



The DEAF LUTHERAN



Official Publication of the International Lutheran Deaf Association & the Board for Missions of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

March-April, 1996

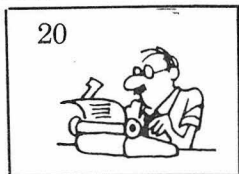
St. Louis, Mo.

Volume 88, No. 2

EMPTY!

By Rev. Steven R. Schlund
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Delavan, Wis. 53115

The Editor comments: Recently, a national magazine had emblazoned on its front cover, the following caption, "The Bible: fact or fiction?" The story left me deeply disturbed.



Among my concerns was what such an article could do to many people with little or no faith. Could it be possible that the Word of God is not true at all?

To answer that question, I am offering in rebuttal the following devotion by Pastor Steven R. Schlund. In all the world, there are tombs of many people who were famous in their day: We have Buddah, Muhammed and Confucius and Caesar and many, many others . . . and all of their tombs are still occupied. They were mere mortals. But there is ONE grave that is empty . . . the grave that held the body of Jesus. Thanks be unto our God, that one is empty! He rose on that first Easter. So, dear reader, read on....

The Editor

If dead people are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised from death, then your



"He is not here;
for he is risen,
as he said."

-Matthew 28:6

faith is for nothing; you are still guilty of your sins . . . but Christ has truly been raised from death--the first one of all those

believers who are asleep in death. Death happens to people because of what one man did (Adam). But the rising from death also happens because of one man (Christ.) Please read I Corinthians 15:16-17, 20-21.

Empty! That is normally a negative word. If your gas tank is empty, your car will stop going and you will be stuck. If your refrigerator is empty, you will be hungry. If your wallet or purse is empty, you are broke and cannot buy anything.

But Easter helps us remember that empty can be a good word, too. Early in the morning on the first Easter, several women went to Jesus' tomb (grave) and found it empty. They thought somebody had stolen Jesus' body and

Continued: EMPTY/Page 2

"THE LORD'S PRAYER"

Sign Language Package Available

The Mill Neck Foundation for Deaf Ministry is offering a special American Sign Language (ASL) package of "The Lord's Prayer". With this offer you will receive one 17"x24" classroom size poster of "The Lord's Prayer" in ASL, a 11"x14" student size poster and a 28-minute videotape demonstrating how to sign "The Lord's Prayer" in ASL.

What does this mean for you? "The Lord's Prayer" Sign Language package is a great ministry tool for Sunday school classes, vacation Bible school, youth groups, confirmation class, retreats and sign choirs.

Now for only \$20, you can receive this special offer which includes a poster and videotape. Shipping is also included. Additional classroom size posters (\$5.00) and student size posters (\$1.00) may also be purchased.

To order "The Lord's Prayer" sign language package or if you have questions about other resources, call Barbara Lanman, coordinator of deaf ministry, at (516) 922-3880 or call our toll free number 1-800-264-0662.

A SPECIAL DAY OF WORSHIP AT MILL NECK SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN

"We are Marching in the Light of God," was the opening hymn at a special Sunday worship for the deaf on Oct. 8, in the formal gardens at Mill Neck Manor School for Deaf Children. Held on the Sunday of the school's traditional Fall Harvest Week-end, the service joined people who are deaf and hearing from local congregations.

Under the direction of Tony Taglino, members of the Family Choir of Peter's Evangelical Church based in Huntington Station, sang while the music was expressed in sign by the sign choir, consisting of staff members from Mill Neck Family of Organizations.

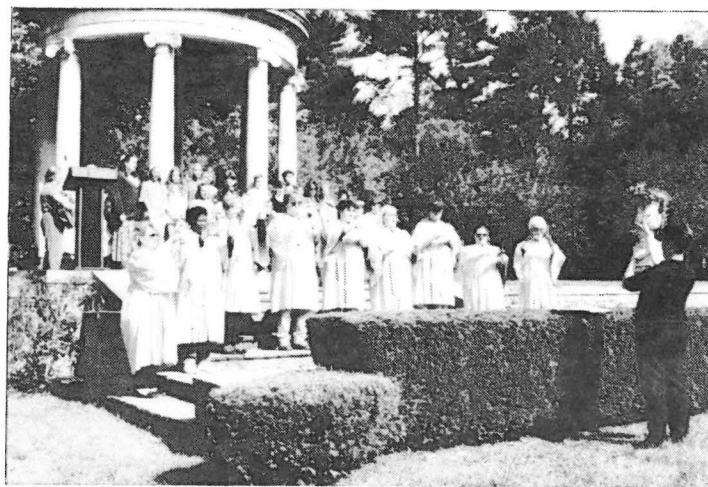
On a picture-perfect day, with about 100

people in attendance, Pastor Carlos Hernandez from Trinity Church in Glen Cove delivered an inspiring sermon, "Rejoice in God's Forgiveness." Barbara Lanman, Mill Neck Foundation's Director of Deaf Ministry, interpreted the sermon.

John Woods and Donna Wright, members of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church of the Deaf in Elmhurst, participated in the service as worship leaders, and children who attend the Extended Day Religion Class at Mill Neck Manor School for Deaf Children led the Lord's prayer.

"This Sunday worship is a wonderful way to bring God's people together to rejoice and give thanks for all His wondrous works."

Every year, when the fall colors are most dramatic at Mill Neck Manor School for Deaf Children, thousands of visitors are welcomed to the campus in celebration of the school's annual Fall Harvest Festival. All proceeds from the festival benefit the school and provide extra services for students who are deaf and/or have other special needs.



"We Are Marching in the Light of God," is rendered in both signs and voice by the Sign Choir (front row) and Family Choir of St. Peter's Evangelical Church (back) during a special outdoor Sunday worship during Mill Neck's Harvest Festival.

IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATION . . .

If your job does not demand much from you, there won't be much demand for you! Support education.

Continued from Page 1

EMPTY!

moved it.

But Jesus' tomb was empty for a more wonderful reason: Jesus was alive and did not need a tomb any more. This is wonderful news! It is wonderful for Jesus. But Jesus' empty tomb is wonderful news for us, too.

God sent Jesus to die on a cross and earn forgiveness for our sins. But Jesus had to become alive again. Jesus' tomb had to be empty on Easter. The Bible says that if Jesus had stayed dead, then our faith means nothing and we are still guilty of our sins. Jesus' empty tomb is **proof** that God accepted Jesus' death on the cross. God had truly forgiven all our sins!

Jesus also promised that His followers would rise from death and live forever! But how could we believe Jesus' promise if He had stayed dead? If Jesus' tomb was full on Easter (if His dead body was still there), then His promise about life after death would mean nothing. Jesus' empty tomb means that His promise is true! We, too, will rise from our graves and live with Jesus forever.

I hope you never have an empty gas tank, an empty refrigerator or an empty purses or wallet. That would be bad. But we thank God because we have an empty tomb on Easter. Jesus is no longer dead. Jesus lives. That means we can be sure our sins are forgiven. We can be sure that we will live forever. In this situation, "empty" is a good thing.

Celebrate that empty tomb with other Christians in church on Easter Sunday--and every Sunday!

WHICH CHURCH?

By Rev. Roy Dahmann
Memorial Lutheran Chapel
Fremont, Calif.

Like many people, deaf people are often confused by the large number of church denominations, groups and sects. Sometimes, people use this division in the church as an excuse for **not** joining **any** church.

As long as we have freedom of religion in this country, we will **not** have one united church. People differ; so do their opinions. Only when all of us give up our opinions to the Christ of the Bible will we have one church. Until that Last Day, we thank God for the freedom to choose the church that teaches and practices what we believe. **But, how can we know which church to join?** Here is some help.

First, there are really only **two** religions in the world! Yes, one teaches that we must save ourselves by our own good life, character, and works. The other is that God saves us by HIS act of mercy in Christ, Who is our Substitute, lived, suffered and died for our sins. That makes our choice easier.

Be sure to choose a church which teaches you to trust in Jesus for salvation! You can't save yourself! the Bible says, "Not by works of righteousness that we have done but according to HIS MERCY (God) saved us through Jesus Christ, our Saviour." See Titus 3:5-6.

When choosing a church you should notice whether or not the Good news (Gospel) of salvation in Jesus Christ is clearly taught in Bible classes and in the preaching. Is the Bible used to teach you about Jesus Christ the Saviour? Take time to compare that church's teaching with Bible truth.

Here are a few important questions to ask before joining any church: **Does this church believe. . . .**

A--that the whole Bible is the Word of God?

All Scripture (Bible) is given by inspiration of God." II Timothy 3:16)
in the Triune (3 in 1) God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit? "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

. . . That Jesus Christ is the only Son of God and the Saviour for all sinners? "God sent the Son to be Saviour of the world." I John 4:14

. . . that Jesus died for the sins of all people? "For God so loved the world that He gave HIS only Son that anyone who believes in HIM shall not die, but will have everlasting life. (See John 3:16)

. . . that any person is saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and HIS atonement (payment for sins)? "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." See Ephesians 2:8.

. . . that baptism washes away all sins? "Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins." (Acts 22:16)

. . . the words of Christ when HE established the Lord's Supper? Jesus said, "This is My Body . . . This is My Blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." Matthew 26: 26-28.

Here are some things you should **not** do when choosing a church:

DO NOT choose a church because it is the one nearest your home. Or because it has many deaf members . . . or because it is the most beautiful building.

DO NOT think that all churches are the same. Or that they are all good. Or, that they lead to heaven. Jesus warns, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing." See Matthew 7:15.

DO NOT neglect the Bible, God's true Word, by which you will be judged, and the eternal truth by which you will be led through life and death.

The Lutheran Church does not claim to be the only saving church; but it does keep and pass on God's truth as it is found in the Bible. **The Lutheran Church does not** teach only the thoughts and opinions of people, but it teaches the printed revelation of God.

The Lutheran Church does not destroy God's truth by believing only what seems right and acceptable to many people. The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (LCMS) believes the Bible, the Word of God, is the only guide for our teaching and life.

AN INVITATION

There is an LCMS church near you where you are welcome to worship the God of the Bible. Call, write or visit.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE NATION

Interesting news breaking from Nebraska: Our friends in Omaha are drawing up plans to build a new church after worshipping at their old building at 5074 Lake Street for many years. The Nebraska District is also considering a call to a second pastor to serve the needs of the deaf at stations in areas far west of Omaha and Lincoln. They already have another church group interested in their Omaha property and parsonage. We will be watching prayerfully as our brothers and sisters plan for the future.

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Rev. Rodney R. Rynearson was in Omaha and Lincoln, Neb. Feb. 11 to lead discussion on the future of ministry to the deaf in Nebraska. Two weeks later, he traveled to Charlotte, N.C. to be guest speaker at the Chapel for the Deaf as they celebrated the 10th anniversary of their church.

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We know many of Don Leber's friends are concerned about his health. Pastor Leber will undergo special radiation treatment in San Diego rather than having the tumor surgically removed. Later there will be regular radiation therapy to reduce the size of the tumor. According to the church newsletter, he has not had any more seizures since Oct. 26, 1995.

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All indications are that the winter of 1995-1996 is going to be one for the record books. In the Midwest, Friday, Jan. 26 saw a blizzard, the likes which had not been in seen in more than 20 years. In the east, another blizzard left widespread problems. The storm in the Midwest was followed by temperatures which dropped to more than -30 below zero with one place in northeast Iowa reporting -47. In Portland, Ore. a storm blew in, taking part of the roof of Hope Lutheran Church with it. Did the groundhog see his shadow on Feb. 2?

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The 1997 ILDA host committee is raising funds for the convention in St. Louis July 3-6. It may seem strange to talk about Christmas ornaments in March and April, but you can order for next Christmas, which will return before we know it! A total of seven (7) attractive designs on 3½" globes highlighting the centennial of deaf ministry in the LCMS; the 1997 convention; "Jesus Loves You" in signs and Christmas are among those that can be sent for. Costs range from \$5.60

to \$6.25, plus shipping. Why not send for a brochure? Inquiries may be sent to Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 101 N. Beaumont, St. Louis, Mo. 63103-2227. All proceeds will benefit the 1997 convention.

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The latest update we have on Dr. Rodney Rynearson and his wife, Rhoda is that both seem to be getting better! Rhoda has finished her chemo treatments and tests show no cancer remaining. And Dr. RRR? Well, the doctors are having a hard time finding his problems, but we are happy he feels better anyway.

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The 44th GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CONFERENCE will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 409 Swissvale Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. on the dates of Aug. 2-4, 1996. Conference theme will be "Church Growth." Additional information may be had by calling Don or Mary Mowl at 1-412-225-8867 or writing them at 1684 E. Maiden St., Washington, Pa. 15301-3111.

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A letter from Diane Munoz, secretary of the Eastern Regional Conference mentions that our churches in Connecticut, St. Matthew of Elmhurst, N.Y. and St. Mark, also of New York City continue to strive, although the latter two have been without the services of a pastor for over six years. In New England (Conn.) it has been nearly four years. In the case of St. Mark Lutheran Church, Rev. Eric Ziegler installed one member, Mr. Joshua Perry as lay leader with special authorization to serve communion in the absence of a regular full time pastor. At St. Matthew in Newark, N.J., Mr. Richard Windisch has been serving the church as a lay minister in the absence of Pastor Ziegler.

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The ER (Eastern Regional Conference) will meet in June at Beltsville, Md. with Christ Lutheran Church hosting the event. (Earlier, it was mentioned in the publication the meeting would be held in Calverton, Md. Please check with hosts).

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Chapel for the Deaf in Charlotte, N.C. obtained a new pastor July 31 in the person of Rev. Michael MacDonald. The ladies there have been busy making banners for the worship services. Chapel for the Deaf observed its 10th anniversary with a banquet Feb. 23-25. The members have also voted to host the ILDA convention in the year 2001.

AT PAX NATURA RANCH

Clyde, Alberta, Canada
Aug. 16-20, 1995



The above photo shows part of the group attending the Youth and Deaf Leadership Training Event hosted by Cross of Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada Aug. 16-20, 1995.

In the lower center of the picture is a bald eagle on loan to the ranch by the Alberta Department of Wildlife. In the front row, left, Pastor Roger Daene sits stiff necked as a result of a horseback riding accident on Saturday night. Pastor Daene, of

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE NATION

Rev. Robert Bauer and his wife, Eleanor and Mr. Gary Anderson were resource persons at a sign language seminar at Concordia Seminary at Edmonton, Alberta in November. Students were asked to wear ear plugs and try to understand sign language communication in a setting similar to that in a world that the deaf live in every day. Pastor Bauer did not say what the whole experience was for those in the student body, but we can imagine it was very interesting! A garage sale with matching funds from Lutheran Life netted more than \$1,200 for Pax Natura Ranch's vehicle fund.

Regina, Saskatchewan, was not seriously injured, but the accident caused enough of a stir for the barn dance on Saturday night to be canceled while prayers were offered to the Lord "to take away our fears and doubts and help us depend on Your great love, O Lord Jesus." X-rays at Westlock, Alberta hospital dispelled their greatest fears; a broken neck.

And like an army the gathering moved ahead on great food supplied by "Mom" (Mrs. Lorraine Hennig) and daughter "Sis" (Chantelle). The Daena and Bergstreaaer children kept us a "balanced" family. Danny Bergstresser came all the way from Columbus, Ohio to fill in love with a special horse, Andy and little brother Johnnie was always ready to give directions. . . .



The closing Worship and Rally Service on Sunday morning, Aug. 20 saw the Ranch Chapel full with enthusiastic worshippers. The whole Gathering Family sang/signed Tallis' Canon, "All praise to Thee, my God" in a round. Pastor Bauer led the morning worship and Pastor Ed Bergstresser preached a dynamic sermon base on our gathering theme, Isaiah 40:31 ". . . they shall rise up on wings like eagles." Seminary President Dr. Dean Hempelman brought greetings as did Dr. Ed Lehman of the Lutheran Church-Canada. The offering was slated for a future Deaf Youth Gathering.

SILENT WORD OBSERVES TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Silent Word Media Resources, an Illinois 501 (c) (3) corporation is celebrating its 10th anniversary with an open house on March 24, 1996 from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Silent Word began 10 years ago with a simple purpose --to bring accessible Christian media to all people, and especially to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. In 1986, this was accomplished with a monthly television show that aired on cable access channels.

Ten years later, the purpose is unchanged, however the means of fulfilling that purpose have grown incredibly. Through a deaf ministry resource center and Videotape Production and Captioning Divisions, and the Lord's blessing, literally millions of people receive the saving message of the Gospel on a weekly basis. This is extremely critical as 95% of people with disabilities do not have any church home.

In celebration and thanksgiving for 10 years of blessings, Silent Word invites you to join us for an open house. A buffet luncheon will be available for \$5 per person and all festivities will be held at Concordia University, 7400 W. Augusta, River Forest, Ill.

ACTIVITIES

10:00 A.M. Celebration Worship--Chapel
Guest Preacher, Rev. Charles Jones

CONVOCAION ON DEAF MINISTRY

It will soon be 15 years since the last Convoation on Deaf Ministry was held at the Yahara Center in Madison, Wis., on the dates of Nov. 20-22, 1981. At that time, participants agreed to hold another one in 10 years to "see where we have been; where we are going and to plan ministry for the 21st century." While a little more time has elapsed since meeting than expected, plans are being made to convene a second meeting, now tentatively scheduled for some time in the Fall of 1997.

Six members of the steering committee met in Austin, Texas the week-end of Feb. 17-18 to review plans of co-chairpersons Rev. Donald Zuhn and Rev. Mark Seeger.

Serving on the steering committee are: Nancy Krause, Minneapolis, Minn.; David Naumann, Houston, Texas; Lordy Smith, Memphis, Tenn.; Rev. George Natonick, Silver Spring, Md.; Richard Norton, Austin, Texas, and Lester Ahls, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Further developments will be announced as they become available.

11:15-4:00 P.M. Technology Experience, Krentz
12:00-3:00 P.M. Buffet Luncheon, Krentz
12:00-4:00 P.M. Live Television Taping, Studio

All are invited for all or part of the day. Sign language interpreters and real time captioning will be offered the entire day. For more information and reservations call 708-209-3341 V/TTY.

WOMAN, 94, LEAVES FORTUNE TO GALLAUDET

Pikesville, Md.--A 94-year-old woman who lived in a run-down, cluttered house despite having a \$4.4 million stock portfolio willed most of her fortune to Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. The amazing thing about the unusual bequest is that no one at the university had ever heard of her.

Her will bequeathed 80% of her estate to the university, the only college of its kind in the world. Olive Swindell's husband, who had been deaf since childhood, passed away in 1994 at 86. He was a draftman. They had no children and no known relatives.

After the death of Olive Swindells, thousands of newspapers and magazines dating back to the 1920's were found, many of them related to the famed kidnaping of the Lindbergh baby. It was also determined that she had amassed her fortune largely through the stock market.

MEDICARE HOTLINE TTY ACCESSIBLE

The Health Care Financing Administration announced in September that a new toll-free hotline with direct TTY access is now available to deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired people seeking information about medicare.

Due to welfare reform and other budget cuts, individuals all across the country have expressed concerns about Social Security and Medicare benefits. Now questions regarding Medicare can be addressed by calling the national Medicare hotline directly.

The new TTY telephone number for the hotline is 1-800-820-1202. Please remember, this is a TTY only. The staff at the national hotline are specifically trained to communicate with the deaf.

THE QUESTION BOX

Q: What is a backslider? How should one reach such a person to bring him back to active membership in the congregation?

This question was posed to Rev. William A. Ludwig almost 30 years ago by someone in the Great Lakes region. If you have a question you would like to have answered in this

column, the Editor will be happy to forward it to Pastor Ludwig or some other minister in the LCMS for an answer.--The Editor

A: According to the dictionary, a backslider is a person who loses his enthusiasm for the church.

The second question is a good one because the church is losing a number of people because of disinterest. Many members talk with each other about the backslider and his falling away from faith, but they do nothing to help him. This does please the Lord who "does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins." (II Peter 3:9 TEV)

Making the falling member a faithful Christian again is very difficult work. Miracles do not always happen at the first effort. Bringing the backslider back to Christ's church may require much time, and love, humility and patience.

As concerned Christians we should first pray to God for help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. We may do well to consult our pastor for advice on what to say and how to say it. Our pastors know which Biblical passage to recommend, for the Bible is the power of God to lead anyone to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Since this work of love may continue for a long time, prayer and patience are very important. Our first efforts may fail, but let us not give up. We must continue to pray for the backslider as well as seek the counsel and help of our pastor.

Remember, if the failing member is finally brought back to active Christian life, there will be much joy in heaven.

--Rev. William A. Ludwig

ASH WEDNESDAY & LENT

What is it all about?

Ash Wednesday is beginning of the Lenten Season for the church and is celebrated for the 40 days preceding Easter. You have seen people with ashes on their foreheads. The ashes signify sorrow for our sins. In Bible times, people would sit in ashes to show their sorrow and the desire to repent.

Today, we do not ask people to sit in ashes. Instead, we use a small spot on our foreheads to mark with ashes for people to see. Ash Wednesday is also the time we begin our walk to the cross with Jesus.

Jesus walked to the cross to bear the punishment for our sins; He died in our place; He paid a debt we had no hope of ever paying.

Lent is a time for deep meditation; to remind us of the severity of our sins and the punishment that sin earns; it also is a time for thanks to Jesus for taking our place and freeing us from the terrible punishment. Lent also reminds us of God's great love, a love made manifest in the cross.

CENTRAL REGION TO MEET IN WAUSAU

The 1996 Central Regional Conference of the ILDA will convene in Wausau, Wis. on May 3, 4 and 5. The theme for the conference will be, "The Body of Christ." Rev. David Eash, Seminary professor and pastor for the deaf in Fort Wayne, Ind. will speak at the banquet Saturday evening. Rev. Steven Schlund, pastor for the deaf in Delavan, Wis., will lead a Bible study on Saturday afternoon. Rev. Mark Anderson, pastor to the deaf in Rockford and Wood Dale, Ill., will preach the Sunday morning worship service.

The conference will be held at the Ramada Inn and Conference Center in Wausau, which is located 150 miles north of Madison on Highway 51. Hosting the event will be the North Wisconsin Deaf Mission, Rev. William Knaack, pastor. Mr. Joe Garcia is the area representative. Registration materials were sent to CRC members in January.

1995 CONVENTION VIDEOTAPE AVAILABLE

Churches wishing to borrow a videotape of the 1995 ILDA convention will be glad to know that one is available on the loan-out basis and may be obtained by contacting the office of Dr. Rodney R. Rynearson in St. Louis, or by request from former ILDA Historian Donald S. Mowl, 1684 E. Maiden St., Washington, Pa. 15301.

THE JOY OF SEEING THE SAVIOUR

The Nunc Dimittis

By Vicar Mark Ruppert
Trinity Lutheran Church
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Shortly after Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary took Him to the temple. There, in the temple yard, an old man waited to see Jesus. God had promised Simeon that he would see the Saviour before he died.

In my imagination, I see old Simeon on that special day: holding Jesus in his arms, he danced around and around in his joy, his bearded face smiling with every whisker! He was looking into his Saviour's eyes and this was the best moment of his life. Nothing could spoil life for him this day His words are still sung in many churches every Sunday.

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy Word;

For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation: which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

A light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel. . . ."

We are like Simeon. We have seen our Saviour, and in our faith, we have hugged Him

with love. He is the One who grew up, lived a life with no sin, then on the cross, He accepted every sin we put on His shoulders. He paid for our sins--He saved us.

Now nothing can spoil life for us. We have held our Saviour--and He has come to live inside us. John 15:4 says, "Get your life from Me and I will live in you." And in II Cor. 5:17 we read, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old (person) is gone. And the new (person) has come."

JOKE!

A little girl was busy drawing a picture. When her teacher asked her what she was drawing, she seriously replied, "I'm drawing a picture of God."

"But no one knows what God looks like," the teacher replied. The little girl answered cheerfully and confidently, "Well, they will when I get finished!"

FAMILY CIRCUS/ Bil Keane



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"What did Grace do that made her so amazing?"

**The DEAF
LUTHERAN**

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