

the REPORter

Editor's Entry

Readers of the repORter should have a lot to be thankful for in this Nov-Dec issue:

- Pastor Knox rightly reflects on Advent;
- Vicar Grills deftly debunks Millennialism;
- Gerry Peterson adeptly abstracts The Rev. Richard Stuckwisch's Kewanee Oktoberfest presentation;
- Tom Wemlinger slips us a salty taste of Lutheran satire;
- Sara Lair announces Angelica & The Gus;
- Judy Fink enumerates LWML's Des Moines convention;
- Celebrated wood carver Dick Hanson considers his craft; and
- Photos flashed by Paula Czarnetzki capture the most perfect of all pig roasts.

A Blessed Advent Season to All!

-Greg Gerjerts

Also in This Issue:

A contributed article, "Why Me?", from Larry Bricker, Zion, Hiawatha.

Plus lots more:

Word Cloud Puzzle; Event Calendars; Upcoming Hymns & Readings; Attendance & Contribution Graphs



Pastor's Post

Reflections on Advent

By Pastor Michael Knox

Dear Redeemed in Christ,

A new Church Year begins on Sunday, November 29, with the Season of Advent.

The beginning of a new Church Year, like its end, reminds all Christians that we stand that much closer to the day when Christ will return in glory to receive His bride into her eternal home. At the same time, the bride readies herself during this season to rejoice anew on the anniversary of her Savior's birth. Such is the tension of the Christian life, for you live in "the time between the times." You are, at one and the same time, ever ready to go home to glory, yet equally ready to invest yourselves in the God-given tasks of today, with an eye on tomorrow. You prepare your earthly homes and families for yet another Christmas even as you look forward to your final rest in your heavenly home with "angels, archangels and all the company of heaven."

Advent, like Lent, is a season of repentance, prayer, and devotion to Christ and His Word as you await His glorious return. With the theme of Advent being one of preparation for our Lord's return, I am mindful of an answer which Martin Luther provided to the question, "How does a Christian prepare for death?"

"In the past much has been written, and with a show of great learning at that, about the manner in which we should prepare for death and await the last day. But it has only made timid consciences much more depressed, for the writers have not been able to refer men to the consolation of the great wealth of grace and salvation in Christ, but have merely directed people to their own works and pious lives as a support against death and the judgment of God.

"Instead of such misdirection we now see the precious grace of God at work. Whoever has the Word of the Gospel goes forth to discharge the duties of whatever office or position he may hold. He consoles himself with the fact that through Baptism he is incorporated in Christ. He receives absolution and, for the strengthening of his faith, partakes of the Lord's Supper, committing his soul to Christ. Why should such a person fear death? Regardless of when it comes, whether by pestilence



Web Gem: Lutheran Satire

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheLutheranSatire>

By Tom Wemlinger

The scene: two men standing in front of an elementary school.

Man 1: "Hello, local Lutheran pastor. What are you doing here?"

Man 2: "Picking up my son from school. What are you doing here?"

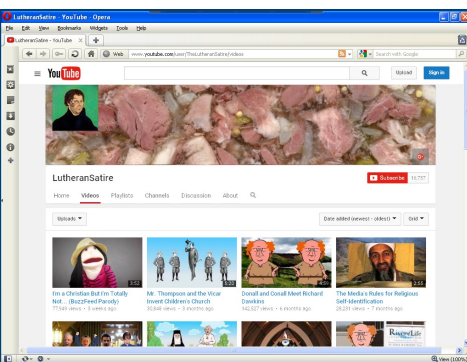
Man 1: "I am here at this public institution of secular education to make sure that they keep Christ in Christmas. I am certain you support my cause."

Man 2: "Well, I think the best way to keep Christ in Christmas is to hear His Word on that day. So will you be going to church on the morning of December 25th?"

Man 1: "Get behind me, Satan! That's family snuggle time!"



In December 2005, the Chicago Tribune reported that Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois, had asked its members to stay home on Christmas Day (which fell on a Sunday) and spend the day with their families. Senior Pastor Gene Appel was quoted as saying, "The best way to honor the birth of Jesus is for families to have a more personal experience on that day." What is the best way to respond to such worldly foolishness? Must we always use a winsome approach, or are there times when snark and satire are called for?



Just ask Rev. Hans Fiene, pastor of River of Life Lutheran Church, Channahon, Illinois, and the brains behind Lutheran Satire. The Lutheran Satire motto should tell you all you need to know: *Teach the faith by making fun of stuff*. This teaching is accomplished mainly through short, animated video clips, which are accessible via the Lutheran Satire channel on Youtube. Entering the address (see above) into your browser will take you to the home page of the Lutheran Satire channel. Clicking on "Videos" on the top menu will take you to the archive page (left). Once there, you can click on any of the thumbnails to load the corresponding clip. You can also use the Search tool to find a particular video based on titles or keywords.

Let's try an example (below). Entering the term "mormon" into the Search box yields this result, with the closest matches listed first. Take a look at the first one here, titled "Donall and Conall Meet the Mormon Missionaries." Donall and Conall are Irish sheepherders who are featured in several Lutheran Satire videos. In this particular episode, Donall and Conall discuss Mormon theology with two Mormon missionaries, Kyle and Brice. Pr. Fiene masterfully uses humorous dialogue to address some lesser-known false teachings of the Mormon church—for example, that the Apostolic church ceased to exist for almost two millennia, and that John the Apostle never died and remains on earth to this day.

Donall: According to the Mormon Church, you don't have the true church without twelve living apostles.

Brice: That's right.

Donall: Also according to the Mormon Church, the Apostle John never died and is, in fact, still roamin' this earth.

Kyle: According to Section 7 of Doctrines and Covenants, that's correct.

Donall: 'Patrick', is St. John the Evangelist currently an apostle in the Mormon Church?

Brice: Ah, no, he's not.

Donall: Speak up, 'Patrick'!

Conall: Yeah, 'Patrick,' we can't hear ya beneath the sound of yer prophets' mountainous continuity error!

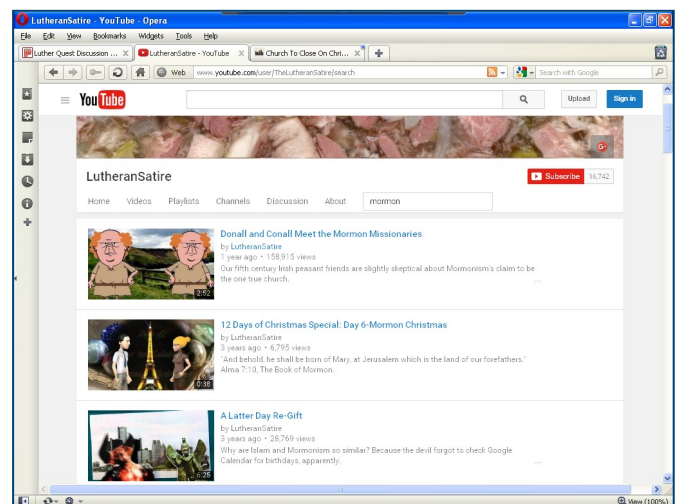
Brice: Uh, I don't think it's an error, it's just... uh...

Donall: Oh, really, 'Patrick'!

Conall: Yeah, c'mon, 'Patrick'!

Donall: So yer tellin' me that after eighteen hundred years with no church to worship in, no fellow believers to gather with, no one to preach to, baptize, commune, or consecrate, that the disciple whom Jesus loved was too busy tap dancin' atop a pile of yak manure to claim the spot Jesus gave him on the freshly-rebooted apostolic roster?

Kyle: Uh, I don't know about that yak manure thing...

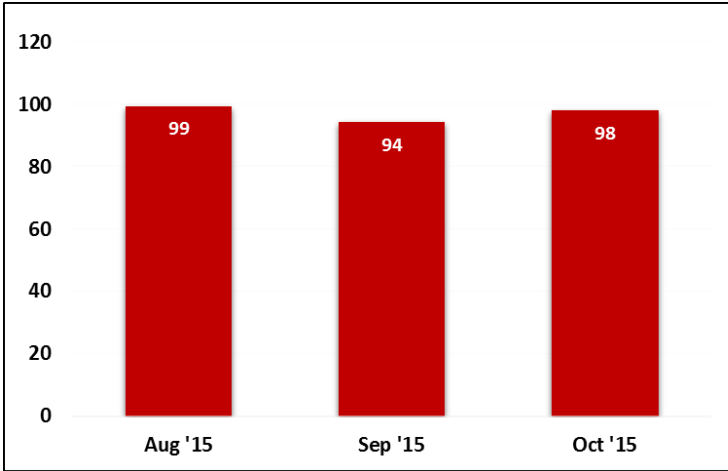


Pr. Fiene takes no prisoners when it comes to Lutherans adopting the language and worship practices of evangelicals. Check out, for example, "Mr. Thompson and the Vicar Invent Children's Church" and "The Gilbert and Sullivan Mass"; you can find these by scrolling through the archive page. There is also lots of good stuff in the "TYLP TL" ("Things Your Lutheran Pastor Totally Loves") series. Explore and have fun; however, keep in mind that the focus is always on defending the Gospel.

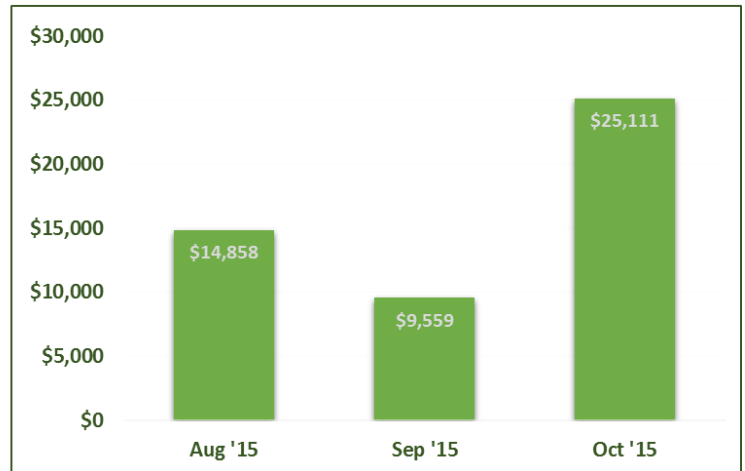
Oh, and one more thing: leave yourself plenty of time to poke around. This stuff is addicting!

ORLC By The Numbers

Divine Service Average Attendance



Divine Service Total Contributions



Editor's Note: Larry Bricker is a member of Zion LCMS, Hiawatha, IA. His daughter is Gretchen Lewis, wife of Adam. Larry likes to write for Zion's newsletter, and he was kind enough to share a number of his columns with us. Today we reprint one of those columns.

Why Me?

By Larry Bricker

From time to time, I stop and wonder why God chose me. I am nothing special! There are many who are "better" than I. Some people even think that they chose Christ on their own. When I hear that someone "found" Jesus, I just simply shake my head. First, I didn't know that He was lost! I hope that they mean the Holy Spirit has opened their heart to Jesus and not that they performed this act on their own. No one can experience this conversion in and of himself. So, I wanted to explore this question a little deeper in hope of finding some answers to the question, "Why me?"

In John 15:16 we read, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide."

See, I *knew* that I had nothing to do with His pulling me to Him. This is not something that we can do on our own. God also calls us to go and bear fruit because of what He has done for us. What is this "fruit" that we should bear? I think that this fruit can be found in sharing Jesus with others and in living lives that are pleasing to God. I believe these works are actions that we want to do because He first loved us. I also know that these works are unworthy unless they are held up by the love of Jesus! When we perform acts for God, they will bear fruits because of Him.

And then in Ephesians 1:4 we read, "Even as He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."

Can you believe it? He chose US before the foundation of the world was laid! I know that some Christians today point to this passage and say, "See, we were predestined to be saved while others were not." This can be confusing for us. Did not Jesus die for all of the sins of the world? Yes! Is this free gift available to all? Yes! But, we ourselves can walk away from God and go our separate way.

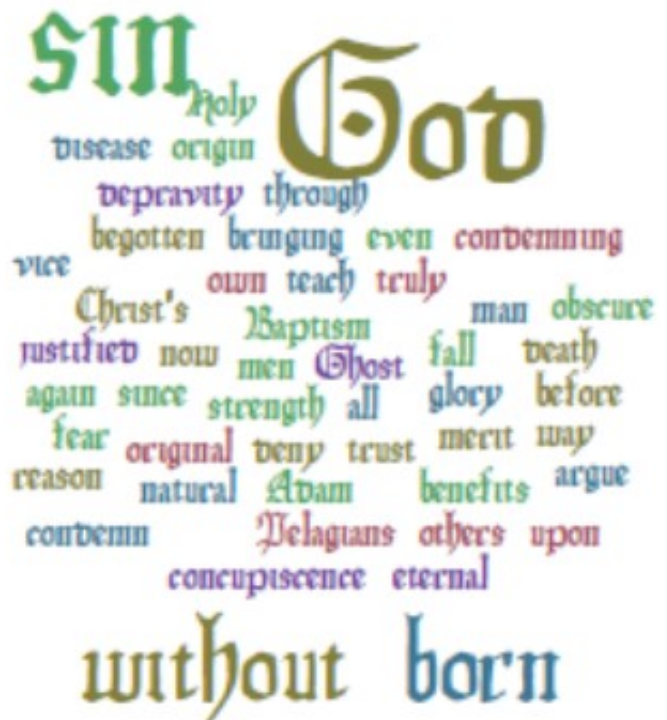
Continued on Page 10

Cloudy Content

Impress the Editor: Guess the Textual Source of this Word Cloud!

Word Cloud: An image composed of words that are used in a particular text or document. The size of each word indicates its frequency or importance.

Last Edition's Solution: Hymn 611, Chief of Sinners



36th Biennial LWML Convention

By Judy Fink, Waterloo Zone LWML President



Convention goers are making cards and writing to serve men.

As the Waterloo Zone Delegate I had the privilege, on June 25-28, 2015, of attending the 36th Biennial Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) Convention at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines. The convention was hosted by the Iowa East and Iowa West Districts under the theme "Sow-Nourish-Reap", based on 2 Corinthians 9:8. What an awesome experience it was!

It was great to have it so close and to have our two Iowa districts working together. Lots of planning and preparation over the last number of years by many people went into preparing for this convention to make it a time everyone will long remember. The Waterloo Zone was in charge of table decorations, which we made at our Fall and Spring Rallies for the convention's evening banquets.

Many ladies from the Waterloo Zone were among the 379 volunteers from Iowa East, and the 700-plus volunteers from both Iowa districts, to

work at the convention in various ways such as being hostesses, ushers, greeters, and registration workers. Over 4600 women, laymen, and pastors from all over the United States attended the 4-day event. (Yes, men! Many husbands came with their wives.) We visited with a couple from Texas one morning at breakfast, and when we asked the husband if his wife had dragged him to the convention, he replied, "Oh No! I would not miss this."

On Thursday Morning we attended servant events where we tied quilts or fleece baby blankets and lap robes, marked Bibles for prison ministry, made cards of encouragement to go with cancer care packages, packaged meals for Kids Against Hunger, made pillow case dresses, and crocheted plastic bag mats for the homeless.

The opening worship service was held Thursday evening with Rev. Gregory Seltz, Lutheran Hour Speaker, as the Proclaimer for the service. It was very impressive to see all the Pastors and LWML district presidents process in for the service. Pastor Seltz urged us to reach out and bless others with joy by sowing the seed of God's word and letting Christ live in you so they can see God in all you do. A vocal choir of 400 women, two bell choirs, and 20 instrumentalists contributed wonderful music. The live-streamed service was picked up in 25 countries and 49 states with thousands joining in real time to worship together.

During the convention, delegates adopted a \$2 million mission goal, approved 19 mission grants for the 2015-2017 biennium, and approved various amendments to the LWML Bylaws. New national LWML officers and a Pastoral Counselor were elected. Patty Ross, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, was elected the 18th LWML National President. The convention also featured a "mission pledge walk", which raised \$83,019 for mites for missions.

We were nourished with God's Word from the Bible studies presented throughout the convention by the many speakers, including missionaries who spoke about their work. LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison brought greetings from the LCMS and gave thanks for the continued mission work of the LWML. Dina Vendetti, song leader, entertained us with music and singing, and Jan Struck brought humor and laughter as she entertained us as Elfreida, a German Frau, from an Iowa farm, who



These corn centerpieces, made by the ladies from each congregation in the Waterloo Zone, were on the tables for the evening meals.

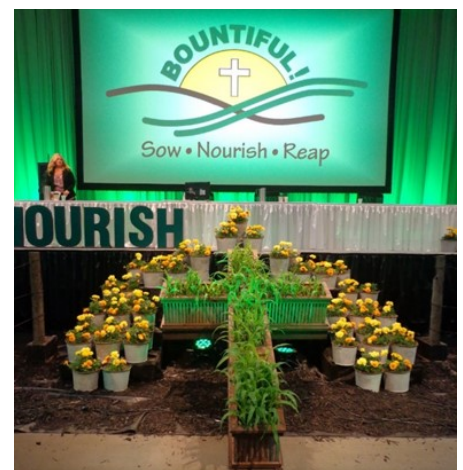
was learning all about Lutheran Women in Mission.

Rev Keith Piotter, Pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Bettendorf, Iowa, was the Proclaimer for the Sunday worship service focusing on the final word of the convention theme, Reap, as he preached on the sermon text, Hosea 8:1-7a.

We met and visited with many wonderful sisters in Christ from all parts of the U.S. who share the common goal of serving our Lord. All who attended the convention were truly blessed to be a part of the 2015 National LWML Convention, and I look forward to the next Convention in 2017 in Salt Lake City.

This is the 3rd national convention I have attended, and all have been equally wonderful experiences. If you have the opportunity to attend a National LWML Convention, don't hesitate. You will never regret going.

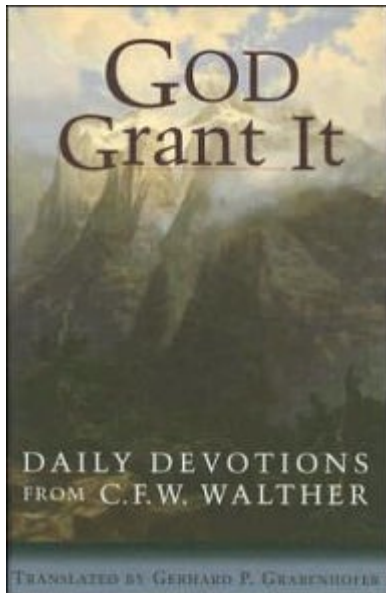
And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (2Corinthians 9:8 NIV).



The cross display in front of the stage changed each day. The first day the seeds were planted, and each succeeding day the corn "grew", until the final day when the corn had been harvested—pails of corn sitting around the cross.

Walther on Individual Confession & Absolution

Editor's Note: In the Sep-Oct edition of the repORter, Elizabeth Peterson blessed us with a stirring piece recounting the benefits of partaking in Individual Confession & Absolution here at Our Redeemer. I wanted to follow up with a devotion from the pen of C.F.W. Walther, which I reprint below. I hope the combination of Peterson's and Walther's thoughts on the subject move us all to avail ourselves of this precious gift, freely given to us by our Savior, through his called and ordained servant, in this place. -gpg



*From: God Grant It: Daily Devotions from C.F.W. Walther, 2006, Concordia Publishing House
Devotion for Sunday, the 19th Week after Trinity
See: Matthew 9:1-8*

Christ usually proclaimed his grace to sinners in general. For example, when He wanted to comfort the chief tax collector, Zacchaeus, He said only that "the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). But on the occasion recounted in today's text, He spoke the forgiveness of sins directly to a highly troubled sinner. Why didn't He speak the general preaching that every penitent sinner can obtain forgiveness?

The reason is not difficult to find. The paralytic was so frightened by his sins that they created more affliction for him than even his severe sickness, and he was thus in need of a special comfort. For another example of this, consider Christ's dealing with a very sinful woman. When, with a contrite heart, she drew near to Jesus, crying bitterly, wetting His feet with her hot tears, and drying them with the hair of her head, Christ did not tell her that grace is for all sinners. Instead, He turned to her and said, "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48).

Here we see the very special comfort that lies in private absolution. This is not, of course, the only means by which God speaks forgiveness to the sinner, for He also does this by the general preaching of the gospel, by the giving of Holy Baptism, and by the eating and drinking of the body and blood of His Son in the Holy Supper. Whoever, in faith, holds firmly to these three testimonies of God's grace toward all penitent sinners has the forgiveness of sins and can be joyfully certain of it. But Christians know from experience that even among those who

hold God's Word as true—those who do not doubt that God wants to be gracious to all sinners when they believe—there can be doubt in an individual's heart as to whether he, too, is in this happy state. When that happens, he may need to be comforted with more than general promises of grace.

When a true Christian reads that such great sinners as David, Manasseh, and Peter obtained forgiveness, he may say in his heart, "Yes, if I were a David or a Peter and my repentance were as thorough as theirs, then I might well believe that my sins, too, have been forgiven." The Christian may read that God does not desire the death of any sinner, that He wants to have mercy on all, and that He loved the whole world so much that He gave His Son for it, but he may then be inclined to think, "Yes, I know that God wants to save me, but have I not, by my sin, excluded myself from universal grace?" The Christian may hear preachers proclaim the wealth of divine mercy, the kindness of Christ, the faithfulness of the Shepherd toward His lost sheep, and His burning desire for the salvation of even the greatest sinners, but he remains assailed by many doubts and he sighs, "Oh, that I could believe that God has such a burning desire even for my salvation!" He may also say to himself, "Oh, that Christ Himself would come and say to me in particular, as He did to that paralytic, 'Be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you!'"

Is it not, then, a great comfort that Christ said to the apostles, and consequently to His whole Church, "If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven" (John 20:23), and "Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19)? When a Christian receives and rests upon private absolution, is he not raised above all doubt? Must he not say that when forgiveness is spoken to him in Christ's name, it is just as if Christ Himself had come down from heaven and spoken it to him with his own mouth? What more certain comfort can there be than when it says, "Your sins are forgiven" when Christ has declared that such an utterance shall also be valid in heaven (Matthew 9:2)?

***Thou, through Thy servant, says't to me:
"Thy sins are all forgiven thee,
Depart in peace; but sin no more
And e'er my pardoning grace adore."
O Lord, we bless Thy gracious heart,
For Thou Thyself dost heal our smart,
Through Christ our Savior's precious
blood,
Which for the sake of sinners flowed.
Amen.***

(ELHB 425:2,3)

My Wood Carving Hobby

By Dick Hanson



Josh is one of Pearl's favorite carvings. He is a caricature in the true tradition—a lot of exaggeration.



The antique sled for which this top was made is from about 1900. I carved the top and gave it to my daughter for Christmas. It is made of butternut wood and it won a blue ribbon.



A close up of Santa's face



This piece of art was carved from butternut and gradually evolved as I worked on it. It won a blue ribbon.



People have been entertaining themselves for hundreds of years creating useful and mundane articles out of wood. Not only is it a pleasant pastime but a good way to express yourself and to provide a product that is useful and enjoyable.

I first began wood carving at my wife's suggestion that I might need something to occupy my time after I retired. Since I remembered my grandfather used to whittle toys out of scrap wood with a jackknife, I said I would like to try it. Not long after, she had me signed up in one of Gary Loshman's classes. I still have the first piece I carved—a Santa that turned out almost square since I had a fear of removing too much wood. As with most crafts, you learn as you practice, and today I freely cut away knowing it's not likely I will remove too much.

I used to have a shop in my basement when we lived in our own home. Now that we've moved to the Western Home, I have a space in the round barn where I can work at my hobby. It works out quite well since I have met many other men who work out there at their hobbies. We spend many hours discussing and solving world problems, but we still accomplish some work.

As a beginning carver I took a lot of lessons from instructors on many kinds of items. I think that's common among carvers, and as we progress we find our niche. I think mine is in caricatures and Santa Clauses. At Christmas time we display about 30 Santas from my collection. Over the years I've shown some of my pieces at carving shows and have been fortunate enough to win some ribbons. One of my most recent ribbons, and one I am most proud of, was a blue ribbon I won for an antique sled for which I made a new top, into which I carved a relief of Santa's face that really had character. I also framed the face with relief carvings of holly leaves and berries. I also have carved a lot of ornaments that we use to decorate our Christmas tree. Our tree is pretty well covered with these.

I've also carved many utility items like box tops, shelves, walking sticks and canes, quilt hangers, spoons, crosses, pins, as well as animals and birds. I don't often carve more than one of any given item, and much prefer to move on to something else.

My tools consist mainly of a band saw and many dozens of knives, gouges and specialty carving tools. I spend a good share of my time in keeping these tools in good, sharp condition. It not only makes the work easier but the result is a nice, cleanly cut surface that is free of splinters and tears. Sharpening and maintaining tools is a skill necessary to doing quality work and one that takes a long time to master. I see other carvers struggle with dull tools and usually spend a little time showing them how to put a keen edge on a tool. They then find their work much easier and more fun.

I don't know if the Lord has blessed me with talent, but he sure has provided me with a hobby I enjoy and can be productive in.



It's a Picnic! *(photos by Paula Czarnetzki)*

Tom Wemlinger and Elizabeth Peterson had been thinking about a parish pig roast for a long time. Earlier this year, Elizabeth found information about a Cuban style, mobile roasting oven on the Web. She ordered it and Tom put it together. The oven is a tight stainless steel box with cooking heat furnished by a charcoal fire on top of the box.

Elizabeth bought a pig from Chris Fink, arranged for it to be butchered, and scheduled the roast for September 20 at Orchard Hill Park in Cedar Falls. The weather was perfect and so was the pig. About a hundred people from the Our Redeemer, Christ, and Peace parishes enjoyed shredded pork and all the trimmings: salads, beans, desserts, and cold adult beverages.

We can't wait till next year's roast!



Hymn Cycle

Pentecost/Advent Season Readings and Hymns

SUNDAY, 1 NOV 2015, ALL SAINTS DAY, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Revelation 7:9-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12
Processional Hymn: Ye Watchers And Ye Holy Ones..... 670
Gradual: *Te Deum Laudamus* 223-225
Hymn of the Day: By All Your Saints In Warfare517 (1,4,3)
Commemoration: Oh, How Blest Are They 679
Dist Hymn: Behold A Host, Arrayed In White 676
Dist Hymn: Jerusalem The Golden 672
Recessional Hymn: For All the Saints..... 677

SUNDAY, 8 NOV 2015, 24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: I Kings 17:8-16, Hebrews 9:24-28, Mark 12:38-44
Hymn of Invocation: *O Christ, Our Hope, Our Hearts' Desire*..... 553
Hymn of the Day: One Thing's Needful..... 536 (omitting verse 2)
Dist Hymn: Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad And Sing 737
Dist Hymn: The Temple Rang With Golden Coins..... 787

SUNDAY, 15 NOV 2015, 25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Daniel 12:1-3; Hebrews 10:11-25; Mark 13:1-13
Hymn of Invocation: *The Church's One Foundation*..... 644
Hymn of the Day: The Day Is Surely Drawing Near..... 508
Dist Hymn: Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense 741
Dist Hymn: Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray 623

SUNDAY, 22 NOV 2015, 18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Isaiah 51:4-6; Jude 20-25; Mark 13:24-37
Entrance Hymn: Now All The Vault Of Heaven Resounds 465
Hymn of the Day: Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying 516
Dist Hymn: Jerusalem the Golden 672
Dist Hymn: Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers 515
Dist Hymn: Here, O My Lord, I See Thee Face To Face 631
Recessional Hymn: Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng..... 813

SUNDAY, 29 NOV 2015, 1ST SUNDAY IN ADVENT, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Jeremiah 33:14-16; I Thess 3:9-13; Luke 19:28-40
Hymn of Invocation: *Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates*..... 341
Hymn of the Day: Lift Up Your Heads, You Everlasting Doors..... 339
Dist Hymn: Savior Of The Nations, Come..... 332
Dist Hymn: Once He Came In Blessing 333
Final Hymn: All Glory Laud, And Honor 442

WEDNESDAY, 2 DEC 2015, MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICE, EVENING PRAYER

Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16
Office Hymn: What Hope! An Eden Prophesied342

SUNDAY, 6 DEC 2015, 2ND SUNDAY IN ADVENT, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Malachi 3:1-7b; Philippians 1:2-11; Luke 3:1-20
Hymn of Invocation: *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding*345
Hymn of the Day: On Jordan's Bank The Baptist's Cry344
Dist Hymn: When All the World Was Cursed346
Dist Hymn: Comfort, Comfort Ye My People347

WEDNESDAY, 9 DEC 2015, MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICE, EVENING PRAYER

Reading: Malachi 3:1-7b; Luke 3:1-14
Office Hymn: Once He Came In Blessing #333

SUNDAY, 13 DEC 2015, 3RD SUNDAY IN ADVENT, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 7:10-35
Hymn of Invocation: *The Advent Of Our King*331
Hymn of the Day: O Savior, Rend The Heavens Wide.....355
Dist Hymn: O Lord, How Shall I Meet You334
Dist Hymn: Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers515

WEDNESDAY, 16 DEC 2015, MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICE, EVENING PRAYER

Reading: Lamentations 2:12-14; Zephaniah 3:14-20
Office Hymn: Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers.....515

SUNDAY, 20 DEC 2015, 4TH SUNDAY IN ADVENT, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Micah 5:2-5a, Hebrews 10:5-10, Luke 1:39-56
Hymn of Invocation: *Savior Of The Nations, Come*332
Hymn of the Day: The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came356
Dist Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel357
Dist Hymn: Jesus Came, The Heavens Adoring353

SUNDAY, 27 OCT 2015, 1ST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, DS SETTING THREE

The Readings: Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:22-40
Hymn of Invocation: *Angels From the Realms of Glory*367
Hymn of the Day: In Peace And Joy I Now Depart938
Dist Hymn: Let All Together Praise Our God389
Dist Hymn: Joy to the World387
Dist Hymn: Now Sing We, Now Rejoice.....386



As Easy as 1-2-3! Save the Dates! Plan To Attend!

- 1 Our Redeemer's annual Advent Christmas Dinner is being planned for Sunday, December 6, at 4:15 p.m.. Come for lots of good food, fellowship and entertainment. The Union Carolers will be with us again.
- 2 Ladies of Our Redeemer, you are invited to a Bridal Shower honoring Michaela Saunders, bride to be of Jason Knox, on Sunday, November 22, at 2:00 p.m. in Our Redeemer's Parish Hall. Michaela is registered at Target and Kohl's. Please RSVP to Sara Lair (266-1163) or Judy Fink (268-0346).
- 3 The Children's Christmas Service under the theme "Away In The Manger" will take place next Sunday, December 20, at 4:00 p.m., followed by a light supper. The entire congregation is encouraged to gather with the children, listen as they tell the story of our Savior's Nativity, and join in worshipping the Word made flesh.



Reflections on Advent

Continued from Page 1

or accident, whether it finds him awake or asleep, he is in Christ and is, therefore, always ready and well prepared for death.”

Luther here reminds you that as you wait for the Lord’s glorious appearing on the Last Day you do so with confidence and anticipation. You have nothing to fear, for in Christ you are forgiven, holy and righteous. Secure in this truth, you don’t sit idly by; rather, you devote yourself first to those things by which you are made ready to meet Jesus – hearing His Word, receiving Absolution, and being strengthened by His Body and Blood. You then in faith go about your life doing those things by which you fulfill your vocation according to God’s calling and commandments.

I would also like to take this time to encourage each of you to be present for the Midweek Advent Services in which you will hear preaching on the Old Testament readings for the week. These will be held at Christ Lutheran beginning at 11:00 a.m., and at Our Redeemer beginning at 7:00 p.m., on the Wednesdays of December 2, 9, and 16.

—Pastor Knox

Window Project Update

By Dave Knoch

In April, we utilized our \$20,000 line of credit (LOC) in addition to a \$9,000 loan from Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) to finance our window project. We have focused on repaying the LOC; however, it appears we will have to renew the LOC to extend past its November 16, 2015, expiration date.

LOC

\$20,000 @ 3.88% APR
Repaid (thru Oct) = \$12,600
Remaining balance = \$7,400 (plus interest)

Loan

\$9,000 @ 3.75% APR
Repaid (thru Oct) = \$600
Remaining balance = \$8,400 (plus interest)

In total, we’ve done pretty well by repaying \$13,200 of the \$29,000 principal over the last 6 months. Including estimated accumulated interest, we still owe about \$17,000. At the current repayment rate, the loans should be paid off within about 6-8 months. **To help accelerate the payoff, please feel free to designate a special offering for “Window Fund”.**

What is the “Millennium”?

Continued from Page 12

A few examples of groups and individuals who profess the doctrine of dispensationalism are:

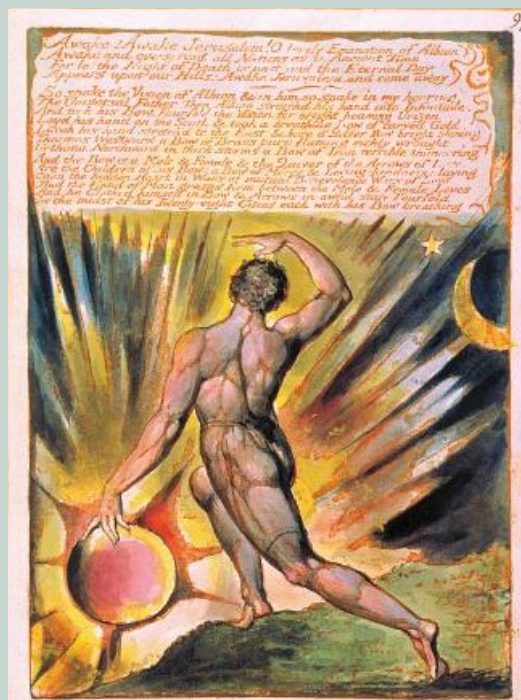
- The Assemblies of God, a large charismatic denomination dating to the early 1900s
- Billy Sunday
- Billy Graham
- Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, authors of the Left Behind Series
- James Dobson
- John Hagee
- John MacArthur

Lutherans, on the basis of Scripture, reject millennialism. Instead we believe, teach, and confess the doctrine of amillennialism.² We do not believe in a literal thousand-year earthly kingdom. Jesus Himself teaches us that His kingdom is not of this world.³ Elsewhere St. Peter reminds us that we yearn for a new heavens and a new earth.⁴ We do not long for political or temporal gain in this present fallen world.

In Revelation 20 we do have a reference to a thousand years wherein Christ is reigning. This is a figurative number that refers to the present age in which we live. Jesus Christ is alive and reigning! Satan is defeated! This period began when Christ ascended into heaven and reaches its fulfillment when He returns again. When this happens the words of Dr. Luther’s Catechism will be made all the more clear to you “[I believe Jesus will] raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life.”⁵

This doctrine serves as a great comfort to Christians. You need not do as the early premillennialists did and sell all of your belongings, quit your job, and shun your family in order to wait for the Rapture to come and earn a place in an earthly fiefdom. No, the Bible shows you a much greater truth: Jesus Christ, who bled and died for you, is now your brother King, living and reigning and ever victorious over sin, death, and the devil. God has called you simply to carry out your vocations in faith until He returns again and brings the new heavens and new earth with Him.

You need not fear when the news on television looks dire or when a would-be prophet seeks to frighten you with his vivid fantasies of the End Times. Dear Christian, you are baptized; you are a prince in this present Kingdom awaiting the return of your King in glory.



'Awake! Awake Jerusalem . . .', plate 97 from 'Jerusalem' (Bentley Copy E) 1804-20 (relief etching printed in orange with pen, w/c and gold), Blake, William (1757-1827).

© Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, USA, www.bridgeman.co.uk.

² Augsburg Confession XVII

³ John 18:36

⁴ 2 Peter 3:13

⁵ Small Catechism: Explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed

Parishioner Profiles: Angelica and Gus Grills

By Sara Lair

Let's meet our vicar's wife, Angelica, and their adorable son, Gus.

Angelica and Vicar Grills have been married six years—and for their fifth wedding anniversary received a great gift, the birth of their son, Gus.

Angelica comes from a large family—three sisters and one brother; she is the youngest in the family, with 19 years separating the oldest and youngest. She was born in Queens, New York City, and her parents are from Panama. Angelica grew up in Florida and her parents are in the process of returning to the U.S. from Panama to be closer to their children and 12 grandchildren (the siblings live in Florida, Georgia, Maryland and Iowa).

Angelica is fluent in Spanish as well as English. She says that her parents insisted that Spanish be spoken in the home, and that her mother perfected her English from watching U.S. television. In fact, of all her siblings, Angelica is the most fluent in Spanish.



Angelica was awarded scholarships to one of several Bible colleges as a winner of Bible quiz programs through her church, and that led to attending the Bible college in eastern Kentucky where she met and fell in love with Vicar Grills. Before marriage, they were looking for a church in which to marry and worship, and that was how they became Mis-

souri Synod Lutherans and made the decision to enter the Seminary at Ft. Wayne.

While in Ft. Wayne, Angelica worked at the Seminary in the library and also with day care.

In her spare time (which, as the mother of an almost year-and-a-half-old son, is limited), Angelica likes to bake and knit on a loom.

Angelica is a delightful young woman and Gus, with his brilliant smile and easy disposition, is a joy.

Welcome to the Grills—a great addition to our congregation!

Why Me? (Continued from Page 3)

I believe that our lives involve a series of choices. We all make good choices and bad choices: they can be like right hand and left hand turns. For the sake of argument, think about right hand turns as “good” choices and left hand turns as “bad” choices. It is our free will that chooses the turns we make. If we make right hand turns, great! But, if we embark on a series of left hand turns, we could find ourselves turning our backs on God. Our silly free will gets us in trouble, doesn't it? This is what Adam and Eve brought into the world when they fell into sin and, therefore, there are many who have turned their backs on Him and rejected His free gift.

In Revelation 13:8 we read, “And all who dwell on earth will worship it (the beast), everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb, who was slain.”

Wonderful! We read that our names have been written in the Book of Life. This is because of what Jesus, our sacrificial Lamb, has accomplished for us. Does this bring you comfort? It sure comforts me. Oh the height and the depth of His Love for us! It is hard for me to comprehend that He loves me this much, especially when I fail Him every day.

In Romans 8:38-39 we find, “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” There is nothing in this world that can separate us from the Love of God. It is only we who can separate ourselves from God. I know that I can survive anything that this world can throw at me if I remain firmly anchored in Jesus. God will never turn His back on us. It is so very sad that many in this world have rejected the free gift that He gave to us.

In 1 John 2-5 we read, “He is the propitiation [atonement] for our sins; and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.”

Jesus not only carried our sins to the cross, but He carried everyone's. Think about it; this free gift is made available to all who call upon His name and keep His commandments. Now, please don't panic if you are like me and fall short in keeping God's commandments. We were all born sinners, but we are forgiven if we repent of our sins. Try as I might, I keep falling short of keeping His commandments perfectly. But He still loves me anyway!

And finally we read in John 6:44, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.” This single verse says so much: God draws us to His son; God initiates the action.

So, again I ask, “Why did He choose me?” I know that it is nothing I have done on my own. It is all about what Jesus has done for me. Do I feel that I am worthy of this much love? I believe the real question we all should ask is, “Did Jesus die for me?” Easy answer: yes! But the hard question remains: why you, and why me? Perhaps it is this: God knows the hearts of everyone, and He has taken root in the hearts and souls of those whom He has chosen. This knowledge should be very reassuring. And we all know that God doesn't make mistakes!

I know that the answers to these two questions will become clearer when we meet Jesus in Heaven. I further trust that He has great plans for each of us in the new world to come. It may be silly, but think about the question that we all have asked our children: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Have you ever thought about what you would like to do in Heaven for all eternity, when you finally “grow up”? I really can't wait to see His plans for each of us as they become a reality. This world will dissolve as the new world and His creation are revealed to us. I pray that God returns to earth soon and sets His creation right again!

Updated Data From Church Directory

Dawson James Derflinger, son of Dana & Janice Derflinger

Born 9/23/2015, Baptized 10/18/2015

By Gerald Peterson

Early in October, Elizabeth and I attended Oktoberfest at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Kewanee, Illinois. Glenn and Jennifer Staudinger also attended, as did Tim Koch and his brother. There were about eighty other people there.

Activities began on Sunday evening with choral vespers. The pastor of St. Paul's, the Reverend Doctor Burnell Eckardt, conducted the service. Pastor Eckardt is the editor of the journal *Gottesdienst*, so services at that church are dignified and in strict accordance with historic liturgy and practice.

After vespers, we enjoyed an excellent German meal of bratwurst, hot potato salad, sauerkraut, and beans. There was Leinenkugel Oktoberfest beer for those who wanted it. (And most people did.) Following the meal, Pastor Eckardt outlined the next day's activities and then led us in a little song. Pastor Eckardt, a talented musician, sometimes makes up satiric songs that reflect his views on the state of the liturgy and practice in the Missouri Synod. He had a new one ready for us this year. I will quote just the first verse, but remember, folks, this is satire:

In the Missouri Synod there are lots of things to see:

From puppet shows to praise bands, we've got a jamboree.

We want to entertain you, whoever you may be.

We're dumb enough to think we can compete with your TV.

There are six more verses, which I would be happy to share with anyone who is interested.

The formal program began on Monday morning with a High Church Divine Service. After the service, the featured speaker, the Reverend Doctor Richard Stuckwisch, began his presentation. Pastor Stuckwisch, a brilliant man, is from Emmaus Lutheran Church in South Bend, Indiana. His topic was "Eucharistic Sacrifice and Eucharistic Prayer in Theology and Practice". Now, the title of the presentation, all by itself, is a stopper for most of us. And the presentation proved pretty tough going for at least the Our Redeemer folks in attendance. But here is what I

think that Pastor Stuckwisch was trying to say.

For most of us Lutherans, Eucharist specifically means Holy Communion, the holy meal of Christ's body and blood. It is appropriate for us to give thanks for the grace that we receive at that meal and for Christ's sacrifice that bought that grace.

But we should be careful about several things. First, the meal itself is not a sacrifice. The redemptive sacrifice was made once and for all in Christ's death on the cross. We might commemorate that one-time and sufficient sacrifice with prayers of thanksgiving for the holy meal. But that meal is not a sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice took care of redemption for all time. And, second, mere attendance at Divine Service does not offer grace in and of itself. In other words, God does not promise us His grace simply for attending church. While attending church is certainly a step in the right direction, we receive grace by first hearing the Word and then by partaking of Holy Communion, the high point and climax of the Divine Service.

That is at least the Cliff's Notes version of the presentation that we heard Monday. On Tuesday, Pastor Eckardt held a seminar on what he believes to be the proper conduct of the Divine Service. He looked carefully at the rubrics in our hymnals and explained the historic roots of our liturgy. He is a reverent and learned master of this subject.

We had a good time in Kewanee. The presentation topic was tough, but it led us to deeper consideration of what goes on in the Divine Service. The atmosphere at the conference is quite informal, with a good mix of laypeople and clergy. It was a wonderful opportunity to talk with some of the leading modern Confessional Lutheran thinkers and writers.

The conference is held every October. I would be glad to talk with you about it.



Begging Your Attendance

(All locations @ ORLC unless noted otherwise.)

November

- 9 Church Council
- 10 Westgate & Waterloo Joint Circuit Pastor's Conference at 9:00 a.m.—*Congregation invited for Matins!*
- 13-14 Higher Things Retreat at McHenry, IL
- 14 Breakfast/Catechism Study, 7:30 a.m.
- 14 Altar Guild Meeting/Study, 9:00 a.m.
- 16 Corporate Confession and Absolution, 7:00 p.m.
- 19 Service at Shell Rock Nursing Home, 4:00 p.m.
- 20 Bridal shower for Michaela Saunders

20-21 Senior High Retreat at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca

25 Thanksgiving Eve Service, 7:00 p.m. (No Midweek Education)

December

Midweek Schedule on Dec 2, 9, 16:

6:00-6:45 p.m., OT/NT and Catechumens

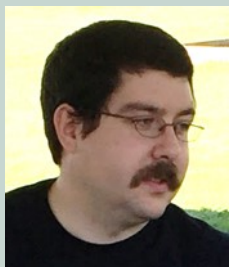
6:00-6:45 p.m., Adult Bible Class

7:00 p.m., Advent Midweek Services

12 Breakfast/Catechism Study, 7:30 a.m.

What is the “Millennium”?

By Vicar Willie Grills



By the time this article is published you will have lived through four more predications of the end of the world. You will have survived the Blood Moons, Shemitah, and the October Raptures. These are all catchy titles created in order to entice listeners and further spread a phantasmagoric doctrine of the apocalypse. They all share a similar theological

foundation called dispensational premillennialism. Perhaps you read the Left Behind series as a teenager, or flipped across the religious channels late one night and heard a message urging you to prepare for the Rapture, or thumbed through John Hagee’s latest at the newsstand. The technical terms might appear strange but you have, no doubt, come in contact with this theological system through some form of media or through interactions with friends and family.

While the scope of this article does not permit me an opportunity for an exhaustive study of their entire system, we can focus on one particular aspect of dispensationalism that is often overlooked: the doctrine concerning the Millennium, or Thousand Year Reign.

Millennialism (or Chiliasm) is a false doctrine that the church perennially confronts in various forms. We have struggled with it since at least the third century AD. In general, we define millennialism as “a variety of erroneous speculations about a supposed 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ, here on earth, during which there will be perfect peace and the complete victory of the church on earth. These views err in that they place too much emphasis on highly figurative language in certain portions of the Bible.”¹

Below are a few examples of current and former millennial groups within the United States:

- The Millerites.—followers of Jacob Miller who predicted the world would end in 1843.
- The Latter Days Saints—better known as the Mormons.
- The Jehovah’s Witnesses—perhaps you’ve seen these individuals knocking on doors in your neighborhood.
- The Branch Davidians—made famous by the tragedy in Waco, Texas, during the spring of 1993.

The dispensational form of millennialism teaches that God has governed differently in seven different ages or “dispensations” throughout history, all resulting in a climactic battle wherein Jesus Christ returns and defeats all of his enemies and establishes an earthly kingdom, centered in Jerusalem, around a rebuilt Temple. After this, Jesus reigns for a thousand years of peace and prosperity until Satan is loosed, is defeated for a final time, and the resurrection of the dead and the Great Judgment begins.

This doctrine began to spread rapidly in America during the mid-1800s—a time when one historian said the church was “drunk on the millennium.” Believers sold their businesses, even abandoned their families, and set out to wait for the return of Christ and the inauguration of His earthly kingdom. By the early 1900s this system was fully established in its present form. We live with the natural consequences of this theology today. These teachers ask for your donations so that they may send the money to Israel in order to build a third temple and usher in the End of Days. They seek to establish a kingdom that is of this world. Many are swept up in the enthusiasm of end times prophecy and forget the comforting truths of the Gospel.

¹ Barry, A.L. “www.lcms.org.” Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. 2003. <http://www.lcms.org/document.fdoc?src=lcm&id=1095> (accessed October 1, 2015).

Continued on Page 9

Our Redeemer 904 Bluff Street



To: