

The Christogram is a monthly newsletter of Concordia Lutheran Church, Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Deadline for newsletter items is the fourth Sunday of each month. We welcome contributions of news items, art work, and other appropriate articles.

Editor: Pastor Cartwright, Marlys Cartwright and Jean Smith

The Weekly Bulletin is printed on Thursday mornings. News items for the bulletin should be submitted by 9:00 am on Thursdays.

Sunday Worship: 8:00 and 10:30 AM **Education Hour:** 9:15 AM



Concordia Lutheran *CHRISTOGRAM*

December 1997



A Savior, a Song and a Star

What are my actual wants - not my whims, but my needs? I want to feel that living has a truly great reason. I want abiding assurance that days are meaningful, that life has a worthy destination, a dependable Guide, and a sure direction. I want something to do and an adequate reason for doing it. I want to hear a voice which says things which do not need to be revised.

I want to be true. I want to be honest. I want to be consistent. I want to be able to pray "thy kingdom come" and "thy will be done" without feeling that I am but a kneeling lie. I want to live with my conscience as I read my Bible.

I want my children to be safe. I want to be happy. I want to be healthy.

I need Christ. Without him there is no significance in my present task and no anchor for my future trial. Without him I choke on every prayer and lift my eyes to a vacant sky.

I want a song, a song that is inspired by an event, that makes an eternal difference, a song that is true. I want this song to sing, but I also want it to give.

Lord, I can never compose this song. Give me a song, I pray.

And then, dear Lord, I want a star to follow, something to look up to.

A savior, a song, and a star - these are my vital needs, and this is my prayer.

From *A Savior, a Song and a Star*, copyright 1945 The Board of Education and the Young People's Luther League of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH
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STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO 80477



**And the Word
became flesh
and lived
among us.**

Christ Is Born

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his
favor rests."*

Luke 2:4-14

Related texts: 2 Samuel 7:8-17; Psalm 89:20-37; Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1-2

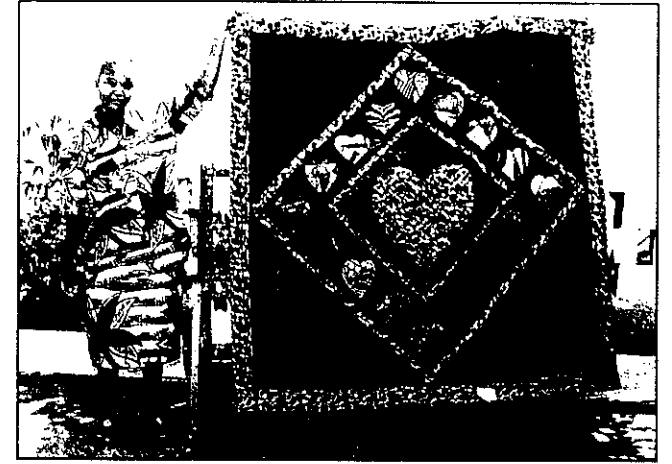
From "The One Minute Bible" edited by John R. Kohlenberger III.

Quilt sent the 'wrong way'

Remember the expression, "Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; teach him to fish you feed him for a lifetime"? You not only send quilts, but you are teaching women to quilt.

Missionaries Bill and Martha Autry work with displaced people in Liberia. Martha started a "home arts" class for women. It provides women with skills they can use to make extra income for their families. The class learned quilting and tie-dyeing. Bible study is an important part of the class; more than half of the class is unchurched.

The women are proficient in their skills and grateful for the support they received from LCMS World Relief. As a way of expressing their thanks, these neighbors made a heart-filled quilt and sent it the "wrong way" to the LCMS World Relief Office.



This quilt came the "wrong way" across the ocean from the LCMS World Relief home arts classes in Monrovia, Liberia. Sarah says, "Thank you for sharing God's love with us. We now can make things to sell in our markets."

Q&A

**LCEF
What is it?**

LCEF

The Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is a unique savings program where Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod members can invest their funds and earn interest. In turn, these funds provide a source of low-cost loans for church sites and facilities. For current interest rates, call 1-800-843-5233. For more information contact Clair Erickson (879-4419).



Healthy Faith

by Thomas Droege

We know healthy faith when we see it: in the trust of a child who rests securely in the promise of parents and God; in the hope of a bedridden grandmother whose sense of self-worth and purpose in life have not been dimmed by the limitations that age and disease have placed on her; in the commitment of parents who bring their children to baptism and cultivate their identity as children of God; in the loving service of a hospice volunteer who brings the healing presence of Christ to persons who are dying.

I think all of us value spiritual health more than we do physical or mental health. But do we attend as much to spiritual wellness as physical wellness? Yes, we go to church and pray in time of need, But beyond that, are we conscious of our spiritual diet? Do we engage in spiritual exercise regularly through meditation, reading Scripture, sharing our faith with others and serving those in need?

What are some characteristics of healthy faith? This is my list. Make your own and add to it things that you can do to improve the spiritual health of yourself and your children.

Healthy faith, like a healthy body, is above all a gift from God. That's most obvious in infant baptism, God cleansing the child from sin and naming the child as His forever. Faith is all gift in baptism, God's doing and not ours. And though we experience faith as our action as well as God's gift as faith develops, the gift quality of

faith is always its most obvious characteristic.

I remember a "dark night of the soul" in my college years when I was deeply troubled with many doubts. At the time I felt guilty about experiencing what I know now was a stage in the development of a healthy faith. God was closer to me than I was to myself through that experience, and what I remember now is not the doubting but the faithful presence of God guarding my soul. Sheer grace. All gift.

Faith, like the self of which it is a part, develops by stages throughout life. The faith of a small child is different from the faith of a college student conflicted by doubt and the faith of a mature adult. What is most apparent in the faith of a child is trust, a struggle for meaning in the faith of a young adult, and a commitment to loving service in the faith of a mature adult. A healthy faith is a developing faith, even though changes from one state to the next can be disruptive and troubling.

Healthy faith grows stronger and deeper all the way to the end of life. Spiritual health is different from physical health in this respect. A healthy body reaches a peak of strength and vitality and then gradually diminishes through the aging process until death takes its toll. By contrast, a healthy faith becomes deeper and stronger as it matures.

Emma was a hospice patient dying of a rapidly growing cancer. I had the rare

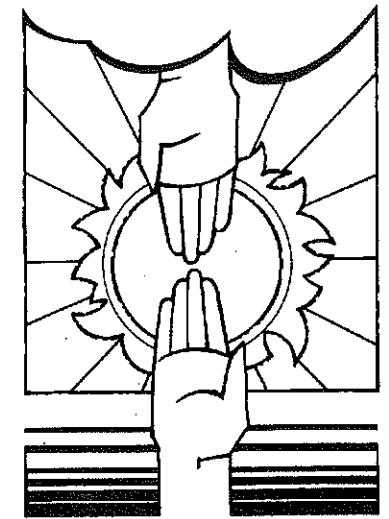
privilege of witnessing the healthy dying of a woman who knew in the deepest part of herself that she was a child of God. Her body disintegrated. Her spirit soared. Her faith was grounded in eternal life, a gift that was already hers in baptism. Her faith was a bridge to life on the other side of the grave.

Healthy faith sustains us in periods of adversity. Adversity comes with many different faces: physical illness, the loss of a job, a broken relationship, severe depression over long periods of time, leaving home, moving to a different place, the death of a friend or member of the family. Faith gets tested in time of suffering, and a healthy faith keeps hope and trust in God's presence alive and strong.

My friendship with Bob goes back to the early years of our ministry. Both recent graduates of the seminary, we shared our joys and frustrations. Bob knew already then that his wife had a blood disease that was likely to end in a premature death. They raised a family and had a full life together, but her death was a wrenching loss. The cantatas of J.S. Bach, so full of Christ dead and risen, sustained Bob in his grieving and made the difference between a lively hope and overwhelming despair.

Healthy faith needs nurture. Health is a gift from God, including spiritual health, but no gift should be taken for granted. The following rules for staying spiritually well come with no guaranteed of prolonging your life, but with the promise of strengthening your faith for now and for eternity.

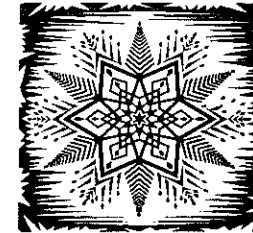
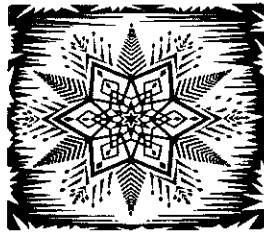
◆ Spend some time each day alone with God.



- ◆ Plan a family gathering at least three times a week to nurture relationships with each other and God.
- ◆ Gather at least once a week around word and sacrament with other members of your community of faith.
- ◆ Make a personal commitment to set aside a minimum number of hours per week for serving others through your church or another community agency.

Rules are not healthful when they are used as an instrument to judge yourself and others, but a healthy faith calls for a disciplined spiritual life in the same way that a healthy body calls for a disciplined physical regiment of regular exercise, good diet and so forth. Faith is God's gift to us. Spiritual discipline is what we do with the gift, how we feed it and exercise it.

Good health to all - in body, mind and spirit!



December 1997

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Playgroup 9:30 Girl Scouts 3:30 PM Women's AA 7 PM	Bible Study 6:30 AM Choir 6:15 PM Journey 7:30 PM	Soup Supper 5:30 PM Advent 7 PM	Women's Bible Study 10 AM Recovery 7 PM		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Worship 8/10:30 Education Hr. 9:15 AM Confirmation 4:30-6 PM	Playgroup 9:30 Girl Scouts 3:30 PM Women's AA 7 PM	Bible Study 6:30 AM Choir 6:15 PM Journey 7:30 PM Church Council 7:30 PM	Soup Supper 5:30 PM Advent 7 PM Confirmation 7 PM	Women's Bible Study 10 AM Recovery 7 PM		Men's Breakfast 7 AM LWML Brunch at Cindy Svendsen's (671 Amethyst) 10 AM
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Worship 8/10:30 AM Education Hr. 9:15 AM Confirmation Dinner & Party 4:30-6 PM Youth Group 5:30 PM	Playgroup 9:30 Girl Scouts 3:30 PM Women's AA 7 PM	Bible Study 6:30 AM Choir 6:15 PM Journey 7:30 PM	Soup Supper 5:30 PM Advent 7 PM	Women's Bible Study 10 AM Recovery 7 PM		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Worship 8/10:30 AM Education Hr. 9:15 AM Sunday School Program 10:30 Service Concordia Cares 11:30	Playgroup 9:30 Girl Scouts 3:30 PM Women's AA 7 PM WEDDING 5:30 PM	Bible Study 6:30 AM Choir 6:15 PM Journey 7:30 PM	Christmas Eve Services 5:30 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 PM Winter Break Begins	CHRISTMAS DAY 10 AM Service of Carols		
28	29	30	31			
Worship 8/10:30 AM Education Hr. 9:15 AM	Playgroup 9:30 Girl Scouts 3:30 PM Women's AA 7 PM		New Year's Eve Service 7:00 PM			

Thursday Recovery:
 Concordia Lutheran congregation has made a commitment to open its doors to the special needs surrounding those individuals, couples, and families who are dealing with the reality of addiction and recovery. Each Thursday night at 7:00pm a group of people meet in the basement of the church for devotions and support. This meeting is designed to aid the recovering person in the quest for a stronger spiritual life.

Sunday Extended Care Center Worship (ECC)
 On the fourth Sunday of each month our congregation is responsible for the care of the worship service at the ECC. The Pastor leads this service with congregational volunteers. There is a need to visit with the residents at the ECC. It is a great way to learn compassion and service. The residents always appreciate a kind contact from visitors.

Tuesday Bible Study:
 Meet and study the Word of God prior to work. This study begins at 6:30am and is done promptly at 7:30am. The format is one of discussion and reflection on God's Word. A good cup of coffee or tea is ready for you upon arrival. Give this study a try!

Wednesday Discovery Bible Study: This Wednesday evening study opportunity has been put into place for a midweek spot of spiritual refreshment. A person can come once a month, twice a month, or every week. It is a relaxed atmosphere for learning, discussion and fellowship. Please, come and enjoy some great "Discovery!"



Quiet Times for Parents

by H. Norman Wright

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea...(Matthew 2:1)

Christmas each year weaves its magic spell upon our hearts. Carols float on the air and there is a surge of love and kindness not felt at any other time of the year. Chreches appear reminding us of the miracle in the manger. In that feeding trough in lowly Bethlehem, a cry from that infant's throat broke the centuries of silence. For the first time God's voice could be heard coming from human vocal cords. C.S. Lewis called that event - the coming of Christ at Christmas - "the greatest rescue mission of history."

During each Christmas season the words of Micah resonate throughout the world. For he was inspired to give the prophecy that named the very birthplace of the Messiah: *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for Me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times (5:2).*

Micah was telling those who were proud and powerful and rich and self-righteous that God's great ruler would not come from their stately and royal environs. He would come forth from the nondescript hamlet of Bethlehem. When over 700 years later the wise men came searching for Him, the scribes had to brush off the dust from the book of Micah to direct them to the very

location where He would be born.

The One who would come is One *whose origins are from of old, from ancient times* (verse 2). This literally means "from days of eternity." It speaks of the eternal existence of Christ. His providence and preeminence are also prophesied as one who *will stand and shepherd His flock and His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And He will be their peace* (verses 4-5). What beautiful and precious promises are ours from this plowman who became God's mighty penman.



Special Services in December

December 3 - ADVENT - 7 PM

(soup supper at 5:30 PM)

December 10 - ADVENT - 7 PM

(soup supper at 5:30 PM)

December 14 - SUNDAY 10:30 AM

(Sunday School Program)

December 17 - ADVENT - 7 PM

(soup supper at 5:30 PM)

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

5:30 PM (Family Christmas)

7:30 PM (Early Eve Service)

10 PM (Candlelight Service /
Communion)

CHRISTMAS DAY 10:00 AM

(Service of Carols)

DECEMBER 31 7:00 PM

(New Year's Eve)



THE ADVENT WREATH & CANDLES

- ◆ The first candle is the candle of PROPHECY. It reminds us of the many Biblical passages that point us to the coming (Advent) of Christ. It is the candle of LOVE.
- ◆ The second candle is the BETHLEHEM candle. It symbolizes the Savior's coming to earth as a child. It is the candle of PEACE.
- ◆ The third candle is the candle of the SHEPHERD. This candle signifies Jesus coming into our hearts by faith. This is the candle of JOY.
- ◆ The fourth candle is the ANGEL candle. This candle represents Jesus' second and final coming (advent). This is the candle of hope.
- ◆ The white candle is the CHRIST candle. White symbolizes PURITY.

The Advent colors are purple which indicates royalty, penance and repentance. Advent is a reflective time. The pink indicates Joy and celebration. These two colors are inseparable. They belong together.

The Advent Wreath is circular in fashion. The eternal nature of God is hinted at. Also, the cycle of the seasons are indicated. The wreath is made of evergreens indicating eternal life and growth.

Advent as a season of preparation for the Festival of the Nativity originated in France. Its observance was quite general by the time of the Council of Tours, 563. It was probably not until the thirteenth century that Advent was universally recognized as beginning the Christian year, which up to that time had begun with the Festival of the Annunciation in March or, in some places, with Christmas.

Reflecting on a threefold Advent - His Coming in the flesh, His return to Judgment, and His daily Coming - are a part of the spiritual preparation during the Advent season.

Concordia November Statistics

November 1997 Sunday Attendance

wk. #1 - (E)127 (L) 143
270

wk. #2 - (E)130 (L) 124
254

wk. #3 - (E)132 (L) 168
300

wk. #4 - (E)120 (L) 158
278

wk. #5 - unavailable at printing.



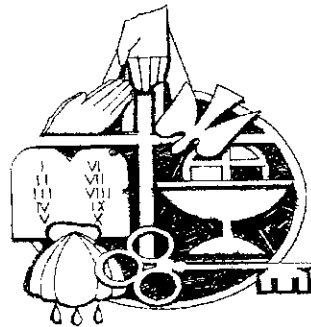
My soul magnifies the Lord,
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. . .
 He who is mighty has done great things for me,
 and holy is His name.
 And His mercy is on those who fear Him
 from generation to generation.
 He has shown strength with His arm,
 He has scattered the proud in the imagination
 of their hearts,
 He has put down the mighty from their thrones
 and exalted those of low degree.
 He has filled the hungry with good things,
 and the rich He has sent empty away.

THANKYOU!

Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers involved in the Fall Rummage Sale which raised \$2,700. The Women's Guild is giving \$450 of this to the Youth Group and Lutheran Brotherhood matched \$450 for a total of \$900.

For all those who supported the event, THANK YOU!

From Elaine & Hank Stroncek
 - Your Lutheran Brotherhood
 Communicator



CONFIRMATION

Meeting Dates for December:

- December 7**
4:30-6:00 PM Office of the Keys
- December 10**
7 PM Advent Service (The confirmation class is responsible for the soup supper for this Advent Service)
- December 14**
4:30-6:00 PM Dinner/Party

ANNOUNCEMENTS

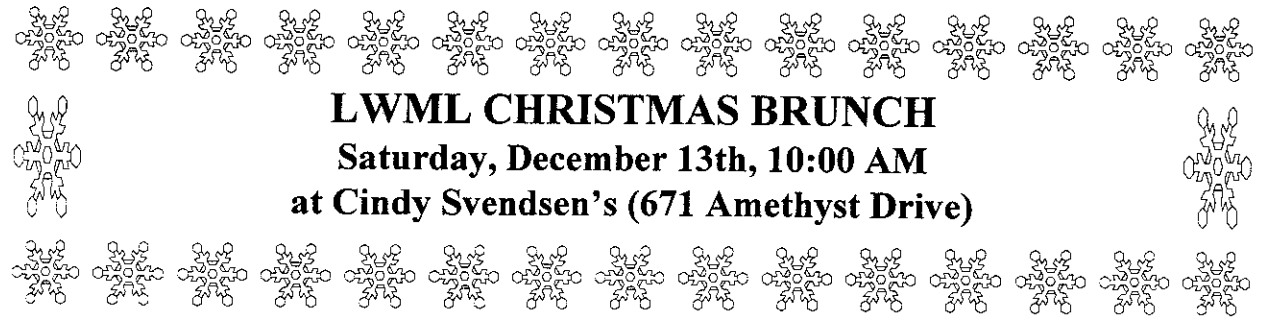
THE PONY EXPRESS IS ON THE WAY...



Expect a saddle bag to arrive any day with information to review on Concordia's Building Fund Drive. Reflect and pray on what you can do to help Concordia Lutheran grow into an effective and dynamic church which can serve our growing congregation.

CONCORDIA COMMUNITY CARES

December 21st (11:30 am): Meeting for December & January teams. If you have any questions or comments please call Elyn Myller (871-1860).



LWML CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

Saturday, December 13th, 10:00 AM
 at Cindy Svendsen's (671 Amethyst Drive)



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

December 14, 10:30 AM
 Practice on December 7 and 14



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13TH 7:00 AM - 8:30 AM
 JOIN US! BRING A FRIEND!