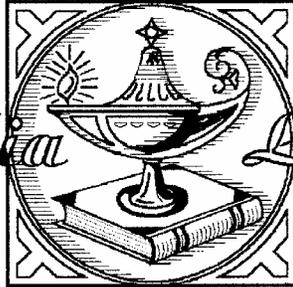


*The  
Concordia Lutheran*



“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105

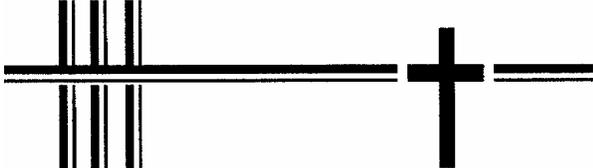
---

Vol. XLVII

November - December 2002

Nos. 11 - 12

---



“And the Word  
was made flesh  
and dwelt  
among us.”

—John 1:14

---



"My Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35  
"My Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

---

Volume XLVII Nov.-Dec., 2002 Nos. 11-12

---

**OFFICIAL ORGAN  
of the  
Concordia Lutheran  
Conference**

This publication appears in a monthly or bi-monthly issue at a subscription price of \$5.00 per year.

**The Concordia Lutheran EDITOR:**

The Rev. David T. Mensing  
17151 South Central Avenue  
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

**Book and Tract EDITOR:**

The Rev. M. L. Natterer  
483 Tangent Street  
Lebanon, OR 97355

**LAY MEMBER:**

Mr. Paul L. Natterer  
3333 SE Oak Street  
Albany, OR 97322

Address all subscriptions, renewals, and remittances to: **Scriptural Publications, 17151 S. Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913.** A special notice of expiration will be inserted in the issue which terminates your subscription.

**Officers of the  
Concordia Lutheran Conference**

**PRESIDENT:**

The Rev. E. R. Stallings  
5605 Windsong Drive  
Windcrest, TX 78239

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

The Rev. M. L. Natterer  
483 Tangent Street  
Lebanon, OR 97355

**SECRETARY:**

The Rev. David T. Mensing  
17151 South Central Avenue  
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913

**TREASURER:**

Mr. Robert G. Bloedel  
10017 - 61st Avenue South  
Seattle, WA 98178

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

To set forth in simple and plain language the pure doctrine of God's Word as taught by the true Lutheran Church in full accordance with the **Book of Concord of 1580** and the **Brief Statement of 1932.**

To show, **on the basis of Scripture,** what true Christians are to believe and how, out of love for their Savior Jesus Christ, they are to lead Godly lives.

To furnish aids for Bible study and articles for Scriptural devotion and meditation.

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or false church body, but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing fellowship with them.

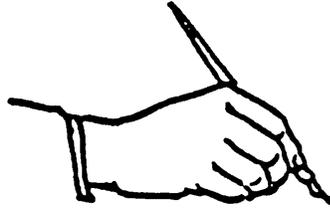
To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are *"perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*

To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

To expose particularly the false teaching and practice of the various so-called "Lutheran" church bodies by comparing their teachings and practices with what is plainly recorded in the Word of God, in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the old orthodox Lutheran writings.

To expose false teaching and practice wherever it makes its appearance and to keep abreast of the current happenings in the church and among the nations as signs of the times.

To be truthful and factual in our reporting and freely to correct any misinformation of which we are not aware and which has been called to our attention. Also to clarify any information or statement of doctrine or practice which may be unclear to our readers or which may create a wrong impression.



## The President's Column

*“And on earth peace, good will toward men.” —Luke 2:14*

Even at the risk of sounding trite, it is getting harder to celebrate Christmas without feeling suffocated by the *world's* version of Christmas, which like a noose seems to get tighter and tighter. Granted, the world will always be the world. We cannot and should not expect the world to appreciate the true spiritual, Biblical meaning of Christmas. The world simply cannot comprehend that blessed phrase in *“Hark, The Herald Angels Sing,”* namely, *“God and sinners reconciled.”* The world does not even know what that statement means, even though its “pop crooners” sing this line and all the other blessed words of our wonderful Christian Christmas carols over and over again. You cannot walk through any department store or mall without hearing the world trying to sing Christian carols! Permit me to express how offensive it is to any sincere Christian’s ears to hear some pop idol swoon and croon off key a Christmas carol to his own sickening glory and honor. It is nothing short of blasphemy! However, on the Last Day, when the Savior of the world comes back as the Judge of the world, then all who took the blessed name of Jesus in vain will find themselves down on their knees, contrary to their own will, and confessing Jesus to be *“LORD to the glory of God the Father”* (Philippians 2:10-11). And then there shall follow for them weeping and gnashing of teeth!

Nevertheless, despite the world’s own blasphemous celebration of Christmas, our celebration cannot and will not be daunted. By the grace of God, we believe in Christ and enjoy that peace brought about by Jesus who was born of the Virgin Mary for the express purpose of reconciling the world unto God. Let us join with the angels who sang out, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”* (Luke 2:14).

Now these words, perhaps the most often quoted words on Christmas cards, do not say what the majority of people in the world think they say. They think these words are talking about *temporal* peace on earth.

They yearn for the day when there be no more wars on earth. Joining such disillusioned people are all the millennialists who dream of perfect peace on earth during a fictitious millennium! Of course, Jesus has already declared that wars and rumors of wars will continue unto the end, even ushering in His second visible coming on the Last Day (Matthew 24). Moreover, most “modern” Bible versions butcher these words saying such things as, “*and on earth peace among men with whom he is well pleased!*” (RSV), or “*and on earth peace among men on whom his favor rests*” (NIV), both of which limit (like John Calvin) God’s peace only to those whom God favors, whereas God’s peace and favor spoken of here is the *objective* peace of God in Christ which extends to all men; or “*and on earth peace among men with whom he is well pleased [men of good will, of His favor]*” (Amplified Bible). All these versions make the peace *temporal*, or make it something *among*, or *between men* toward one another, or limits God’s peace only to those whom He favors with the implication that in Christ God does not favor all!

Not so! The angels gave glory to God because the birth of Jesus ushered in the Savior of the whole world of sinners to establish peace between God and sinful man, the enemy of God. In the birth of Jesus, God was sending forth His Son, “*made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law*” (Galatians 4:4-5). Jesus came to reconcile God, whose just anger and wrath was upon all mankind from Adam’s Fall. God was justly angry with the world of sinners. But Christ came and gained for the world peace with God. Christ came, and by His holy obedience to the Law and His atoning sacrifice, appeased and satisfied the offended justice of God so that now God is at peace with us.

Scripture further explains this peace of God toward us in these words: “*And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile **all things** unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable in his sight*” (Colossians 1:20-22). By the blood of Jesus, shed on the cross, the wrath of God upon the world was turned away. Now, for Jesus’ sake, God says, “*I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of PEACE, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*” (Jeremiah 29:11). **This** is the peace of which the angels sang when they declared, “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men.*” Yes, God’s good will toward us poor sinners is the **true peace** which we celebrate at Christmas, “*peace with*

*God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1), peace which we appropriate personally by faith.

What a shame to celebrate Christmas but fail to understand, truly understand, and thereby fail to receive the peace which Christ came to give to every person. To have not just a happy Christmas but a happy life, even unto eternity, see and acknowledge your own sinfulness with repentance, and embrace by faith the Lord Jesus who secured peace with God for the whole world, and therefore and in particular for you. On this basis, may you have a most blessed Christmas!

—E. R. S.

## Dedication at Good Shepherd, Tucson

On Sunday, October 27, the members of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tucson, Arizona, assembled at the entrance of their new church building to celebrate its completion and to dedicate it to the glory of God. They were joined by a sizeable contingent of visitors from far and near, inasmuch as the congregation was about to host the annual fall meeting of the pastors of the Concordia Lutheran Conference. After a brief devotion and dedicatory ceremony at the door conducted by the congregation’s pastor



of thirty years, the Rev. David G. Redlin, the sanctuary was all but filled to capacity for the festive worship service that followed.

Pastor Redlin served as liturgist, and the sermon was delivered by the Rev. E. R. Stallings of Windcrest, Texas, current Conference president, who had been instrumental in facilitating Good Shepherd’s contact with our Conference back in 1991. He preached on **Psalm 26:8**, taking as his theme, “**God’s House: It Most Surely Is a Place to Love,**” and dividing it into two parts: **I.** God’s House is a place where God Himself dwells in and through His Word, and **II.** God’s House is where His honor dwells. The service was specially beautified by an

anthem entitled, “*Sing to the Lord of Harvest*,” offered by the congregation’s choir; and the assembled members and their brethren from afar raised their voices in hymns of praise to the Lord of the Church for His continued never-failing grace toward them.

Good Shepherd was formally organized as a congregation in 1949 and shortly thereafter joined the Wisconsin Synod. It built its original sanctuary in 1950 and two years later expanded its plant with classroom space and established a Christian day school which it maintained for thirty-three years. However, the cost of fully supporting the school finally took a financial toll on the congregation, particularly when enrollment decreased substantially in 1985; and the church reluctantly decided to close it. But that decision also resulted in membership losses since it apparently had been the *school* and not the faithful ministry of the *Word and sacraments* that had been the chief attraction for quite a few families. The smaller congregation soon found it unfeasible to maintain the large physical plant in a rapidly deteriorating area and decided to relocate to suburban acreage on Melpomene Way; and when officials of the Wisconsin Synod attempted to interfere in the congregation and to lay blame for its situation on its faithful pastor, Pastor Redlin was expelled from the synod; and his faithful congregation followed him, choosing rather to be independent than submit to synodical tyranny. Only six years later, after coming to know the Concordia Lutheran Conference and carefully examining its position in doctrine and practice, did the little congregation again consider a synodical affiliation. Pastor Redlin was colloquized in 1991, and the congregation was received into the membership of the Conference in 1992.

For over ten years, the congregation tried unsuccessfully to erect a church building on its acreage. Local requirements made it difficult to erect a “public” building in a “residential” area, arrangements to swap acreage for construction services fell through when difficulties were encountered in re-zoning the property, and eventually seven acres were sold to finance the building project. Construction finally began in the spring of 2002, and the building was completed in October. The effectual fervent prayers of the congregation and of their Conference brethren had been answered in the Lord’s own good time according to His promise, and the members joyfully celebrated the dedication of their new house of worship filled with humble gratitude for His abiding gracious blessings. We join them in their thanksgiving.

—Ed.

# Remembering Luther's Birth



*“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and  
forget not all His benefits!”*

—Psalm 103:2

Each year on November 10 we remember with gratitude to God the life and work of His servant, Martin Luther, as one of His preeminent blessings to His church on earth. For if it had not been for Luther's reformation of the church in the sixteenth century, we might still be sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death (Luke 1:79), robbed of the light of the Gospel by the tyranny of the Roman Antichrist!

Luther was born on November 10, 1483, just nine years before Columbus landed in the “new world” during the age of exploration. Europe was emerging from the “Dark Ages” of ignorance and superstition into a *Renaissance* or rebirth of intellectual curiosity and investigation. The time was right for the papal system to be questioned, unmasked, and held to account for the “*commandments of men*” (Matthew 15:9) under which the saving truth of God's Word had been hidden and by which it had been perverted for well over a thousand years.

In the little town of Eisleben in Saxon Germany, Hans and Margarete Luther worked hard to make a living. Hans labored in the copper mines, while his wife cared for their humble home under arduous conditions. When their first son was baptized on “St. Martin's Day,” November 11, they named him after the great missionary, not realizing the impact that his life's work would have under the Lord's blessing for hundreds of years to come. When Martin was only six months old, his father moved the family to nearby Mansfeld in order to take advantage of better opportunities for work as a miner. There the family grew with the addition of Martin's three brothers and four sisters. His parents were very strict in the way they raised their children and tried to bring them up to be God-fearing, respectful, obedient, and devoutly faithful to the Roman Catholic Church — the only church they knew. It was only when Luther was a young adult, having given up the study of law to

become a priest, that he learned from the Holy Scriptures to recognize the soul-destroying errors in the church of Rome and was enabled by the grace of God to combat them and to teach in their place the everlasting truths of His precious Word.

As we observe our annual Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday of November, let us remember to note among our *spiritual* blessings the great benefits that the Lord our God bestowed upon the world in and through Martin Luther and his work of the Reformation. Chief among these is that he restored to the church on earth the *Word of God* in its truth and purity as *the only source and standard of Christian faith and life*, the Word which for centuries had been hidden under a multitude of false teachings and practices. At the same time, on the basis of the Scriptures, Luther restored to poor sinners the comfort, peace, and hope afforded by the pure Gospel of *salvation by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, totally apart from the works of the Law*. Our Lutheran heritage, summarized in the confessional writings produced during Luther's life and immediately following his death, is based upon those two basic principles. Those *Lutheran Confessions*, which comprise the ***Book of Concord*** of 1580, include Luther's *Small* and *Large Catechisms*, the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology* [or *Defense*] of the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, and the *Formula of Concord*.

In addition to those *chief* blessings and benefits, we are also grateful for Luther's efforts to bring congregational singing back to the church on the basis of numerous passages of Scripture. Luther collected the few old hymns that he could find; and he himself wrote thirty-seven more. Some of these were incorporated them in the first Lutheran hymnbook published in 1524. Perhaps the most famous of his hymns is "*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*," which first appeared in 1529. Luther also stressed the importance of a thorough Christian education, the blessing of children, and an active Christian family life, among many other applications of Scripture in the lives of God's people. "*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits*," particularly those He gave us through His servant Martin Luther!



—D. G. R.



## A Truly Christian Thanksgiving

*“In everything give thanks.”* —I Thessalonians 5:18

Thanksgiving Day has been observed by presidential proclamation since the time of the Civil War, commemorating the tradition of the Pilgrims’ first bountiful harvest in the New World and establishing a festive day once each year on which the citizens of our blessed country are encouraged to visit their houses of worship to thank God for His blessings. Many professing Christians do indeed attend special Thanksgiving services, piously folding their hands to give thanks unto God both there and later at the feast set before them. As for the rest of the year, many still remember to ask the Lord’s blessings and to give thanks at *mealtimes*, or at least they try to, but just as many *never* give God a grateful thought from one Thanksgiving Day to the next.

Thus it’s not just appropriate but *important* that we ask ourselves what a truly *Christian* thanksgiving is. What it *isn’t* we have already indicated. What it *is* involves a great deal more than just saying thanks at our meals, or when we’ve passed a major exam, or gotten a big promotion at work, or any similar circumstances. As the Holy Spirit of God Himself exhorts us through the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians, *“In everything give thanks!”* The Lord our God fully expects our gratitude, not only for the things of this life but, even more importantly, for those things which pertain to our spiritual life and the life to come!

*“In EVERYTHING give thanks!”* There is no limitation in these words whatsoever. It is an easy matter to give thanks for the *good* things that come our way. We often hear a nominal believer, that is a believer in name only, or even an **unbeliever**, say “Thank God!” upon hearing

he's received a big promotion, or after having been saved from death or serious injury in a terrible accident, or at the birth of healthy child. But how will that nominal Christian react, how will that unbeliever respond, when things **don't** go the way he thinks they should? If he *loses* the promotion, if he is severely *injured* in an car crash, if his child is born with *Down's Syndrome*, then we hear him *curse* God's Name, *complain* that God is not fair to him, and claim that he *deserves better* from God. It is this attitude the prevents them from *ever* being truly thankful.

True *Christian* thankfulness begins in a heart that knows that it deserves *nothing* but God's wrath and eternal damnation, for he knows from God's Law that he is a sinner, that he was conceived and born a sinner, and that he has lived as a sinner. Indeed, every *true* Christian cries out with King David, "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*" (Psalm 51:5). The true Christian knows that, by nature, he cannot do anything but sin, that he cannot of his own power and strength do anything pleasing to God. Jesus Himself says of natural man, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh*" (John 3:6), and Paul says of the sinful flesh within all of us: "*I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing*" (Romans 7:18).

However, God in His limitless grace and mercy, had compassion on us and sent His only-begotten Son into the flesh to become one of us, who was "*in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin*" (Hebrews 4:15). As our perfect Substitute, the sinless Son of God offered up His perfect life among us and His bitter suffering and death to pay for all our sins, and "*not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:2). And God, for Christ's sake, declared in time what He had determined in eternity, before the foundations of the world, that "*in Christ,*" because of Jesus' vicarious atonement, He reconciled the world unto Himself, "*not imputing their trespasses unto them*" (II Corinthians 5:19). It is as the fruit of confidence in this truth that all true *Christian* thankfulness begins, thanksgiving to God for the forgiveness of sins *given freely* to us poor wretched mortals in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Every true Christian is also aware of the fact that, despite the claims of poets to the contrary, life is no "rose garden" in which we experience one blissful moment following the other. No, *because of sin* in the world, our days are full of pain, and sorrow, and labor, and toil, and sweat, and illness, and problems, and all the rest of sin's temporal consequences, not to mention the problems, the suffering, and, yes, the ridi-

cule and scorn we suffer *because we are Christians*. And yet, St. Paul tells us, “***In EVERYTHING give thanks!***” Surely he cannot mean that we are to give thanks for “*the sufferings of this present time*.” Oh, but, yes, He **does** mean that. He means **exactly** that! His Word tells us why we *can* and *should* be thankful, no matter in what vexing situation we may find ourselves.

In St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, we find these remarkable words: “*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose... What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*” Romans 8:28,31-32. What could possibly happen to any of us as believers in Christ that could diminish in any way what God has freely promised to give us? **Everything** that happens in the life of the Christian happens either according to God’s own plan or, at the very least, with God’s permission. Notice that Paul tells us that “***all things work together for good to them that love God.***” He doesn’t say that a *few* things, or *some* things, or even *most* things, but **ALL** things work together for our *good* as Christians. And because all things do work together for our good, we can give and should give thanks to God for **ALL** things, even those things which in our limited, sin-blinded reason we may not see as “good” at the moment. We can be sure that they are, however, because God Himself, our heavenly Father, has promised us that they will be good for Jesus’ sake.

Are you in pain? Your Savior suffered *more!* Give thanks to God, for His strength is made perfect in your weakness! Are you ill? Give thanks for having been healed of all your *spiritual* diseases, and then commit your physical disease to His will to relieve or not to relieve according to His good pleasure. Are you suffering for Christ’s sake; are you suffering the ridicule of the world because you really live your life as a believer in Christ? Be grateful and rejoice! For St. Peter tells us: “*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trail which is to try you, as though some strange happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified!*” (I Peter 4:12-14).

Finally, *how* should we give thanks to God for all His merciful benefits toward us. Certainly we should do so with our mouths, “*in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in [our] hearts to the Lord*” (Colossians 3:16). But our thanksgiving should not start and stop just with our prayers and our songs of praise. Indeed, that should be only the starting point. Our entire lives, everything that we think, everything that we do, everything that we say should be a living thanksgiving, an outward testimony that the entire world can see, a light shining before men that we live every day in thanksgiving to our gracious and loving God. Again, St. Paul says: “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*” (Romans 12:1,2). Brethren, this is what thanksgiving *should be* in the life of a Christian. God grant that, to the praise of His grace, such a life of thanksgiving become a pattern for all of us, and not just once a year on a day set aside for that purpose, but every day of every life that has been bought and paid for with the blood of Jesus Christ, “*who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*” (Titus 2:14).

*Now thank we all our God with hearts, and hands, and voices,  
who wondrous things hath done, in whom His world rejoices;  
who from our mother’s arms hath blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love and still is ours today.*

*Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us  
and keep us in His grace and guide us when perplexed  
and free us from all ills in this world and the next!*

*All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,  
the Son, and Him who reigns with them in highest heaven:  
The one eternal God, whom earth and heav’n adore!  
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore. Amen.*

TLH 36

—M. W. D.



## The Threefold Significance of Advent

*“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in!” —Psalm 24:7*

“Public worship adjusts itself to the seasons of the **church year**; and this idea of the church year is worked out in the Hymnal both in the liturgical section and in that containing the hymns. ...As the outstanding redemptive acts of God pass in review before our eyes in church year after church year, they invite us time and again to devout contemplation and to earnest application; neglecting the church year we would deprive ourselves of a most valuable element of religious instruction.” (M. Reu, *Catechetics*, p.374ff.). The season of **ADVENT** marks the beginning of the church year as we have it today. This season is comprised of the four Sundays immediately preceding Christmas, beginning with the Sunday nearest November 30<sup>th</sup>. Thus its onset may vary from as early as November 27<sup>th</sup> (28 days) to as late as December 3<sup>rd</sup> (21 days). Traditionally, the liturgical color violet (or purple) is used; but some have substituted a royal blue in order to distinguish this season from Lent and to stress anticipatory hope. The word “Advent” is taken from Latin and means “coming.” The purpose of the season is to prepare for the *coming* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and as such it is a time of penitence and prayer combined with hope and joy. During Advent we pray: “Oh, how shall I receive Thee? How greet Thee, Lord, aright?” (Paul W. Nesper, *Biblical Texts*; cf. also *The Lutheran Hymnal*, #58)

Lucas Lossius (1508-1582), the German Lutheran musicologist of the Reformation era, friend of Melanchthon, and editor of many music text-

books and of a famous Reformation *cantionale*, speaks of a **threefold** Advent: Jesus' coming in the past as the Incarnate Christ and Savior, His coming in the present in the administration of the Word and Sacraments, and His coming in the future as Judge on the Last Day (See Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, p.466). A brief review of the Advent hymns in our *Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) reveals that about one-third of them have all three themes (#56, 58, 60, 63, 68, 70, 74), and the rest stress the first or the second Advent or both. The historic Gospel pericopes appointed for the four Sundays in Advent stress the first Advent (Matthew 21:1-9; 11:2-10; John 1:19-28) or the second (Luke 21:25-33), while the Epistles contain texts pointing to the second Advent (Romans 13:11-14; I Corinthians 4:1-5; Philippians 4:4-7) more than to the first (Romans 15:4-13). In his *Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith*, Wilhelm Loehe has the following prayer that contains all three themes:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Thou camest into the world in the name of Thy Father to be a King and a Justifier of many, even to save Thy people from their sins. Thou camest to Thine own, and they received Thee not. Wherefore Thou camest to us poor Gentiles, and still visitest us in Thy Word and Sacrament. O Lord Jesus, Thou Son of David, precious Savior, only Hope of mankind, blessed art Thou that comest in the name of the Lord. In Thee do our hearts rejoice, and all that is within us is glad because of Thy help and deliverance. Thou art He who wast to come, and we look not for another. Wherefore abide with us, and fill our hearts anew from day to day with Thy presence. By Thy Spirit dwell in us, that we may praise Thy holy name, as did Thy disciples and the people of Jerusalem when Thou enteredst in triumph. O blessed Savior, may we, with the faithful of all ages, remain steadfast unto death. And as Thou wilt return again at the end of the world to deliver us from all evil, grant that we may await with joy the time of our redemption, and watch and pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape those things which shall then come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. All these blessings we ask for the sake of Thine infinite love. Amen.”

In Psalm 24:7 we read this exhortation to the Church: “*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in!*” The first stanza of Hymn #73 is a good commentary on this text as it stresses: “The King of kings is drawing near,

the Savior of the world is here. Life and salvation He doth bring” in praise of God the Father, the “wise Creator,” who sent His Son into the world to be our Savior. In addition to describing the first Advent of our Savior-King, Hymn #73 in its third stanza also gives praise to the Holy Spirit as “our Comforter” through the Gospel of Christ, exhorting us to receive the King of Glory with wide open hearts through the Means of Grace, that the Holy Spirit may “guide us on until our glorious goal is won” (i.e. at the second visible Advent of our Savior).

As we are now “preparing for the holy Advent” (Dr. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, American Ed., Vol. 16, p. 40), we do well to consider all three “comings” of the Savior emphasized during this season in true *repentance* over our sins and holy joy and sure hope through the *forgiveness* of our sins in Christ Jesus.

Our first focus is on the original, historical Advent in the “*fulness of the time*” (Galatians 4:4) when “*He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” (Hebrews 9:6). The message of this first visible Advent and the purpose of the Incarnation of the Son of God is clear, as the Apostle Paul declares: “*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*” (I Timothy 3:15). May God ever move us to accept in God-wrought, child-like faith this faithful saying in direct application to ourselves as the chief of sinners!

Secondly, may each of us faithfully persevere in Advent faith through Christ’s spiritual Advent into our hearts through the Means of Grace that, as the Apostle Paul also says, “*Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*” (Ephesians 3:17), for Christ *in us* gives us the hope of future glory by faith alone (cf. Colossians 1:27). Only through the Gospel in Word and Sacraments does the mystical, spiritual and invisible indwelling of Christ occur so that we may confess with Paul: “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me*” (Galatians 2:20).

Thirdly, “*if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness*” (Romans 8:10), and we are prepared to face the second visible Advent in joyful hope, looking for our King to “*appear the second time without sin unto salvation*” (Hebrews 9:28). This anticipated imminent second visible Ad-

vent will arrive so suddenly that our Savior tells us in reference to the final great signs of the end: “*And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh*” (Luke 21:28). In that Great Day, we shall receive what we presently groan for within ourselves, the fullness of our adoption, “*to wit, the redemption of our body*” (Romans 8:23). As the Apostle Paul declares: “*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself*” (Philippians 3:20-21). At the second visible Advent, our status as God’s sons will be made manifest: “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.*” (I John 3:2). Until then we live in Gospel hope and God-wrought patience (Romans 8:24-25).

“*Lift up your heads*” this Advent Season! Receive the *coming* Savior, the King of Glory, as He should be received in spirit and in truth! Be assured on the basis of God’s sure Word that the King, who came in the past, still comes in the present through the Means of Grace to prepare you for His future Advent! Unto Him who **was**, who **is**, and who **is to come**, the King of Grace and of Glory, be all praise and dominion! Amen.

—E. J. W.

# Christmas

## The Feast of God the Father

“*Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!*”

II Corinthians 9:15

“Feast,” as it is used in our title, refers to a joyful festival or celebration which honors God. For example, in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (TLH), we have, on page 67, reference to “Easter Day, The Feast of The Resurrection of Our Lord,” and, on page 73, “The Feast of The Holy Trinity.”

Now, at this time in the new church year, we anticipate with joy “The Feast of God the Father,” which is none other than the festal, joyous celebrating of God the Father’s giving His only begotten Son (John 3:16) as “**THE** [one and only] *propitiation for...the sins of the whole world*” (I John 2:2). This marvelous **GIFT** is the foundation for real, genuine, and overflowing joy at Christmas, but not only at Christmas, but **always** in our short stay (compared to eternity) in this world. Let us ask ourselves: What gives us **real** (not pretend) and **lasting** (not temporary) joy, even when we are sad and disappointed?

The “*Spirit of truth*” (John 14:17) counsels us in Philippians 4: “*Rejoice in the Lord **always**, and again I say, Rejoice*” (v. 4). What a shame that **we have not always** heeded (I John 2:1a; Matthew 5:48) this counsel in our daily lives! **How often we** “*have sinned and come short*” (Romans 3:23) of what God commands us to do and what surely is our duty to do as His blood bought property (I Corinthians 6:20), which includes “*giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Ephesians 5:20). The psalmist is not “going overboard” when, in only one psalm, he repeats, four different times, the same plea: “*Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men*” (v’s. 8, 15, 21, 31). Oh, **how we need to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (II Peter 3:18)! Yes, how we need to “***abound more and more***” (I Thessalonians 4:1) in **praising and pleasing the heavenly Father for not only giving** the sure promises of the “*Seed*” (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16) of the woman, who brought blessing to “*all the nations of the earth*” (Genesis 22:18), including the blessing of forgiveness for all of our sins of ingratitude and forgetting “*His benefits*” (Psalm 103:2), **but also for perfectly fulfilling** His unchanging promises of the Savior being born of a “*virgin*” and being called “*Immanuel*” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23). Let us “*abound more and more*” in thanking our heavenly Father for “*His unspeakable gift*” by...

...serving Him “*with gladness*” (Psalm 100:2) **more and more** in our marriages as we follow the pattern set before us by Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33), live and work with our families (Galatians 6:10; Romans 12:18), prepare and study for classes (Ecclesiastes 9:10), labor diligently at our jobs (II Thessalonians 3:12), let the light of our faith in Jesus show itself in our Christian congregation (Matthew 5:16; James 2:18b), and “*endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:3) with our sister, like-minded (I Corinthians

1:10) congregations in the Concordia Lutheran Conference;

...entering “into His gates **with thanksgiving**, and into His courts **with praise**” (Psalm 100:4) **more and more** where He is honored (Psalm 26:8; Matthew 6:9b) by the faithful teaching and preaching of His Word (Jeremiah 23:28; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9), ever **continuing** in those things which He has taught us from His Word of truth (John 8:31-32; II Timothy 3:14), “*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much **the more**, as ye see the day approaching*” (Hebrews 10:25); and

...remembering **more and more** that He “*is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations*” (Psalm 100:5), especially as we ponder “*His unspeakable gift.*”

But what exactly is God’s “*unspeakable gift*,” for which we are to thank Him in our lives? This “*unspeakable gift*” is “*the exceeding grace of God*” (v. 14) or, as it referred to in verse 13, “*the Gospel of Christ.*” What are some of the things which we are told regarding this “*gift*” here in II Corinthians 9 and in other places of Scripture?

—This “*gift*” is **so great** that it is “*unspeakable*,” indescribable, and inexpressible; words are not adequate to **properly** define and describe it. It is most certainly “*awesome*,” filling one with wonder and awe at its sight and existence. There is no Christmas gift like it; it is **THE GIFT** above all gifts!

—This “*gift*” is so **very necessary** because “*by one man sin entered into the world*” (Romans 5:12). And the consequences from sin? “*By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation*” (Romans 5:18), so that as a result of God’s sentence of justice based on His Law “*every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*” (Romans 3:19). Furthermore, no matter how much we try to keep and follow the demands (Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:48) of God’s Law, we **cannot** change the verdict of condemnation into a verdict of justification. Romans 3 leaves no doubt when it makes the declaration: “*By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight*” (v. 20). So, if sinful human beings, **on their own**, attempt to do what God wants them to do and, also, **on their own**, attempt to “pay off” the debt and damages from their sins by their “good” deeds, they will most certainly bring on themselves God’s just anger, His deserved condemnation, and His everlasting rejection. This changeless conclusion is confirmed in Galatians 3: “*Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them*” (v. 10).

—This “*gift*” from God the Father is always “*the exceeding grace of God*” **in Christ**. The grace of God, His undeserved, unmerited, and unearned favor which He shows toward all human beings, is grace gained by Christ’s fulfillment of the Law of God (Matthew 5:17) in our place, in our behalf, in our stead. He was “*made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law*” (Galatians 4:4-5) — His active obedience for us and for all. Furthermore, Christ totally suffered (John 19:30) the curse and condemnation of the Law for “*the whole world*” (I John 2:2) as spelled out so clearly in Galatians 3, verse 13: “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us*” — His passive obedience for us and for all. On account of that active and passive obedience by Christ for all sinners (Romans 3:23), God the Father has freely justified all by His grace (Romans 3:24), “*not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Corinthians 5:19).

—This “*gift*” of “*the Gospel of Christ*” (II Corinthians 9:13) can surely be included in the statement of truth in James 1: “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*” (v. 17). Therefore, it is very much in order to sing: “*Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (I Corinthians 15:57). After the angel of the Lord announced the birth of the Savior, “*Christ the Lord*” (Luke 2:11), that announcement which brought generation-after-generation “*good tidings of great joy*” (Luke 2:10), it was very much in order that a multitude of holy angels praised God and said: “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*” (Luke 2:14). What a proper, fitting, and deserved **feast of praise to God the Father!** Yes, “*thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.*”

—R. J. L.



## “Grant Us Now a Glad New Year”

“Redeeming the time because the days are evil.” Ephesians 5:16

As we approach the coming New Year we are reminded of Paul’s words in Ephesians 5:16: “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” The Christian view of time is different than that of the world. In God’s Word, we have a new perspective on the past, present, and future. God has freely forgiven our past sins for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Therefore, confiding in His grace, we can now look to the future, not with fear and dread, but with new hope and confidence. God is in control of the affairs of entire world; nothing can touch the life of the child of God apart from His loving and wise permission. In the present we rejoice that God has objectively justified the entire world because of the vicarious life and death of His Son and freely offers the forgiveness of sins to all men through the message of the Gospel.



Because of the sure promises of the Gospel the Christian’s future has been made certain. We do not know the exact details of all that will happen in the years to come, but we trust in the promises of God’s Word who cannot lie or fail to keep His Word. As we look to the future Paul exhorts us to redeem the time God has given us; to make the most of the finite number of days we are given on this earth. God has given each of us a vocation to fulfill with our lives, and we are to labor to His Glory. “Redeeming the time” also includes faithfully serving the Lord in accordance with His Word in the Church, using our individual talents and abilities. Christ has commissioned His believing children to proclaim the Word of Reconciliation to the world that men might believe the Gospel and be saved. This blessed privilege of extending the Kingdom of God is the Christian’s priority as he lives in the world.

While on earth, our Lord Jesus Christ was focused on the priorities of His saving work, and He understood that His time on earth was brief. He once said “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is

*day; the night cometh when no man can work*” (John 9:4). *“Redeeming the time”* is living by divine priorities, using the time God has given us for the most important things in life and eternity. Our Lord told a parable of a rich man whose priority in life was the accumulation of wealth and personal comfort. He is shown in the parable planning his future retirement and life without any consideration to his dependence on God or the reality of his own mortality. God said to him: *“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?”* (Luke 12:20). Jesus posed a similar question to all of us regarding the real consequences of wrong priorities when He asked *“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”* (Mark 8:36). Because we don’t know the times and the seasons regarding our own life and death, we must live by God’s priorities; none of us knows what the day may bring.

Our newspaper in town carried a story a while back about a businessman in his mid forties who was involved in a large building project worth millions of dollars. Every day he could be found at the job site consulting with his engineers and contractors on the details of the project; and, by all accounts, the work was going very well. His family and friends later told the newspaper reporter that he had always appeared to them to be in excellent health. His personal physician also confirmed that he had no history of heart problems. Yet one day without warning, he had a massive heart attack and died. He was a very successful man in the world’s estimation; he likely had many plans and dreams for his future; but he suddenly discovered that God had other plans for him. In the end, the most important thing about him was not his money; it was the condition of his eternal soul before God. *“Redeeming the time”* is making our first priority the present condition of our soul in light of God’s Word.

Scripture warns all of us not to receive the grace of God in vain and invites penitent sinners everywhere to be saved today. *“Behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation”* (II Corinthians 6:1-2). We dare not trust our past “spiritual track record” but rely solely upon the work of our precious Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the payment in full for the sins of the whole world (I John 2:2). God has given all of us a certain amount of time during our Day of Grace to believe on Jesus Christ; and the Apostle James reminds us that in light of eternity our time on earth is very brief: *“For*

*what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14). Therefore we must seek the Lord today and not put off calling upon Him while He is near to us in His Word. “Seek the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6).*

The Lord Jesus Christ lived His life upon this earth in perfect obedience to His Father in Heaven, always “*redeeming the time*” and making the Father’s will His life’s priority. His entire life on earth was filled with good works and deeds of mercy as He, as our Substitute, purchased righteousness for all mankind. He earned in our place a life filled with the Holy Spirit, grace, joy, and peace that is ours through faith in His Gospel. He paid for our sins by His atoning death and calls us through His Word to walk in His steps in the power of the Holy Spirit (I John 2:6). He has revealed to us what God’s will is toward all men, namely that they “*be saved and come unto the knowledge of the Truth*” (I Timothy 2:4) and that He is “*not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*” (II Peter 3:11b). As we look forward to the New Year, may God grant each of us continued repentance and faith to live in the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our precious Savior, “*redeeming the time*” God has given us as we live in an evil world eagerly anticipating “*the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.*” Amen.

—R. A. M.



## Churches in Fellowship with the Concordia Lutheran Conference

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Yekaterinburg  
Yekaterinburg, RUSSIA  
**For the time and location of services**, contact:  
THE REV. ROMAN G. SCHURGANOFF, Pastor  
P. O. Box 27  
620039 Yekaterinburg  
RUSSIA

Faith Lutheran Church (F. L. C.)  
Highway N  
Stover, MO 65078  
**For the time of worship services**, please  
contact **Stephen Richter** at (314) 376-3221.  
THE REV. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Vacancy Pastor  
233 North Cuyler Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60302 (708) 386-4145

St. Mark's Ev. Lutheran Church (F. L. C.)  
22012 S. Torrence Avenue  
Sauk Village, IL 60411  
*Telephone: (708) 758-6222*  
**Worship Service** ..... 5:45 p.m.  
**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 7:00 p.m.  
THE REV. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Vacancy Pastor  
233 North Cuyler Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60302 (708) 386-4145

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church (F. L. C.)  
300 North Ridgeland Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60302  
*Telephone: (708) 386-6773*  
**Sunday School & Bible Class** ..... 9:00 a.m.  
**Worship Service** ..... 10:15 a.m.  
THE REV. ROBERT J. LIETZ, Pastor  
233 North Cuyler Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60302 (708) 386-4145



## Savoring by Faith the PEACE and JOY of Christmas

*“Glory to God in highest heaven,  
who unto us His Son hath given!”*  
Thus angels sang with pious mirth  
the gladsome tidings of His birth.

When we listen at Christmastime in particular to one famous choir after another singing the hymns and carols of the season, we marvel at the rich beauty which human voices, blending together in a harmonious tapestry of sound, can produce. And yet, in the annals of this world’s history, no chorus and no music could ever compare to *“the multitude of the heavenly host praising God”* on that first Christmas night. Indeed, the choir of holy angels which filled the night air with glorious music celebrating the Savior’s birth was, as we sometimes say, “a hard act to follow” — both because the **singers** were perfect, sinless angels, and also because the **occasion** for which they were singing and the **nature** of their song was most particularly special.

We can’t of course, duplicate the **sound** of that heavenly choir electronically, nor can we even come close to approximating its splendor; but we can study and evaluate the **lyrics** of the angels’ song of praise and see in them the blessed EFFECT of our Savior’s birth which caused the heavenly choir to break forth in gladsome voice. The effect is really

twofold, as the angels sing of it: First, that all **GLORY** for this momentous event belongs to **GOD alone**; and secondly, that the **BENEFITS** to be derived from Christ's birth are for **MANKIND alone**.

"*Glory to GOD in the highest,*" the angels sang; and no wonder! For the birth of the Savior in fulfillment of 4,000 years of sacred prophecy was an event solely of *God's* doing. He had **planned** it before the foundation of the world; He *alone* had made it **possible**. It was *His* Gift, completely undeserved by its recipients, and it was the "*unspeakable Gift*" of His only-begotten Son to be the Redeemer of sinful and rebellious mankind. God Himself brought it about in the fulness of time that His only-begotten Son would become incarnate, taking upon Himself human flesh and blood, and that He would place Himself under His own Law to fulfill it in the place of sinners. Paul writes to the Galatians that "*when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law*"(4:4). This event was indeed "a great and mighty wonder" of God's amazing love for those who had rebelled against Him, disobeyed Him, and brought death and destruction upon themselves. Why He even bothered with the likes of us poor human beings is itself a mystery of divine love; "*for God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son*" (John 3:16). "*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that HE loved US, and sent His Son to be the propitiation [the payment] for our sins*" (I John 4:10). God's love was always like a one-way street — His love for us, who were His *enemies*, and who returned Him nothing but *evil* by nature. No wonder the angels sang: "*Glory to God in the highest*" for His amazing love!

With our eyes riveted upon the image of the Baby Jesus lying there in Bethlehem's rude manger, with our attention focused upon Christ, the Savior, beginning His *state of humiliation* with His conception in the Virgin Mary and with His birth under the lowliest of conditions in the stable at Bethlehem, it's not surprising that many people regard Christmas as a festival in honor of **God the Son**, who came down to this world of sin to be our Savior. But, in reality, Christmas is in honor of **God the FATHER**, the GIVER of His Son to be the scapegoat, the substitute for sinful men, and to lay down His life to redeem them from slavery to Satan. It is, after all, **the Father's** Christmas Gift of love to all the world after which all **our** Christmas giving is to be patterned, and our **appreciation** for that Gift after which all our giving is to be motivated.

“*Glory to God in the highest,*” sang the multitude of the heavenly host. It was **His** plan, **His** promise through the prophets of old, **His** execution of the plan in the fulness of time, and **His** love that prompted it all! To **Him** goes the credit, the praise, and all the glory!

But the angels’ song also shows us that the ultimate benefactor of this Gift of God’s love is **mankind alone** — the **object** of God’s love. The blessed effect of the Savior’s birth on that first Christmas night is, as the angels declared it, “*peace on earth, good will toward men.*” By sending His only-begotten Son to be our Redeemer, God “*reconciled the world unto Himself,*” the Bible tells us (II Cor. 5:19). He made us poor, helpless, miserable sinners —who were His **enemies** because of our transgressions of His holy Law— He made us His **friends** again by requiring of **JESUS** what He requires of **US**, perfect adherence to His Law, AND by accepting Jesus’ perfect obedience and crediting it to our bankrupt account in the ledger of His justice. Then He also punished Jesus with the “*wages of [OUR] sins*” (Romans 6:23) and accepted His suffering and death as payment-in-full of our debt to Him, so that no blot on our record with God would remain. Thus “[*God*] *made Him, who knew no sin* [His holy Son, our Savior], *to be sin FOR US, that we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM,*” St. Paul writes to the Corinthians (II Cor. 5:21). And then, in consideration of all that Jesus accomplished on our behalf, God **UNILATERALLY** reconciled the whole world unto Himself, no longer counting our sins against us. —Now, when we **accept** that *objective* or *general* forgiveness that God declared for the whole world in His “*good will toward men,*” when we cling in humble, childlike confidence to the merits of Christ, our Savior, then the **benefits** of that forgiveness are **ours personally**; and “*being justified by faith,*” Paul says in Romans 5, verse 1, “*we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

**THAT** is the “**PEACE**” of which the angels sang —*not* peace among the nations! For **earthly** peace lasts only for the brief interval between wars; and *that* kind of peace isn’t worth having at the cost of our **Savior’s** peace. “*Peace I leave with you,*” He tells us, “*My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*” (John 14:27). HIS peace is peace of **heart**, peace of **conscience**, because of the forgiveness of our sins. “Peace on earth and mercy mild: God and sinners reconciled!” we sing in the beloved Christmas hymn. **THAT**

is **lasting** “*peace on earth,*” the enjoyment in this life already, by faith in Jesus, of God’s “*good will toward men,*” His good and gracious will to us in Christ Jesus “*while we were yet enemies*” and had no good will toward Him whatsoever.

“*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!*” Let us take these “*good tidings of great joy*” sung by the angel choir into our hearts by faith, trust them as God’s own reliable message of peace, **HIS** peace and **HIS** good will, **HIS** everlasting mercy and grace to us and to all people. And let us then hasten with the shepherds of old to the manger-bed in Bethlehem’s stall—to the manger-bed of the **sweet Gospel**, where our Savior lies for **us**. Let us take Him up into our arms of faith, hold Him fast to our trembling breast, and pray:

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child,  
make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,  
within my heart, that it may be  
a quiet chamber kept for Thee!

And then may the *TRUE* PEACE OF CHRISTMAS, “*the peace of God which passeth all understanding,*” abide in our hearts by faith this holy season, throughout the coming year, and unto life everlasting!

—D. T. M.

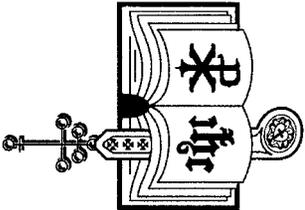


O, Lord Christ, our Savior dear,  
Be Thou ever near us,  
Grant us now a glad New Year.  
Amen, Jesus, hear us!

TLH 97, 4

# Scriptural Publications

(Concordia Lutheran Conference)  
17151 South Central Avenue  
Oak Forest, IL 60452-4913



---

Non-Profit Organization  
U. S. Postage  
P A I D  
Seattle, Washington  
Permit No. 2649

---