

Christogram

Words from Samuel H Nafzger

December 2004
Volume 2, Issue 12

Samuel H. Nafzger is Executive Director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

From his paper entitled: "The Office of the Pastoral Ministry and the Priesthood of All Believers"
cont.

The office of the public ministry has been instituted by God for the public proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. These functions were originally carried out by the apostles, who were called into the apostolate directly by Christ. The occupants of the office of the public ministry, however, are now to be chosen or elected mediately through the instrumentality of the royal priesthood in a given locale. It is with them that the ultimate authority for administering the means of grace lies.

The key issue here is a recognition of the authority given by God to all believers. By assiduous study of Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and the writings of Luther, C.F. W. Walther came to see how central the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is for the proper understanding of the doctrines of church and ministry. Walther's understanding of this doctrine enabled him to set to the side both the presumptuous threats of hierarchical tyranny on the part of the clergy and also populist and uncontrolled overreaching by the laity. According to Walther, it is God's express will that a local congregation (or group of congregations) fill this high office by electing a qualified man to carry out its functions. In so choosing, the members of the priesthood of believers do not surrender their sovereign rights or powers. What the pastor is to do in the stead and name of the congregation remains fundamentally the responsibility of the priesthood of believers, and it would be correct to say, therefore, that a pastor does no more, and can do no more, than what a congregation itself has the authority to do. Nor does the congregation's call diminish in the slightest the divine nature of the office of the public ministry.

Now is not the time for us Lutherans to quarrel about the doctrine of the ministry. Ordinarily, those priests who have not been recognized by the church through the apostolic custom of ordination ought not carry out the distinctive functions of the pastoral office such as public preaching and public administration of the sacraments. To say this, in no way minimizes the importance of the priesthood of all believers. Nor is this to deny that there may be rare and unusual situations when exceptions can and should be made. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers does not contradict the Scriptural truth that the pastoral office is divinely instituted, that this office is God's will for the sake of good order in the church, that one of the priests who possesses the Scriptural qualifications of this office be selected to hold this office in the congregation and carry out the distinctive functions of this office publicly—i.e., in behalf of and with accountability to the others.

But having said this, it is high time that we in the Missouri Synod reclaim our Reformation heritage, that we take the doctrine of the priestly office of all the baptized out of the slogan category and put it to work in the living theology and practice of our life together in the church. May God grant it!

Words from Ellie Bach

A STRANGE WAY TO SAVE THE WORLD...

I don't know about you, but sometimes I think about Christmas and frankly, I wonder how in the world God came up with this kind of a plan to save the world. There would seem to be so many majestic ways He could have chosen. But for some reason, He picked a manger. And into the salvation mix He threw a stable, a virgin mother, some shepherds, a handful of wise men, a healing ministry, a cross and an empty tomb. How creative our God is!

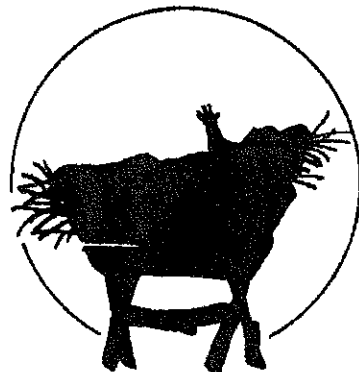
But He is more than creative. He is loving. I am reminded these days of the sacrifice that came with this plan. Only someone who was madly in love would sacrifice themselves in such an extreme manner. I can't even begin to imagine what kind of love it takes to do that. I can think of a mother's love. She would do anything for her child. I could think of a husband and his wife. He loves her with all that is inside of him. He would possibly even die for her. But that doesn't even come close. The Savior's love for us is even greater. It is beyond these examples, beyond the images that we can actually begin to understand. God's love is perfect, unchanging, and unconditional. And that's the part that gets me—unconditional. He knew that we would continually mess up. He knew how many times we would throw His love back at Him like it didn't matter. He knew that there would be many that wanted nothing to do with Him; that would deny His existence and chose to live life without Him. But He did it anyway. He loves us so much, that He died for us—despite us.

God loves us just as we are. He calls us to live lives set apart. He wants us to be like Jesus—to strive to be holy and blameless. But when we mess up, His love stays the same. And although I can't understand it, I am so grateful for that kind of love. I would be lost without a God who can love me with all my failures and shortcomings included. He loves all of me. And He loves all of you.

This Christmas, when you see the manger scenes at this place or that, take a close look at the baby in the manger. Because it is through that precious gift that we are able to live for eternity with a God who is madly in love with us. I pray that where ever you are this Christmas, that you would feel that love like never before.

Merry Christmas!

 Ellie



Tenets, Tidbits, and Trails..... The Elder's report

GIVING THANKS IN TOUGH TIMES

The best time to give thanks may be in the toughest of times. In 1863 in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln decreed that America would celebrate "a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father".

Sadly, many people come into Thanksgiving with mixed emotions. It may be their first Thanksgiving without a loved one. Or the holiday may serve as a reminder of some other hurt in their life. Someone's circumstance may tell them that they have

nothing to be thankful for. But God tells us to be thankful in all situations. "In everything give thanks." (1 Thes. 5:18) Psalm 34:1 says "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." The pressures of life can be overwhelming sometimes, but we have a choice to be thankful or not. When we give thanks to God in the midst of our trials we can expect to see things change for the better.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Bob



"PRAYER & PRAISE"

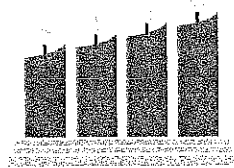
In December "Prayer & Praise" will be taking a break. However, we will be providing the music for our first Advent service on December 1st.



Advent & Christmas Services

Advent Midweek Services:
December 1st 7pm
December 8th 7pm
December 15th 7pm
December 22nd 7pm

Each service will be preceded by a Soup Supper at 5:30pm



Christmas Services

December 24th
5:30pm
7:30pm
10 pm Candlelight

December 25th
10 AM



For information on Kelly Hanson, serving in the Peace Corp in Mongolia go to her web site, www.kellysger.com/letters read her letters, link to the home page to see pictures, etc. & subscribe for update. There are also address labels in the Hanson mailbox at church.

Sunday School News. . . .

Christmas Service

The children in preschool through 7th grade will be presenting a special Christmas Service: "Oh Christmas Tree" on Sunday December 12th during the 10:45am service. Practice schedules for the program are as follows:

Sunday November 28th 9:15 - 10:30am

Sunday December 5th 9:15 - 10:30am

Wednesday Dec. 8th 3:30 - 5:00pm

Sunday December 12th 9:15 - 10:30am

Please have your child attend as many practices as possible. Invite a friend to the service - it's a great opportunity for outreach.



Advent

We have sent a Christmas Tree Devotional home with children in grades Preschool - 5th. (one per family) Have fun building the tree with your child during the 24 days before Christmas. There are also winter nightly devotionals for kids under the mailboxes. Feel free to grab one and read it with your child.

Dec. 19th is a regular Sunday School day. I know some of the teachers would like to do a special Christmas lesson with their kids on this day. Dec. 26th there will be NO Sunday School.

Merry Christmas!

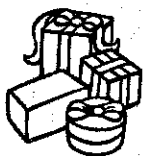
Your Sunday School Team



LWML Guild News

The LWML met November 16th at the home of Marilyn Palmer with 14 women present. We continued our Bible study entitled "A Woman After God's Own Heart", by Elizabeth George.

Concordia's Taste of Christmas was a "Great Success". A huge thank you to Deb Nelson for all her "crafting". Thank you also goes to Dianne Weber and Sherry Kammerer for organizing the Cookie Caper. Thank you to Linda White, Billee Harris, Cindy Klein, Ann Gilbertson, Helen Berntson, Ellie Bach & Raya Duryea for helping bake. Thank you to Nancy Kounovsky & Sue Krohn for organizing the Specialty Items & thanks goes to Pam Patterson & Cindy Svendsen for organizing the Christmas Brunch. All together this event raised \$3879 for missions local and worldwide. Praise be to God!



A Christmas Brunch will be held at Cindy Svendsen's on Saturday, December 4th at 9:00 am. We will reveal secret sisters and receive the new secret sisters. Billee will do a Christmas story and we will have a brunch.

TOOLS FOR LIVING NEWS

Our High Priest

Our high priest is able to understand our weaknesses. When he lived on earth, he was tempted in every way that we are, but he did not sin. *Heb 4:15*

Read how J.B. Phillips translates Hebrews 4:15

For we have no superhuman High Priest to whom our weaknesses are unintelligible—he himself has shared fully in all our experience of temptation, except that he never sinned.

It's as if he knows that we will say to God...: "God. It's easy for you up there. You don't know how hard it is from down here." So he boldly proclaims Jesus' ability to understand. Look at the wording again.

He himself. Not an angel. Not an ambassador. Not an emissary, but Jesus himself.

Shared fully. Not partially. Not nearly. Not to a large degree. Entirely! Jesus shared fully.

In all our experience. Every hurt. Each ache. All the stresses and all the strains. No exceptions. No substitutes. Why? So he could sympathize with our weaknesses.

Grace for the Moment by Max Lucado

He has walked the walk, talked the talk, felt the feelings. He has literally walked beside us, foot prints in the sand, living, breathing, feeling all that we do. A bit scary!!!! Yes, but for us who suffer, what a HUGE relief to know that HE understands our failings and temptations. He has experienced our lives; through His grace we are forgiven. I thank God everyday for the gift of GRACE, without it I would be lost forever. Recovery is hard. Recovery from all things, all sins. Use the strength of God and His flock to help you through it. Go to recovery groups! Pray! Call us!

Contact anyone of your Tools For Living members, for support, prayers or information.
Helen Bernston 870-9675 Karen Burin 879-7974 Lori Joens 879-7120 Becca Utu 879-1064



Youth CALENDAR



DEC.

December 5th
5:00pm-6:30pm

Sr. High Bible study/Dinner
* Don't forget to bring your Bible

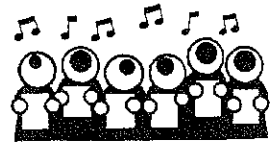


December 11th
1:00pm-4:00pm

Jr./Sr. High Cookie bake

December 12th

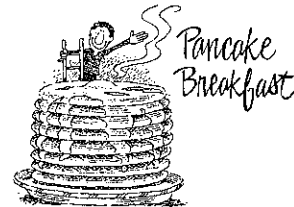
Christmas Caroling w/Congregation (4:00pm)
Dinner w/congregation (about 6:30 pm)
Christmas party (7:00-8:30pm)



* Don't forget your \$5 wrapped present for a boy or girl.

December 15th
9:00am

Sr. High late start breakfast
* Don't forget your Bibles



PARENTS + CONGREGATION MEMBERS:

We will be in need of drivers for the caroling. If you are available to help out, please talk to Ellie. Thanks.



MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

Lutheran Christmas CD

Lutheran composer/arranger Trent Thompson, a student at Concordia Seminary, has a new Christmas CD available, *O Holy Night*, which includes classical favorites like *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Silent Night*, *Sing Noel*, *Little Drummer Boy*, *Joy to the World*, *O Come Emmanuel*, and others. The suggested donation of \$20 helps several students with their tuition. Listen to sample music and order at www.alaythiamusic.com or call (314) 505-7426.



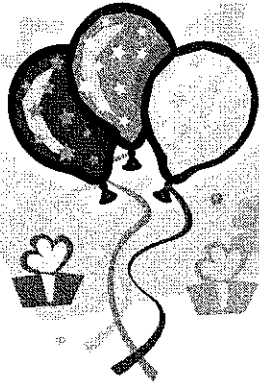
**Men's
Breakfast**
Saturday,
December 11th
7-8:15am in the
Fellowship Hall
Bring a friend!

December Birthdays

Ben Bradfield - 20th
Raya Duryea - 21st
Eryn Rinck - 26th
Ellie Bach - 27th
Rebecca Duryea - 28th

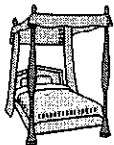
Baptism

Keenani Starbuck - 7th
Leo Starbuck - 7th
Mariah Starbuck - 7th
Cory McConnell - 18th
Brian Aragon - 28th
Jack Craig - 28th



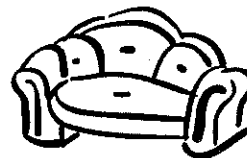
Still in Search of Some Volunteer Cleaners

Thanks to all the volunteers who graciously help keep the church clean! Each cleaning "team" works once a month for an hour or two on a specific area. There are still several "team" slots to be filled and also one cleaner looking for a "teammate" to help share her spot each month. If you can help with any of these openings, either as a permanent assignment each month or a temporary seasonal assignment, please give me a call at 870-6415.



We are also looking for a couple of items for the parsonage: a couch and a queen size bed. If anyone has one &/or both of these items that they would like to loan or donate to the church please give me a call at 870-6415.

Again, thank you to all!!



Trish Hendricks
Trustees Committee

MATCHING GRANT FUND ALLOCATION

Just an update to keep you informed about the matching grant funds and how they are being dispersed. The amounts that were specified for a specific ministry have been paid as follows: Christ-Aid \$179; Missions \$36; Pre-school \$16; Mortgage principle payment \$12360; Sunday School \$358; Youth \$358; Joel Scheiwe LCMS World Missions \$895; Music/Sound \$448. Total specified paid: \$14650. Total unspecified amount was \$98534. 10%, \$9853 (our tithe) goes to missions. We voted to pay for Joel Scheiwe's first year of mission/vicarage \$8000 total. \$895 specified + \$7105 from the tithe of the unspecified. This leaves \$2749 of our tithe for missions, and \$88,680 unspecified. We have used this amount to meet our financial obligations to the Rocky Mountain District in the amount of approx. \$8000 leaving \$80,680 unspecified. The Trustees are getting bids on repairs needed at the parsonage and some of this remaining money will be used towards that. If you have any questions or suggestions for ministry opportunities for the remaining money please contact Brian Thornton or one of your Council members. Thanks.

About Our Organization...

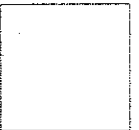
The Christogram is a monthly newsletter of Concordia Lutheran Church, Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Deadline for newsletter items is the third Sunday of each month. We welcome contributions of news items, art work, and other appropriate articles. You can email us your contribution at concordia@steamboatlutheran.org

The Weekly Bulletin is printed on Thursday mornings. News items for the bulletin should be submitted by 9:00 am on Thursdays. Church Office: 970-879-0175 Fax: 970-871-0190

Saturday Worship: 5:30 PM

Summer Sunday Worship: 8:00 & 10:45 AM **Education Hour:** 9:15 AM

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH
755 CONCORDIA LANE
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO 80487



Jesus Lives For:

2004



December 2004							January 2005						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30	31					

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 1						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
January 1						

<p>8:00am Worship Service</p> <p>9:15am Education Hour</p> <p>10:45am Worship Service</p> <p>5:00pm Sr. High Youth Dinner & Bible Study</p>	<p>6:00pm Elders</p> <p>7:00pm Women's AA</p>	<p>4:30pm Worship Committee</p> <p>6:00pm Tools for Living</p>	<p>3:30pm Kid's Praise</p> <p>5:30pm Advent Soup Supper</p> <p>7:00pm Advent Service</p>	<p>9:00am CBS</p> <p>7:00pm Handbell Choir</p>	<p>4:30pm Concert of Prayer</p> <p>6:30pm Community Youth Christmas Party</p>	<p>9:00am LWML Christmas Brunch</p> <p>5:30pm Worship Service</p>
<p>8:00am Worship Service</p> <p>9:15am Education Hour</p> <p>10:45am Sunday School Christmas Service</p> <p>12:00pm Board of Youth-Brunch</p> <p>4:00pm Youth Christmas Caroling/Party</p>	<p>7:00pm Women's AA</p>	<p>7:00pm Church Council</p>	<p>3:30pm Kid's Praise</p> <p>5:30pm Advent Soup Supper</p> <p>7:00pm Advent Service</p>	<p>9:00am CBS</p> <p>7:00pm Handbell Choir</p>		<p>7:00am Men's Breakfast</p> <p>1:00pm Jr./Sr. High Cookie Bake</p> <p>5:30pm Worship Service</p>
<p>8:00am Worship Service</p> <p>9:15am Education Hour</p> <p>10:45am Worship Service</p>	<p>7:00pm Women's AA</p>		<p>5:30pm Advent Soup Supper</p> <p>7:00pm Advent Service</p> <p>8:00pm Adult Choir Practice</p>	<p>7:00pm Handbell Choir</p>	<p>5:30pm Christmas Eve Service</p> <p>7:30pm Christmas Eve Service</p> <p>10:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</p>	<p>10:00am Christmas Day Service</p>
Winter Break						
<p>8:00am Worship Service</p> <p>9:15am Education Hour</p> <p>10:45am Worship Service</p>	<p>7:00pm Women's AA</p>	<p>6:00pm Board of Education</p>	<p>6:00pm Prayer & Praise Practice</p>	<p>7:00pm Handbell Choir</p>		