.net/jump/brazil).

**Commission on Adult Discipleship**  
414-256-3278; [cad@sab.wels.net](mailto:cad@sab.wels.net)

An 11-part Bible study called "Heirs Together of God's Gracious Gift of Life" is now available. This Bible study was introduced at the first Women's Ministry Leadership Conference, held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, in July. Written by Prof. Richard Gurgel and Kathie Wend-



## LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

*Thomas Glende, pastor at Christ the Rock, Farmington, N.M., shares the following story:*

*Outreach among Albanian people is part of my family history. My father-in-law served as a missionary in Albania. However, to prove the axiom that going overseas is not the only way to serve in a "foreign" mission field, consider the most recent entry into my family history. My dad and mom serve as teachers at St. Paul, Columbus, Ohio—home to a "foreign" mission field.*

On July 19, a miracle occurred. Silently and gently, water sprinkled and splashed. Simultaneously, powerful words were ushered forth: "... in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Two boys, Ameld and Geri Sulag, were washed in Baptism.

The miracle is all the more amazing when the facts preceding this day are considered. Half a world away sits their home country—Albania. Their family set up residence in the United States, within reach of St. Paul, Columbus, Ohio. News of the Lutheran elementary school at St. Paul came to them via another Albanian family,

who had enrolled their daughter. Ameld attended fifth-grade confirmation class during the course of this last year's school schedule. Geri, in second grade, heard the Word of God every day via devotions and Bible lessons. Now, in the middle of attending vacation Bible school, God's continuation of his plan occurred. A request was made, the plans were set, and God's outpouring of grace through Holy Baptism was received.

Are more miracles yet to come? Is this family's story finished? Ameld and Geri's parents attended the baptism. The parents had begun to get more involved at the school. Mimoza, their mother, attended Good Friday service at church. Both parents attended the picnic Sunday service and fellowship earlier this summer. And now, on this day of their two boys' baptisms, the opportunity arrived to present them with Christian literature that was written in their own native language. The family even attended worship at St. Paul the Sunday following the baptism, and now the parents are attending Bible information class.



Gary Pieper, pastor at St. Paul, and the Sulag family—(left to right) Geri, Ameld, Mimoza, and Faik—on the day Geri and Ameld were baptized.

One more piece of the story is worth telling. Another family at St. Paul had become good friends with this Albanian family during the year. Bonds formed. Love was shared. Welcoming faces greeted them when they entered the walls of the school or church. Encouraging words were spoken to these parents so they would feel at home and become involved. How much did this Christian friendship play a part in getting to this point in the story? As this story continues, in what way might God further use this friendship in order to accomplish his plan?

land, this study provides opportunities for men and women to discuss what Scripture says about their interdependence and looks at the unique callings as male and female. "Heirs Together of God's Gracious Gift of Life" (Workbook, 387620; Leader's guide, 387621) is available at [www.nph.net/wels\\_products](http://www.nph.net/wels_products). Or call Northwestern Publishing House at 800-662-6022 (Milwaukee area, 414-475-6000, ext. 5800), 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. CDT.

### **Board for Ministerial Education** 414-256-3236; [bme@sab.wels.net](mailto:bme@sab.wels.net)

More than 450 pastors, professors, and seminary students attended the Fall Symposium on Christian Stewardship at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., in September. Three pastors presented essays under the theme, "Raising Up a Generation of Godly Givers"—Pastor David Valleskey,

past president of the seminary and now serving at Beautiful Savior, Carlsbad, Calif.; Pastor Ronald Muetzel, vice president of institutional advancement at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee; and Prof. Forrest Bivens, professor at the seminary.

This annual fall symposium is held to bring together pastors, seminary professors, and students for worship, fellowship, and the study of topics that are timely in the life of the church. Next year's symposium will be held Sept. 15-16, 2008. More information, including this year's presentations, is available at [www.wls.wels.net/sections/continuing-education/symposium](http://www.wls.wels.net/sections/continuing-education/symposium).

These updates are from the offices of the synod administration building at 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222-4398.

## Lutheran elementary school prepares students, reaches out to community —

Since its doors opened in 1948, Redeemer Lutheran School in Tucson, Ariz., has been partnering with Christian parents to bring up children in the training and instruction of the Lord—but that's not all. In addition to providing students with a strong academic and spiritual education, Redeemer also works to instill in its students a servant attitude. "We try to stress service and provide our students with service opportunities in our community," says Jared Rathje, principal at Redeemer. "We want our students to learn in many contexts that they have a wonderful opportunity to serve God with their gifts."

This emphasis on reaching out began in 1998 when the school moved from downtown Tucson to one of the suburbs. "It is a growing area and there are a lot opportunities to reach people," says Rathje. Since then, the church and school have been working together to actively reach out to the neighborhood. "When we have events like Easter for Kids and Christmas for Kids, during the school day we'll take [seventh- and eighth-grade students] out into the community and hang door hangers. And if we come across some people on the way we'll talk to them, too," says Rathje.

In addition to canvassing and face-to-face witnessing, Redeemer hosts

a variety of community events to increase awareness about the school and recruit new students. "We've held basketball camps the last two years," says Rathje. "[At the camp] we hand out Bibles and give out basketballs with crosses on them. And we have ice cream sundaes and a scrimmage at the end of the camp."

Other events include an open-house at the school and Easter and Christmas for Kids programs. Last year they held a community "Fun-in-the-sun" day: "We had a church service outside and then we did water games, like shooting water balloons, and golfing games," says Rathje. "This year we're going to have a carnival. We're going to try to [incorporate] those games with the carnival and our seventh- and eighth-graders are going to set up booths. . . . It's just a different way to get the community involved."

Community events aren't the only way new families find Redeemer, however. Many people become involved with the church through the preschool, opened in 1998. "Many times a member of our congregation will tell a friend to send their child to our preschool," says Rathje. "That gives us the opportunity to follow up with those families and create a relationship with them."

Approximately 80 children attend Redeemer's preschool, and with the addition of another room to the preschool last year many more children will be able to learn about Jesus.

"Our students get to hear about God's saving work every day, and they see how true forgiveness works," says Rathje. "Our students are part of a school system that is grounded in Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and glorious. We have students that live in that light of the gospel every day."



Students at Redeemer in Tucson, Ariz., work on Christmas cards. The cards will be sent to missions in Mexico that the school is supporting through offerings this year. "We try to stress service and provide service opportunities" says Principal Jared Rathje. "We want our students to learn in many contexts that they have a wonderful opportunity to serve God with their gifts."

## In the news —



**Juniors at Michigan Lutheran High School, St. Joseph, Mich.,”** scored well on the new high school Michigan Merit Exam. According to statistics in the Aug. 19

edition of *The Herald Palladium*, Michigan Lutheran had the highest percentage of students in the region that met or exceeded state standards. Students were tested in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies.

**Members at Shepherd of the Valley, West Fargo, N.D.,”** were featured in the *Fargo Forum* on Aug. 25. After learning about the baptisms taking place in Thailand—and the basic washcloths being used during the service—a group of women in the congregation decided to make baptismal napkins to send to Thailand. "A baptismal napkin like the people in Fargo and Moorhead are making, for the Hmong it would be one of the most treasured possessions they have," says former Missionary Jim Hewitt. The church is hoping to send 100 napkins by Christmas.

**Hope Christian Schools, Milwaukee, Wis.,”** received a \$1 million grant from Siebert Lutheran Foundation. According to the Sept. 12 edition of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the funds will support Hope's elementary, middle, and high schools, which serve some of the most impoverished students in the central city.

On Aug. 15, the *Winona Daily News* ran a story about **Bethel, Arcadia, Wis.,”** and its building project. The new church will be 7,000 square feet, increasing the church's seating capacity from 50 to 200 people. Bethel has received grants as well as help from Builders For Christ, a group of WELS volunteers that travels around the country assisting with building projects. "We've had one blessing after another," says Pastor Nathan Strutz.



## District news

### South Atlantic

**Living Savior, Asheville, N.C.**, dedicated its new church building on June 3, and more than 230 people attended the public grand opening on June 10. There were 26 first-time guests from nine different zip codes—thanks, in part, to a \$10,000 grant from WELS Board for Home Missions and \$5,000 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

**Shepherd of the Hills, Knoxville, Tenn.**, began exploratory services in the Crossville area on June 10. Twenty-one people attended the first service. The group, which meets Sunday afternoons, adopted the name Ascension Lutheran Church.

### Michigan

**Julaine Boehm**, third- and fourth-grade teacher at Trinity Lutheran School, Jenera, Ohio, was recognized as the local “Teacher of the Year” by Wal-Mart. Boehm has taught at Trinity for 47 years.

### Minnesota

The construction of **Kingsway Retirement Living** is underway at The Luther Home campus in Belle Plaine, Minn. The complex will include 45 units of apartments and 36 units of assisted living for people over the age of 55. Kingsway will also provide spiritual care for its residents. The grand opening is scheduled for spring 2008.

### Nebraska

The faculty at **Rocky Mountain Lutheran High School, Northglenn, Colo.**, is coordinating several service projects for students this school year. Students got their first opportunity to serve in August when they took several hours off from school to help a family in the community move into a new home. The faculty hopes to set up four service opportunities for each class to help the students learn valuable life lessons.

### Northern Wisconsin

**Janeen Leises**, a sophomore at Winnebago Lutheran Academy, Fond du Lac, Wis., saved up her money and donated \$125 to “kids c.a.r.e.,” a Lutheran Women’s Missionary Society

(LWMS) mission project. Because of her contribution, Leises was selected to present the “kids c.a.r.e.” check, totaling \$12,239.06, at this year’s LWMS convention, held June 21-24 in Detroit, Mich.

### Pacific Northwest

On June 28, **youth from Messiah, Nampa, Idaho**, headed into the heartland of the Church of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah. The youth handed out resources and wore T-shirts that said, “I’m perfect, ask me how!” They discussed law and gospel with local Mormons and learned a lot about Mormon culture and beliefs. The youth group is planning another trip next year.

### Southeastern Wisconsin

A **Wisconsin Hispanic fellowship day** was held Aug. 18 at Woodlawn, Milwaukee, Wis. Families from the surrounding cities of Green Bay and Fort Atkinson attended, as well as members and prospects of Gethsemane, Risen Savior, and St. Peter congregations in Milwaukee. The day included Bible study, singing, and a practical talk on money management for the adults.

### Western Wisconsin

Nearly 70 students at **Lakeside Lutheran High School, Lake Mills, Wis.**, traveled to Milwaukee to volunteer at the Lighthouse Youth Center, a WELS urban outreach mission that provides after-school programs. The trip was a result of a religion class assignment—either write about witnessing or go out and do it. “I learned not to be afraid to share my faith,” says Lakeside student Candy Gentz. “I figured this would be fun, but it was way better than I imagined it to be.”

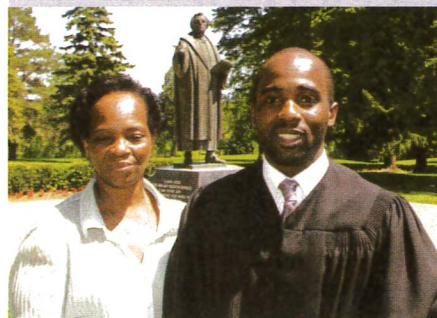
### Happy Anniversary!

D-M—**Rev. William Russow** celebrated 40 years in the ministry on May 27.

SA—**Northdale, Tampa, Fla.**, celebrated its 50th anniversary on June 10.

SEW—**Rev. James Westendorf**, professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., celebrated 40 years in the ministry on Sept. 9.

### South Atlantic



Jason Richards was installed at St. John’s, St. John’s, Antigua, on July 22. After graduating from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 2007, Richards, a native of Antigua, was assigned back to Antigua. Richards is the first West Indian WELS pastor trained, called, and fully supported by a West Indian congregation.

**St. John, Wauwatosa, Wis.**, culminated a year-long celebration of its 125th anniversary on Oct. 14.

WW—**Rev. Kent Schroeder** celebrated 40 years in the ministry in July.

### CORRECTIONS

Two picture captions were incorrect in the September issue. We apologize for the errors.

The correct order of the Lor brothers at their installation (1 to r): Ger Lor, Bounkeo Lor, Dewid Lor, and Daniel Lor.



The correct order of the men who served for a total of 103 years at St. Paul, South Haven, Mich. (1 to r): Donald Holzhueter, Pastor William Balza, and David Brohn.



These pastors are the reporters for the districts featured this month: D-M—Wayne Rouse; MI—John Eich; MN—Jeffrey Bovee; NE—Tim Kernnitz; NW—Joel Lillo; PNW—David Birsching; SA—Christopher Kruschel; SEW—Scott Oelhafen; WW—Brett Brauer.

**CHANGES IN MINISTRY**

**Pastors**

**Baumann, John C.**, to Mount Olive Chinese Christian, Saint Paul, Minn.  
**Birkholz, Mark A.**, as Mission Counselor, Board for Home Missions  
**Eckert, Mark A.**, to WELS Lutheran Campus Ministry, East Lansing, Mich.  
**Martin, Joshua C.**, as Civilian Chaplain for Europe, Germany  
**Nuss, R. Stephen**, as Christian Giving Counselor, Ministry of Christian Giving  
**Scheele, Martin J.**, to retirement  
**Willitz, John D.**, to retirement

**Teachers**

**Bame, Laurie J.**, to Grace, Saint Joseph, Mich.  
**Berg, Linda M.**, to retirement  
**Greenstreet, Rose M.**, to retirement  
**Hoef, Patricia E.**, to retirement  
**Iles, Rebecca C.**, to Eternal Love, Appleton, Wis.  
**Kom, Michelle L.**, to St. Andrew's, Saint Paul Park, Minn.  
**Reinhard, Renee G.**, to retirement

**COLLOQUY NOTICE**

Norman A. Schell, Omaha, Neb., formerly a pastor in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, has requested a colloquy for the purpose of serving in WELS pastoral ministry. Correspondence related to this request should be addressed to Pastor Joel Frank, President, Nebraska District-WELS, Box 222, Plymouth, NE 68424; 406-656-3176; nedpwels@diodecom.net.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

**Muskego, Wis.**—St. Paul (150). Nov. 3, 6 P.M.; Nov. 4, 8, 9:30, and 11 A.M.; Nov. 5, 7 P.M. Theme: Celebrating Lutheranism. A Reformation service also will be held on Nov. 4. Vince Kirchoff, 414-327-1619.  
**Springville, N.Y.**—Our Savior (25). Nov. 4. Worship, 4 P.M. Meal to follow. Marcia Denzien, 716-592-8903; mellen915@iwon.com.  
**Green Bay, Wis.**—St. Paul (125). Dec. 9. Organ concert worship, 8 and 10:30 A.M.; brunch between services. April 13, 2008. School anniversary worship, 8 and 10:30 A.M.; potluck lunch to follow. June 22, 2008. Confirmation reunion service, 10 A.M.; luncheon to follow. RSVP requested. Nov. 2, 2008. Worship, 8 and 10:30 A.M.; luncheon to follow. RSVP requested. Carla Hoffmann, 920-435-8468, stpaul@new.rr.com.  
**Fond du Lac, Wis.**—St. Peter (150). Sept. 28, 2008. Ralph Leisten, 920-921-6987.

**COMING EVENTS**

**Christian Life Resources National Convention**—Nov. 2-4. Site, St. Paul, Slinger, Wis. 800-729-9535; Web site, www.CLR events.com. Walk-in registrations accepted.

**Milwaukee area reformation festival service**—Nov. 4. Worship, 4 P.M. Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee, Wis. A light luncheon will follow the service, provided by the Greater Milwaukee Area Chapter of WELS Kingdom Workers.

**WELS Military Contact Pastors Conference**—Nov. 7-8 in Colorado Springs, Colo. Open to first 25 military contact pastors who register. Carl Ziemer, 414-256-3240; carl.ziemer@sab.wels.net.

**WELS Prayer Institute Conference**—Nov. 10, 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. Faith, Sussex, Wis. Special pre-event prayer gathering on Nov. 9, 6-7:30 P.M., at Pilgrim, Menomonee Falls, Wis. Web site, www.welsprayerinstitute.com.

**Concert**—The Lutheran Chorale of Milwaukee. Nov. 25; 3 & 7 P.M. Atonement, Milwaukee, Wis. Mary Prange, 414-873-9105.

**Living Nativity**—Nov. 30, 6-9 P.M.; Dec. 1, 6-9 P.M. (signed at 7 & 8 P.M.); Dec. 2, 4-7 P.M. St. Paul, Howards Grove, Wis. Presentation runs every 20 minutes. Free admission, parking, and refreshments. 920-565-3780. Web site, www.stpaulshowardsgrove.org.

**Lakeshore Lutheran Chorale Christmas concerts**—Dec. 2, 3 P.M., at St. Peter, Collins, Wis.; Dec. 9, 4 P.M., at St. John, Two Rivers, Wis.; Dec. 9, 7 P.M., at St. Peter, Mishicot, Wis.

**WELS National Brass Festival**—Jan. 12-13, 2008. Star of Bethlehem, New Berlin, Wis. Concert, Jan. 13, 2008, 3 P.M. Focus on music of Samuel Scheidt and Charles Wesley. Brass players of all levels welcome, membership in a group not required. Register by Dec. 15. Patricia Backhaus, 414-643-5116, cornetpat@aol.com.

**Mexico Mission Partners donor trip**—Feb. 16-25, 2008. Tour includes worship at three churches and the seminary of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church (Mexico). Sightseeing includes the Cholula pyramid, several cathedrals, and the El Redentor statue of Christ in Torreón. Registration deadline, Jan. 4, 2008. Pastor Dennis Kleist, 920-740-5899; dennis.kleist@sab.wels.net. Sponsored by WELS Ministry of Christian Giving.

**CEO Men's Rally**—March 7-8, 2008. Brian Lampe, brianandtracey@tds.net. Web site, www.stpaulmuskego.org.

**Martin Luther College choir tour 2008**—

- March 8—6 P.M., Grace, Glendale, Ariz.
- March 9—10:30 A.M., Peace, Cottonwood, Ariz.; 4 P.M., Christ, Prescott Valley, Ariz.
- March 10—6:30 P.M., Emmanuel, Tempe, Ariz.
- March 11—11 A.M., Arizona Lutheran Academy, Phoenix, Ariz.; 7 P.M., Redeemer, Tucson, Ariz.
- March 12—7 P.M., Christ our Redeemer, El Paso, Tex.
- March 14—7 P.M., Torreón mission, Torreón, Mexico

- March 15—Mini-concert, Saragosa Sur (Torreón mission), Mexico; 7 P.M., Monterrey, Mexico
- March 16—7 P.M., Our Savior, San Antonio, Tex.
- March 17—7 P.M., Holy Word, Austin, Tex.
- March 18—7 P.M., Victory of the Lamb, Katy, Tex.
- March 19—7 P.M., Abiding Word, Houston, Tex.
- March 30—3 P.M., St. Paul, New Ulm, Minn.

**Christian Woman Today Retreat**—April 4-6, 2008. Olympia Resort, Oconomowoc, Wis. Theme: "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." Maureen Sertich, 262-784-0412.

**Today's Christian Woman Retreat**—April 11-13, 2008. Radisson Hotel, Kalamazoo, Mich. Theme: "Keep me, keep me as the apple of your eye." Web site, www.tcw.org.

**WELS National Handbell Festival**—April 12-13, 2008. Host, Emanuel, New London, Wis. Site, New London High School, New London, Wis. Concert, 2 P.M., April 13. www.welsbells.com.

**MLC, DMLC, and NWC Reunion Weekend**—July 25-27, 2008. Site, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn. Celebrating five-year incremental class reunion (2003, 1998 and all previous classes ending in three or eight). Steve Balza, 507-217-1731; balzasj@mlc-wels.edu. Web site, www.mlc-wels.edu/home/alumni.

**NAMES WANTED**

**Butte, Mont.**—Justin Cloute, 406-543-8222; cloutejr@hotmail.com.  
**Akron/Hartsville/Canton, Ohio**—Mike or Sharon Webb, Webb2bs@neo.rr.com.

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**Development director**—Northland Lutheran High School, Wausau, Wis., is looking for candidates for the position of development director. Rick Grundman, 715-359-3400; or mail resume to 2107 Tower Rd, Mosinee, WI 54455.

**Counseling positions**—Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service, through its ministry of Christian Family Counseling, is looking to hire licensed psychologists, licensed professional counselors, and master's degree licensed clinical social workers for its offices located in eastern Wisconsin. It also wants to expand outside of the Midwest by using technology and opening new offices. Mary Schoultz, human resources director, 888-685-9522; 414-353-5506 (fax); mschoultz@wlcfs.org; PO Box 245039, Milwaukee, WI 53224-9539.

To place an announcement, call 414-256-3210; bulletinboard@sab.wels.net. Deadline is eight weeks before publication date. View an updated bulletin board at [www.wels.net/jump/bulletinboard](http://www.wels.net/jump/bulletinboard) and a calendar at [www.wels.net/jump/calendar](http://www.wels.net/jump/calendar).

# Match

Bible characters **names** with their **meanings**

1. **Lo-Ammi**—The second son of the prophet Hosea. His name was given as a sign of God’s rejection of the Northern Kingdom. (Hosea 1:9) ●
2. **Maai**—A musician at the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 12:36) ●
3. **Achan**—An Israelite who violated God’s command by taking loot from Jericho, causing a military defeat at Ai. (Joshua 7–8) ●
4. **Appaim**—Listed in the genealogy of Jerahmeel, a descendant of Judah. (1 Chronicles 2:30) ●
5. **Cozbi**—One of the Midianite woman who tempted Israelite men into adultery as well as idolatry. (Numbers 25) ●
6. **Balaam**—A famous pagan practitioner of the occult hired by King Balak of Moab to curse Israel. (Numbers 22–24) ●
7. **Malachi**—A prophet whose words are recorded in the book of Malachi. ●

8. **Asher**—Second son of Jacob and his wife’s maidservant Zilpah. Head of the tribe of Asher. (Genesis 30:13) ●
9. **Heman**—A Levite seer who was one of David’s chief ministers of music. (1 Chronicles 6:33) ●
10. **Hezekiah**—The king of Judah whose religious reforms provided the basis for deliverance from an Assyrian army. (2 Kings 18–20) ●
11. **Oholiab**—A Danite craftsman who assisted Bezalel in constructing the tabernacle and making its furnishings. (Exodus 31:6) ●
12. **Anna**—A prophetess who recognized Jesus when Mary brought him to the temple. (Luke 2:36–38) ●
13. **Eden**—A Levite who distributed offerings among the priests during Hezekiah’s reign. (2 Chronicles 31:15) ●
14. **Chloe**—Members of her household informed the apostle Paul of the problems he addressed in 1 Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 1:11) ●
15. **Jemimah**—The daughter of Job born after his time of trouble. (Job 42:14) ●
16. **Noah**—The righteous man who built an ark in which he and his family survived the great flood. (Genesis 6–10) ●
17. **Lois**—The grandmother of Timothy, who brought him up to trust God. (2 Timothy 1:5) ●
18. **Samuel**—The last judge of Israel. ●
19. **Leah**—The older of two sisters who married Jacob. (Genesis 29–30) ●

## Picture this



Laura Maier, a member at Beautiful Savior, Everett, Wash., carved this pumpkin last year for Reformation. She said it was her “jack-o’-Lutheran.”

Submitted by Luke Scherschel

- |                                 |                         |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>A.</b> Faces or nostrils     | <b>H.</b> Delight       | <b>O.</b> Troubler      |
| <b>B.</b> Devourer              | <b>I.</b> Wild cow      | <b>P.</b> Compassionate |
| <b>C.</b> Tender shoot          | <b>J.</b> Rest/comfort  | <b>Q.</b> My messenger  |
| <b>D.</b> Little dove           | <b>K.</b> God hears     | <b>R.</b> Faithful      |
| <b>E.</b> Happy                 | <b>L.</b> Better        | <b>S.</b> Grace         |
| <b>F.</b> Yahweh is my strength | <b>M.</b> Father’s tent |                         |
| <b>G.</b> Not my people         | <b>N.</b> Voluptuous    |                         |

# Answers

ANSWERS: 1. G; 2. P; 3. O; 4. A; 5. N; 6. B; 7. Q; 8. E; 9. R; 10. F; 11. M; 12. S; 13. H; 14. C; 15. D; 16. J; 17. I; 18. K; 19. I

Meanings located in two books by Larry Richards: Every Man in the Bible and Every Woman in the Bible.

Send pictures to **Picture This**, *Forward in Christ*, 2929 N Mayfair Rd, Milwaukee WI 53222; fic@sab.wels.net. On a separate sheet, give us information about the photo. Those whose photos are chosen will receive a small gift.

**I**t may catch you off-guard. One midnight hour it hits home. Your life seems uncertain and in disarray. You toss and turn and struggle to find needed and healing sleep. Instead, it gets worse. Everything crushes you into deeper turmoil. You fret over so much left undone, so many new projects waiting to be done. Your confidence is low. You have no energy to make smart decisions and choices. Life is burying you. You'd just as well be covered up. You don't even care to pray. You wonder how God could possibly keep track of your life and those of millions like yours. You seem confused—knocked out of spiritual balance—and ungrounded. Everything seems, well, awful. Your life is in the pits.

It dawns on you that you are not in the Word enough. You forget that Jesus is not only your Savior but also your friend who knows and calls you by name, who is ready to listen anytime, anywhere. You forget your baptism where you were made a new creation in Jesus. All this adds to your agony and uncertainty at midnight's screaming hour.

At that hour God has crushed you with the flaming arrows of his law. They seem aimed at you from all directions. You sink to your lowest, buried in your muddled and murky life.

At times like this, from the dirt, it is good to look beyond yourself, to seek refuge, to cry out to God. Remember Psalm 103. There God says he "redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion" (v. 4). Now, that's a powerful and uplifting word of comfort. Through Christ, God pulls you out of that self-inflicted and muddy pit. He jolts you back to Christian reality. He aims a gleaming ray of hope in your direction.

You breathe deeply and recall that even breath and oxygen are gifts of God. You remember you are God's child through Jesus. You begin to think about why you are here.

God wants you to use your unique gifts to shine like a star in the universe as you hold out the Word of Life (Philippians 2:15) to others who may feel overwhelmed—those even as close as your own family. You are here to show the light and life and truth that Jesus gives. Above all, you know where you are traveling eternally as a homesick saint of Jesus.

Think also of those who toss and turn restlessly without the knowledge of who they are, why they are here, where they are going—who think all they are is dust in the wind. You are here for them too. In thanksgiving to Jesus for your redirected life, pray for those who are screaming in their midnight hours. Find them. Give them an ear. Listen. Mentor them with kindly attention and through the example of your life. Lift their eyes to the light of Jesus, to the brighter days and nights and fullness of life that he brings.

Others, especially the young, observe you as a Christian. They observe how you handle obstacles, how you deal with impossible schedules and deadlines, how you live in hope

**At times like this, from the dirt,  
it is good to look beyond yourself,  
to seek refuge, to cry out to God.**

and concern for others, and how you pray at midnight: "We place into your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes, knowing that only what you bless will prosper" (*Christian Worship*, p. 139).

*Wayne Schulz, a mission counselor, is a member at Eastside, Madison, Wisconsin.*

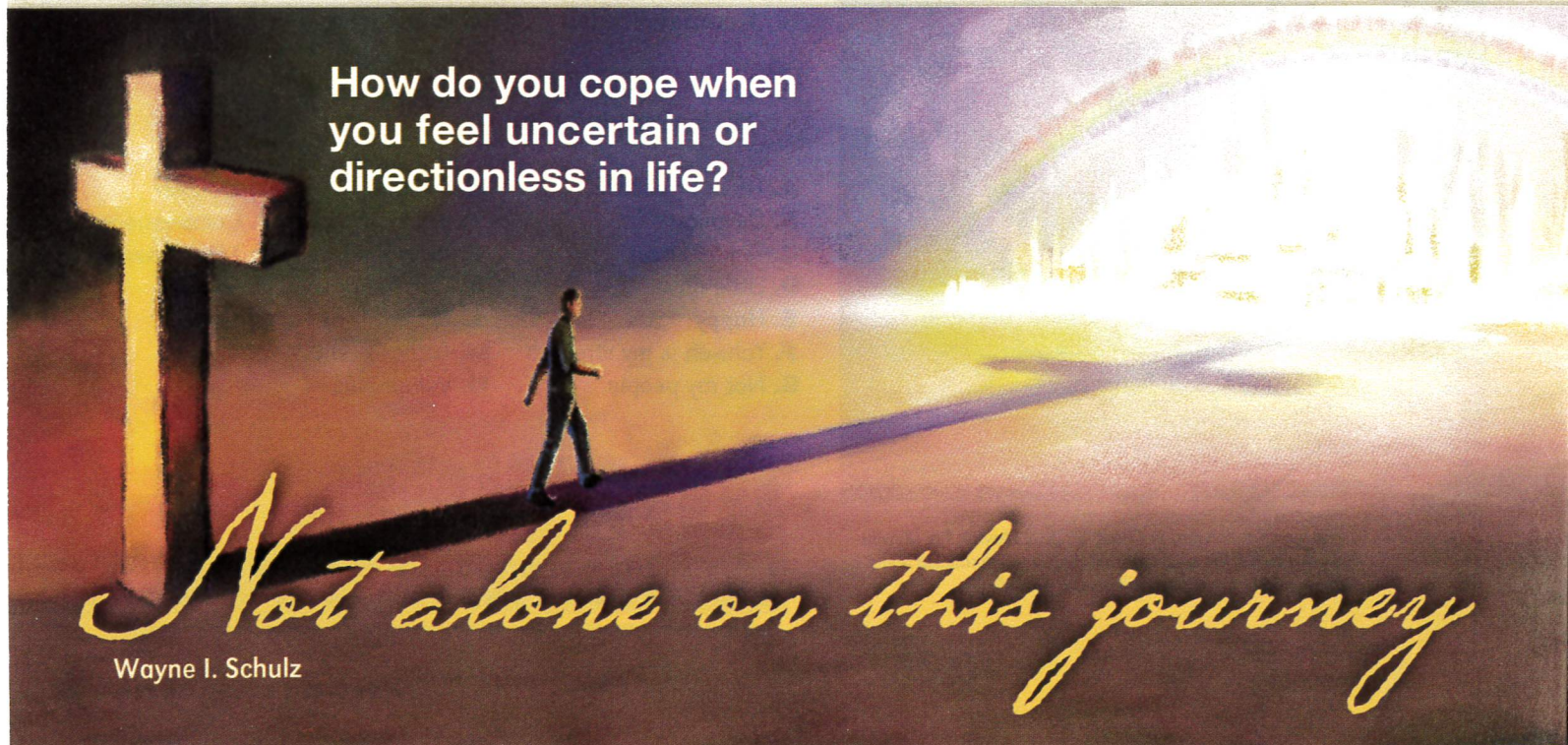
*This is the second article in a six-part series on challenges we face and how fellow Christians can help.*

ILLUSTRATION: GOODSALT

**How do you cope when  
you feel uncertain or  
directionless in life?**

*Not alone on this journey*

Wayne I. Schulz



# Beth Flunker:

## *Here am I. Send me*

Finding ways to fill needs led Beth Flunker to work on publications in both Spanish and Portuguese and to homeschool for 20 years.

Rachel Hartman

It started with a box and a chart. It ended with more than 100 Sunday school lessons in Spanish. Today, these Bible stories have been used throughout Latin America and the United States. "Looking back," Beth Flunker says, "it didn't seem like that much." She just did what needed to be done.

Finding ways to fill needs led Beth to work on publications in both Spanish and Portuguese. It also directed her to homeschool for 20 years. During her years in Puerto Rico and Brazil, God has presented opportunities to serve him in different ways.

### **The box and chart**

Beth's husband, Missionary Charles Flunker, was called to Puerto Rico in 1974. When the Flunkers arrived, they found an assortment of Sunday school supplies in a box. Beth recalls, "Vicar Rob Meister had organized everything he found—all the visual aids, the story material and worksheets that had been produced sporadically from the beginning."

Meister also made a big chart. It presented a way for the materials to be used in a Sunday school course and showed which lessons in the course were missing. "The chart was of great value," Beth says. "The gaps were many."

They looked into the options available and decided to make booklets for the children. Missionary Flunker developed the Bible stories, while Beth made worksheets to go with the stories. She also created the teacher's guide.

Their efforts resulted in two Sunday school series in Spanish. One course has eight booklets, the other 10. Each course has a total of 52 Bible stories for children. Worksheets come in different levels for beginning, intermediate, and advanced readers. Today, these booklets are available through Multi-Language Publications ([www.mlpwels.com](http://www.mlpwels.com)).

When the Flunkers moved to Brazil in 1987, they faced a similar problem. Sunday school materials in Portuguese were scarce. Beth and her husband developed another Sunday school course. These lessons are still used today in Sunday schools.

### **Beyond books**

In addition to publishing, God has led Beth down other paths of service. When they first arrived in Puerto Rico, their children entered the school system. But soon the Flunkers realized that if they wanted to send their kids to Lutheran prep schools in the United States, they would need to do something else. Beth began to homeschool their children and continued to homeschool for the next 20 years.

Beth also has taught piano lessons and is involved in church music. She currently serves as church secretary to Star of Bethlehem in Dourados, Brazil. She helps develop worksheets for the Bible Stories in Pictures series, which is produced by Multi-Language Publications.

### **God's preparations**

God often presents unforeseen

opportunities to serve him. Before leaving for Puerto Rico, Beth received training to teach high school. "This was my preparation for homeschooling," she observes.

God continued to prepare Beth. Through spending time with the people, she learned of the children's needs and the Sunday school teachers' capabilities. This helped her create appropriate worksheets and teacher manuals.

During her 33 years in world missions, Beth raised six children. In her various areas of service, she has followed her husband's attitude of serving the Lord first, as well as his motto: "If there is something that needs doing, find a way to do it, but don't complain."

God prepares each one of us. He also gives us opportunities to serve. As Beth notes, "Living and serving anywhere is a blessing." No matter what our situation is, we can find ways to further his kingdom here on earth.

*Rachel Hartman and her husband, Missionary Michael Hartman, are serving in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico.*

*Next: Yvonne Janosek: Train a child in the way he should go*



# Volunteering

Christ inspires love for others and gives his people health and opportunity to help and serve others.

When Christ finds a place in a human's heart, and that person begins to comprehend what Christ's death and resurrection mean, prayers inevitably rise to heaven. What if we could listen in? *Lord, help me to love others as you have loved me. You have blessed me so much; help me to give back to others. May my attitude, like yours, Christ, be humble.*

The Georgsons had been active members of their Wisconsin congregation for 44 years. Allan served on the church council, was a delegate to Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries, and used his hands for many jobs at church. Viola was involved with Ladies Aid and the Funeral Committee as well as the guilds of Wisconsin Lutheran High School and Wisconsin Lutheran Child & Family Service (WLCFS). With four sons and one daughter and now 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild, "the Lord has always been the head of our house," shares Viola.

Right now, home is at Luther Haven in Milwaukee, Wis., "a wonderful independent living center where we moved over three years ago after my husband Allan's health made keeping up a house and yard more difficult."

At their new home and in a new congregation, the Lord continues to use this couple to spread his love and blessings in many ways.

"God has blessed me so richly," Viola reflects, "that

I feel I want to work for the Lord while I am able. Most of my family of origin died quite young, and, at 77, I feel especially blessed to still have the gifts of ambition, health, and love of my fellowman to do what I do."

While Allan's health has slowed him down, his encouragement has spurred Viola to serve. Viola points to John 15:12 as her motivation: "Love each other as I have loved you."

## Serving at home

When I first contacted Viola about her volunteering, I asked her if she had an e-mail address that I could use to reach her.

"Oh, yes," she replied. "I am an officer in the Computer Club at Luther Haven."

In addition to computer meetings and duties, Viola also helps new residents become acquainted with the Luther Haven facility and serves on the Wellness Committee, which meets several times a year to discuss health issues, dining services, and activities. She and Allan feel privileged to give back to the Luther Haven community, a community that has brought such blessings to their lives.

## Helping in his house

"We joined Risen Savior, a multi-ethnic church that is active in spreading God's Word," Viola says. She serves on the Outreach Committee, Ladies Guild, and Altar Guild, and also helps with English as a second language (ESL) classes.

"In ESL we help the Hispanics with reading, writing, and pronunciation. This has been the most challenging volunteer project for me—and one of the most rewarding. I know no Spanish, but to help these eager people to learn English is very rewarding. They are so appreciative, as they show us with a meal they provide at the end of the sessions."

## Taking Christ into the community

About 40 years ago Viola and Allan began taking things no longer needed from friends and family to the Bargain Center, a resale shop in Milwaukee that benefits several WELS organizations. "For some years I have been volunteering there and taking donations with me," Viola says. "A friend and I usually go every Wednesday. There is a group of us who enjoy working together, and we get a lot of donations sorted, priced, and sold."

Since living at Luther Haven, Viola helps collect things for Risen Savior as well. "We have a rummage sale every spring that benefits the children in our neighborhood. We help pay for them to go to Camp TREES, where they learn about their Savior's love. This rummage sale is also much appreciated by the needy people in our community who get great bargains on needed items."

Calvary Academy, a Milwaukee ministry for troubled youth and their families, also has a huge rummage sale



# For Jesus

Laura E. Warmuth



Viola and other volunteers at the Bargain Center in Milwaukee: (Left to right) Marge Gebert, Ruth Benduhn, Rosane Bourassa, Anita Stott, Beverly Braskett, Helen Drew, Terry Jante, Bernice Haack, Viola Georgson, Carol Felch, Thomas Buresh, and June Trede. Many of these volunteers also knit caps and socks for veterans and needy people, make crafts for sales that benefit WLCFS, and make quilts for families in need.

every summer. Viola says that “it is enjoyable to work there, too, with other dedicated volunteers for another very good cause.”

## Offering God’s love

When the Georgson’s home telephone rings in the middle of the night, Viola is not caught off guard. As a hotliner for the pregnancy call center of WELS Lutherans for Life, she receives calls from 4 P.M. to 9 A.M. on the night of her shift. “Often callers are looking to have an abortion, so we encourage them to come for a consultation to learn more about procedures in hope that they will change their minds,” Viola explains. “We encourage adoption in some cases. Sometimes the caller is a mother of a young pregnant girl or a boy who needs to talk and wants direction.” Knowing that this is a matter of saving lives here on earth and for eternity, “each of us hotliners approaches our shift with prayer that God will give us the words to say,” Viola says.

Also to benefit the pregnancy counseling center, you’ll find Viola and Allan helping out at the Life-a-Thon, an annual walk/run. “I encourage people to participate and help in any way I can with set-up, water distribution, and clean-up. I like to greet and welcome participants,” Viola shares. “WELS Lutherans for Life has been dear to our hearts for many years.”

## Looking after one’s brother

Sometimes serving doesn’t have to mean volunteering for

a specific project or signing up for a committee. The Lord expects us to look after our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Mary Gross, the activities director at the assisted living center Wisconsin Lutheran Care Center (WLCC), is thankful for caring friends like Viola. “Viola is here regularly to visit friends from Luther Haven and her church community that, for various reasons, are staying at WLCC.”

Viola also helps throughout the year, including decorating trees and wrapping gifts for residents at Christmas time. “She is a caring, Christian volunteer who greets all with a smile and an upbeat, happy attitude,” Gross continues. “She is a blessing to us and to our residents.”

## Living with zeal for the Lord

It’s obvious that nothing but the supernatural love of a fantastic God could move hearts such as Viola’s to service. “I thank God that he has given me health and strength to see the needs of others and a loving husband who has always encouraged me to volunteer wherever I can,” Viola says.

Just as God used unselfish acquaintances and friends in Viola’s life to model Christian caring, God has used Viola’s life to inspire her family and others around her. Perhaps Peter summed up Christian service best in 1 Peter 4:11 where he wrote, “If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

*Laura Warmuth is a staff writer for Forward in Christ.*



Mark Schweden

# What is the Synodical Council?

This month I will have the privilege of chairing my first meeting of the Synodical Council. You may have heard of this group if you follow synodical news. More than likely you saw references to the Synodical Council in the discussions leading up to and following last summer's synod convention.

Exactly who belongs to this group? What does the Synodical Council do?

The Synodical Council (often referred to as the "SC") is comprised of the synod president as chairman, one lay representative from each of the 12 districts, three district presidents, the four chairmen of each area of ministry (World Missions, Home Missions, Ministerial Education, and Parish Services), one pastor (elected at the synod convention), and one teacher (elected at the synod convention). Advisory members include the two vice presidents, the chief financial officer, the director of the Ministry of Christian Giving, the director of communications, and the director of technology.

The duties of the Synodical Council are very much like those of a church council in a congregation. It is responsible for overseeing the work of the synod between conventions, just as a church council oversees the work done in a congregation between voters' meetings. It's the responsibility of the Synodical Council to see to it that the decisions and directives of the synod convention are carried out faithfully.

Another major responsibility of the Synodical Council is to oversee the synod's

finances and budget. The council proposes a budget to the synod convention. Once the budget has been adopted by the synod convention including any changes made by the convention, the Synodical Council must do all it can to see to it that the budget remains balanced. If the offerings received by the synod are not sufficient to carry out the work adopted by the convention, the Synodical Council is responsible for adjusting the budget or taking appropriate action to ensure the fiscal health of the synod. You can imagine how difficult this task must be in times when expected offerings fall short of what is needed.

The recent convention adopted a two-year budget. But even though we are only five months into that budget, the Synodical Council will already begin working with the various areas of ministry to plan for the next two-year budget to be considered by the 2009 convention. The SC tries to determine the amount of funding that will be available and then strives to propose a budget that will best carry out the work that we will do together as a synod.

Please keep these faithful men in your prayers. Thank God for their willingness to serve; they give many hours of their time and make many sacrifices to "be about their Father's business." And ask God to give them a rich measure of his wisdom as they serve you and their Lord in this important role.



# LESSONS FROM THE CREED

Charles F. Degner

*“... and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.”*

In Washington, D.C., it is all about who has access to whom. Lobbyists curry favor of important lawmakers and argue the case for their client's interests. Unfortunately, access to a representative or senator often costs money. The more money you float around, the more likely you will have access to the people who make a difference.

This is nothing new. In the Old Testament, Adonijah used his mother, Bathsheba, to gain access to Solomon's throne. “When Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, the king stood up to meet her, bowed down to her and sat down on his throne. He had a throne brought for the king's mother, and she sat down at his right hand” (1 Kings 2:19). Solomon let Bathsheba sit at his right hand. He honored her, and he gave her access.

## Jesus sits at God's right hand

God gave Jesus the place at his right hand to honor him. “The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’ ” (Psalm 110:1).

He placed him at his right hand to share in all things in his kingdom.

What does this mean for us? It means we have access to the throne of grace through Jesus. Jesus said: “In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name” (John 16:23). I once heard a Catholic priest try to

**BY FAITH IN JESUS,  
WE HAVE A LAWYER  
WHO IS ALWAYS AT  
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TO PLEAD OUR CASE.**

justify praying to Mary. He said, “We pray to Mary, because Jesus would never deny a request that came to him through his mother.” The Bible never says that Mary can give us access to the throne. Besides, why would we want to go through Mary when we can come directly to God through Jesus?

## Jesus pleads our case

Access to the throne is especially important to us when we have sinned. “Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was

raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Romans 8:34). Jesus is our faithful high priest (Hebrews 8:1) who is always before the throne of God and pleading our case.

John compares Jesus to a lawyer to give us this same hope. “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One” (1 John 2:1). Wealthy people put lawyers on retainer so that they are obligated to represent them. By faith in Jesus, we have a lawyer who is always at God's right hand to plead our case.

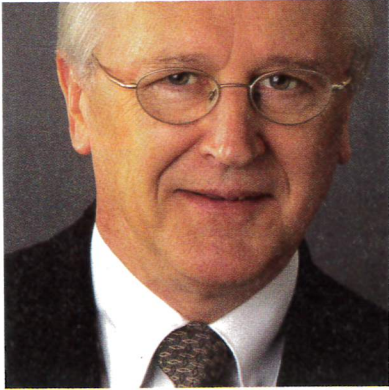
When Stephen faced the crowd that held stones in their hands to take his life, God gave him a special vision. “‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God’ ” (Acts 7:56). Stephen saw his Savior, his friend, his lawyer, his High Priest at God's right hand, ready to welcome him into heaven. I can't imagine when access to the throne will be more important than in that moment of my life.

*Contributing editor Charles Degner is pastor at Saint Peter, Saint Peter, Minnesota.*

*This is the ninth article in a 10-part series on the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed. To read other articles in the series, go to [www.forwardinchrist.net](http://www.forwardinchrist.net), and search by the author's first and last name.*



**JESUS.**



*John A. Brann*

## Foggy road ahead

People worldwide want to know what lies ahead. Many spend great sums of money attempting to peer into the future. They consult fortunetellers, palm readers, and tarot cards among other things. A few discuss the work of Nostradamus. Others seek out so-called mediums, so they can talk with the dead about the future. Still others have turned the books of Revelation and Daniel into maps that chart future events.

God is clear about such things. He says, "Don't." Among other things, the Second Commandment expresses God's will concerning such superstitious practices.

Yes, Jesus told his disciples what would take place during the end times, but his comments provide only a general look ahead. They provide no clear chronology. His words tell us that believers will be living in an increasingly hostile world and that catastrophic events like wars, earthquakes, and famines will be the harbingers of the future—his return.

But we want to know more details. We crave specific, concrete directions and turn to whoever seems to have a vision for us to follow into the future. We look for ways to satisfy our curiosity. *Left Behind* is one such view of future events. Others abound. But each approach is flawed and false.

The road ahead is not that clearly marked. It remains foggy and muddled. That's the way God wants it. Even the words of Jesus about the end times can apply to every age. Jesus simply wanted us to realize that his coming is just around the corner. James wrote, "The Lord's coming is near . . . The Judge is standing at the door!" (James 5:8,9). That was as true for first-century Christians as it remains for us today.

We might accept the broad principle of the unknown and unknowable future. But

we are still filled with concerns about our own personal futures and the events that lie ahead for us and for our families. If we only knew the future, we think, we could make the best investments and even prepare for the occasional shattering events ahead.

But the reality of this life is much different. On a personal level we know even less about the future than we know about the broad view Jesus gives us of the world's future. Our futures and those of the people we know and love are hidden from us. That, too, is as God wants it.

His guiding principle in keeping these things from us is love. He understands that if we knew the tragedy ahead we would stop on our journey and fail to move forward. We would sit paralyzed until the events overwhelmed us. On the other hand, if we knew the great joy ahead, we would cease to take care of today's challenges and opportunities. We would ignore today and perhaps be unprepared for tomorrow no matter how joyful and pleasant it might be.

So be thankful that the Lord has given you only a rough black-and-white sketch of the world's future and left the page where your future is drawn in his book and not yours. That's the way he wants it.

But he has not left us without comfort and hope. First, he tells us that eventually he will return and take us to the mansions he has prepared. Second, he gives us his promise that no matter what he has written on our pages all will work out for the best (Romans 8:28). Finally, God, who gave his only Son for us, loves us with a deep, wide, and enduring love. We are secure in his love no matter how foggy the road ahead.

Jacob and Esau were twins. God told their mother that the blessing would go to Jacob, the younger brother. But when Jacob and his mother conspired to deceitfully take the blessing, his brother Esau vowed to kill him. Jacob ran for his life. After years apart, Jacob was about to meet his brother for the first time since Jacob fled. Both of these brothers had wronged the other. Would they be able to reconcile past wrongs? Could they find forgiveness?

### Watch your assumptions

Read Genesis 32:6-8 and 33:1-4.

1. What assumptions did Jacob make about Esau? Were they well founded?
2. How did those assumptions color Jacob's understanding of the situation?
3. How did Esau immediately prove Jacob's assumptions wrong? What do Esau's actions tell you about him and his relationship with Jacob?
4. What was the reality behind the assumptions that Jacob made?
5. What danger do you see in making assumptions in your relationship with others? How can you keep yourself from making unfounded assumptions about your family, friends, or coworkers?

### Forgive as God forgives

Read Genesis 33:5-20.

1. Imagine that you have wronged someone. You know it; they know it. You want to be forgiven. Define what forgiveness means to you in that situation.
2. Where do we get the power to forgive like that?
3. Agree or disagree: There is nothing fair about forgiveness.
4. When we have been wronged, we often have the following emotionally charged attitudes:

- a. How can I forgive them if they're not even sorry?
  - b. They need to learn a lesson.
  - c. It's not up to me to make the first move.
  - d. I don't want to encourage bad behavior.
- How does God address each attitude?
5. Agree or disagree: Forgiveness is the same as pardon.
  6. Philip Yancy wrote: "By forgiving another, I am trusting that God is a better justice-maker than I am. By forgiving, I release my own right to get even and leave all issues of fairness for God to work out. Though wrong does not disappear when I forgive, it loses its grip on me and is taken over by God, who knows what to do." Evaluate his statement.

### Be reconciled to one another

1. Look at Genesis 33:9. What does Esau call Jacob? What does that mean? How would it have made Jacob feel?
2. For another expression of reconciliation made real, look at the first time that Jesus ever addressed his disciples as, "My brothers" (Matthew 28:10). How is the situation the same? How is it different? How would you compare the emotions?
3. Look at Genesis 33:10. What does forgiveness and reconciliation allow us to be for our loved ones?

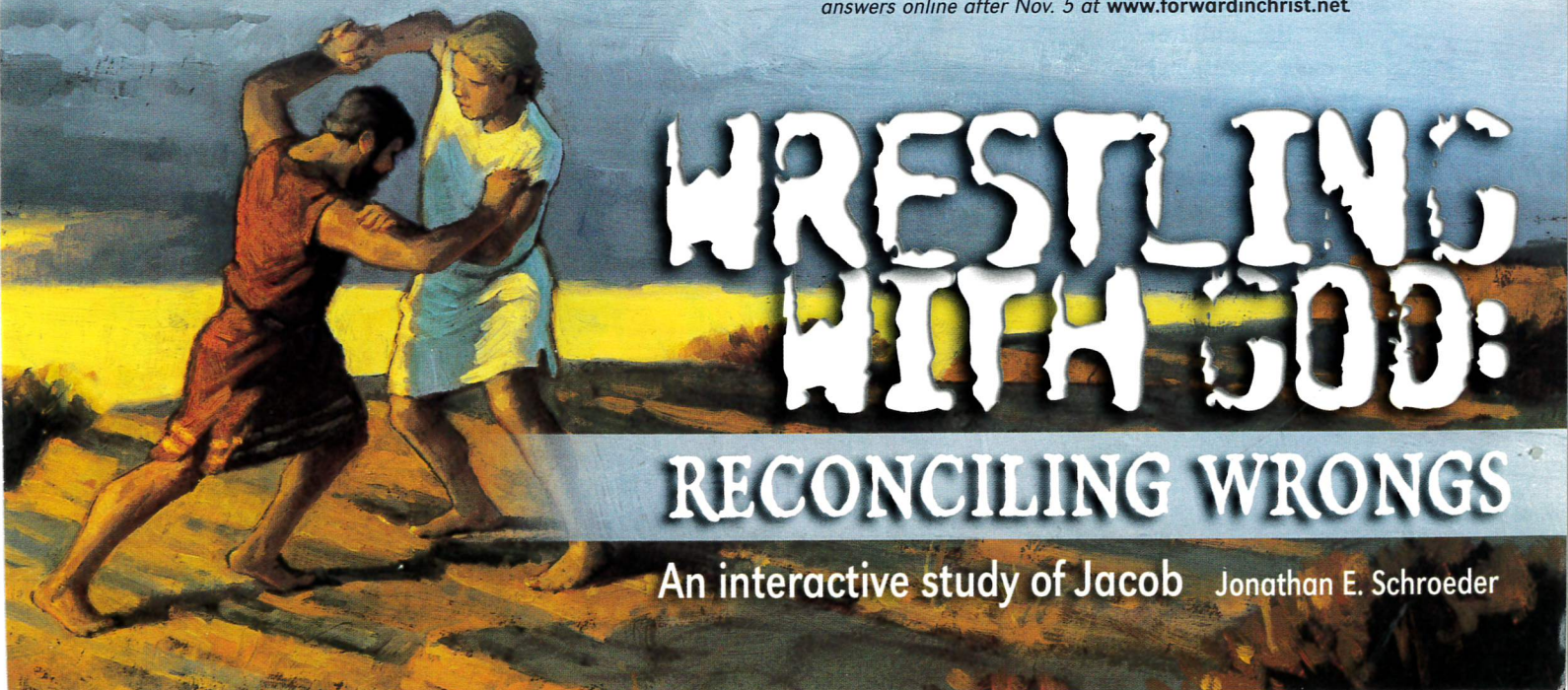
### Bringing it home

Jacob had come to this meeting limping because he had wrestled with God and received his blessing. What better way could there be for us to approach reconciliation and forgiveness? Wrestle with your God and then limp your way in love and let your face be like the face of God.

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*This is the 11th article in a 12-part Bible study. Find this article and answers online after Nov. 5 at [www.forwardinchrist.net](http://www.forwardinchrist.net)*

ILLUSTRATION: JOHNSON AND FANCHER



# Hallway lessons

The simple faith of children allows them to look to Jesus for help and safety and sing his praises.

We were still in the glow of Easter on that Wednesday afternoon in April. The teachers had been made aware that morning storms were in the forecast. When the sirens sounded at about 2 o'clock, we were thankful that a school tornado drill had been held the week before. On the way to the hallway, a first-grader's question brought reality to the hour: "Is this a practice?" The teacher's answer had to be "Actually, no, it's not."

The noise of the raging wind and pounding rain was obvious as, one by one, students protected their heads with their arms and crouched under the benches along the wall. No one could help sneaking an occasional peek out the glass doors at the end of the hall. As the storm continued, faces became sweaty and the air felt stuffy as we huddled together. Eventually, teachers and students alike began sitting up for relief. Adults began pondering what an appropriate diversion might be to take the children's minds off the circumstances. Should we read a book? Talk about something else?

**It was a second-grader next to me who cleared the air of confusion.** "Would you read Scripture to us? You know, the kind that would be comforting to us in this situation?"

"Of course," I answered, trying to convince myself that she had simply beat me to the punch.

I quickly ducked back into the classroom and grabbed a student Bible. She directed me to "Jesus Calms the Storm," so I turned to Luke. When I looked up from the reading, tears were streaming down her face. The storm was still roaring. "Will you pray with us?" I led the students closest to me in a prayer for safety, peace, and thanks for a Savior. When I opened my eyes, a glance over my shoulder showed a group of four or five first- and second-graders sitting in a circle. They were holding hands and praying.

I'll never know who brought the first note, but one voice and then many

were singing, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today," complete with all the hallelujahs that children and adults love to hear and sing. After the second verse, someone else began, "I know that my Redeemer lives, what comfort this sweet sentence gives." Imagine the voices of 65 children, ages 6-14, ringing in the confines of a school hallway. As I listened and sang along in a choked-up sort of voice, I couldn't help but think that this is a piece of heaven—a haven of joy, right here in this moment.

**Eventually the storm passed, and, with hearts slightly shaken, we returned to the classrooms.**

Later, news reports told us that a tornado had indeed touched down less than five miles away in the middle of a field. No one was near, no property damaged. Praise God.

I think we teachers were the ones who were changed the most that day. Our growth came as we realized the purpose of the storm. The lesson for all? Live what you have learned: Jesus knows where we are and is indeed in the wind that blows and as close as the air we breathe—even in a stuffy hallway. We are his first thought. He patiently waits for us to think of him.

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