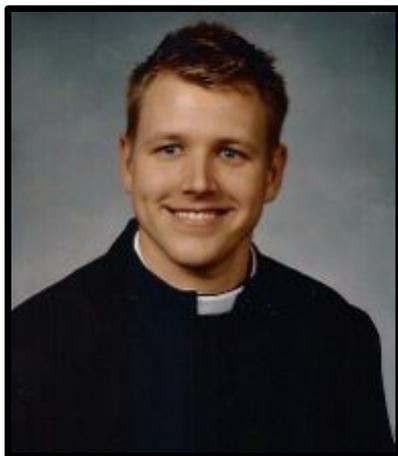

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Volume 1, Issue 5

February 2011



From Pastor's Desk

February is the month, all because of one day, devoted to love. But what sort of love does it uphold?

St. Paul writes in his letter to the Church in Rome: “¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom 13:10). Love fulfills the law. Love does no wrong. I guess the Beatles were right after all—all you need is love.

We live in a world that defines things abstractly and selfishly. We see things in terms of what they mean to me. And so we define love as a feeling that *I* have for someone or something else, which I take joy and happiness from.

Here's the issue: Love isn't abstract and it's certainly not selfish. No, Love is an action that gives of the self to the one loved.

Do you see the difference? Love is a concrete action. Thus, love is demonstrated in action. And love gives, not takes. It gives of itself for the benefit of the one loved. It doesn't seek its own good. This is why St. Paul can say that love fulfills the law. “For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Rom 13:9).

This is how God loves us—not by taking but by giving, not abstractly but concretely. God loved the world in this way: He gave his only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners; Christ died for us (Rom 5:8). Take eat; take drink this is my body and blood given and shed for you for the forgiveness of all your sins. God gave His Son. Jesus gave His body and blood.

Thus, we pray after receiving God's love for us in the Holy Communion: “. . . and we implore You that you strengthen us in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another . . .” We pray that God's love would so fill us that it overflow and pour out onto one another. In this way, others will see and know Christ and his love, for they have experienced your love for them in service.

Somehow I don't think this is what Hallmark or the Beatles have in mind.

GREETERS LIST

- Feb 6 Laverl Byers - West
Becky Kappes – East
- Feb 13 Geof & Sue Danielson – West
Tim & Tresa Pollock – East
- Feb 20 Harold & Irene Wattjes – West
Donna & Gunnar Campbell – East
- Feb 27 Jim Dyer – West
Joan Vukelich – East
- Mar 6 Laverl Byers – West
Bekcy Kappes – East
- Mar 13 Tim & Tresa Pollock – West
Harold & Irene Wattjes - East
- Mar 20 Donna & Gunnar Campbell – West
Jim Dyer – East
- Mar 27 Joan Vukelich – West
Laverl Byers - East

GREETERS NEEDED

COFFEE COMMITTEE

- Feb Pastor & Lauren Braaten
- Mar Laverl Byers
- Apr Ann Carroll
- May Arleigh Jones
- Jun Ruth Sims
- Jul Harold & Irene Wattjes
- Aug NEED VOLUNTEER
- Sep Pastor & Lauren Braaten
- Oct Harold & Irene Wattjes
- Nov Jerry & Joyce Alexander
- Dec NEED VOLUNTEER

ALTAR COMMITTEE

- Feb Sue Danielson & Becky Kappes
- Mar Ann Carroll, Ann Hilgendorf & Janice Arthur
- Apr Ruth Bretz, Marylin Joergens , Carol Munson & Sue Danielson
- May Joan Vukelich & Theresa Fields
- Jun Holly Wikoff and Sharon Allen
- Jul Delores Ford & Becky Kappes
- Aug Janice Arthur & Janet Stumeier
- Sep Wanda Long & Irene Wattjes
- Oct Theresa Fields & Sharon Allen
- Nov Ann Hilgendorf & Carol Munson
- Dec Ann Carroll, Holly Wikoff, Sherrie Hoel & Tonia Timlin

ATTENDANCE		OFFERINGS		
Saturday	Sunday	General	Missions	Building
	1/2 90	3329.00	51.00	
1/8 15	1/9 72	10045.72	650.00	
1/15 19	1/16 73	1932.84		50.00
1/22 23	1/23 63	2088.05		165.00
1/29 15	1/30 71	1369.00		
TOTALS 72	369	18764.61	701.00	215.00

EDUCATION CORNER

DESIGNING THE ULTIMATE STROLLER

I don't know how my own children survived their infancy.

The stroller that rolled them from place to place looked nothing like the intricately designed mobile devices that now transport my grandchildren. Those old, spindly aluminum tubes can't compare to the multi-levered assembles that must have been designed by former NASA engineers. The same is true of highchairs, porta-cribs and car seats enjoyed by the children of my children.

Child safety is important, and I'm thankful for the progress that has been made in the field, even if I haven't a clue how to get the car seat properly buckled. Nevertheless, I am still anxious about childhood safety, but safety of a different kind. The difference in our culture today between the efforts of parents to keep their children physically safe and efforts dedicated to their children's spiritual welfare seems seriously out of whack.

Is there as much concern that children learn to pray (and pray with their parents), and attend Sunday School (and observe their parents attending Bible class)? Are children reminded of their Baptisms by parents and sponsors? What about the spiritual safety of the child?

Recently I've noticed a renewed emphasis on the responsibility of parents in this regard, all driven by the recognition of the spiritual authority God has placed within the home. Eph. 6:5 readily comes to mind: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children' instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." So does Deut. 6:6-7: "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in our house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise." Yet assuming these responsibilities within the home hasn't been easy.

This challenge is nothing new, however. Every generation finds itself challenged to pass on the faith to its offspring. Martin Luther raised the alarm in 1524. Writing in an open letter to the councilmen of Germany, Luther outlined three major obstacles that stood in the way of parents fulfilling their

educational responsibilities toward their children. In volume 45 of the American Edition of *Luther's Works*, Luther notes that the first difficulty is that "there are some who lack the goodness and decency to do it, even if they had the ability." The next problem is that "the great majority of parents unfortunately are wholly unfilled for this task," a reference to parents' own inability to pass on what they themselves lack. The third obstacle sounds very contemporary. "Even if parents had the ability and desire to do it themselves, they have neither the time nor the opportunity for it, what with their other duties and the care of the household."

In his open letter, Luther was concerned about more than just religious instruction. He was writing about all of education, and he used his analysis of parental competency to argue that it was the responsibility of the cities to provide public education for the next generation, quite a radical suggestion in his day and age. When I look at Luther's list of obstacles, however, I see a mirrored reflection of the challenges we face today for children's spiritual education, for their spiritual safety.

Each of the three issues that Luther identifies—parental care, ability and time—could be seen as a strength or as a weakness. Some families appear to care very little about their children's spiritual welfare while other families care a great deal. Some families lack a strong background in the faith and knowledge of the Scriptures and are unprepared for the task of training their young. Many other families are very familiar with the catechism, know the faith well and can pass it on with ease. Similarly, there are families

'Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.' (Esp. 6:4)

in our stressed economy that don't have time to share the faith, while others do.

What are we to make of Luther's observation? Does it suggest something of our own families? With a great deal of charity and understanding, let's recognize how complicated the spiritual lives of families can be today.

There are families that care a great deal about their children's spiritual growth, that have the ability to guide that growth, and take the time to do it. I call such households "Foundational Families" because their feet are on solid bedrock. Pastors and other professional church workers come to rely on these households and pray that their own families might be so blessed.

Other families also care a great deal but do not have the resources to guide the growth nor the time to give. "Frustrated Families" describes this category. The educational and family ministries of congregations are especially important for these families because of limited resources.

Families that care and have the ability but no time are "Busy, Busy Families." They may need to reconsider their priorities and look for alternatives that enable their behavior to match their values.

Less often there are families that care and have the time but lack the knowledge necessary to guide their children's spiritual growth. I like to call these "Sponge Families" because they will participate in whatever is offered, ready to soak up whatever they can from the congregation.

Spiritual safety for children in our families is no stroll in the park, not in Luther's day and not in our own. The design for the ultimate spiritual stroller requires reliance on the Holy Spirit working through the Word, to be sure. But the design must also account for the places that Word will be used. Family ministries need to be flexible enough to respond to the needs of multiple family types. And families need to care.

Rev. Dr. John W. Oberdeck is assistant director for lay ministry at Concordia University Wisconsin.

**Here are some resources for every age—from toddlers to adults—
that will help your family grow together in God's Word!**

From Concordia Publishing House

The Lutheran Study Bible. Delve into God's Word with your family, and learn from notes and commentary that are uniquely Lutheran.

The Lutheran Service Book. Joining scriptural truths with song, the hymnal is an excellent tool for teaching the faith to all members of the family.

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (ESV). The catechism is simple enough that small children can understand it but complex enough to challenge adults, joining entire families together around God's Word.

Happy Times. Each monthly issue is filled with Christian stories, poems, colorful activity pages, and special projects for active 3- to 5-year-olds and their parents.

My Devotions. This wonderful magazine for school-aged children helps youth interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran viewpoint.

Portals of Prayer. Whether you read it online or in print, this daily devotional offers Scripture, meditation and a brief prayer.

Family Faith Walks. Parents and children learn together from a book filled with devotions and activities in which they are encouraged to meditate on God's Word, talk to each other and pray for God's guidance as their family grows in faith.

Icky Sticky, Hairy Scary Bible Stories: 60 Poems for Kids. Written for the little ones, this collection of silly poems based on Bible stories is sure to give families plenty to discuss!

FIND THESE AND MORE AT CPH.ORG.



IN THE NEWS

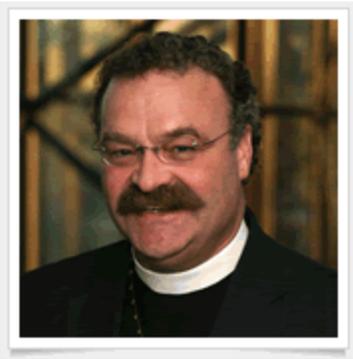
Based on the press reports, the Roman Catholic Church continues to accept the big bang model of universal origins, but the pope makes it clear that believers should still see a divine mind behind the bang.

“The universe is not the result of chance, as some would want to make us believe,” the pope said in a sermon this week, labeling some scientific theories “mind limiting” in that they “only arrive at a certain point . . . and do not manage to explain the ultimate sense of reality.” Reuters reports that the pontiff also claimed, “In the beauty of the world, in its mystery, in its greatness and in its rationality . . . we can only let ourselves be guided toward God, creator of heaven and earth.” While it seems hard for any theist to disagree, a vocal group of atheistic scientists insist that – almost by definition – the purpose of science is to lead us away from God, who is seen as merely an intellectual “crutch” when we do not fully understand an aspect of the natural world (e.g., how the universe could supposedly create itself).

Obviously, we agree with the Catholic leader’s comments insofar as we see God as the ultimate Creator behind the universe. The question is, why push God “outside” the universe, only

letting Him initiate the universe with a bang and then using billions of years of natural processes – including death and destruction – to create mankind? That sort of thinking leads Catholic biologist (and ardent evolutionist) Ken Miller to [declare that he has “no idea”](#) whether God intended to create humans, or whether it was a mere cosmic accident.

Yet Genesis – which Jesus quoted as fundamental truth – teaches not only that mankind did not evolve, but that God was intimately involved in all aspects of creation, including the astronomical bodies throughout the universe. Moreover, Genesis puts man at the center of creation, with the [sun](#) and moon serving as lights for us. Thus, the evolutionary worldview turns the biblical worldview on its head, insisting that there was no purpose nor meaning in creation, and that we are merely a cosmic accident. But if that is true, why did God even bother? Only the biblical worldview presents a coherent portrait of why we exist. Furthermore, the biblical worldview refutes the big bang. As AiG President Ken Ham wrote on his [Friday blog](#): “The big bang has the [sun](#) and stars before the earth, but God said He made the earth before the [sun](#) and stars. Furthermore, the big bang has the earth beginning as a hot molten blob, but the Bible has the earth at the beginning covered with water.”



WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER: A Threefold Key to Our Future

Luther well knew what he was preaching on that St. Stephen's Day in 1523. He did not believe that the response of the apostolic church in Acts 6 to the problem of needy widows was merely a temporary glitch in the Church's life. Neither did C. F. W. Walther. Right from his earliest years in America, this text from Luther began to appear again and again in Walther's writings on the Church. Why? Our fathers and mothers in the faith knew Luther, and they knew the New Testament.

Dr. Walther asserts that the pastor is also to be concerned with the poor, the needy, and the weak *within* the congregation. And yet, he asserts that in times of need and disaster, the congregation is to be concerned with those *outside* the church. He refers to Galatians.

"When James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship [*koinonia*; LIFE TOGETHER] to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised [WITNESS]. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do [MERCY]" (Gal. 2:9–10).

Here three things come together:

1. The apostles carefully resolved the doctrinal and practical challenges that always result from taking the Gospel to new peoples—for the sake of WITNESS to Jesus [Acts 15].
2. The apostles were deeply concerned that the Church be a locus of MERCY to those suffering physical need.
3. This WITNESS and MERCY were part and parcel of the Church's very life—yes, its LIFE TOGETHER.

This is the threefold key to the future of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Hear Luther:

From this story (Acts 6) we learn in the first place how a Christian community should be constituted. In addition, we have a true pattern of spiritual government [*geistlichen Regiments*] that the apostles here provide. They care for souls, occupy themselves with preaching and prayer, and yet also see to it that the body is cared for; for they suggest several men who are to distribute the goods, as you have heard. Thus the Christian rule is concerned for the people in both body and soul [*Leib und Seele*] so that no one suffers want . . . that all were richly fed and well cared for in both body and soul.

This is a very fine pattern and example, and it would be well for us to do likewise, if only the people were so minded. A city could be divided, as here, into four or five parts, and every part would receive a preacher [*Prediger*] and several deacons to supply the people with preaching, distribute the goods, visit the sick, and see to it that no one suffers want. But we do not have the persons for that. . . . A "bishop" means a steward [*Amtmann*] of God who is to distribute the divine and spiritual gifts, preach the Gospel, and supply the people with the Word of God. He must have ministers, and these are the deacons who serve the community in such a way that they have a list of all the poor people and care for them in all their needs with the money of the community, visit the sick, and in every way handle the supplies with great care."

("Sermon for St. Stephen's Day, Dec. 26, 1522;" WA 12:693 ff.; quoted by Walther, *Church and Ministry*, Theses VIII, On the Ministry)

Pastor Matthew Harrison
"Let's go!" Mark 1:38

February 2011 Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																									
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6 9:00 AM Divine Service/Communion 10:15 AM Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM Confirmation Gonda Rahn Tara Rahn	7 7:30 AM Mattes 6:00 PM Elders Angeline Logue Rachel Keeney	8 7:30 AM Mattes 9:00 AM Circuit Pastor's Conference Alison Pangburn Kelley Elchin	9 7:30 AM Mattes	10 7:30 AM Mattes	11 Pastor's Day Off Robyn Wierke	12 5:30 PM Divine Service/Communion																																																																																																									
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