

THE LUTHERAN WITNESS™

VOL. 129 NO. 12 DECEMBER 2010

When Half-Spent Was the Night

**THE FIRST DIVINE SERVICE
OF CHRISTMAS**

Your Light Has Come!

Yes, Virginia. There Are Angels!

The Twelve Days of Christmas

God Bless Us, Every One!

The Smallest Gift

lcms.org/witness

Tantrums and Gifts

When I was a little girl, Santa Claus scared me. My parents recall that I never wanted to sit on his lap. They urged me to do so once at the mall when I was just four years old. I took one look at the jolly man in red and erupted in a fierce tantrum. That was the end of that.

Lest anyone suspect I was a super-pious, no-fun kid growing up, the tradition of getting presents (no matter *whom* they were from) was not lost on me. Every year I wrote my Christmas wish list. And every year, I would get a few things from the list. To my dismay, I'd always have to put "that pony" on the following year's list. But growing up as a kid in the suburbs, I never did get that pony.

Looking back on this now as an adult, I wonder how much has really changed. Certainly, the wishes and desires are different. A pony has transitioned to wanting a new car, enough money, or a healthy baby and family. But the desires themselves haven't changed. Even the tantrums—while more internal (and oh-so-adult)—still exist. When we don't get what we want, turning on other people, ourselves, and God is nothing new, no matter what age. We often think of God as a spiritual Santa Claus and thus limit Him and His abundant gifts.

So where does that leave us? Should we only ask God for the things that we need? Did the monks and nuns have it right in supposing we all just live in monasteries, as if our desires would somehow cease? Of course not. Further, God not only urges us to ask for things we want but to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). This includes all the thought, word, and deed trappings of our sinful natures. And truthfully (like American Express), we can't leave prayer without it.

But there is good news! We are also bound to Christ.

Furthermore, the thing most needful in our lives is the thing we could not even ask for, no matter how hard we pray. We might think we are pious and holy for wanting Jesus and His gifts of Word and Sacrament. But if it weren't precisely for these Means of Grace, we would never want them in the first place. God knows this, and thanks be to Him for endlessly revealing His love through these gifts.

Like the birth of our Lord that first Christmas night, God comes to us even now, when we aren't wanting or expecting Him. He takes the ordinary things of this life (a baby, bread, wine, water), and when they are combined with His Word, extraordinary, eternal things take place for our salvation and the forgiveness of our sins. Not only that, but He gives us abundantly more than just Himself: He gives us all that we need to support this body and life. Maybe even ponies.

While it might seem unfair that some people have more than others, God gives us exactly what we need. Can we accept that answer? In sin, no. But in Christ, certainly.

As we sing the Gloria this season—"Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth"—we participate in a foretaste of the heavenly choirs, where the angels welcomed Jesus, the Giver of all good gifts, into the world. As baptized believers, we are assured that God continually strengthens and renews us in the gift of faith in His Son and in love toward one another this Christmas.

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Providing Missouri Synod laypeople with stories and information that complement congregational life, foster personal growth in faith, and help interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran Christian perspective.



Official periodical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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Published 11 times per year by Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968

Individual subscription \$22.00 per year. Organized congregation subscriptions and district editions offered at reduced rate if submitted through local churches.

To subscribe, renew, or to give a gift subscription, call Concordia Publishing House at 1-800-325-3040.

For subscription information or address changes, e-mail: cphorder@cph.org.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
1-888-THE LCMS (843-5267)
www.lcms.org
e-mail: LUTHERAN.WITNESS@cms.org

Member: Associated Church Press
Evangelical Press Association
December 2010 (ISSN: 0024-757X)
Vol. 129, No. 12

Cover photo: © istockphoto.com

to the reader

By the world's standards, a Lutheran Christmas doesn't make much sense. The culture is busily focused on skiing trips and snow globes, on iced cookies and elaborate light displays, on down coats and collectable Santas.

At the same time, we Lutherans are anxiously listening to the story of a pregnant virgin, following kings trailing a lone star, and rejoicing when Christ is born to be our Savior.

But shouldn't presents be more appealing than unhelpful innkeepers? And aren't sleigh rides more enticing than shepherds in fields? To the world, a Lutheran Christmas must be confusing, indeed.

But that's because Christ didn't come just to satisfy our minds and reason. He came to answer the questions of our hearts and souls too.

So, unlike the world, our Christmas doesn't end with a sad pile of trash bags stuffed with crumpled wrapping paper on the night of the 25th. No, Christ is Emmanuel, God with us, always. He is the one who—day in and day out, ice skates or inflatable snowmen—makes sense out of our confusion and gives answers to our questions.

That's what you'll find within the pages of this month's magazine: answers to questions that Lutherans and the world alike are asking.

Why do Lutherans celebrate the first Divine Service of Christmas on Christmas Eve? Read Rev. William Weedon's "When Half-Spent Was the Night."

Who cures our winter blues? Ponder Dr. Lessing's "Your Light Has Come!"

Are angels really just glorified chubby babies? Check out Deaconess Rose Adle's "Yes, Virginia. There Are Angels!"

Why doesn't the Church celebrate Christmas according to the world's calendar? Consider Terence Maher's "The Twelve Days of Christmas: Unwrapping the Gifts."

Should traditional Christmas stories be read in Christian homes? See Rev. Lonie Eatherton's "God Bless Us, Every One!"

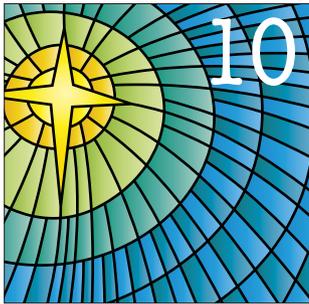
How is it that care for our neighbor can come in so many different shapes and sizes? Contemplate Rev. Tom Engel's "The Smallest Gift."

Finally, as a little Christmas gift to you, we'll be introducing a refreshed design of *The Lutheran Witness* next month. On the outside, the cover will look a bit different. On the inside, you'll find an increased emphasis on regular departments. These shorter, easy-to-read columns will, we hope, help you better interpret the contemporary world from a uniquely Lutheran perspective.

By the world's standards, Christmas may not make much sense. But Christ does. So be at ease. He loved you in the manger, He loved you on the cross, and He loves you now . . . whether it makes sense or not.

Adriane Dorr, Managing Editor
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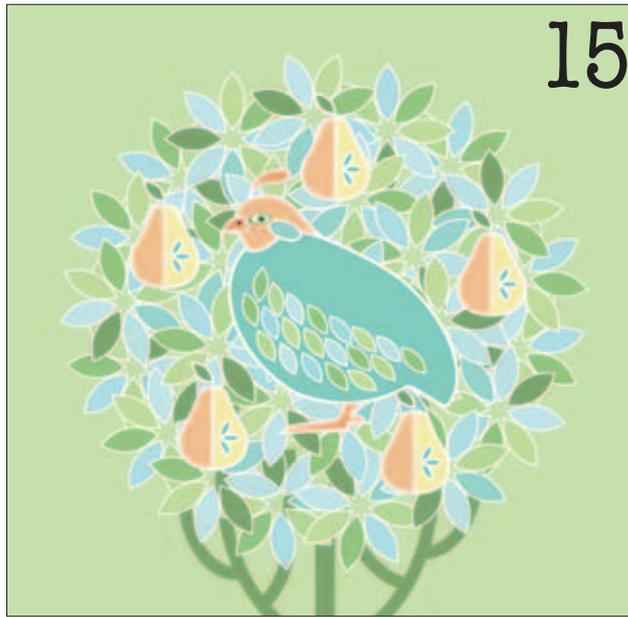




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»» on the web

- For the latest Synod news, visit *Reporter Online* at lcms.org/reporter. Included this month is news about the second meeting of the two new LCMS Boards for National and International Mission as well as news about LCMS members elected this fall to Congress and as governors.
- Also, go to lcms.org/witness to check out Rev. Thomas Chryst's article "Why Did He Bother?" that answers the question, "If Jesus is the reason for the season, what is the reason for Jesus?"

On top of the issue

Thank you to Dr. Rast for his review of the “God in America” series on PBS. After watching that series, my first question was, “Where were the Lutherans?” I was troubled and curious to know the answer. Very soon after the program aired, my question was answered when I received the October issue of *The Lutheran Witness* and read the article Dr. Rast wrote in response to that very question! I was amazed that *The Witness* was on top of the issue so quickly. In my opinion, Dr. Rast answered my question completely and succinctly. His advice and recommendation on watching the series were also helpful and to the point. Thank you to

middle colonies. And he did not discuss the Salzburgers, escaping persecution, who were led by their pastor, Johann Martin Boltzius, in the 1700s. I believe that Dr. Rast owes his readers more than the bibliography he supplied at the end of his article.

*John Lavendar
Sioux Falls, S.D.*

Freedom of faith

I am one of the “no” people when it comes to Christianity being the foundation or the guiding force of our nation (“What Makes America American?”). Christianity is the belief in Christ, the Savior, the Trinity. The quotes often used point to our country being founded on a belief in God, which is true, but also true that it is/was not specifically Christ.

The article seemed more focused on how Lutherans were slighted in the PBS documentary. I’m more concerned why the body of Christ, in general, is being slighted, both in our media and in the highest office of our nation, while we as Christians fail to boldly proclaim the biblical principles on which our nation was founded. We cannot sit silently by while history is being rewritten about our Christian founders, and I’m deeply disappointed *The Lutheran Witness* missed this opportunity to highlight this blatant revisionism of our Lord’s hand in our nation’s history.

*Beth Groh
Oklahoma City, Okla.*

Changed for the better

I have read *The Lutheran Witness* many years and have probably saved all of them since 1997. My opinion of it had fallen off after the last few years, but I can say without question that it changed for the better with the October issue. I have heard Dr. Rast speak. I so enjoyed his article and the one by Dr. Kolb. We have such a rich heritage, especially in our music and liturgy.

*Jane Jensen
Plainview, Neb.*



Thank you to the editors of *The Lutheran Witness* for keeping us abreast of what goes on in our world.

*Lorraine Ondov
Billings, Mont.*

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*Lorraine Ondov
Billings, Mont.*

More than the bibliography

Dr. Rast’s article on “What Makes America American?” (October) . . . barely touched on the Lutherans’ contribution to American life so that the reader is left with the idea that Lutherans were ignored in this special, but very little attention was given to even a brief overview of the Lutherans’ contributions so that the reader is aware that something is missing. Amongst the numerous contributions to the American culture, he does not mention the Swedish Lutherans that settled along the Delaware River . . . Nor does he note the famous multi-lingual Henry Muhlenberg who arrived in Philadelphia in 1742 and would spread Luther’s Catechism in the

Thomas Jefferson explained that freedom of religion (whether it is Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, or otherwise) is in the Constitution to protect freedom of faith. I am a Christian, a Lutheran, and I am also an American. I believe firmly in separation of church and state. Otherwise my beliefs could be held hostage to someone’s non-belief or a belief not of my choosing.

*Polly Booher
Thomasville, Ga.*

History is being rewritten

I started reading with great anticipation the article, “What Makes America American?” However, I was left scratching my head when I finished because the article failed to address the reason why this topic is even on Americans’ radar screens. We have a president who declared, in June 2007, “Whatever we once were, we’re no longer a Christian nation.”

Hitting the million mark

I think the last issue of *The Lutheran Witness* was wonderful and filled with great articles. I especially loved the hymnal article (“Hitting the Million Mark”). I hope many people read it so they start to realize how special it is to use a hymnal for worship. Too many churches in our Synod don’t. I hope it encourages people to ask *why* if they don’t use it in their church.

*Kari Anderson
Alexandria, Minn.*

Heads and tails above the rest

Having read your monthly journal for a number of years now, I wanted to express my gratitude for your work. The last two months especially have been heads and tails above the rest! The writing is well done, and the choice of topics and presentation address many of the concerns of my congregations here in Kansas, as well as, I’m sure, throughout our church. I’m not sure what exactly has been the change, but please, keep up the good work!

Members of my two churches have even been coming to me and commenting on how *The Lutheran Witness* seems to get better and better. Please receive this as a gift of thanksgiving. The Gospel presents itself clearly in your work to those who dearly need it.

*Rev. Geoff Boyle
Wichita, Kan.*

Providing solace from society

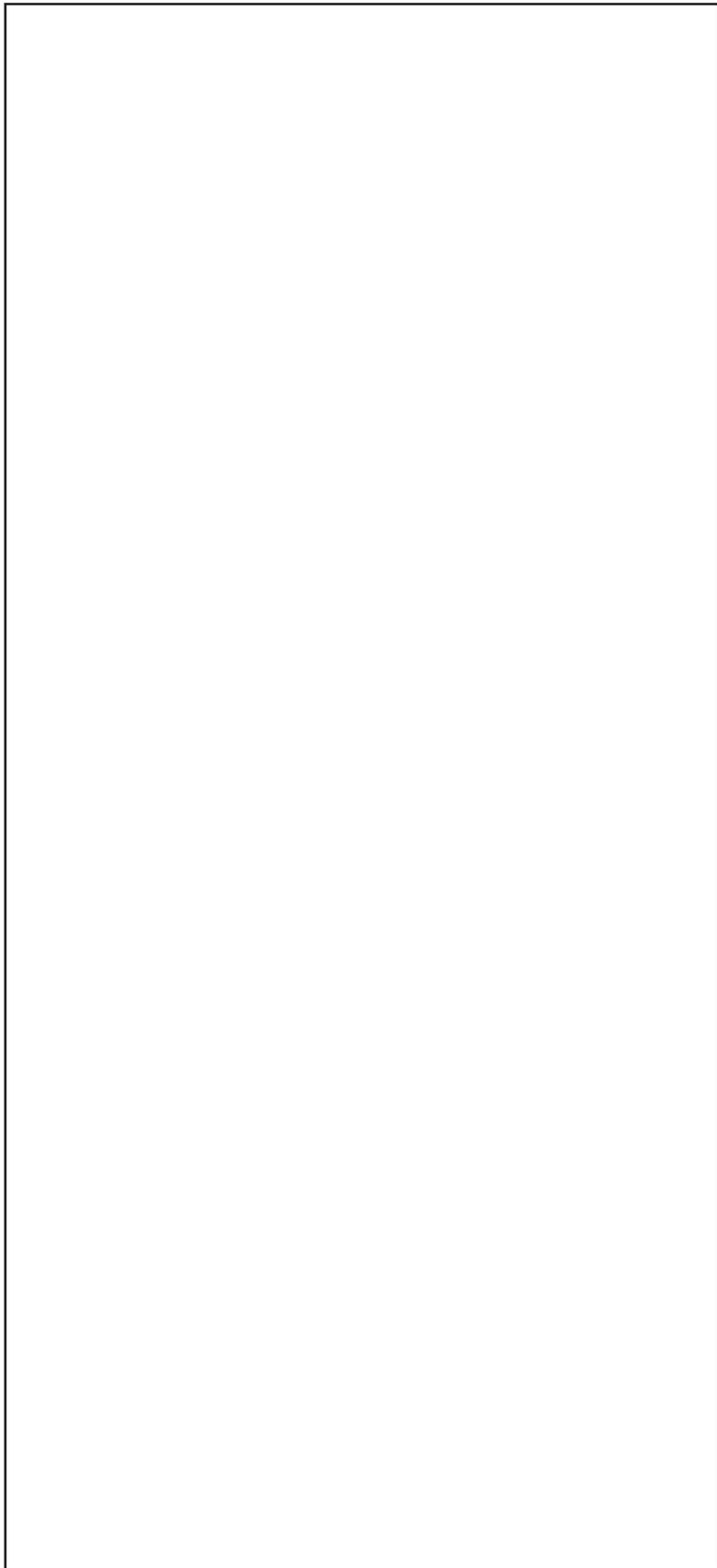
It has been my recent experience that many churches, including Lutheran churches, appear to be emphasizing contemporary technology. This takes the form of screens, amplified instruments (usually guitars), and monitor stations. In some churches, the architecture accommodates the monitor station, which is plainly visible. Often the amplified music is loud. The lyrics may not always reflect Lutheran theology.

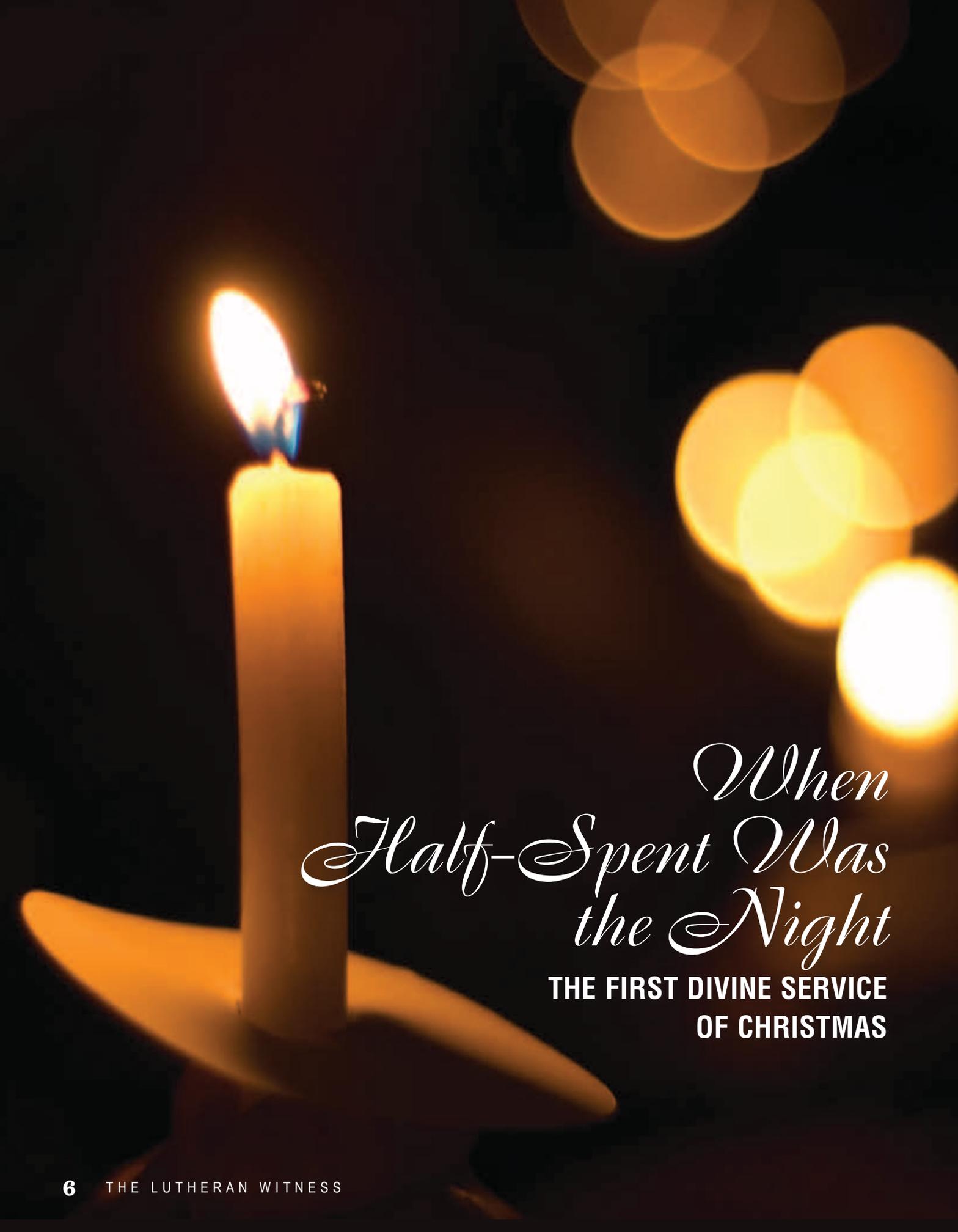
I do not understand why “loud” should be a part of any worship setting. Neither do I understand why this equipment should be so obvious to those in attendance. In fact, each of these things, in my opinion, is a distraction from the main purpose of worship.

Additionally, it seems to me that this is some type of elevation of technology to an unnecessary level. Is this another example of the church following the world rather than leading it, or providing a solace from the secular society in which we live?

*John K. Jenkins
Mason, Mich.*

Read more letters to the editor at lcms.org/witness. We welcome letters that comment on articles in *The Lutheran Witness*. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Send letters to “Letters,” c/o *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; or send them via e-mail to lutheran.witness@lcms.org. Please include your name, postal address, and telephone number. Letters without this information cannot be considered for publication.



A lit candle in a holder is the central focus, with a warm, golden glow. The background is dark, featuring several out-of-focus, circular bokeh lights in shades of orange and yellow, creating a festive and intimate atmosphere.

*When
Half-Spent Was
the Night*

**THE FIRST DIVINE SERVICE
OF CHRISTMAS**

Except for the occasional semi rumbling along the interstate, the night is remarkably quiet. The people are slowly gathering. This is a night we have longed for. For weeks now, Advent has been the focus: the certainty of our Lord's glorious appearing, the strong warning of our Lord to watch and wait for that day, the uncompromising call of St. John the Baptist for repentance in our lives, crying out for our Emmanuel.

Advent has its own beautiful songs and themes, and we need Advent in our lives, but tonight, it has ended with the setting of the sun. That was hours ago. We are heading toward midnight, and instead of being in their beds asleep, little ones and old ones and everyone in between have come out into the cold and dark night to celebrate a Light that no coldness and no darkness will ever overcome. It is Christmas Eve, and the first Divine Service for the Nativity of our Lord is about to begin.

Why have Christians gathered for so many centuries at midnight for this celebration? The answer might surprise you. Tucked away in one of the Apocryphal books, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, we read:

*For while all things were in quiet silence,
and that night was in the midst
of her swift course,
Thine Almighty Word leaped down from
heaven out of Thy royal throne,
as a fierce man of war into the
midst of a land of destruction.*

The context is the angel of death coming to Egypt to destroy the firstborn, but the Church long ago heard something else in this passage: a description of the birth of our Lord, who is the Almighty Word, and who descended from the royal throne—Mary's body, she being David's offspring—in order to war against the enemies of God's people: sin, death, and the devil.

Combined with St. Luke's words about the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night, the notion became fixed that it was at midnight that the Virgin gave birth to the world's Savior. The verse from Wisdom even serves as the antiphon for the Introit on this evening in the *Lutheran Service Book*, and the idea has remained fixed in popular piety by our hymns: "To show God's love aright, / She bore to us a Savior, / When half-spent was the night" (*LSB* 359:2) and "It came upon a midnight clear" (*LSB* 366).

And so, century upon century after the birth of our Lord, Christians have kept vigil in the middle of the night, gathered together for prayer, praise, preaching, and

receiving of Holy Communion to celebrate the birth in the flesh of the only-begotten Son of the Father.

All Glory Be to God on High

The great bell begins to sound, breaking the silence outside the church. Boom-boom, boom-boom. Written around the bow of the bell are the words, "Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr!" ("All glory be to God on high!") These words were first heard on the very first Christmas Eve, floating down from the heavens to the earth. In all the centuries since, poor sinners have repeated those same words with joy, joining in the angels' song. The church sings the greater Gloria often in the Divine Service, but it will ring with greater joy on this night, the night God first revealed it to man.

As the bell falls silent, the organ introduces Paul Gerhardt's immortal "All My Heart Again Rejoices," and the procession into the church begins. When we reach the Gloria in Excelsis, the joy is quite palpable. We are singing together with the angels this night, the night that the Good News was first announced as "good news of a great joy for all people."

The collect is particularly poignant: "O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that we who have known the mysteries of that Light on earth may also come to the fullness of His joy in heaven." What light! A light in the darkness. A light no darkness can overcome. A light that was kindled this night in our very flesh when the Virgin gave birth to the Child who is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace.

From Heaven Above

The reading of the Gospel is a true high point of this liturgy. The decree from Caesar Augustus, the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and the remarkable brevity of the actual birth: "And she brought forth her firstborn Son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger." Then we hear of the shepherds and the good news and the mystical song of the angels. When the Gospel is finished, the Nicene Creed trumpets forth, saying back to God what He has said to us.

**O God,
You make this most holy
night to shine with
the brightness of the
true Light.**

Luther's Christmas hymn "From Heaven Above" speaks to the child in all of us. It is so simply said, so majestically sung: "Ah, Lord, though You created all, / How weak You are, so poor and small, / That You should choose to lay Your head / Where lowly cattle lately fed. . . . Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, / Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled, / A quiet chamber set apart / For You to dwell within my heart" (*LSB* 358:9, 13). The sermon unpacks the unspeakable joys of this feast, when God appears in human flesh as our Brother to give to us all that is His.

After the Holy Communion is celebrated, as the people return from receiving into their dying flesh the undying body and blood of Him who is Mary's Son with the promise of forgiveness and eternal life, the candles are lighted. From one to another the light passes until the whole church gleams with the shared light, which does

**We have seen
and known the light
of "love's pure light"
beaming from the face
of the Redeemer.**

not diminish no matter how many share it. Then together we sing the song of old Simeon who once held the Child, held the very body and blood of Him whom we have now received into ourselves. He is a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of God's people, Israel. And so endless glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

In the candlelight, the carol begins: "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht." "Silent night, holy night." Indeed, in Christ, our Savior, we have seen and known the light of "love's pure light" beaming from the face of the Redeemer, the very "dawn of redeeming grace" at the birth of our Lord. The singing isn't loud or boisterous; rather, it is quiet and contemplative. We have seen, tasted, touched the love of God in human flesh and blood. A light that no darkness of our lives will ever be able to put out has been kindled within us by His body and blood. The eternal God has become our Brother, Friend, Savior, our hope.

Joy to the World

After the benediction, the candles are extinguished and the congregation erupts in "Joy to the world!" After the last hymn, the great bell rings again and keeps on

ringing as we leave. Out into the darkness we may go, but we are witnesses to a Light stronger than the darkness, a Light that will never go out, a Light that is our Redeemer's love in our human flesh and blood.

We go forth on Christmas already witnesses to Calvary and the Resurrection. The One who came among us in His flesh and blood came to offer it in perfect love to His Father on the cross and to be raised in that very flesh incorruptible and immortal, the source of our eternal salvation. He took humanity from us so He could die as the perfect sacrifice for human sin. This is the love that we have beheld at the midnight Divine Service for the Nativity. It is a love that makes the angels sing of glory on high and peace on earth, and we cannot help but join with them.

Midnight has passed. The occasional semi roars past on the highway. People begin to take leave of the church. Bethlehem proved not to be far away at all. It came near to us in the Divine Service and in the Savior. So as we leave, our hearts are filled and rejoicing. We have joined in worship and bowed down before the Lord who made us, the little Child born of Mary, praised by the angels, adored by the shepherds, later nailed to the tree, raised in incorruption, seated in glory, coming again at the joyous Last Day, and, in the meantime, given us as our very spiritual food in the Holy Supper.

Good news of great joy for all people indeed! It will be a short night. Christmas morning Divine Service is only hours away. We'll gather again and receive even more. That is the way of our God: He gives us everything, and then He gives us more. Yes, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men! Amen.

Rev. William Weedon (weedon@mac.com) is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Hamel, Ill.





by Reed Lessing

After the joy and happiness of Christmas are over, it's easy to feel a post-holiday letdown. But Dr. Lessing has the cure for your winter blahs: Jesus' death and resurrection . . . for you!

Your Light Has Come!

Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known as winter depression, is a mood disorder that some people experience in the cold and dark months of the year. Those who get SAD may sleep too much, have little energy, and often feel down and out. Additional symptoms may include a tendency to overeat and, of course, this leads to weight gain.

Just around the corner, another kind of "sad" is quickly approaching. It happens right after Christmas. We often call it the post-holiday blues. Cherished relatives and friends will have said their tearful goodbyes. Gone will be their cacophony of choruses: "Thank you so much," "You shouldn't have," and "It just fits." Under the holiday spell, Americans will shell out more than \$500 billion for toys, turkeys, travel, tinsel, trees, and Tylenol. But what will we get for it? Size 36 will be exchanged for size 40, eggnog will be on sale for half price, and that delicious pecan pie will become stale as it lies forgotten in the back of the refrigerator. When these January blahs are placed on top of SAD, we find ourselves in a sad, sad, sad world!

‘Arise, shine,

for your light has come.’

Some doctors suggest that one treatment for winter depression is regular exposure to light. Special therapy employs light boxes that emit more lumens than a customary incandescent lamp.

There Is Another Light Too

Isaiah bursts into our gloom and promises a more massive display of light. “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light” (Is. 9:2 NIV).

I’m not totally comfortable admitting this, but as a child I was an unabashed fan of the Lone Ranger. “Nowhere in those sterling pages of yesteryear can one find a greater champion of justice. We turn again to those thrilling days when out of the past come the thundering hoofbeats of the great horse, Silver, for the Lone Ranger rides again!” But in every episode, 29 minutes and 30 seconds into the half-hour program, somebody would inevitably ask the question, “Who was that masked man?” Here was someone who had been without a pistol, or in prison, and certainly in a pinch. The Lone Ranger rescued him. But he missed it!

Isaiah initially promised light to the ancient tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali (Is. 9:1). These Israelites were called out of Egypt, fed and nourished for their wilderness journey, and given their tribal inheritance. They had the sure and certain prophetic words of men like Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea. The Lord had repeatedly loved, saved, and rescued them. But they missed it (2 Kings 17).

In Holy Baptism, you and I are called out of darkness and into marvelous light. With Christ’s true body and blood, we are fed and nourished for our journey to the New Jerusalem. What’s more, we have an inheritance in heaven that can never perish, spoil, or fade (1 Peter 1:4). God has repeatedly forgiven, cleansed, and delivered us. But we miss it!

Why? “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

All too often we love the darkness of self-centered narcissism, live in the shadows of lies and half-truths, and long for more of the filth that feeds our flesh. The Prince of Darkness mocks our feeble discipleship, our failed relationships, and our fatal attractions.

But Isaiah promises a great light!

The first light to shine in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali was Gideon, who made mincemeat out of the Midianites (Judges 6:35). Judges 7:20 states, “Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding

in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, ‘A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!’” Soon after Isaiah’s time, another light would shine. King Josiah marched north with the burning torch of his newfound word of the Lord (2 Kings 22). It was a lamp to his feet and a light for his path (Ps. 119:105).

But the best light was saved for last. Luke writes, “An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them” (Luke 2:9). Simeon celebrates, “A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:32). The Magi marvel, “We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him” (Matt. 2:2). What a light show! Majesty arrived in the midst of the mundane. Divinity entered the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a teenager, and in the presence of a carpenter.

Jesus took on flesh to take us into His arms, heal our hurts, and destroy our darkness. He became a human being, not to demonstrate the innocence of infancy, but to live the life we could not and experience the Father’s judgment so we need not. Here is dazzling light, brilliant light, and eternal light!

But with Gideon, the light burned out because of his son’s wickedness and idolatry (Judges 9). With Josiah, the light faded when he died at the Battle of Meggido (2 Kings 23). Would this light burn out as well? Would it cease to shine for all time? Would Christ’s betrayal, blood, and burial be the final curtain call?

Not on your life! “The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5 ESV).

Art Holst, a veteran NFL referee, tells about the game when Kansas City Chiefs tight end Fred Arbanas was tackled so hard that his artificial eye popped out. Soon the missing eye was found. Arbanas popped it back into place and was eager to resume play. Holst then said to Arbanas playfully, “I’m impressed with your courage. But what would you have done if you had lost the other eye?”

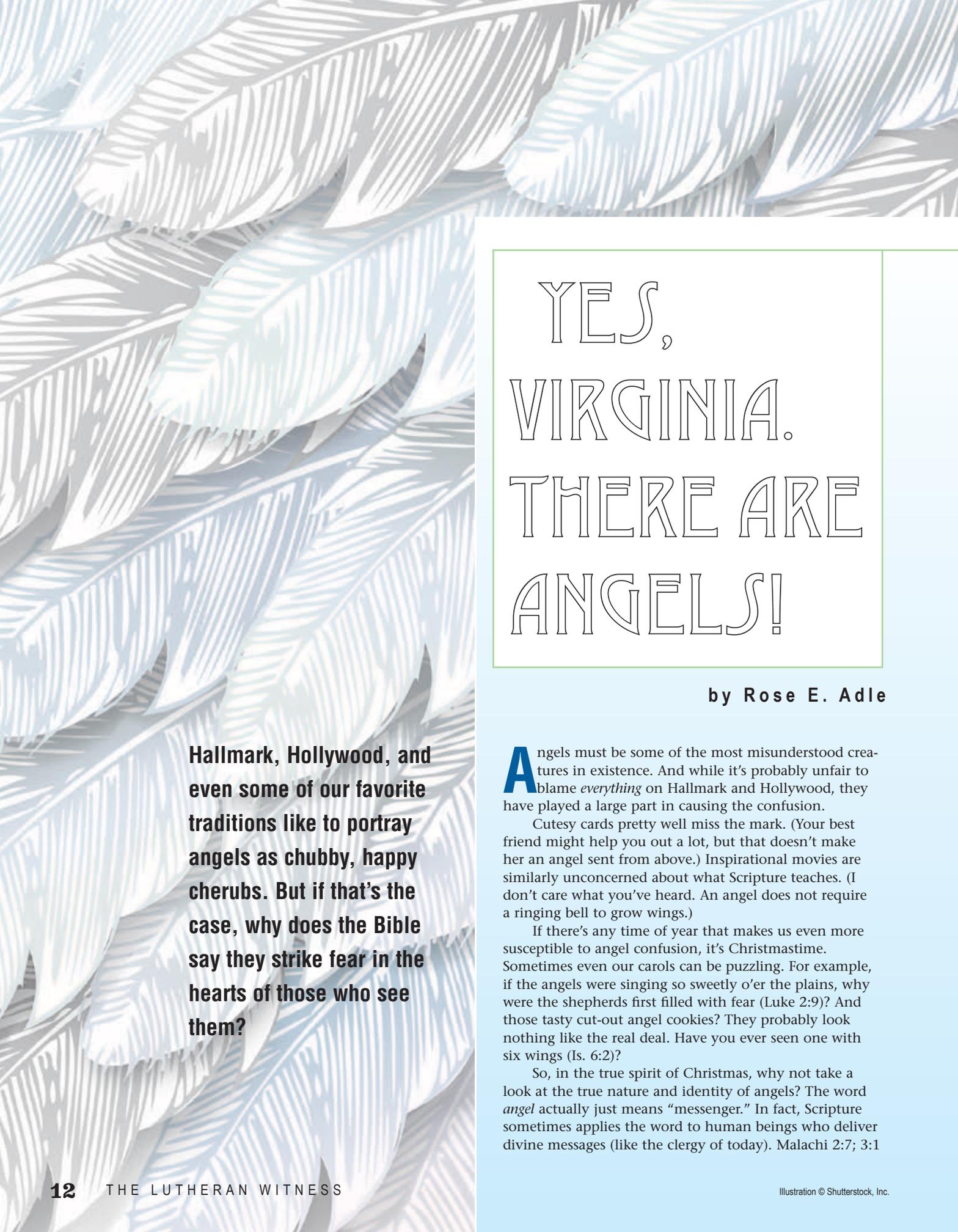
“That’s easy,” snapped Arbanas. “I would become a referee!”

Referees aren’t the only ones who get stuck in the dark. So do we, especially right after Christmas.

Hear the word of the Lord: “Arise, shine, for your light has come” (Is. 60:1).

Don’t miss it!

Dr. Reed Lessing (lessingr@csl.edu) is director of the graduate school and associate professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.



YES, VIRGINIA. THERE ARE ANGELS!

by Rose E. Adle

Hallmark, Hollywood, and even some of our favorite traditions like to portray angels as chubby, happy cherubs. But if that's the case, why does the Bible say they strike fear in the hearts of those who see them?

Angels must be some of the most misunderstood creatures in existence. And while it's probably unfair to blame *everything* on Hallmark and Hollywood, they have played a large part in causing the confusion.

Cutesy cards pretty well miss the mark. (Your best friend might help you out a lot, but that doesn't make her an angel sent from above.) Inspirational movies are similarly unconcerned about what Scripture teaches. (I don't care what you've heard. An angel does not require a ringing bell to grow wings.)

If there's any time of year that makes us even more susceptible to angel confusion, it's Christmastime. Sometimes even our carols can be puzzling. For example, if the angels were singing so sweetly o'er the plains, why were the shepherds first filled with fear (Luke 2:9)? And those tasty cut-out angel cookies? They probably look nothing like the real deal. Have you ever seen one with six wings (Is. 6:2)?

So, in the true spirit of Christmas, why not take a look at the true nature and identity of angels? The word *angel* actually just means "messenger." In fact, Scripture sometimes applies the word to human beings who deliver divine messages (like the clergy of today). Malachi 2:7; 3:1



and Matt. 11:10 provide evidence of this. However, most assume that the word *angel* refers to the entire class of those spirits that we picture with halos and wings. We'll go with that.

Angels are created beings. Genesis doesn't say exactly when, but it's safe to say it was sometime between Day 1—when it all got started—and Day 6—when it all got done. Angels are not animals, and they are not human. They are spiritual, not physical (Heb. 1:7). They are mighty, but they don't possess divine characteristics like omniscience, omnipotence, or omnipresence. Angels remain angels for all eternity, and humans remain humans for all eternity. (That means no human will become an angel after dying, another common misconception, even among Christians.) Scripture contains information about countless angels, but only a few are known by name.

The first is actually known by several names: the devil, the prince of the power of the air, the accuser, Beelzebub, the father of lies, the serpent, the god of this age, the dragon. Call him what you will, Satan is a dark angel. This is another critical scriptural truth: some angels are good, and some are bad . . . very, very bad (though not created that way). The evil angels are those that sinned way back in the beginning. They have sealed their fate. There's no turning back for them (2 Peter 2:4). Though we can't pinpoint the moment of their falling into sin, it was sometime before humanity's fall. We know this because it was actually the chief of the fallen angels, Satan, who tempted Adam and Eve in the garden.

Evil angels, also known as evil spirits or demons, are spoken of throughout Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. The devil tempted our Lord in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1). Scripture describes demons possessing various people, causing sickness and afflictions, and engaging in combat against good angels (Rev. 12:7–8).

Some even know Scripture and can manipulate it to further their diabolic cause (Gen. 3:1; Matt. 4:6). Satan can masquerade as an “angel of light” when it

suits him (2 Cor. 11:14). Evil angels are primarily concerned with one thing: destroying the relationship between God and humanity, chiefly by destroying faith. This sounds scary, and, in fact, it is.

But here's the good news: evil angels are subject to God's authority. They can't do anything without God's knowledge and permission. This means that even the most evil angel, Satan himself, cannot separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:38–39). And ultimately, the fallen angels will get what they have coming. Scripture teaches that an everlasting fire has been prepared for Satan and his evil hench-angels (Matt. 25:41).

Enough about the bad angels. What about the good guys? Holy angels are the ones that didn't sin way back in the beginning. They are in blissful communion with God for all eternity. They praise Him around the clock (Ps. 148:2). And they rejoice when sinners repent (Luke 15:10). God uses these holy angels to serve His people. In Scripture, they perform a few different functions. First, they worship and praise God. But beyond that, they also deliver divine messages and guard and protect the Church (all believers).

The word *angel* actually means “messenger.” In fact, Scripture sometimes applies the word to human beings who deliver divine messages (like the clergy of today).



Scripture is full of messenger angels. The first such angel called by name is Gabriel. He appeared to the prophet Daniel (Dan. 8–9) to interpret a vision and to bring an answer to prayer. This isn't what Gabriel's best known for though.

Some 500 years later, he starred as the angel that we all know and love from the Christmas pageants. Gabriel approached Zechariah in the temple and proclaimed the unlikely conception of Christ's forerunner, John the Baptist. Gabriel also visited the mother of our Lord.

As is the case with pretty much every angel appearance, the first thing he says to her is the same thing he said to Zechariah: "Do not be afraid."

This doesn't mean he's a bad, scary angel. It means he's a good, scary angel.

That's right; even the good ones are frightening when they reveal themselves to humans. They are incredibly strong. They can't help but intimidate, even when they're on a mission from God for the good of humanity.

Gabriel tells the Virgin Mary that she will bear the Son of God. Then there's a long string of divine pronouncements. Shepherds in the field hear an angelic announcement and hurry off to see God in the flesh, a babe in Bethlehem. Some other messenger angels make sure the right people are in the right places at the right times. An angel appears to the Wise Men and warns them

not to return to King Herod. And another angel comes to Joseph in a dream and tells him to take the infant Lord to Egypt to keep him safe from the wrath of jealous Herod.

Every turn of the Christmas narrative involves messages being pronounced by angels. It's really no surprise. Christ coming in the flesh had to have been a bewildering thing, certainly one that required explanation. Francis Pieper points out that, "[Angels] proclaim the conception, the birth, the resurrection, [and] the return of Christ (Luke 1:26; 2:11; 24:5ff; Acts 1:10ff)" (Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:507.) From the annunciation to the ascension, angels were present to explain to human beings exactly what was going on and why it was all so important.

But Christmas isn't the only time of year that the church should be thinking about angels. On Sept. 29, many churches celebrate the feast of St. Michael and All Angels. Michael is the only other angel known by name. He is described as an archangel (Rev. 9). On Daniel's behalf, Michael contended against the princes of Persia and Greece—presumed to be fallen angels (Dan. 10). He also fights with Satan himself in spiritual battles (Rev. 12).

Aside from fighting the evil angels and delivering heavenly messages, there's another level of angel activity occurring. Angels act to protect us (thus the common phrase "guardian angel"). There are many examples of angels defending and protecting humans in Scripture. An angel prevented the lions from eating Daniel in the den (Dan. 6:22). Angels and a flaming sword were posted outside of the Garden of Eden to prevent humans from re-entering the former paradise to

their own detriment (Gen. 3:24). A figure who is assumed to have been an angel joined Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:25). And on one surprising occasion, the Lord opened the eyes of a young man so that he could actually see all the horses and chariots of fire who were present to defend Elisha (2 Kings 6:19).

Angels' work was not limited to biblical times though. They're still around today (Heb. 13:2). Ordinarily we can't see them acting on our behalf, but that doesn't mean they aren't there. Angels accompany believers—throughout all of life—from the little ones (Matt. 18:10) to the dying (Luke 16:22).

Angels even join us in worship every Sunday. They are the topic of some of our finest hymns (*LSB* 521, 522, 523, etc.). And during the singing of the *Sanctus*, we join our voices with the saints who've gone before us and with the entire heavenly host (Is. 6:3). Like us, the angels of the Lord also love to hear the proclamation of the Gospel, which was spoken by the prophets and is now preached by faithful pastors (1 Peter 1:12; Eph. 3:10).

So whether it's Christmas Day or the Feast Day of St. Michael or any other day of the Church Year, praise and thank God for His holy angels. They guard us in all our ways (Ps. 91:11) and protect us from the power of the devil (Rev. 12:7–8). The angels in Hallmark and Hollywood are okay, but the ones in Scripture are heavenly.

Deaconess Rose E. Adle (reg1219@yahoo.com) is a member of the LCMS Board for International Mission and a member of Saint John Lutheran Church, Secor, Ill.

During the singing of the *Sanctus*, we join our voices with the saints who've gone before us and with the entire heavenly host (Is. 6:3).



The **12** Days of Christmas: Unwrapping the Gifts

Contrary to what the contemporary world tells you, Christmas isn't over on Christmas Day. In fact, it's just getting started! The Twelve Days of Christmas have a deep and historical meaning to the Church.

If you, like good king Wenceslaus, looked out on the Feast of Stephen—that's Dec. 26, for the record—you might think Christmas is over. On the Christmas Day evening news, local TV stations are already posting Christmas tree pick-up sites and times. Some trees hang around for a week to give a festive atmosphere to New Year's Eve and Day, then come down. On Jan. 2, Valentine's Day candy is in the stores.

That fits with the world's Christmas season, but the Church has something a little different going on. December is largely taken up with Advent. The idea is preparation, but not in buying presents and food. It's about a preparation of repentance for celebrating the coming of God in the flesh, Jesus, who will die to save us from our sins.

Christmas Isn't Just One Day

The Church's celebration of Christmas does not begin with December and end on Christmas, with New Year's Day tacked on the end. In the Western Church, it begins on Christmas and continues until Epiphany. That day—Jan. 6—is when we celebrate the arrival of the Magi to worship Jesus. By tradition, these twelve days from Christmas through Epiphany comprise the Twelve Days of Christmas.

How did that happen? Nobody knows. Epiphany is a much older feast than Christmas, but it's largely forgotten by most, lost in the shuffle by many, and celebrated by a few. Now how did *that* happen?

The Original Christmas

By the late fourth century, Epiphany was celebrated on Jan. 6. The earliest known reference dates from 361, and in those days the references indicate not just the appearance of the kings—*epiphany* is an English form of a Greek word meaning "appearance" or "manifestation"—but also the appearance or manifestation, the epiphany, of God, including His birth.

It's not that there wasn't Christmas. This is Christmas as well as a celebration of all the other events in the life of the young Jesus up to and including His Baptism and first public miracle at the wedding in Cana. In short, it's a big day!

Developments in the Western Church

In the Western Church, events began to spin off from Epiphany. By the sixth century, Dec. 25 had become the celebration of Christ's birth. His Baptism was celebrated after Epiphany, so Epiphany itself focused on the arrival of the kings who, not being Jews, give it the significance of the appearance, or manifestation, of the Messiah to the Gentiles. Divisions cease. Jesus appeared not only as the Chosen One of Israel but the Lord of all nations.

Developments in the Eastern Church

The same doesn't hold for the Eastern Church, where the day retained its original character. Many adopted Dec. 25 as the feast of Christ's birth but kept the celebration of His Baptism on Epiphany. There's the added complication that Jan. 6 in the older, Julian calendar (still used liturgically by the Eastern Church) is the equivalent of Jan. 19 in the Gregorian calendar used in the West. Confusing!

In the Eastern Church, the day is more commonly called the Theophany—the divine appearance or divine manifestation—and is considered the third most important feast in the church's calendar (Easter is first and Pentecost second). So, while there aren't Twelve Days of Christmas for our brethren in the Eastern Church, Theophany is more in line with the original intent of what we in the West call Epiphany.

And Then Came Vatican II

To complicate matters further, after a millennium and a half of usage, Rome decided at its last council, Vatican II in the early 1960s, to make Epiphany a movable feast. Now it's no longer on Jan. 6 but on the Sunday after the first Saturday in January. So, if you were to listen



Epiphany is a much older feast than Christmas, but it's largely forgotten by most.

to Rome, there aren't Twelve Days of Christmas in the West now either!

But for us Lutherans—those who seek to hold to the catholic (not Catholic), evangelical faith—we can look to our latest hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book*, and find that Epiphany is still happily listed as Jan. 6.

What Is Feast of Stephen?

"Good King Wenceslaus looked out on the Feast of Stephen." Now, if you think Epiphany got lost in the shuffle, what about this Feast of Stephen? It's Dec. 26, the day after Christmas.

Stephen is the first recorded martyr for the Christian faith. It is the custom of the Church to commemorate someone not on the day of his earthly birth but the day of his birth to eternal life (his death). So it only makes sense that the first person to have been born to eternal life by martyrdom for his faith is celebrated right after the earthly birth of Him who came to make eternal life available to us.

Who Is This Wenceslaus?

Wenceslaus was a martyr for the Christian faith just like the first one, Stephen, on whose feast he looked

out (according to his legend, at least). He served as the duke of Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic, in the early 900s. He's called good because, despite his pagan mother, he kept the Christian faith of his grandmother, St. Ludmilla, who was herself converted by saints Cyril and Methodius, the "Apostles to the Slavs." He was, according to tradition, a pious and prayerful Christian leader, killed at the hands of his pagan, power-hungry brother.

So what was Wenceslaus doing looking out on the Feast of Stephen? Tradition says that he spotted a man scrounging for food and asked his page where the man lived. In mercy, he then set out with his page to bring the man and his family aid. The page started faltering due to the cold and snow, but when he followed in Wenceslaus's footsteps, he is said to have found the ground warm to his feet.

How to Celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas

You can still follow in the good king's footsteps. John Mason Neale's carol says, "Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing, Ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourselves find blessing."

That means that from Christmas Day onward, all the fun and festivities are just beginning! You have twelve more days to celebrate, so leave those decorations up, right on up through Twelfth Night (Jan. 5–6). Also, check with your pastor. Many churches have a special service each day of the Twelve Days of Christmas to commemorate Christ's Incarnation—His coming to earth in the flesh—for your salvation.

Simply put, the appearance or manifestation of God is just too big to contain in one day! That's why the Church doesn't. Instead, it extends the celebration of God's coming among us to twelve days, starting at Christmas. Don't let the world, the mall, or any calendar tell you any differently!

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The spirit of Christmas, Tiny Tim, bah humbugs . . . what does all this mean for a right understanding of Christmas? Rev. Lonie Eatherton offers his thoughts on what's good—and not so good—about the well-loved classic, A Christmas Carol.

God Bless Us, Every One!

by Lonie Eatherton

It's just not Christmas without *A Christmas Carol*. Every year the crotchety old Ebenezer Scrooge, whose best response to Christmas is “Bah! Humbug!” goes through the most frightening and revealing past, present, and future scenes of his otherwise pitiful existence and, having lived through it all, has a dramatic change of heart and is wonderfully transformed into “as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old City knew.” And when all is said and done, little Tiny Tim has yet one more thing to say to top it all off: “God bless us, every one!”

But what is the “spirit of Christmas” anyway? Charles Dickens himself might argue that the essential “spirit” is the “Christian” spirit. *A Christmas Carol* is, after all, a demonstration in story form of what kind of spirit should be alive and active in each and every Christian, especially at Christmastime.

However, what is most important for every Christian is the following question: Does the Gospel even make an appearance in *A Christmas Carol*?

Charles Dickens did not claim to be a preacher of the Gospel. He did claim to be a Christian. But his writing quite often reflected what he thought about how Christianity was practiced in his day. It was not always good. The poor were oppressed. Poor children were uneducated and doomed to a life of want. The rich often did little to help those in need. And it seemed to Dickens that there was so much to be done. Simply put, Charles Dickens was a preacher of social reform.

Dickens's portrayal of Christianity is very common but, nevertheless, very false. It judges people as either good or bad with no apparent regard for whether they trust in Jesus Christ for forgiveness or not. Check out these examples.

Tiny Tim

Tiny Tim is the very picture of innocence and purity, the teacher of the Christian way. Bob Cratchit tells his wife, “He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see.”

Is Jesus only a good person who helps poor people in their physical needs? Where is the Savior from sin?

Dickens never allows Tim to speak that Gospel message. All we are allowed to see is his so-called goodness. That, we are led to believe, is all there is to Christianity.

Scrooge

"Oh, but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner." Do we see our own sinfulness in Scrooge? Or do we see him as evil and ourselves as good in comparison?

When Scrooge finally falls to his knees at his own tombstone, he is a broken man. He is, we can assume, genuinely remorseful, or at least terrified at the thought of dying as the miserable scoundrel that he has become. Does he turn to God and ask forgiveness? No, he turns to the "Spirit" and pleads for a chance to change his life and make amends. "I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year."

Scrooge awakens on Christmas morning a changed man. Before his ordeal, he found joy in nothing. Now he is "as light as a feather . . . as happy as an angel . . . as merry as a schoolboy . . . as giddy as a drunken man," and he takes delight in everything from his bed curtains to the lusty ringing of the church bells around him.

But did you remember that one of his first activities of the day was, as Dickens records it, "He went to church"? Oh, how good it would be

to think that Scrooge heard the Gospel there, and took it to heart, and rejoiced above all things, in Jesus Christ, his Savior. But Dickens moves us quickly on to watch Scrooge walking the streets of the city, patting the children on their heads, talking to beggars, and watching the common people. These are the things that "give him so much happiness."

the true Christmas message: that Jesus Christ was born into this world to save sinners. *A Christmas Carol* not only lacks the Gospel, it denies the Gospel. It substitutes a different gospel, that is, our love for one another. Our sympathy and kindness to others is made to do the work that only God's love and forgiveness for sinners can do.

How, then, does a Lutheran

respond? No, we don't need to toss Dickens' well-loved story in the trash. We can enjoy it as the classic literature it is. But we can be aware of what's lacking also. As parents, when we read *A Christmas Carol* to our children,

or watch our favorite movie version together, we can discuss the story and remind them what Jesus, "the one who made lame beggars walk and blind men see," did for every sinner by dying on the cross.

Jesus' birth is still the greatest Christmas story ever. Jesus was born to be our Savior! This is the story that changes our lives and blesses us. And so we say with Tiny Tim, "God bless us, every one!"

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Jesus' birth is still the
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Now What?

What then is truly Christian in *A Christmas Carol*? In the end, Scrooge is reformed but not saved. And it is not even the Christmas Gospel that gives him a change of heart. God the Holy Spirit would have surely given him joy in Jesus, the Savior. All the "spirits" can do for him is arouse his hidden human emotions and scare him half to death! This is not Gospel.

In short, although Dickens's classic Christmas tale hints at the Gospel throughout, it completely leaves out



*Christmas isn't about
flashy gifts, big
meals, or new toys.
Instead, during this
season of the Church
Year, the Church
focuses on
seemingly small
and insignificant
things, like a Baby
in a manger.*

The Smallest Gift

My first church was in a small mining town in the woods of northeastern Minnesota. The mines were gradually shutting down, and the town's population now was almost all made up of retired mine workers. The town had nearly every main-line denomination represented, and to the townsfolk's credit, they were able to keep the churches going. Our Lutheran church was the first church on the way into town, and the Baptist, Catholic, and Apostolic churches were spread out in a line down the main street after us. It was an inspiring scene as a person drove down the hill into town and saw the row of steeples.

The priest and the Apostolic minister were retired pastors who served only two days a week, but the Baptist minister was fresh out of the seminary like I was. Dan and I struck up a friendship. We met for lunch about once a week at the local diner, and over tuna melts and many cups of bitter coffee, we shared our troubles and successes, and although both of us were inexperienced, we would try to support each other by giving advice. We were probably leading each other down a dead-end road, but at least we would go together through the trials, dilemmas, and challenges of ministry.

At one of our lunches a few weeks before Christmas, Dan came in with a long, weary face. He looked like he hadn't been getting much sleep, and he sat down, pouring sugar halfway up into his coffee cup. We hadn't met for a couple of weeks, and I asked how he was doing, trying to say it in such a way that he understood I wanted more than the usual response, the same old stuff.

He must have noticed my serious intent. He said, "You really want to know how I am? Here's my list. The church roof has sprung a leak, and the estimate to fix it is way out of reach of the congregation."

"What about the roofing fund?" I asked.

"That's the second thing on my list. They borrowed much of that last winter to pay for repairs on the furnace, and the congregation is now split. Some are saying, 'I told you we shouldn't have borrowed from it.' And the other side is saying, 'We had to get the furnace fixed.'

The voters meeting was not pretty last week. My car is sitting in the driveway with a water pump leaking antifreeze by the gallon. And I got a call from the nursing home that my grandma isn't doing well."

Dan didn't put this on his list, but I thought to myself, "All this is happening during the busy season of Advent. There are sermons to write and hymns to choose. Why do these things always happen before Christmas?" One by one, we talked about the things on his list. We went over options, and I don't know if I was any help, but at least it was good to talk it out.

I was dealing with a few problems of my own. Mostly I was just trying to get it all done. It was my first year as a pastor, after all, and I was feeling a little overwhelmed.

But I think we left each other feeling a little better, and we promised to meet a day or two before Christmas to check up on each other, to be sure we were doing okay even though we would be busy.

We did meet just before Christmas. I asked Dan how he was doing, and he said, "Better." I asked him about the roof, his car, his grandma, and all was about the same. The members were still in conflict about the roof, his car still sat in the driveway, and his grandma was doing better but still weak from her bout with the flu.

Then Dan told me what had happened the previous Sunday. On Sunday afternoons every other week, he took one of his three kids to see his grandmother at the nursing home two hours away. This time it was Stacey's turn. At 11,

she was his oldest daughter.

They were on their way back, and Grandma was doing much better. They had had a good visit, but Stacey was sitting in the front seat with a disappointed look on her face. Dan asked what was wrong. She said, "I know it's not right what I'm thinking. I should be glad that Grandma thinks of me every year, but she always gets me a stuffed animal for Christmas."

There in Stacey's lap was wrapping paper and cute little lion cub. Dan knew that Stacey's bed at home was filled with stuffed animals, and each one was strategically placed. But Stacey was at the age where she was starting to think of perfume and eye shadow and not stuffed animals and dolls.

On the way home, Dan tried to explain to Stacey that Grandma makes her list and someone else goes and buys the presents. Her great-grandma has difficulty knowing just how fast Stacey is growing up.

After explaining Grandma's gift buying, Dan noticed that the gas gauge was pointing toward empty. It was dark now, and they stopped for gas and to get a drink.

While they were in the minimart, back by the coolers, picking out their drinks, a young man in his late teens came in holding a baby and yelling. The baby was crying, and the young man screamed at the girl behind the counter, who looked even younger than the man holding the baby. He said, "The baby hasn't stopped crying since you left. I don't know what to do. It's all your fault. It's not my responsibility. I'm out of here."

He handed the baby to the girl and rushed out the door, his tires squealing as he left the parking lot.

Dan and Stacey walked up to the counter to pay for the gas and their drinks. The baby was crying, and the girl was in tears. All that Dan could say was, "I'm sorry." He handed her the money and left.



Maybe it showed
that someone
cared a little
and that someone
tried to under-
stand another
person's problem.

After driving for a few minutes in silence, thinking of the scene they had just witnessed, Stacey yelled, "We have to go back!" Dan didn't ask why. He simply turned and went back to the gas station.

When they pulled up, Stacey jumped out of the car and ran into the minimart. Dan looked at Stacey and could make out what she was saying: "Here. My grandma gave me this. I've got tons at home. It's not much, but I hope it helps."

Stacey got back in the car, and they drove in silence until they pulled up into the driveway. Then they talked about what had happened. They talked about the young girl and her baby and so many others in the world in the same situation who are struggling with life. Dan ran through the scenes of his

own life in his mind: a church with a leaky roof and members in conflict, financial stress of his own, sickness, and the pressures of the season.

But then he realized something about Stacey's gift. She was right. It wasn't much, but maybe she gave it at the right time, and it could help. Maybe it showed that someone cared a little and that someone tried to understand another person's problem. And maybe, too, it pointed to another gift.

Stacey and Dan went into the house, and Dan sat down at his computer. He had been struggling with his Christmas Eve sermon. He opened his Scripture and read the angel's message to the shepherds: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."

It wasn't until well into January that Dan and I met again for lunch. The café's bitter coffee tasted good coming in from the minus-10-degree day in Minnesota. I told him, "I heard that you delivered a good message on Christmas Eve. A preacher has to give a good message for word about it to get around town like that."

"Let's just say I got to thinking about gifts," said Dan. "Some may not always look like much at first, but they can mean all the difference."

"Just like a little baby in a manger," I replied.

"And that baby in a manger has made all the difference," Dan said.

Rev. Tom Engel (tom.teefish@gmail.com) is pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Louisville, Ky.

Note: The “official notices” are published for a single purpose only: giving notice of a result, namely, changes in the Synod’s membership rosters by the addition or deletion of the names of individuals and congregations. It is not always appropriate that reasons for the changes be identified in the published notices. Since a change can occur for any of a variety of reasons, no assumptions may be made merely from the fact that a change has occurred.—Ed.

Official Notices— From the Districts

REV. RAYMOND V. HENDRICKSON, Menahga, Minn., was appointed circuit counselor for the Wadena Circuit (5), replacing DR. KARL WEBER, who was elected to the Concordia University—St. Paul Board of Regents.—Rev. Donald J. Fondow, LCMS Minnesota North District.

REV. DENNIS R. SCHMELZER has resigned from the Ministers of Religion—Ordained roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is, therefore, no longer eligible to receive a call.—Dr. Ray G. Mirly, President, LCMS Missouri District.

Official Notices— Call for Nominations

The President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod herewith calls for nominations for the position of Chief Mission Officer (CMO) of Synod. The CMO is a new position mandated by the 2010 Convention, to be appointed by the President in concurrence with the Synod Board of Directors, as per Bylaw 3.2.1.1. of the Handbook, Constitution Bylaws Articles of Incorporation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2010.

Bylaws 3.4.3 through 3.4.3.8, provide a description of the responsibilities of this position, which contain the duties that an ordained minister of religion, mission officer will be responsible for, inclusive of all programmatic and coordinative functions and of the ministries of the Synod, as it provides vision and leadership to the Boards for National and International Mission.

Names should be submitted in writing to the undersigned no later than Thursday, Dec. 30, 2010.

Val Rhoden-Kimbrough, Executive Director,
Human Resources
Val.Rhoden.Kimbrough@lcms.org
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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Official Notices—Colloquies

DAVID W. HARRIS, Shanghai, China; ELIZABETH D. IMRIE, Houston, Texas; HEATHER M. MILLER, Sioux Falls, S.D.; JANE M. TAUSCHER, Fort Worth, Texas; ELLYN S. HEICHER, Waukesha, Wis.; JUSTIN M. PALM, Red Bud, Ill.; and BRADLEY S. JENTSCH, Sheboygan, Wis., have submitted their applications for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through CUEnet. DENISE DESART-STRASSER, St. Paul, Minn., has submitted an application for the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through Concordia University, St. Paul, Minn. Correspondence regarding these applications should be directed within four weeks after publication of this notice to Rev. Herbert C. Mueller Jr., Chairman, Colloquy Committee, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

SARAH MASTERS, Battle Creek, Mich., has completed all requirements of the Teacher Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and is, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Brian L. Friedrich, President and CEO, Concordia University Nebraska, 800 N. Columbia Ave., Seward, NE.

MEGAN MIESSLER, Orlando, Fla., and TRICIA HAMILTON, Fort Worth, Texas, have completed the Director of Christian Education Colloquy Program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and are, therefore, eligible to receive a call.—Dr. Stephen C. Stohlmann, Director of Colloquy, Concordia University, St. Paul, 275 Syndicate St. N., St. Paul, MN.

Official Notices—Requests for Reinstatement

ERIC E. KLEMME, Melrose Park, Ill., and WALLACE EVERETTE MOONEY, Flat Rock, N.C.,

have applied for reinstatement to the Ministers of Religion—Ordained roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. JULIE LANE, Bakersfield, Calif., and JILL L. SCHAEFER, Springfield, Ill., have applied for reinstatement to the Ministers of Religion—Commissioned roster of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Correspondence regarding these applications should be directed to the undersigned for receipt no later than Jan. 5, 2011.—Dr. Raymond L. Hartwig, Secretary, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295.

Positions

The Lutheran Witness welcomes notices for positions available at affiliated entities and Recognized Service Organizations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The deadline for receipt of such notices is the 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month (e.g., Dec. 20 for the February 2011 issue). Send notices to karen.higgins@lcms.org.—Ed.

The following institutions of the **Concordia University System (CUS)** are seeking candidates for positions described below:

- **Concordia College—New York, Bronxville, N.Y.**, seeks to fill the following positions: **Associate director of Admissions**
- **Concordia University, Irvine, Calif.**, seeks to fill the following position: **Special Education**
- **Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill.**, seeks to fill the following positions: **Psychology; English; Theatre; Journalism; Special Education; Literacy Education; dean of the College of Business.**
- **Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis.**, seeks to fill the following positions: **Cell/Molecular Biology; Computer Science; Modern Asian History; Management; Nursing Program director; Occupational Therapy.**
- **Concordia University Nebraska, Seward, Neb.**, seeks to fill the following positions: **Health and Human Performance; dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.**

For more information about these and other CUS positions, including complete job descriptions, qualifications, and application process, visit <http://www.lcms.org/cusjobs> and click on "Positions Available at Our Campuses."



The colleges, universities and seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the college, university or seminary. While the colleges and seminaries of the Synod give preference to members of the Lutheran faith, they do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other college or seminary administered programs. The colleges and seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are Concordia University, Ann Arbor, MI; Concordia University Texas, Austin, TX; Concordia College, Bronxville, NY; Concordia University, Irvine, CA; Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, WI; Concordia University, Portland, OR; Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, IL; Concordia University, St. Paul, MN; Concordia College, Selma, AL; Concordia University Nebraska, Seward, NE; Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO.

Anniversaries

The Lutheran Witness *welcomes notices 50 words or less from LCMS congregations about their upcoming "milestone" anniversaries. The deadline for receipt of such notices is the 20th of the month two months prior to the publication month (e.g., Dec. 20 for the February 2011 issue). Send notices to karen.higgins@lcms.org.—Ed.*

Grace, Clarksville, Ark., has moved to its new facility at 922 W. Main, Lamar, Ark. With this move the church body has chosen to take the new name of River Valley Grace Lutheran Church in Lamar, Ark., to imply its church body comes from all over the River Valley.

River Valley Grace, Lamar, Ark., will observe its 50th anniversary on Dec. 4. A celebration is in the planning stages, but the schedule is not yet set. Former pastors and members will be contacted to help celebrate this joyous event. Special events will be coordinated by Leo and Sharon Knoernschild at 479-885-3566. Visit online at www.rvglc.org for updated information or e-mail arkansasguy@suddenlink.net.

Bethany, Overland Park and Stilwell, Kan., will celebrate its 50th anniversary Jan. 16, 2011. Rev. Kenneth Klaus will be guest speaker. A catered dinner will be served Saturday evening, Jan. 15. To attend dinner, RSVP to Jonét Williams at Bethany Lutheran Church, 9101 Lamar Ave., Overland Park, KS 66207; www.bethanylutheran-op.org.

In Memoriam

Obituary information is provided by district offices to the Synod's Office of Rosters and Statistics. Any questions about content should be referred, therefore, to the appropriate district office.—Ed.

ORDAINED

DORAN, DANIEL W.; June 28, 1937, Sedro-Wolley, Wash., to Aug. 6, 2010, Sequim, Wash.; colloquy 2006. Served 2006–2007. Ministry/parish: Juneau, Alaska; retired 2007. Survivors: Carol Doran; son: David; daughter: Kelly. Memorial service: Aug. 22, 2010, Sequim, Wash.

GERIKE, ERNEST LUTHER; Nov. 13, 1917, Tripp, S.D., to Sept. 13, 2010, Bloomington, Ill.; son of Rev. Henry and Clara (Bornhoeft) Gerike; graduated

St. Louis, 1944. Served 1944–1985. Ministries/parishes: Fairview Heights, Bloomington, Ill.; University City, Mo.; retired 1985. Preceded in death by his wife, Vera (Roschke) Gerike. Survivors: sons: James, Rev. Kenneth; daughter: Mary Richard. Funeral and entombment: Sept. 20, 2010, Bloomington, Ill.

JANZOW, WALTER THEOPHILUS DR.; Dec. 18, 1918, Ada, Minn., to Aug. 21, 2010, Lincoln, Neb.; son of Rev. Fredrick and Emma (Wiegner) Janzow; graduated St. Louis, 1944. Served 1944–1987. Ministries/parishes: Goodridge, McIntosh, Minn.; Murphysboro, Ill.; Seward, Waco, Neb.; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; Southern Illinois district president: 1957–1959; retired 1987. Preceded in death by his wife, Frances (Snider) Janzow. Survivors: sons: Frederick, Rev. Frank, Daniel; daughter: Kathleen Kapke. Funeral: Aug. 26, 2010, Seward, Neb.; interment: Aug. 26, 2010, Walton, Neb.

KRAUSE, EDWIN GEORGE; Sept. 27, 1925, Oak Park, Ill., to July 14, 2010, DeKalb, Ill.; son of George and Adella (Reinke) Krause; graduated St. Louis, 1952. Served 1953–2007. Ministries/parishes: Rockford, DeKalb, Ill.; Northern Illinois District circuit counselor: 1990–1997. Preceded in death by his wives, Hildegard (Thalmann) Krause and Gladys (Suelflow) Krause. Survivors: son: Rev. Kenneth; daughters: Jeannette Newton, Debra Weber. Funeral and interment: July 23, 2010, DeKalb, Ill.

NIELSEN, RICHARD J.; July 2, 1940, Orange, N.J., to Sept. 21, 2010, Fort Wayne, Ind.; son of Howard and Margaret (Piersing) Nielsen; colloquy, 1984. Served 1984–1999. Ministries/parishes: Wellsboro, Pa.; Anza, Calif.; Pacific Southwest District circuit counselor: 1991–1997; retired 1999. Survivors: Carol (Cramsey) Nielsen; son: Jeffrey; daughter: Dawn Richmond. Funeral: Sept. 24, 2010, Fort Wayne, Ind. Cremation.

OSTRUSKE, NEAL J.; March 3, 1916, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., to Aug. 30, 2010, Hayward, Calif.; son of John and Laura (Getzlaff) Ostruske; graduated St. Louis, 1940. Served 1940–1981. Ministries/parishes: St. Louis, Mo.; Hayward, Calif.; California-Nevada-Hawaii District circuit counselor: 1971–1977; retired 1981. Survivors: Helen (Rahm) Ostruske; daughters: Lois Hall, Deborah Pretto, Helen, Marion Abney. Funeral and interment: Sept. 4, 2010, Hayward, Calif.

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Caring for Caregivers

My mother lives in a nursing home in another state and is becoming more erratic in how she reacts to staff there. My siblings and I get calls asking us to “convince” Mom to cooperate when they have to take her to the hospital or to have a procedure. Our brother lives near her, but he’s getting burned out. How can we kids strategize with the nursing home staff to help them and Mom?

Aging often involves conflict and frustration, both for the person aging and his or her caregivers. We all hope to age gracefully, but the journey is not always a smooth one. Faced with your mother’s increasingly

“erratic” behavior, you and your siblings may feel frustrated and helpless, especially since you live at a distance. But there are things you can do.

For example, recognize that for your mother, life may seem to be changing in ways she can’t comprehend and at a rate she can’t keep up with. Persons struggling with aging frequently worry about their ability to function in the world. With age, one’s tolerance for change and uncertainty can diminish. Anger, fear, and a sense of powerlessness over one’s circumstances rise more readily to the surface. Often, he or she struggles to make independent decisions, only to be reined in by well-meaning aides, nurses, physicians, and family.

Faced with unanticipated behavior in someone they love, caregivers often

become stressed to the point of burnout, questioning themselves and their faithfulness. I encourage you to check out caregiver-support groups in your area to help you cope and to get ideas about how to build bridges of communication with your mother’s nursing home. Identify as your ally one or two people there—perhaps the nurse who works with her most frequently—who are sensitive to your concerns. The chaplain at the facility can be an advocate to the staff on your mother’s behalf and her pastor a source of constancy and connection to her church. Keep talking with others in your family about your frustrations and your hopes. A united front is a tremendous blessing.

It is essential that you also care for yourself. Jesus met others’ needs, but He also took time to pay attention to His own. The Gospels report how He often “withdrew to pray” following episodes when He healed many who were sick. In your ongoing care for your mother, avail yourself of the forgiveness and nourishment at Christ’s table and the fellowship of the worshiping community.

Dr. Leslie (Jack) Fyans is a clinical psychologist and member of the Ministerial Health Committee of the LCMS Central Illinois District.



Send your questions to Q & A, *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; or send them via e-mail to lutheran.witness@lcms.org. Please include your name and address. While we look for questions that have broad interest among our readers, no question is unimportant. Unfortunately, the volume of questions we receive makes it impossible to answer every question individually.

NOTICES

STEFFEN, NORMAN L.; Aug. 29, 1928, Omaha, Neb., to Sept. 10, 2010, Lawrence, Kan.; son of Otto and Hulda (Jetter) Steffen; graduated St. Louis, 1954. Served 1954–1990. Ministries/parishes: Davis, Calif.; Lawrence, Kan.; DeKalb, Ill.; retired 1990. Survivors: Kathryn (Pierce) Steffen; son: David; daughters: Nancy Anderson, Carolyn, Suzanne, Janice. Memorial service: Sept. 17, 2010, Lawrence, Kan.; interment: Sept. 17, 2010, Douglas County, Kan.

COMMISSIONED

FLESCH, ROBERT WILLIAM; July 14, 1937, Chicago, Ill., to July 16, 2010, Venice, Fla.; son of William and Margaret (Traub) Flesch; graduated

Seward 1965. Served 1965–1999. Schools/ministries: Walnut Creek, Calif.; Cabot, Pa.; North Tonawanda, N.Y.; Oviedo, Fla.; retired 1999. Preceded in death by his son, Derek. Survivors: Madonalenea (Riegel) Flesch; son: Stephen; daughter: Tamara Ernd. Memorial service and interment: July 23, 2010, Oviedo, Fla.

FRITZ, ESTELLA AUGUSTA; April 19, 1924, Joplin, Mo., to Aug. 31, 2010, Springfield, Mo.; daughter of Emil and Erna (Kaiser) Fritz; graduated Winfield, 1945. Served 1973–1993. School/parish: Joplin, Mo.; retired 1993. Funeral: Sept. 3, 2010, Joplin, Mo.; interment: Sept. 3, 2010, Freistatt, Mo.

MUELLER, GORDON PHILIP; July 21, 1933, Niagara Falls, N.Y., to Oct. 9, 2010, Cape Girardeau,

Mo.; son of Paul and Edna Mueller; graduated River Forest 1955. Served 1955–1995. Schools/parishes: Cape Girardeau, Florissant, Mo.; McCook, Neb.; retired 1995. Survivors: Lida (Landgraf) Mueller; sons: Jeffrey, Thomas. Memorial service and interment: Oct. 12, 2010, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

PALMETER, DONALD WILLIS; March 12, 1942, Chicago, Ill., to Aug. 23, 2010, Warren, Mich.; son of Willis and Ruth (Sahs) Palmeter; graduated River Forest, 1964. Served 1965–2004. Schools/parishes: Garfield, N.J.; Bristol, Conn.; Utica, Mich.; retired 2004. Survivors: Nancy (Klatt) Palmeter; daughter: Wendy Wojciechowski. Funeral and interment: Sept. 27, 2010, Utica, Mich.

Where Does God Come From?

My seven-year-old grandson asked me where God came from. I could not tell him. I hope you can.

Dear reader's grandson, I have a grandson about your age. His name is Joey. Like you, he is a very smart and curious person. He asks hard questions, some that even adults do not often ask. I hope that you will continue to ask questions like "Where did God come from?" because that shows you want to know more about what the Bible teaches about God.

I can guess why you asked this question. Most things that we know about have a beginning and an end, like recess at school, or like our own life. We had a beginning when our mother gave birth to us, and we will have an end when we die. All things we know about have beginnings and ends. So, why not God? Didn't He start somewhere sometime? It is a perfectly natural question.

Well, the first thing we need to know about God is that He is not like us. He is totally unlike anything or anybody we know. He had no beginning, and He has no end. The coolest thing of all is that nothing or no one created Him! The Bible calls Him "eternal" or "everlasting." Think about these Bible verses from a favorite Psalm of mine in the Old Testament: "From everlasting to everlasting You are God . . . For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past" (Ps. 90:2, 4). In other words, God doesn't live by clocks or calendars in heaven to measure time. He has no beginning and no end.

This is what I would tell Joey if he asked me what you have asked. Think of a perfect circle, like a halo around the moon, or a ring, or a wave rippling out when you drop a stone into the water. A circle has no beginning or end. Or think of the number eight, the only number with no beginning or end when you look at it. That's how God is.

The second thing to remember about God is that His love for us lasts forever and that those who believe in Jesus will live forever. Ask your grandpa if he knows this verse of the Bible: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have *eternal* life" (John 3:16). Maybe you don't use the word *eternal* very often, but it is really an awesome word. It means "forever and forever, with no end." I'll bet you know this verse too. This means that when Jesus comes, "We will *always* be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17).

I'll bet you are like me. I like the idea of being with God forever and forever!

Sincerely,
Another grandpa

Until his retirement, Dr. Jerald C. Joersz was an associate executive director of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations.



Send your questions to Family Counselor, *The Lutheran Witness*, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; or send them via e-mail to lutheran.witness@lcms.org. Please include your name and address. While we look for questions that have broad interest among our readers, no question is unimportant. Unfortunately, the volume of questions we receive makes it impossible to answer every question individually.

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT

Conspicuous by Absence

A pastor was absent from the adult discussion group one Sunday, so the next week he tried to review by asking, "Whom did you talk about last Sunday?"

With one voice, the class responded, "You!"

George Kottwitz
Edwardsville, Ill.

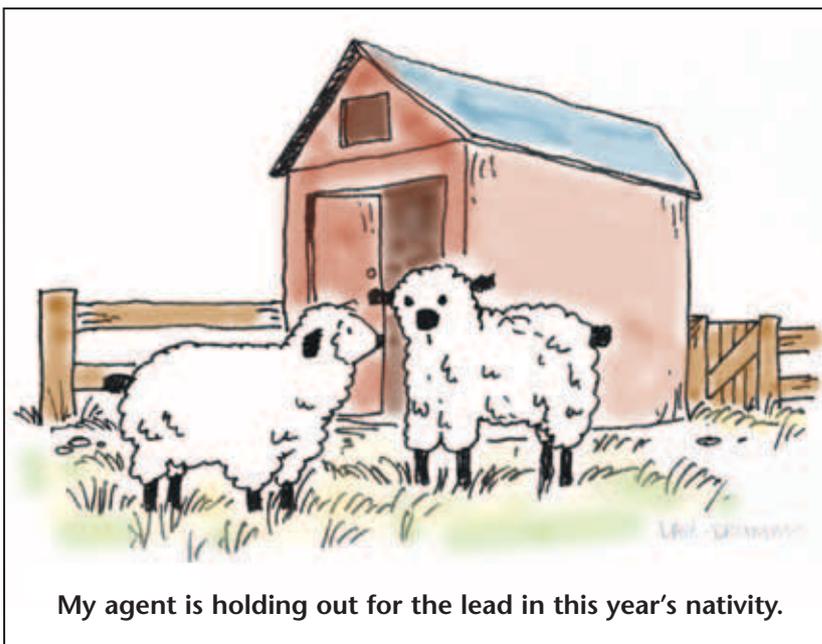
It's All Relative

As Christmas drew near, a young boy was praying upstairs while his mother sat near him. His father and grandmother were downstairs. The little boy began to pray loudly, "Lord, I pray for a train set, a remote control car, and a new bicycle!"

"You don't have to shout, dear," said his mother. "God's not deaf."

"I know," said the little boy, "but Grandma is!"

Anonymous



My agent is holding out for the lead in this year's nativity.

Christmas Presence

When we were children, Christmas was about presents. The beautifully wrapped gifts under the tree—trimmed with ribbon, bows, and name tags—captivated our imagination. As Christmas Day drew near, the anticipation became almost unbearable as we dreamed about what those pretty packages might actually produce.

Now that we are older, Christmas still might be about presents, but it is the giving that gives us joy. When we discover that perfect present and wrap it with care, our anticipation grows for the moment our loved one will unwrap it and get a first glimpse of his or her gift.

This is certainly our heavenly Father's perspective of Christmas. "Every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17). It gives God great joy to give to us, and His present at Christmas is His Christmas presence! God imparts Immanuel, and through His Son wrapped in human flesh, He makes His dwelling among us.

Incarnation Expectation

This amazing gift comes with great anticipation, as it was first promised in the eighth century B.C. The circumstances couldn't have been bleaker for the people of God. King Ahaz, a 20-something king, ruled over Judah. Young and brash, he engaged in all kinds of pagan practices. When his kingdom was besieged by invaders from the north, Ahaz turned to his enemy, the Assyrians, instead of the Almighty for help.

Read Is. 7:10–14.

Ahaz literally means "God holds fast," yet he doubted God's presence and protection. What offer does God give him to bolster his faith (v. 11)?

Ahaz had already made up his mind to make a secret deal with the Assyrians. How is his rejection of God's offer decorated in false piety (v. 12)?

How are we like Ahaz? When we face trials, where do we place our trust?

Isaiah foretells of a future faithful king (v. 14). How does His name contrast with Ahaz's doubt?

Immanuel Indeed!

God makes good on His prophetic promise through the sending of His Son. By the time Jesus was born, there was no longer a king of Judah. God had cut down the Davidic monarchy because it had grown even more unfaithful. In Christ, however, God Himself establishes His throne forever.

Read Matt. 1:18–25.

What important point is made in verse 18? What part of the Apostles' Creed does this support?

Why will the child be called Jesus (v. 21)? Why would Immanuel have to be with us in bodily form to accomplish this?

Read John 1:1–14.

Immanuel is described in great detail in the first five verses. What is His identity (vv. 1–2)? His activity (v. 3)? His ability (vv. 4–5)?

Verses 9–11 make clear that even today many are like King Ahaz. How? In this hectic season, do you fail to recognize Him?

God's presence is not philosophical. It's physical! How does v. 14 emphasize this? What two things does His presence bring in our lives?

Let God bolster your faith through His presence promises: 1 John 4:4; Phil. 1:6; Rom. 8:28–39.

A Prayer for Presence

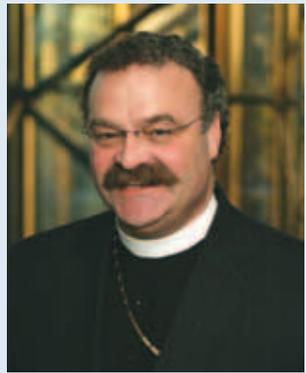
O holy Child of Bethlehem,
 Descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin, and enter in,
 Be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels,
 The great glad tidings tell;
 O come to us, abide with us,
 Our Lord Immanuel! (LSB 361:4)

Rev. Steven B. Borst (ilcspastor@yahoo.com) is senior pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Riverside, Calif.





from the President



LIFE TOGETHER: Confession or Witness?

In this month's letter, President Harrison concludes his series of three articles on the "Witness, Mercy, Life Together" emphasis for the church and the world. To find out more about these themes, check out www.lcms.org/emphasis.

It's no secret that we in the Missouri Synod struggle to live in the unity that Christ so freely and generously gives us in His blessed Gospel of salvation by faith in the cross alone.

A significant "fault line" that has divided us is whether the Church's primary task is either *witness* or *confession*. Shall we be primarily *witnesses* of the Gospel or *confessors* of truth? The Synod creaks and groans and undergoes occasional tectonic shifts relative to these issues.

In fact, these tensions have been with us since the very beginning and are, in a way, represented by the two major streams of Lutheranism (Loehe and Walther), which were melded into one Synod. The seismic synodical divide is full of crags and cliffs—misunderstandings, assumptions, prejudices, and presumptions. Each viewpoint represents more than a bit of the truth.

On the *witness* side of the fault, the primary, laudable, and biblical goal is reaching the lost—now, in today's world, in a way people today can actually hear it. "I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Meanwhile, those who are convinced that the fundamental aspect of the Church's life in this world is *confession*—that is, holding forth for the truth of the Gospel and all its articles—rightly and intensely identify with New Testament texts that bid us to stand fast against world, culture, and prevailing trends. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23). "That faith, however, that does not present itself in confession is not firm" (Ap IV 385).

These two great truths of the Christian life are represented by two powerful and pervasive New Testament words: *martyria*, or *witness*, and *homologia*, or *confession*. *Witness* is used in the New Testament for a straightforward witness to facts (Matt. 18:16). The apostolic circle were witnesses to the resurrection in the legal sense,

that is, they actually saw the risen Christ. As such, they were commissioned by Christ Himself to "bear witness" to what they had seen and heard (Matt. 10:18), and such witness produced faith in others.

So right from Pentecost, the *witness* becomes more than just a dispassionate reciting of historical fact. To be a witness was now to speak with faith and conviction about what God had done and continues to do in Jesus: To save people from their sins. In the second century, there arose the common use of *witness* as *martyr* for a Christian who had been murdered for the faith. It is clearly the intent of Jesus that the Church bear witness through all time to His saving Gospel; that is at the essence of her very being and life (Luke 21:13; Is. 44:8; Acts 1:8).

To my great surprise and delight, while studying and paging through my Greek New Testament, I came upon a truth which is, I believe, vital for us as we seek to live together as a church. I discovered that in the New Testament, *witness* and *confession* belong together.

Finally, the witness is given by the disciples themselves (Jn. 15:27; 1 Jn. 4:14). Their witness is confession. "Witness" (*Marturein*) and "confession" (*homologein*) merge into one another (1 Jn. 4:14 ff.) [Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4:498].

I've come to be convinced by the Bible that *witness* requires the strong confession of the truth as it is in Jesus—"teaching all things which I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19); "the doctrine and all its articles" (FC SD X 31). Likewise, *confession* ("Here I stand!") that does not "Go, therefore, into all nations" is not the full confession of Jesus. Put simply, witness without confession is not witness, and confession without witness is not confession.

Confession or witness? Yes! God grant us such a life together.

Pastor Matthew Harrison

"Let's go!" Mark 1:38
e-mail: president@lcms.org
Web page: www.lcms.org/president