

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE
PROCLAMATION OF THE
WORD OF GOD



Psalm 119:105
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

DECEMBER 2010

THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

May grace, peace, and the love of God abound in your hearts now and forever.

I have often desired to write a few words to you brothers and sisters, many of whom I have not met, but with whom I feel a kinship that none but Christians can feel toward one another. We feel this kinship because we are united by common ties. We often sing, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." (John Fawcett) That tie is held together by Christ Himself, who said, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* (John 12:32) He has done this in His kingdom here on earth. We are drawn to Christ through our brothers and sisters in faith. As our church father, Martin Luther, said, "Where can you find Christ but in your brother?" This is why Christians are drawn to one another.

We need not wander aimlessly about when sins trouble us or doubts obscure our way. We have a *very present help in trouble.* (Psalm 46:1) We need look no further than our nearest brother or sister in faith. *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his*

devices. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11) It is a wonderful experience to have God's assurance of forgiveness proclaimed to our burdened consciences. This is indeed evidence of God's kingdom here on earth.

Certainly the flesh is against such manifestations of God's grace, but is the flesh ever for spiritual things? *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (Galatians 5:17)* This has often been my experience. I am sure it has been yours, also. Isn't it the flesh that so often hinders the work of the Holy Spirit, and our love toward one another?

Satan, also, finds many occasions to exploit our corrupt nature. He knows our vulnerability. He knows, as did Paul, that *in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. (Romans 7:18)* He knows what the flesh enjoys. We all have the same flesh, and the same inclination to evil. We must often lament with the Apostle: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Romans 7:24)*

Though this warfare is ever present in believers, our desire is not to give in to evil, but to be victorious over it. Through the new birth, God instilled a new desire in our hearts when, through repentance and faith, we received the Holy Spirit. Now we are new creatures in Christ: *old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

The Apostle Paul felt this change. In his self-righteous state, he thought nothing of persecuting Christians and committing blasphemy against God. But what was his experience when God began His work? Paul wrote, *For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (Romans 7:9)* When God revealed Paul's sins to him, he proclaimed himself the chief of sinners when he said, *...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. (1 Timothy 1:15)* He felt very closely the workings of evil in his own flesh. He said, *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. (Romans 7:18)*

A blessed word of comfort comes to mind here. You recall that, after His death and resurrection, Jesus spoke to Mary at the tomb. He said, *...Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I*

ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (John 20:17) Prior to Christ's suffering, the disciples disputed as to who should be the greatest in Christ's kingdom. When Christ suffered in Gethsemane, those same disciples could not bear with Him, but fell asleep. Later, after having promised faithfulness, Peter denied his Lord three times. Yet Jesus designated them as "my brethren."

Let us take these words to heart. When Satan entices us with evil lusts and desires, or when our faith seems cold and listless, let us return to the words "my brethren." If the disciples could fall in such ways, we should not think it strange that we, too, are afflicted. Furthermore, Jesus spoke these words when the disciples' hope seemed gone; their King was destroyed and they were deserted. Even so, Jesus spoke of them, and of us, as "my brethren." Sometimes it seems that our faith is completely gone. Our thoughts and lives condemn us. But to have the assurance that Christ intercedes as our brother, and to know that we have been made sons of God, are precious things.

As we approach another Christmas season, it is my hope and prayer that God will humble our hearts to rejoice in the Christ Child. Oh, that God would permit us to receive the blessing of His true Christmas presents.

The world is busy exchanging gifts, but how momentary, and only monetary, are their value. The delight in them passes with the passing of days. Our true joy at Christmas, and the only real present we can receive, is the blessed presence of Christ in our hearts. This is a present that will not fade with time. According to God's grace, it becomes more precious through life, and perfect in eternity.

We do not have to save for this present. God will not have it. He is so generous that either we receive His gift of love completely at His hand or not at all. Our earnings have only merited us condemnation.

Likewise, we do not have to exchange God's presents, nor compare with each other what we received or did not receive. God *giveth to all men liberally. (James 1:5)* He ordained us to receive, one and all, His complete gift of eternal life. There is to be no comparing of one's merit with the merit of another. We all receive Christ without any merit and rejoice together in this common gift. It is true that God wraps some of His presents

with different wrappings, such as outward gifts that differ according to His will and their use in His kingdom; but within, the treasure is just as precious.

God did not skimp to buy this gift. It was bought with the greatest price: the blood of His only begotten Son. In such a costly gift, we have all received the best God could offer.

The gift of eternal life contains clothing for us so we need not be ashamed when this life is over. We have a robe of righteousness to cover our nakedness. It was made to perfection, for Christ Himself sanctified it. There are also shoes to wear. Our feet are *shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*. (*Ephesians 6:15*) God included a ring in this gift, by which we are wed to Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Let these gifts be the reason for our rejoicing at Christmas. May we bow the knees of our hearts through this season so that God will bless us.

*In God's peace,
Stephen Kurtti*

*Steve died in Viet Nam in June 1968. His wife, Eva, found this letter in his papers. It was first printed in January 1969.
Submitted by Steve's sister, Ruth Hilman*



Christmas Poem

Christmas is not all about getting.
It's about giving too.
If you don't know what Christmas is all about,
Then I will tell you.

Mary and Joseph had a little boy
Who was Jesus and filled with joy.
Jesus came to die for our sins,
But you still better watch out for Satan.
Jesus is what Christmas is all about,
So if you don't get enough presents, don't pout!
I also have one more thing to say:
Jesus is the best gift on Christmas day!

*Kaija Levijoki, age 8
Ironwood, Michigan*

RETRO CHRISTMAS LETTER



Dear Friends in Christ,

This is a portion of a Christmas letter my father wrote to us a long time ago:

*G*race, peace and mercy be multiplied unto you from God our Father and our blessed Savior, now and always.

It is soon Christmas again and we celebrate the birth of our dear Savior. It's a story retold over now for 19 wide centuries and it never grows old; it is replete with wonder. Each new year brings us closer to the day when He shall appear to gather His own so that where He is, we shall also be. It is not for human intellect to comprehend this story, but by faith we believe that His coming was for our purpose and our satisfaction. Man was lost, undone, and unable to save himself; therefore, He came as a Savior to save us from our lost and fallen state. Christ was born a Savior as He died a Savior. The prophet Isaiah calls Him the Almighty. To save calls for almightiness to save, and He alone was the Great Hero who vanquished all His foes and brought victory for all.

Christ's entry into this unthankful world is characterized in the greatest poverty and want: there He lays confined in the narrow limits of a stable amid cattle, for there was not room for them in the inn. Not many have room for Christ today, but as the Apostle Paul declared, "those that received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God (John 1:12)."

Christ is called the "Light of the World." Outside of Him there is only death and darkness. He came as prophesied to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and my people Israel. What a dark world indeed without the Light to lighten us!

So, I have been writing my little Christmas message, sharing this message that came from above. May the Babe of Bethlehem always remain within your hearts. We pray God's blessings for the coming year and the answer for the prayers we send to Him.

God's peace,

Dad

(The late Frederick O. Johnson)

Submitted by Carol Levijoki, Camp Verde, Arizona

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

The first promise of Christ, the Savior of the world, was given to our first parents, Adam and Eve, when God said that the Seed of the woman, Christ, would bruise the head of the serpent, the devil (Genesis 3). Throughout time, in the Old Testament, the believers lived by faith in this promise as they realized all their sacrifices and burnt offerings could not take away their sin nor reconcile them to God, their Creator, but only the Seed of the woman could redeem them. Their walk was by faith in God's promise to send Christ, the Savior of the world, for their redemption; and thereby they were saved. In Hebrews we read: *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets... (Hebrews 1:1)* We see from the Old Testament and also from this verse in Hebrews that God often renewed this promise of the Savior with other prophecies which were fulfilled in the New Testament. One such prophecy is this: *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. (Numbers 24:17)* This was fulfilled when Jesus was born in Bethlehem: *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. (Matthew 2:1-2)*

We read the precious prophecies recorded by Isaiah, who was enlightened by the Spirit: *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)* These blessed words tell of Christ and His work of redemption for sinful mankind.

In our culture we often give gifts, especially at Christmas. Growing up in Norway after the war, we didn't have much, and I remember how happy we were to get gifts from my mother's aunt who lived in America. But of course, the greatest gift of all time is the Gift that our Heavenly Father gave when He gave

His only begotten Son for our salvation, the manifestation of God's true love for the human race. The question for you and me is whether this Gift Child, Jesus, is our personal Lord, Savior, and Prince of Peace. If our sins are washed away with a spiritual cleansing in the blood of Jesus by the proclamation of His Gospel of the forgiveness of sins and a living faith abides in our hearts, then this Child and what He has done for you and me will always be precious. Yes, it will be even our greatest treasure, which we have by faith in our hearts.

**Fear not: for, behold,
I bring you good tidings
of great joy...**

To announce the birth of this long foretold Savior, we read the marvelous proclamation by the angel to the shepherds: *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (Luke 2:9-12)*

These glad tidings concerning the birth of our Savior were so wonderful and exciting that both the angels and the shepherds glorified and praised God for this precious gift: *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men... And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. (Luke 2:13-14, 20)*

May this Christmas joy and peace, which is Jesus Christ, remain in our hearts by faith with the Holy Spirit until life's end, and may we always be thankful to Him for His gracious gift of salvation. *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15)* In closing, I wish all of the readers of this publication a joyous Christmas and a blessed new year!

*Love and God's peace,
Pastor Arne Nordahl
Vancouver, Washington*

FORGIVENESS

Dear fellow Christians,

I write on the important matter of where a sinner finds the altar of mercy that God has provided for a penitent and sin-burdened heart. This matter is of such importance that God has given much instruction about it. The 17th chapter of Leviticus, verses 1-9 speak of it, but we will be focusing on the 8th and 9th verses: *And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice, And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people. (Leviticus 17:8-9)* We know that Christ paid it all, so the only offering to bring is a broken and contrite heart. Where does a heart in this condition go to find the tabernacle spoken of in Leviticus? To the temple of the Living God, which we read is found in each and every living Christian: *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)* God also tells us in *1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

We read in Revelation 1:6 that as believers we are "kings and priests unto God." We are, therefore, able to bring all our sins and burdens to that altar of mercy, found in our believing brother or sister. Then we are able, by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ (or I could say by the preaching of the Gospel), to declare it forgiven. Why? Because we are possessors of the keys to the kingdom of heaven, that whosoever sins we forgive, they are forgiven, and whosoever sins we retain, they are retained, as stated in Matthew 16:19, 18:18, and John 20:23.

We can look at it another way. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says we are "ambassadors for Christ." A natural ambassador has the full authority of his home country's government to declare valid or binding any decree he makes which it (his government or ruler) has authorized him to make. In our case the decree is to preach repentance and to proclaim the forgiveness of sin through the name and blood of Christ.

When someone comes into faith, we are able to strike that same blood on the door posts and lintel of their heart, as they did in Exodus (in the natural sense), that the angel of death must pass over that heart. As the children of Israel fell into sin when they journeyed, we also fall, but God has given us the wonderful blessing that we can, in the spiritual sense, sprinkle that blood so that the conscience can be renewed unto peace.

...the decree is to preach repentance and to proclaim the forgiveness of sin through the name and blood of Christ.

Am I saying that this confession and forgiveness of sins produces Christians? As Paul says, "God forbid." When

the children of Israel offered sacrifices to God for sin, did they do it to make themselves Israelites? No, they did it because they were Israelites. Again, did the Israelites kill the lamb, strike the blood on the door posts and lintels of their houses, and eat the Passover supper to make themselves Israelites? No, they did it because they were Israelites; they believed God that this was the only way to escape the death of their firstborn and open the way to escape from Egypt.

We may look also at the prodigal son. What is the one thing he says when he knows the Father hears? He confesses what he is. Does this make him the son of the Father again? No, he was always the Father's son, but it did him no good because he had left the Father's house and his sin had caused unbelief to come so that he could not believe that he was acceptable in the Father's eyes. When we know the Father knows everything, everywhere, why did he find it necessary to return to the Father's house? Because that is where the compassion of the Father is felt, and where the servants are abiding. Most importantly, when the servants hear the son's confession they can immediately follow the Father's instructions, and put the best robe on the prodigal, which we know to be the proclamation that the righteousness of Christ is available for that person also, through the sprinkling of Christ's blood. The beautiful thing is that it doesn't end there. We, as servants according to the parable, are able also to put a ring on the hand or, more liter-

ally, to proclaim to a new Christian that they are indeed now acceptable to the Father and an heir of the Father. It goes further; we can put shoes on their feet. We are to give them the ability to protect themselves from the stones, etc. on the path as they continue their walk. As servants we are to encourage them to stand on the whole Word of God that their journey would be simple, the fullness of the name and blood of Christ being our sure guide and our all in all.

May God add His blessing to these words, and may He richly bless each reader with the fullness of the love of God through Christ Jesus.

*Shane Juuti
Gimlet, Alberta, Canada*

Dear Little Children of God,

Hello to each of you. How are you today? I hope you are having a good day. Every day when you wake up, you begin another day that is a gift to you from the Lord. Remember to thank God for each day, and for the life He has given your body. I *was* going to share some more on the Commandments, but it's time for the Christmas story. You can find it in St. Luke, chapter 2.



FROM HEAVEN TO A MANGER

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, including man. He saw that it was all very good. Then sin entered the world. The world went on for hundreds of years and God looked down and saw how sinful man had become and He repented that He had made man. *And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth (deeply saddens) me that I have made them. (Genesis 6:7)*

But one man, Noah, found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah and his family were servants of the Lord. God told him to build an ark, a very large boat, to be made of special wood with the measurements that God gave Noah. It was to have three

floors and be big enough to hold every kind of animal, 2 of some, and 7 of others. After 120 years had passed and the ark was ready, God instructed Noah and his family to gather food for themselves and the animals and to go inside the ark. This was done and God closed the door. The rains came and came and the earth was flooded. All life outside the ark died, but inside 8 people were safe. After 150 days the water dried from the earth and the door of the ark was opened and the animals and Noah and his family came out of the ark. Life on earth began once more. God had a plan that was not complete yet...

Hundreds of years passed and life continued. Man was sinful and God could see that things were not going to change. The people needed help. They needed someone to save them. It was time for God's only Son to come to earth. God sent His angel to a young woman named Mary, who lived in Nazareth. God's angel told her that she would have a Son, and she would call His name Jesus. She was to be given in marriage to a man named Joseph, but the marriage had not happened yet.

She was troubled at hearing this as she was not married, and Mary asked the angel, "How can this be?" She was told that the Holy Ghost would come upon her and the Child would begin to grow in her womb. We know that all things are possible with God. It came to pass just as it was told to Mary and she knew she was going to have a child. Soon after, Joseph and Mary were married.

The king at that time had said that everyone needed to go to the country where they were born and be counted with the government. This meant that Joseph had to take Mary with him and go to Bethlehem, the town of Joseph's birth. They packed their things, said goodbye, and began their 3-day journey. It was hard for Mary to travel because she was going to have her baby soon. They arrived just in time, as Mary's time had come.

Joseph went to the inn to find a place for Mary, but the inn was full. Joseph took Mary into the place where the animals were kept. As night came upon them and quiet was all around, the little Child was born. God's only Son came into the world.

Out in the fields, shepherds were watching their sheep and suddenly an angel appeared in the sky. The shepherds were afraid, but the angel of the Lord spoke and said, *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to*

all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:10-14) The angels went away into heaven and the shepherds went quickly to find this Babe. They found Him in a manger just as they were told, and they bowed before Him. On their way back to the fields, they told everyone they met about this Child. They praised God all the way back to the fields. It was a special night for these men, a night they would hopefully never forget. It was a special night for the whole world as the Savior for all mankind had been born.

Much of the world is trying to forget this Babe who was born, but no one will really be able to forget Him. Many do not serve our Jesus and never will, and many who say they won't serve him will. He grew to be a Man and died on the cross for everyone, to take away their sin, and He rose again. His power will never be stopped! One day He will come to take all those who love Him to live in heaven. I'm so glad God sent His only Son so all who believe in Him will not have to suffer forever but will live forever. Praise God for this precious Christmas gift, the best one that will never change. Thank you, Jesus!

*I wish you all a very blessed Christmas full of God's peace,
Gwen Wilson*

The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity—hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory—because at the Father's will Jesus Christ became poor and was born in a stable so that, thirty years later, He might hang on a cross.

The divine Son became a Jew; the Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human Baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child... The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets.

J. I. Packer

KNOWING THE GOSPEL

To know the Gospel is to know the preached Word of God unto a repentant sinner. The message of the Gospel is this: *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18)* The Gospel is preached unto man and believed in the heart. Why preached? *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:10)* This preaching is so faith can be given unto a believing heart. *And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:15-17)* Why sent? Because they are the ones God has called, who have heard and believed the Gospel that was preached to them. They have been sent to preach the Gospel of peace, the glad tidings of good things. The essence of the Gospel is the preaching of the forgiveness of sins to a contrite spirit, a heart broken before God and His Word. This is the power of God unto salvation, given to the church. Jesus said, *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:18)* ...*Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20:21-23)*

We are justified by faith before God, by the faith of the Son of God given to us. When a sinner, who sees his lost condition and cries, "What must I do to be saved?" hears the preached Gospel of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name, and believes in the power of the Gospel, each day he then is given a new measure of faith to believe his sins are forgiven before God in heaven, and he has received the righteousness which is of Christ Jesus by faith. This is that power which God has given to His church on earth to preach to the lost that they can believe

their sins are forgiven in Jesus' name and shed blood according to the words of the Gospel. Therefore we are able to believe with a free heart and have the peace of God that passes all understanding, being justified by the faith given to us by Jesus Christ Himself. There is no doubt that this power has been given to the church; just ask those who have come this way into the kingdom of God, the living church. This is the narrow way that Jesus speaks of that many shall seek, but few shall find.

First, we are to come to the hearing of the Word of God, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Regarding those who are sent: what are they to preach so that by faith we as sinners may believe what the Gospel really is? The Gospel is the preached Word of God to reconcile sinners to God through His Son Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, the preaching of the forgiveness of all their sins in Jesus' name.

Jesus said, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and*

**The Gospel is the preached
Word of God
to reconcile sinners to God
through His Son Jesus Christ.**

that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (John 15:16) Many religious people say, "Pray and accept God." This is not the Gospel; this is religion and is the enemy of God. Please do not be those of whom Jesus speaks in *Matthew 7:20-23: Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:20-23)*

Jesus tell us that the people thought they had salvation in the Word but they did not see that the Word spoke of Him. *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. (John 5:39-40)*

This narrow way is not easy to understand, for many shall seek or are looking for the way of the Gospel, but few shall find it. Many people say "gospel" but few are able to explain the Gospel. Why? These people have not entered or come to find Christ through the preaching of the Gospel or have come through this way, for if you understand the Gospel then you would know the essence of the Gospel: the forgiveness of your sins in Jesus' name.

Saul (Paul) knew the Scriptures but, after he had heard the voice of Jesus say, "Why persecutest thou me?" he had to have the Gospel preached to him by God's servant. The prodigal son was not converted until the servant placed the robe on him (preached robe of the Gospel). Therefore we have peace with God through Jesus Christ His Son. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:4-17)*

The Gospel is the preaching of the cross of Christ and the forgiveness of sin, for Christ took upon Himself all the sin of the world and bore all our sin, grief and sorrow on the cross where He died. He was buried, descended into hell and rose the third day for our justification. Christ alone is the end of the law of sin and death and is for all mankind the law of liberty. Jesus said, *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:44-47)*

This is written that you would hear what the Gospel says, that you would believe in your heart the preached word of the Gospel, the forgiveness of your sins, unto the salvation of your soul and be granted living faith. Then shall the Gospel be known to you, that you would be not only a hearer but a doer unto good works; so all can be saved from hell and the power of Satan's mighty hold, and everyone would enter into the kingdom of God through the Gospel in the time of grace.

*Your brother in Christ Jesus,
Mark E Sunnarborg
Rhineland, Wisconsin*

Free Newlywed Subscription

The Book Concern is offering a free one-year *Christian Monthly* subscription to newlyweds, retroactive to the last two years. If you or someone you know was married within the last two years, please order by contacting The Book Concern:

Mail: PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604-2126, USA

Phone: (360) 896-7344

Email: books@apostoliclutheran.org

NOTICE to congregations: Please send the names/addresses of newly wedded couples and notify engaged couples of this offer.



Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern

Need a Christmas gift idea? Give a gift
that lasts the whole year through...

A year subscription to the Christian Monthly **\$12.00**
(Washington residents add your local sales tax)

Songbooks

Hymns and Songs of Zion **\$15.00**
Regular or Spiral Binding, smaller format with less weight

Pocket Hymnal Blue Hardcover only **\$10.00**
Small version of Hymns and Songs of Zion without music

Heavenly Sunshine **\$9.00**
Children's songbook

Peace on Earth **\$5.00**
Christmas songbook

Books

King James Version Award Bible **\$7.50**
(with Dictionary & Study Helps)
Choose from: Black, White, Navy Blue, or Purple

Egermeier's Bible Stories
Hardcover/**\$26.50** Softcover/**\$18.00**

Bible Pictures for Little Eyes **\$19.00**

The Pilgrim's Progress
Hardcover/**\$17.00** Softcover/**\$8.50**

Little Pilgrim's Progress **\$9.00**
Softcover only, 5-1/2" x 8-1/2"

A Hive of Busy Bees **\$6.00**

Please order from the Book Concern; address on page 19.

*To simplify our bookkeeping,
please do not send money when placing your order.*

*We'll send an invoice including postage charges
when your order is shipped.*

WELCOME TO THE 2011 ALC CONVENTION

The Apostolic Lutheran congregations of the Copper Country have joined together to host the 2011 annual convention and meetings of the Apostolic Lutheran Church of America, which will take place **July 7-10, 2011**, in **Houghton, Michigan**. Business meetings and worship services will be held at the Sports Development Complex (SDC) on the campus of Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. The opening service will be held on Wednesday, July 6, 2011, at 7:00 pm at the Zion Lutheran Church in Hancock, Michigan. Services will continue Thursday, July 7th, through Saturday, July 10th, at the MTU campus.

It is recommended that lodging arrangements be made as soon as possible as this is a busy time in our area. Hotels and cabin lodging are available; college dorms and private homes are also available. For registration and housing, please contact Barb Mattila (906)482-3811. There are three campgrounds for anyone traveling with an RV/camper: McLean State Park, Hancock; City Park, Houghton; City Park, Hancock. Self-contained RV/campers can also utilize the university parking lot. Shower facilities will be available.

Please visit the convention website at www.alcconvention.com for more information.

*Glenn Chapman, Chairman
(906) 482-0044*

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

2 Timothy 2:1-7

2011 ALC CALENDARS

You may now order the Apostolic Lutheran Church calendar for the year 2011. The price for each calendar is \$5.50 to cover the cost of printing and mailing. The calendars will be mailed out early in December. Do not send your payment with your order. An invoice will be included with the shipment for payment to be mailed to the Federation treasurer.

Please send your order in one of the following ways:

Email: alc_calendars@mac.com

Telephone: 925-454-1648

Mail: Corrie Karlsen, 2994 Rodeo Lane, Livermore, CA 94550

Corrie Karlsen

ALC Calendar Committee

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth
that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 5:5

CHRISTIAN MONTHLY

Vol. LXVI—No. 12

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

US: \$12 Canada: \$18 (Payable with US money order only) Foreign: \$25
(Washington residents add 7.7% sales tax — \$.92 for 1 year)

Send articles for publication to:

Lois Matson, Editor

CHRISTIAN MONTHLY

PO Box 2996

Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA

Phone: (360) 904-6951

Fax: (360) 686-4131

E-mail: cm@apostoliclutheran.org

*Address subscriptions, payments,
and Book Concern orders to:*

Anders and Clara Sundqvist, Managers

THE BOOK CONCERN

PO Box 2126

Battle Ground, WA 98604-2126 USA

Phone: (360) 896-7344

E-mail: books@apostoliclutheran.org

APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

website: www.apostoliclutheran.org

Western Mission: western@apostoliclutheran.org

Eastern Mission: eastern@apostoliclutheran.org

Foreign Mission: foreign@apostoliclutheran.org

The Christian Monthly (ISSN 0009-5494) is published monthly for \$12 per year by the
Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, 19113 NE 144th Street, Brush Prairie, WA 98606.

Periodical postage paid at Battle Ground, Washington.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the above PO Box 2126 address.

Christ is Born!

O'er the hills in far Judea
 Rang the first glad Christmas song,
'Twas a grand angelic chorus,
 Shepherds saw the shining throng.
Glory streamed across the heavens,
 Music echoed thro' the air;
Christ the Morning Star hath risen!
 Tell the tidings everywhere.

Tell again the sweet old story,
 Of the shepherds on the hill,
When the angels from the glory
 Sang while all the world was still.
Tell again the story wondrous,
 Of the Infant in the stall,
Of the guiding star above Him
 Shining o'er the Lord of all.

Angels wondered at His coming.
 To this scene of earthly night,
From the fadeless day in glory,
 From His home so wondrous bright,
Angels looked in deep amazement,
 At the manger of His birth,
Understanding not His purpose
 To redeem this sinful earth.

Flora Kirkland

We wish you and yours a Blessed Christmas!

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of
angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world,
received up into glory.

1 Timothy 3:16