



# The DEAF LUTHERAN



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

November-December, 1996

St. Louis, Mo.

Volumes 88, No. 6



## JOY to the WORLD

UNTO YOU IS BORN... A SAVIOR... CHRIST THE LORD!

"Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14

*There's a beautiful legend  
That's never been told--  
It may have been known  
To the Wise Men of old--  
How three little children  
Came early at dawn,  
With hearts that were sad  
To where Jesus was born.*

*One could not see,  
One was too lame to play;  
While the other, a mute  
Not a word could he say.  
Yet led His star,  
Came there to peep  
At the little Lord Jesus  
With eyes closed in sleep.*

*But how could the Christ Child,  
So lovely and fair,  
Not waken and smile  
While He heard their glad prayer,  
Of hope at His coming,  
Of faith in His birth,  
Of praise at His bringing  
God's peace to the earth.*

*And then as the light  
Softly came through the door,  
The lad that was lame  
Stood upright once more.  
The boy that was mute  
Started sweetly to sing.*

*While the child that was blind  
Looked with joy on the King! --Unknown*

## HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

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

"So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son (Jesus)." Luke 2:4,6,7

Here is a favorite Christmas song that says, "I'll be home for Christmas; you can count on me." Many people enjoy being home with family for Christmas. Many people will travel long distances to be at home with their families. Maybe you will be traveling, too, to be at home for Christmas.

That is all well and good. But when you read the Christmas story from the Bible, did you ever stop to consider that NO ONE was home on that first Christmas? Mary and Joseph were not home. They had to leave their home in Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem to obey the Roman king's command. The shepherds were not home. They had to work and were out in the fields watching the sheep. The Wise Men were not home. They traveled many miles from the East, following a bright star.

But there is one more important person who was not home for Christmas--Jesus Himself! His home was in heaven. But Jesus left His heavenly home and became a person. Jesus did that for a very important reason. Why? Because God wanted us to be at home with Him in heaven--not only for Christmas, but forever. We could not come to heaven on our own. Heaven is for a holy God and holy people. The Bible says that we are born as sinners. We also do sins--sinful thoughts, sinful words, signs, and sinful deeds. We don't deserve a home in heaven, but we deserve a home in hell.

## MONTANANS CELEBRATE 35 YEARS

The members of Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf in Montana celebrated 35 years under God's grace with renewing of an annual "Lutheran Deaf Camp." The camp was held at the beautiful Trinity Lutheran Camp in Bigfork, located about 17 miles southeast of Kalispell on the northeast shore of Flathead Lake. Fifty-three (53) campers were in attendance and celebrated God's grace with a week full of fun and activities.

The camp consisted of morning and evening devotions led by Pastor Hank Drummond on the topic of the church as "family." Daily activities were planned to involve everyone in laughter and fellowship. The kitchen crew consisted of volunteers from Trinity Lutheran Church, Great Falls, and the Grand Chef, Pastor Drummond, who prepared delicious meals. Most campers gained a few pounds at camp.

The campers enjoyed a week of swimming, boating, fishing, camp fires and Bible study.

## HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

Continued from Page 1

Jesus left His home in heaven and came to earth on Christmas to change that. On Christmas, we think of the cute story about Jesus' laying in a wooden manger. But it is the terrible story about Jesus hanging on a cross that is more important for us. Jesus took all our sins, failures and mistakes with Him on that cross. He suffered and died to take away our sins, failures and mistakes and make us God's holy people. Jesus rising from the dead is God's guarantee that He has forgiven our sins and that we will rise, too.

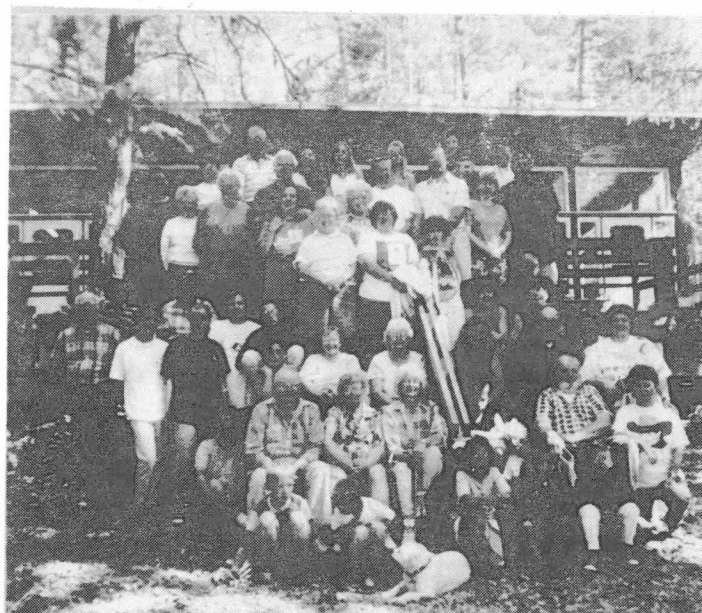
We may not be able to be home for this Christmas, but we do have a home forever with Jesus in heaven. Jesus is getting that home ready for you right now. Jesus said, "There are many rooms in my Father's house . . . I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with Me, so that you can be where I am." (John 14: 2,3)

This is Christmas, spend some time in your spiritual home--your church--with your spiritual family--brothers and sisters in Christ. Hear the wonderful story about Jesus' birth and remember that no one was home that Christmas so that you would be home with God forever in heaven!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

Sunday ended the week of fun with a huge breakfast followed by a worship service celebrating 35 years under God's grace. The SIGN (Signing in Good News) participated in the service signing special music for the service.

This camp was made possible by grants and donations from AAL, District LWML and LWML from various churches. The generous donations made it possible for the campers to attend at a cost of only \$20, which allowed many people to attend the Deaf Camp who otherwise would not have been able to participate. The members voted to make this a yearly event and continue to thank God for 35 years of His grace.



AT BEAUTIFUL FLATHEAD LAKE--Fifty-three members of the group posed for their picture. The area is in the northwest part of the state, well known for beautiful mountains and forests . . . and has been the site of previous meetings of the deaf community.

14th Biennial Convention  
INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN DEAF ASSOCIATION  
Adam's Mark Hotel  
(Across street from Gateway Arch)  
St. Louis, Mo.  
July 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1997

"HE IS THE GATEWAY"

Ms Sharon Schwarz, Chairperson  
404 Eureka Road  
Eureka, Mo. 63025-2155

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Larry M. Gorton, President  
3807 S. Latawah St.,  
Spokane, Wash. 99203

Another change is happening in the DEAF LUTHERAN. After many years of processing and mailing the publication, the elderly deaf residents of Columbus Colony in Westerville, Ohio are not able to continue the service. It started under Rev. Don Leber. Many of the residents there now have physical/and or mental disabilities. Sadly, other capable deaf residents have other options to be independent. As a result, fewer and fewer of the residents are able to help with the preparation and distribution of the DEAF LUTHERAN. At the same time, postal regulations are getting stricter and mailing is taking more staff time and not helping getting out our publication quickly enough.

It is the ILDA's pleasure to know our Christian deaf members at Holy Cross Lutheran Church for the Deaf as the mail permit holder are more than happy to take over the duties temporarily until the ILDA Board of Directors

is able to find two new leaders, editor and business manager by the middle of next year.

It is everyone's prayer that all those involved will be challenged to find new direction for the Association's important publicity paper and its long history of continuing to communicate with deaf Lutherans, pastors and its many friends.

Thanks to all our subscribers, ILDA members for your concern, interest and continued support for THE DEAF LUTHERAN.

## FRIEDRICH HONORED

Rev. Ronald Friedrich, pastor of John Beverly Chapel for the Deaf, Dallas, Texas was recognized by five deaf social and civic groups April 21 for service to the deaf community. A week of events is organized annually in Dallas to promote deaf awareness with two awards presented, one to a deaf person and another to someone who is not. Pastor Friedrich received "The LBJ Award."

The five organizations making this year's awards were the Dallas County Deaf Caucus; Dallas Community Center of the Deaf; Dallas Metro Club of the Deaf; Dallas Black Deaf Advocates and the Spanish Deaf Association of Dallas.

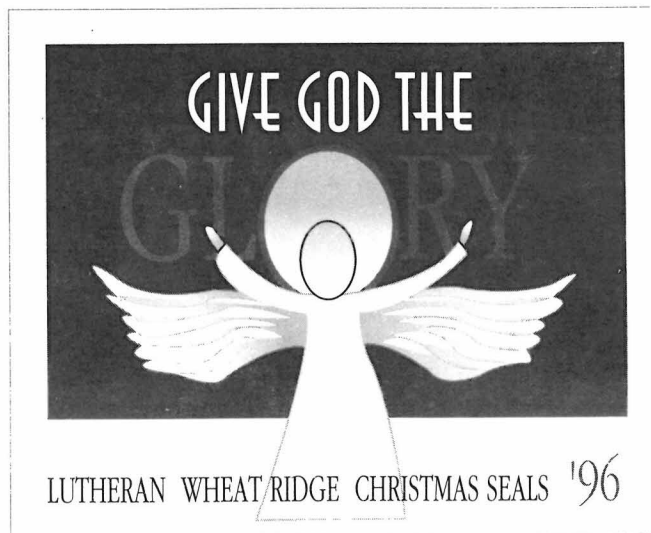
The honoree has served deaf ministry in the LCMS for the past 20 years, the last 12 in Dallas. Rev. Friedrich was ILDA pastoral adviser from 1983-1987.

The Board of Directors of the  
INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN  
DEAF ASSOCIATION  
continues to seek interested  
persons to serve on *The Deaf  
Lutheran* staff beginning in FALL  
1997:

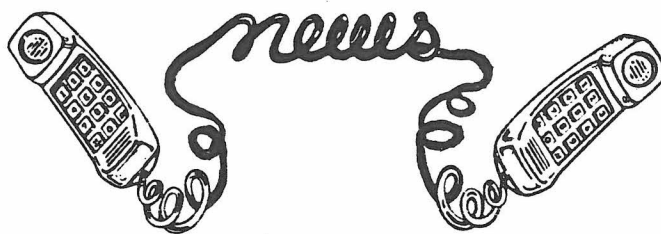
**EDITOR** - Responsible for layout  
and editing ILDA's publicity  
newspaper. Collection of  
mission informations, news and  
stories.

**BUSINESS MANAGER** - Assists  
with subscription lists, notices  
and distributions.

Contact: **Larry Gorton, President**  
**S. 3807 Latawah**  
**Spokane, WA 99203**  
**(509) 624-5650**







**Rev. Roger Altenberger**, pastor of Word of God Lutheran Church, Cedar Rapids, Iowa underwent cancer surgery at St. Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids Aug. 12. The tumor, which was located in the bladder, was removed and the operation appears to have been successful. He spent a month recuperating at home and returned to his ministerial duties Sept. 4.

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Trinity, Pittsburgh, will have the services of **Vicar Roger Blesi** of St. Cloud, Minn. as its pastor, who started work in August. He has been a student at the Fort Wayne Seminary and has enjoyed worship and social activities with the deaf at St. John's there before coming to his new church.

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**Rev. Robert Bauer**, pastor of Cross of Christ, Edmonton, Alberta was the honoree at a surprise reception and banquet at the Tegler Center at Concordia College there September 21 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his work in deaf ministry. It was followed on Sunday with worship and an open house at Cross of Christ from 10:30 to 2:00 p.m. We wish Pastor Bauer and wife Eleanor many more blessings on his ministry and happiness in the years to come.

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The Great Lakes Regional Conference, meeting in Pittsburgh, elected Robert Kane of Christ Lutheran Church, Cleveland, Ohio as its new president and John Rushton of Alpha Lutheran Church, Rochester, N.Y. as president-elect. Other officers are Diane Waters, secretary; Robert Gore, treasurer, and Helen Shoup, Rochester, historian. Don Mowl, of Trinity Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh will be the new GLRC reporter.

o-0-o

What do you do on a nice summer day in Iowa? Why, you charter a bus and go sightseeing at the Mall of America in Minneapolis! That is what 35 deaf and **Pastor Roger Altenberger** and his wife, Kim did Aug. 10. The trip was lots of fun, but very tiring after trudging through the huge facility.

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The Iowa District East Chapter of the LWML

voted to donate \$3,500 to Word of God Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids to purchase a badly needed new computer. The money has been received and a new computer and some software purchased.

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**Betty Rose**, Minneapolis, retired July 31 from her job with the National Guard, Department of Military Affairs. Betty is secretary of the Midwest Conference.

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The importance of preserving family records was brought out recently when a long time member of Peace Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, decided to begin a search for the date of her baptism. Her family church had no record; the school she attended in her youth in Wisconsin could not provide a date, either, although its "fuzzy" records said she was. With a cloud of uncertainty over whether she had been truly baptized or not, it was decided to conduct the rite on July 28.

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**Rev. Mark Anderson**, who serves the Northern Illinois District, underwent surgery after a shoulder injury and will be recuperating at home for some time.

## THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Are there still TEN commandments in the metric systems?"

## An Editorial . . .

# CHRISTMAS IS COMING

It's not hard to tell that Christmas is coming. This is being written in mid-September and we are already seeing Christmas merchandise being put up in the stores. And the annual "Christmas Appeals" are already showing up in my mail box. Trying to get into the spirit of Christmas when the temperature outdoors is still in the mid-70's is not very easy to do. But since most of our readers will not see this until around Thanksgiving time, we will talk a little about **Advent**.

How easy it would be to get so wrapped up in Christmas preparations that we forget all about the importance of Advent. What a great loss that would be! We need Advent to understand Christmas. Only someone who has been in prison for a long time knows the full meaning of freedom. No one celebrates liberty like someone who has been a slave. Only one who has fully experienced Advent understands the real meaning of Christmas.

Advent calls us first of all to a time of waiting. We wait for God to fulfill His promise. Israel had to wait for nearly two thousand years for the promise of the Messiah to be fulfilled. Yet, "in the fullness of time" according to God's own timing, He sent forth His son. For over nineteen centuries the church has been waiting for Christ to fulfill His promise to return. The longer the wait, the deeper our longing.

With the waiting, Advent calls for a time of reflection and should include some time for serious meditation upon the reasons why Christ came. That meditating should include some thought as to why the Son of God would give up the splendor and adoration of His home in heaven and submit Himself to the discomfort, dishonor, suffering and death here on earth? Someone who has pondered in his heart the awesome sacrifice that God made and a love that is beyond human understanding can truly appreciate the true meaning of Christmas.

Like the Lenten Season, Advent also calls us to repentance, and to remember the reason God sent forth His Son. It should cause us to consider the terrible prospect of an angry God coming to judge and our casual indifference to our sinful way of life. It should horrify and dismay us and cause us to be moved to a more God pleasing life. Alas, our culture craves instant satisfaction; it has no use for meditation and even less for wait-

ing. And repentance? No need for that, either. So the world bypasses Advent and heads for the partying, gifts and food. But truthfully, only Christians who have experienced the depths of Advent can know the heights of Christmas. Only they understand the birth of the Saviour, who is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God grant each and every one of us a rich and rewarding Advent Season and may the coming of Christ fill our hearts with new joy . . . a story that never becomes old and is ever new.

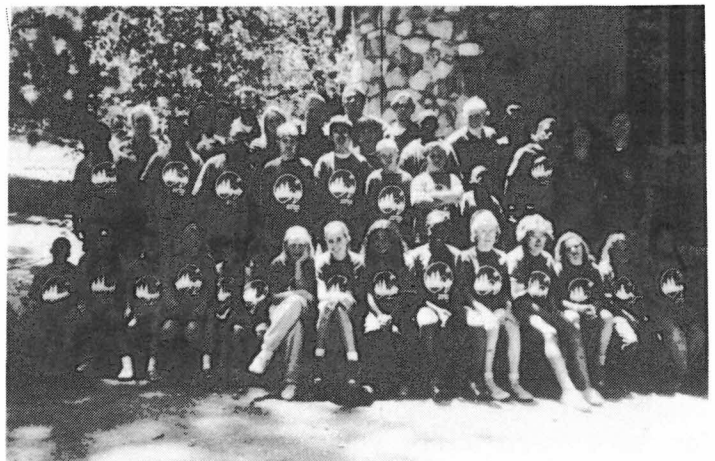
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## DEAF YOUNGSTERS ENJOY SUCCESSFUL CAMPING WEEK IN CALIFORNIA

Lutheran Deaf Camp of California completed a successful week at El Camino Pines Lutheran Camp at Frazier Park, Calif. (located in the Los Padres National Forest about half-way between Los Angeles and Bakersfield) with 28 deaf and hearing children. Four counselors, three deaf and one hearing helped teach the children stories from the Bible about God's Winning Team.

Pastor Brian Smith and Don Leber lead the team of Louise Ellison, Clifford Combs, Karen Almond, Gordon Goebel, Rachel Ronning, Jared Little, Kristen Ross and Brandon Shamizu. The children came from Las Vegas to San Diego to Los Angeles.

The 1997 camp is scheduled for the week of July 27 to Aug. 1.



**CAMPING IN CALIFORNIA**—This group of young people spent a week at Frazier Park, CA enjoying God's great outdoors. Notice the similarity in the shirts.

# PASTORAL DEVOTION

Rev. Donald E. Leber  
6950 Center Ave.  
Alta Loma, Calif. 91701

Why is attendance at worship not very important to some deaf people? One of the most valuable gifts that God gives to HIS people is the gift of worship. Maybe you never thought about it that way, but it is true. Think back to the Old Testament. God wanted to help HIS people remember that HE is always with them, and thus God gave directions to Moses about the way to build the Tabernacle or tent church. Every time they moved, the people took the tent down and carried it to the next place and set up the tent church again. And God was with them. Then when they arrived at the Promised land, there was no more need for a tent church and God gave to King Solomon the job of building the permanent temple.

Again, God showed HIS people that HE was always with them there. And God gave rules for the people to follow in their worship, because God knew what the people needed, and HE knew that Satan will try every way he can to keep the people from getting the things they need. In the worship service God brought HIS people together to help one another; to hear HIS Word read and explained to them; to have the people bring their thank offerings to HIM; and to be blessed with the forgiveness of their sins.

Can you imagine receiving a Christmas present and never opening it? The other day I met an elderly "Lutheran" deaf lady and I asked her if she wanted me to bring the Lord's Supper to her. She told me she did not have the Lord's Supper since 1945, because she stayed away from church. All these years God's gift of forgiveness and strength and peace was waiting for her at church in the worship service and she never received the gift.

Some deaf people today use the excuse that they are going camping or bowling on that week-end and can't worship because of that. Good excuse?? Good for Satan, but not good for the camper's soul.

Have you ever thought to ask your pastor for some help while you are gone? I am sure that he will gladly provide you with a prayer book, some Bible readings, perhaps even a few songs and maybe a copy of his sermon. But you need to ask for it. Some deaf people prefer to stay home because they do not like

the pastor, or they had a disagreement with one of the members, or any other of a million reasons. Well, it all comes down to whom will we listen, God or Satan?

I just love to receive gifts and every Sunday God surprises me in worship with the gifts HE offers to me. Open your hearts and receive God's great gifts. Worship HIM, your God and Saviour, EVERY SUNDAY.

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## CONVOCATION ON DEAF MINISTRY

After more than two years of planning, it can finally be announced that the 1997 Convocation on Deaf Ministry will take place on the dates of Oct. 3, 4 and 5 at the Saviour Pastoral Center in Kansas City, Kan.

The Midwest Conference held a meeting there six or seven years ago and it is an excellent facility and should be adequate for our needs.

The last convocation was held in Madison, Wis., in November, 1981 and plans were made then to hold another such meeting "within 10 years" but time has a way of passing us by rather quickly. A new millenium will be upon us in less than four years and one of the purposes of the meeting will be to make preparations for deaf ministry in the 21st century.

A grant from Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) for \$35,000 and another from Mill Neck Foundation for \$15,000 to the International Lutheran Deaf Association (ILDA) made the convocation possible. The ILDA, the sponsoring organization, put up the remaining funds to insure that the meeting could be held.

Additional details will be announced as they become available.

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## EL SKUNKO

Army recruit: "Sarge, I've got a pet skunk."

Sergeant: "Where do you expect to keep him?"

Recruit: "Under my bunk in the barracks."

Sergeant: "What about the smell?"

Recruit: "He's gonna have to get used to it like I did."



# ABOUT RECENT CHURCH BURNINGS

By Rev. Mark W. Seeger  
Jesus Lutheran Church  
Austin, Texas

Jesus says, ". . . on this rock I will build My Church, and the forces of Hell will not prevail (overpower) it." (Matthew 16:18).

We have recently seen in the news about the many church buildings that have been burned. Many of these churches are made up primarily of African-American Christians. It is a sad and terrible thing to learn about these fires. Why would someone want to burn a house of worship?

Unfortunately, it is nothing new. As we read through the Bible, we read how the Old Testament temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the evil King Nebuchadnezzar. The temple was finally rebuilt, but then it was destroyed again in the year 70 A.D. Through the years, many church buildings, temples and houses of worship have been destroyed. It is never a good situation. It is never a happy event. It is always sad, always heartbreaking. Through the coming years, we will read about many more of these terrible things happening.

We can take comfort in the Words of Jesus. He said HE WOULD BUILD HIS CHURCH. His church is people. We are the church. All the believers in Jesus from all the different denominations are His church. The buildings that are built and destroyed are simply that--buildings. Yes, they have sentimental value. Many people may have given much to build these buildings. A lot of sweat and energy and time may have been put into these places of worship, and all of those efforts are important, but the most important thing to remember is that PEOPLE ARE THE CHURCH AND NO ONE CAN DESTROY HIS CHURCH. Jesus said that the

forces of hell cannot overpower His church.

The evil people who burn churches should be caught and punished. We should also pray for them. They may hate the church and the Christian message, but Jesus came and died for all people, even the arsonists who are burning church buildings.

The Bible tells us about a man named Saul. His whole purpose in life was to destroy the church. But Jesus had other plans for him. Jesus wanted him to become a missionary and proclaim the Good News to the gentiles. Jesus changed Saul's heart, and Saul became Paul --the author of most of the New Testament letters. Let's all pray and ask God to give comfort to the Christians whose church buildings have been burned, and also ask God to change the hearts of the arsonists so that they will be changed and their hearts will burn with a zeal to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He can do miracles.

HE IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH AND THE POWERS OF HELL CANNOT OVERPOWER IT!

## *Time to Read the Bible—Do You Know That:*

It takes 70 hours and 40 minutes to read the Bible at pulpit rate.

It takes 52 hours and 20 minutes to read the Old Testament.

It takes 18 hours and 20 minutes to read the New Testament.

In the Old Testament the Psalms take the longest to read: (4 hours and 28 minutes).

In the New Testament the Gospel of Luke takes 2 hours and 43 minutes.

That is less than 12 minutes a day to read it through in a year.

*Do It This Year*

Copied

## THELMA THWARTUM -- By Alex

A Public Service of AARP  
Criminal Justice Services



## INDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH PROJECT FUNDED

The largest of the Mission Projects authorized by the 1995 ILDA convention at Schaumburg, Ill. was fully funded on June 3, 1996 when \$20,000 was wire-transferred to the MELIM account in Madras, India. This project will permit Ephphatha Lutheran Church to com-

plete its process of purchasing 2.14 acres of land near the watch factory in Hosur. The land will cost about \$18,000 and the remaining amount used to build a wall and get utilities.

The plan is to use the land for a church building, dormitories for men and women, craft shops, a library, and housing for the pastor. The facility will provide a center where the deaf can go to learn jobs, and where deaf and hearing can go to learn more about Christian outreach with deaf persons.

The letter to Treasurer Russel Healey from Dr. Rodney Rynearson, Counselor of Deaf Ministry in St. Louis, thanks ILDA members for their help with the important project and for sharing Jesus with many people.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

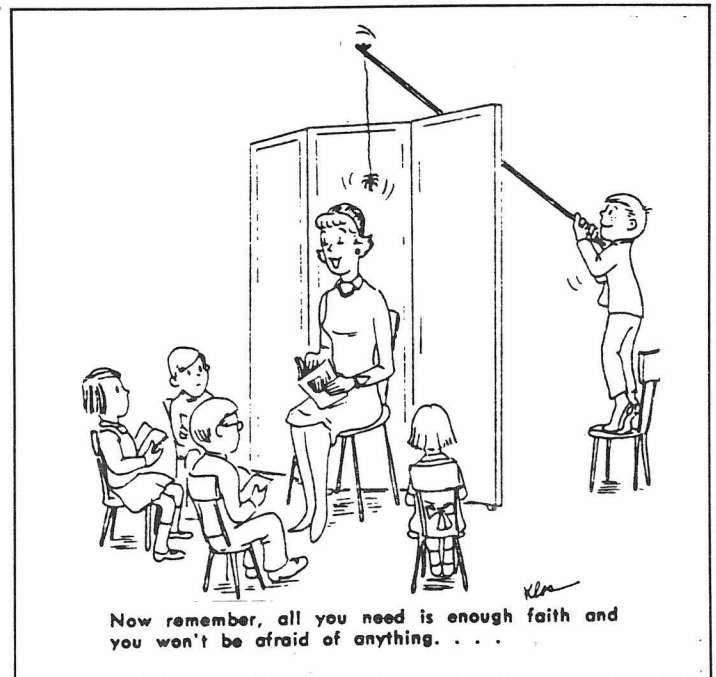
Most of us, when we were born, were given at least two names and more often that not, three. First, there would be our given name, and surname which would identify our family and a middle name as well. It is interesting to note the various names given to our Saviour, Jesus. God's Word, the Holy Bible li at least a dozen, and these are the most c mon. Since we are approaching Advent Christmas, let us take a look at them.

First, we have "JESUS" which means Saviour. Next, we have "MESSIAH" which interpreted, means the Promised One. Then there is "IMMANUEL" or God with us and "THE WORD" WHICH refers to the Promised One who will come.

We have "LORD", "CHRIST", "SON OF GOD", "SON OF MAN", "WONDERFUL", "COUNSELOR", "MIGHTY GOD", "EVERLASTING FATHER" and "PRINCE OF PEACE."

To us, who are the redeemed and the baptized in His Name, the name of Jesus is so wonderful and great that every knee shall bow.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. Jude 24-25



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