

**FROM THE  
PASTOR'S DESK**

### ***What is Islam?***

Our nation's current involvement in the Middle East has aroused curiosity about the predominant religion of the area: Islam.

### ***Founded by Mohammed***

Islam was founded by an Arab named Mohammed about six hundred years after Christ in the city of Mecca, located in present-day Saudi Arabia. Mohammed was born in about 570 A.D. to a poor family from a prominent tribe of Mecca. An orphan at an early age, Mohammed was raised by an uncle. Mecca was a prosperous trading city, and Mohammed became a successful trader. His first wife was a wealthy widow, and she bore him several children.

Mecca was also a religious center for the nomadic Arab tribes. They believed in hundreds of different gods and each god had its own shrine at Mecca. Most also professed belief in a superior chief-god, Allah, but did not directly worship him. At the age of 40, Mohammed claimed to have received visions of an angel who gave to him divine revelations. The main thrust of these revelations was monotheism—that there is only one god, Allah. Mohammed embarked upon a career as a preacher and prophet of Allah, but at first with little success. Although his wife became his first convert, most members of his own tribe and other citizens of Mecca rejected him. In fact, Mohammed was so strongly opposed in Mecca that in 621 A.D. he and his followers were forced to move to Medina.

From Medina, Mohammed began to conquer the Arabian peninsula. This conquest was accomplished mainly through military campaigns but also by peaceful means, including treaties which were often sealed by Mohammed taking as his wife the daughter of a tribal leader (after the death of his first wife, Mohammed had up to nine wives at one time; modern Moslem men are permitted four wives). In 630 A.D. Mohammed finally gained control over the city which had rejected him, Mecca. He destroyed all the shrines there except those to Allah. When Mohammed died in 632 A.D. he was the spiritual and govern-



**Pastor Vogts took this picture of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built on the site of the ancient Hebrew temple, and revered by Islam as their third holiest shrine. The rock it contains is thought to be the location where Abraham nearly sacrificed Issac (Genesis 22:1-18), which Christians understand as foreshadowing God sacrificing his own Son. Muslim lore says that Mohammed ascended from this same rock into heaven to receive the visions contained in the Koran.**

mental ruler of the entire Arabian peninsula, and he had planted the seeds of a powerful religious and cultural movement. In the following centuries Islam spread rapidly, often through military conquest. Today, Islam has over 1 billion adherents. Contrary to the popular belief that all Arabs are Moslem and all Moslems are Arabs, only 20% of Moslems worldwide are Arab and about 10% of Arabs are Christians, including many Lutherans.

### ***The Koran***

Islam teaches that there is one supernatural "book" of divine revelation, and that all cultures have prophets which give to mankind small parts of it. Thus Islam teaches that there have been thousands of true prophets in the past, including Moses, Abraham, David and Jesus, and that their preachings and writings are all a part of the divine revelation. But Mohammed is believed to be the supreme and final prophet, and the revelations of Mohammed are considered superior to all past revelations.

These revelations were supposedly given to Mohammed by an angel at various times over a period of twenty years. While in a trance-like state Mohammed would supposedly hear words spoken into his ear, a sound resembling the ringing of a loud bell. These revelations are collected in the Koran, the scriptures of Islam. The Koran is about the same length as the New Testament. The word "Koran" means "to recite." This may refer either to the angel supposedly reciting divine revelations in Mohammed's ear, or to the custom of reciting the Koran in worship. The Koran is considered to be the very words of God and the is highest authority for Islam.

### ***Five Pillars of Islam***

The word "Islam" means "submission" or "acceptance." It denotes submission to and acceptance of the Creed of Islam: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." The word "Moslem" [or "Muslim"] literally means "to make submission" or "to do Islam." A Moslem is anyone who practices the five requirements of Islam, called "the Five Pillars:"  
1) Creed—Recite the Creed at least once in his lifetime correctly and with conviction. 2) Prayers—Say prayers, consisting of set formulas with pre-

scribed bowings and prostration in the direction of Mecca, five times daily, upon rising, at noon, midafternoon, after sunset, and before retiring. 3) Almsgiving—Required almsgiving of 2.5% of all possessions. 4) Fasting—Muslims are required to abstain from food and drink and sexual intercourse from sunrise to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan, which this year begins March 17. 5) Pilgrimage to Mecca—It is obligatory for every Moslem during his lifetime to make a pilgrimage to Mecca if he can possibly do so.

## Islam and Christianity

Islam has some superficial similarities to Christianity: Moslems believe in one god who created the world in six days; they consider Christ a great prophet, who was virgin-born and did miracles; they believe in a heaven and hell, Satan, angels, Judgement Day and everlasting life; they accept some of the Old Testament prophets and writings, such as Moses and the Pentateuch and David and the Psalms.

But despite these superficial similarities, Islam strongly rejects the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith: 1) Trinity—No teaching of Christianity has come under more intense attack from Islam than the doctrine of the Trinity. The Koran declares that Christians are idolaters who worship three gods. 2) Deity of Jesus Christ—Islam considers Jesus Christ only a great prophet, not God in human flesh. The Koran states, “Jesus was no more

than a mortal whom Allah favored and made an example.” This conflicts with many Bible passages which proclaim Jesus to be divine, such as Colossians 2:9: “In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. 3) Crucifixion of Christ—Moslems consider the Koran to be a correction of errors in previous revelations, such as the Gospels. The Koran states, “The Jews have said, Verily we have slain Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of Allah; yet they slew him not, neither crucified him, but he was represented by one in his likeness. . . . They did not really kill him; but Allah took him up into himself.” Moslems believe that Allah changed Jesus’ features so that those who wanted to crucify him would not recognize him. Then Allah raised him to heaven before he could be seized. Judas, instead, was crucified, so cleverly disguised by Allah as Jesus that even Mary and the disciples were deceived. 4) Atonement and Forgiveness Because Islam so strongly denies the crucifixion of Christ, it also denies that Christ gave his life and shed his blood as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Instead, Moslems believe that they will earn their salvation through the performance of good works, especially the “Five Pillars.” Those whose works are acceptable to Allah will enter into Paradise. Those whose works are unacceptable will be damned to serve as fuel for the fires of hell. The Moslem has no assurance at all that he has earned eternal life; he can only hope that he might have done enough.

In contrast, Christianity teaches that the blood of Jesus pays for our sins and that we are fully forgiven for his sake (John 1:29; 1 John 1:7). Our works could never earn our way into heaven, but all who trust in Jesus for salvation receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life as a gift of God. *Our good works are a response to our salvation, not the cause of it* (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 2:8-10).

In summary, Islam is very definitely a false religion, a religious cult that has enjoyed great success. We must not follow to such false prophecies (Galatians 1:6-9; 1 John 4:1), but remain in the words of Jesus (John 8:31-32).

## Witnessing to Moslems

Moslems who convert to Christianity face potential execution, and in some countries this sentence is regularly meted out. Despite this threat, there are many Moslems who do come to faith in Christ as their Savior. Our Lutheran Laymen’s League sponsors a Christian radio station in Beirut, Lebanon that reaches out to most of the Arab world with the Gospel of Christ. In some more tolerant countries, our missionaries are working directly among Moslem people. But perhaps our best witnessing opportunity is right here in the United States—the thousands of Moslem students visiting our country for their college educations and employment. In America we can witness freely to them about Jesus Christ, and they can take the Good News back to their homelands.

We must support mission work among the Moslems and remember these misguided souls in our prayers, that they would come to know the truth of the Gospel.

Pastor Kevin Vogts



## 9/11 Community Prayer Service

Is it engraved in your memory where you were and what you were doing when you first heard about the attacks on 9/11?

Holy Cross is sponsoring a “9/11 Community Prayer Service” on Thursday, September 11 in front of the flagpoles at the corner of Dakota Dunes Boulevard and Prairie Boulevard.

Led by Pastor Kevin Vogts, this brief, simple prayer service for our nation and in remembrance of 9/11 will be held from 7:46am to 8:03am, which is

## Crossnotes

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the interval between the times when the first and second planes struck the World Trade Center towers.

An invitation is being sent to all Dakota Dunes residents, and we would also like as many Holy Cross members present as possible.

*"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 32:12).*

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## **Family Fun Carnival September 14**

Our first *Family Fun Carnival* for the community will be Sunday, September 14, from 4:00pm-7:00pm, rain or shine under a "big top" tent on the west lawn of the church. Activities will include a children's inflatable "bouncer" (thanks to Paul Kaardal for arranging this), carnival games, crafts and food, all free for the community. There will also be a special appearance by "Sonny the Clown."

This is the same day as the Diabetes Walk, so there will be many visitors to Dakota Dunes that day. An invitation will be sent to all Dakota Dunes residents and a banner in the median of Dakota Dunes Boulevard will also invite people. Children will be attracted by the "bouncer," which we plan to put out near the church sign.

We will need all the members possible to help set up and work at the various activities. If you can help or have ideas or suggestions for this event please contact evangelism board chair Janet Martin (232-9657).

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## **Preschool Chapel Schedule**

Pastor Vogts leads chapel for our Preschool students on Wednesdays at 9:00am and 1:00pm and Thursdays at 9:00am, and for Mom's Day Out on alternating Mondays and Wednesdays at 9:00am. We usually read a Bible story book, or have an object lesson, sing a song and close with prayer. Parents, grandparents, and anyone interested are always welcome.



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## **EXCITING NEWS**

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### **Limited Preschool Openings**

At one point just before school began our Preschool had full enrollment with every slot filled! However, some last minute withdrawals, due to families moving, parent's schedule changes, etc., has left a few openings in some classes. Even with these limited openings we have been blessed with a record enrollment in both Preschool and After School Care, with 48 for Preschool and over 15 for After School Care.

We would like to fill all open slots as soon as possible, so please spread the word to friends, neighbors, co-workers and family about our high-quality Christian Preschool and After School Care. Brochures about the Preschool and After School Care programs are available on the table in the entryway and in the tract rack. For more information, contact Board of Education members Janet Martin at 232-9657 or Terese Vogts at 232-4013.

Our Preschool classes for this year include:

Three Year Olds—Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:30am to 11:00am, taught by "Miss Sharon" Godwin.

Three and Four Year Olds—Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 8:30am to 11:00am, taught by "Miss Julie" Krull.

Four and Five Year Olds—Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 12:15pm to 3:00pm, also taught by "Miss Julie."

Our Mom's Day Out program for two year olds and three year olds not yet toilet trained is on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 8:30am to 11:00am, led by "Miss Diane" Bald.

After School Care—the only such program conveniently located in Dakota Dunes—is also led by "Miss Diane." Children thru 6th grade enjoy a variety of supervised activities from 3:00pm-6:00pm. Bus service is provided directly to Holy Cross from both Dakota Valley and Sacred Heart elementary schools.

Pray for the Lord's blessing upon this effort of our congregation as we *"tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD"* (Psalm 78:4).



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## **Give Us A Call**

### **Phone System and Voice Mail Upgrade**

An additional phone extension has been installed in the south classroom, since it is important for safety reasons that each classroom have direct access to a telephone. Wiring was also installed to move the fax machine into the office. Faxes can be sent to 235-1688, which is also the direct number for the Preschool and After School Care. The phone system detects whether it is a fax or voice call and routes it accordingly. Also newly wired to the office is a direct connection to this number (235-1688) as a backup in case of a power failure, since our telephone system will not work in that event.

A new setup of our existing voicemail system now instructs those who call either numbers, for the Church (232-9117) or Preschool (235-1688), how to leave a message in one of four mailboxes, for either Pastor Vogts (#1), the Preschool (#2), the After School Care (#3), or a general mailbox (#4).

Calls can now also be easily transferred to this voicemail system, if callers should want to leave a voice message, and instructions will be posted above each phone (simply press transfer button, voicemail button, and hang up).

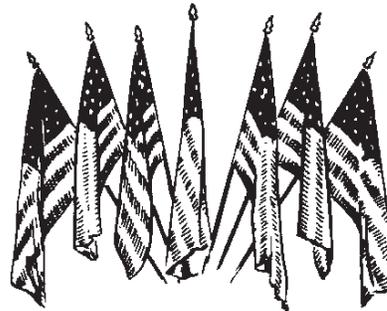
It is still important for parents and others calling the Preschool or After School Care to use their direct line (235-1688), since the Church number (232-9117) does not ring in the classrooms, and the staff normally will not answer this line, although a voicemail message can be left for any mailbox at either number.



## ***Luther Learns to Speak in African Tongues***

Driving down the main street of Lilongwe, the capitol of the African nation of Malawi, one sees the construction of many mosques on each street, an attempt by the Muslim dominated government to claim this as firmly Muslim territory. But, Rev. J.P. Bvumbwe, Bishop of the fast-growing Malawi Lutheran Church, asks pointedly, "What do you think is more significant, seeing a new mosque built that remains empty, or seeing 40 Lutherans gathering under a tree for worship during a heavy rain?"

Some of the fastest-growing Lutheran bodies in the world are on the continent of Africa. However, even the basic writings of the Lutheran Church, such as Luther's Small Catechism and the other Lutheran Confessions contained in the Book of Concord, have not been accessible even to most African Lutheran pastors because it was not translated into their native languages. The Lutheran Heritage Foundation, a Registered Service Organization of the LCMS, is finally helping make those old Germans speak in African tongues!



## **9/11 Community Prayer Service**

Thursday, September 11

From 7:46am to 8:03am

(Times the First and Second Planes Struck the Towers)

At the Flagpoles at the Corner of  
Dakota Dunes Boulevard and Prairie Boulevard  
A Brief, Simple Prayer Service for Our Nation  
in Remembrance of 9/11

Led by Pastor Kevin Vogts  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Dakota Dunes

**"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."**

In East Africa, the main language is Kiswahili, which was the language of the Arabic slave trade. Since slavery covered a huge area of East Africa, Kiswahili is spoken by more than 80 million people. So, the language of the slave trade has become a way to carry God's Word to many people, and this shameful past

now has the positive function as the medium for translating the Book of Concord and other basic Lutheran literature.

Other languages include Chewa, used by at least 19 million people in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, and Tumbuka, spoken by about two million people in Malawi. The Small Catechism is currently being translated into at least three Zambian languages. The Augsburg Confession was recently published in Sinhala for the people of Sri Lanka, and "The Bible—God's Handbook for Living" was published in Amharic for the people of Ethiopia.

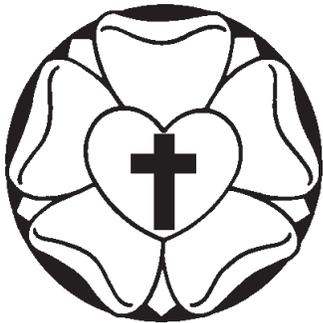
In Kenya, the Small Catechism was recently published in the Sukuma language, which is spoken by eight million people. Bishop Nehemiah Bomani of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya recently invited LHF to hold training classes for all ELCK pastors, to introduce them—most for the first time—to such basic Lutheran writings as the Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession.

The grand celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan—ten years of astound-

**Rev. Japhet Dachi of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan performs baptisms in Maridi. Weekly services in remote congregations of this fast-growing church are led by deacons, but baptisms are performed only when a "circuit rider" pastor visits. This was the first such visitation to this area in several years.**

Laying the foundation for the new Lutheran Church in Saura, Sudan, which is being dedicated this month.

ing growth under persecution in this Muslim country—will culminate on December 3 with an anniversary service in the capital Khartoum, during which three new pastors will be ordained by Rev. Andrew Mbugo Elisa, President of the ELCS.



## ***New Luther Movie in Theaters this Fall***

*Last month we announced the release in theaters across the country on September 26 of the new feature film "Luther." This month we have a review of this exciting film, by Rev. Paul McCain, interim president of Concordia Publishing House.*

The movie is stunning, dramatic, powerful and beautiful. For a Lutheran, the movie is intensely emotional. The acting is excellent, and the costumes, location work, and cinematography are stunning. The movie was filmed on many locations throughout Europe and the realism, authenticity and historical accuracy are impressive.

Does the Gospel come through in this movie? Absolutely, yes. A major Hollywood distributor said that he loved

# **Family Fun Carnival**



Sunday, September 14

4:00pm-7:00pm

Rain or Shine Under the "Big Top"  
on the Grounds of Holy Cross Lutheran Church

*Free Children's Inflatable "Bouncer"*

*Free Carnival Games and Crafts*

*Free Food and Prizes*

Special Appearance by "Sonny the Clown"

***All Invited — Everyone Welcome!***

the movie and wanted to distribute it, but he had one condition he had. He asked for all the "Christ stuff" to be taken out. It wasn't. Thank goodness! The movie shows Luther's progress in realizing how, in Christ, God is a loving heavenly father, not the harsh judge who is appeased only through works of piety on the part of the faithful.

However, this is a primarily a religious move or a documentary. The goals of this movie were to provide a motion picture that would attract interest and present a powerful moment in history, a moment of high drama, with action and emotion to bring audiences in, and then, once there, to give them a chance to meet Martin Luther, and have a sense of what he went through.

Various focus groups of all ages have indicated they were thoroughly captivated by the movie and consider it dramatic, moving and exciting. One young lady of 22 said that she can't wait to see it again and will gladly pay to do so this time.

This reviewer left the movie theater inspired, uplifted and profoundly moved by the power of this movie. I have spent most of my professional life studying Luther and reading Luther and this movie did not leave me disappointed. For those who know little about him, I am sure they will be fascinated as well. I am convinced that this movie really will open doors for people interested in Lutheranism, wanting to learn more about Martin Luther, his life and his work. What a great opportunity for Lutheran congregations! It will provide a valuable tool for years to come to help portray the essential truths of the Lutheran Reformation.

If the very positive reactions of the focus groups are an indicator, we are about to launch a movie with a Christian message that succeeds with mass market audiences—a rarity in today's entertainment world.

A "trailer" that gives a taste of the movie's drama and high production values, and a listing of theaters nationwide where it can be seen, is on-line at [www.lutherthemovie.com](http://www.lutherthemovie.com).



## **Missionaries of the Month**

Beginning this month we will remember in prayer in our worship specific missionaries sponsored around the world by our congregation, through our Synod and related organizations. You are encouraged to remember them also in your personal and family prayers.

September 7  
*Christy Dzluk*  
*Hungary*

Christy teaches English as a Second Language classes in Győr. Pray that as she works with Hungarians eager to learn English, she may also have opportunity to touch their hearts with the words of salvation through Jesus Christ.

September 14  
*Dale and Sandra Saville*  
*Venezuela*

The Savilles work with agricultural projects to assist the Venezuelan people to become more financially independent. Pray that these practical efforts will not only aid them physically, but serve as a testimony to the love of Jesus.

September 21  
*Rachel Murray*  
*Taiwan*

Rachel teaches at Concordia English Language Academy, which was started four years ago. Two remote school sites have also been started in Beikang and Chia Yi, with a total enrollment of more than 400 students being nurtured in a Christian environment. Pray that the kindergarten and elementary school students she teaches and their parents may be receptive to the Good News of Jesus.

September 28  
*Rev. Charles and Jeanette Groth*  
*Ghana*

It is also the start of a new school year in Ghana. Pray for Jeanette as she prepares materials for a new children's curriculum, and for Charles and the new seminary students as he leads them through their studies to prepare for the ministry.



## **New Year of Sunday School and Bible Class**

Our new year of Sunday School classes will begin Sunday, September 7, from 10:30am-11:15am. There are no charges or fees and all children are welcome from age 4 through 6th grade. This is also a great opportunity for you to invite friends and neighbors.

For more information about Sunday School, contact board of education members Janet Martin (232-9657) or Terese Vogts (232-4013) or Pastor Vogts.

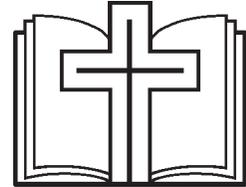
*"What we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us, we will not hide it from our children. We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. Then they would put their trust in God" (Psalm 78:3-4, 7).*

## **Movie Night Success**

Thirty-two people, including 26 visitors from the community, enjoy Disney's *101 Dalmatians 2* at this summer's last Free Family Movie Night on August 17. The first film in June had 26 in attendance, with 16 in July. This is a good response for our first year. We plan to continue this program next summer and may have movie nights in the fall and

winter, with an emphasis on inviting Preschool families.

Thank you to Doug Martin for loan of the digital projector from St. Luke's Occupational Medicine, and to Dennis Melstad for the loan of the theater-style popcorn popper from the Boy Scouts Council and the sound system from the Dakota Dunes Development Corporation.



The Adult Bible Class meets during this Sunday School hour from 10:30-11:15am. In September we will begin a new study on "Walking with Jesus Through the Pages of Matthew."

*"I will not neglect your word" (Psalm 119:16).*



## **Sermon Themes for September**

September 7  
*"The Living Bread"*  
John 6:51-58

September 14  
*"We Will Serve the Lord"*  
Joshua 24:15

September 21  
*"Neither Add Nor Subtract"*  
Deuteronomy 4:2

September 28  
*"The Healing Miracles of Jesus"*  
Mark 7:31-37