

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

*This month's newsletter is a combined January-February issue because I got a little behind due to being absent in Africa the first two weeks of December. (I wouldn't recommend a pastor leaving the country for two weeks at the beginning of the Christmas season!) A brief report on my trip follows after this "From the Pastor's Desk" article.*

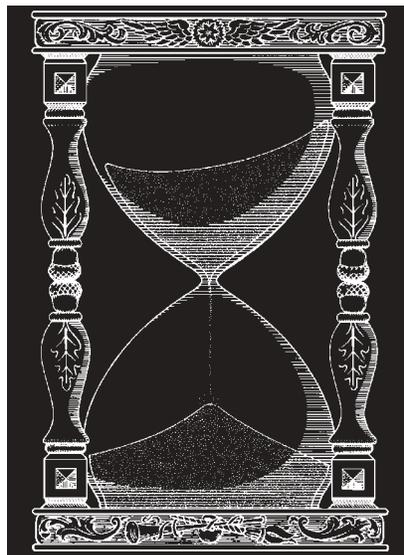
Ash Wednesday on February 9th will mark the two-year anniversary of my installation as your Pastor. As I thought about this milestone, it got me thinking about all the changes in my life over those years: accepting the Call to serve as your Pastor; leaving after five years in the administration of Concordia University; packing and moving from Wisconsin to Dakota Dunes; buying and settling into a new home; getting used to a new community, school, congregation, etc.; the growth and maturing of our children.

It also made me wonder: What will things be like two, five, ten years from now? What do I see during these years for myself, my family, and especially for our congregation?

Of course, James 4:13-15 says, "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" So, our vision for the future must always be in the spirit of, "If it is the Lord's will."

*Lord willing, I see our worship enhanced by an excellent new organ, lovely stained-glass windows, and beautiful new altar, pulpit, lectern and Baptismal font. This prediction is easy, since the new organ and furnishings have already been installed and the stained-glass windows are nearing completion!*

*Lord willing, I see our worship attendance increasing significantly, perhaps more than doubling our current average of about 40.*



**I trust in you, O LORD;  
I say, "You are my God.  
My times are in Your hands."**

Psalm 31:14-15

*Lord willing, I see increased participation in Sunday School, Bible Class, and additional opportunities to be in the Word.*

*Lord willing, I see many new activities and ministries begun by our congregation.*

*Lord willing, I see our congregation looked upon favorably as an important part of the Dakota Dunes community.*

*Lord willing, I see our Preschool and After School Care continuing to*

effectively serve the community and share Christ with hundreds of children.

*Lord willing, I see us reaching not just Lutherans moving into our community, but also bringing the unchurched into our fellowship.*

*Lord willing, I see our congregation not only meeting but exceeding the financial challenge of decreasing subsidy from the South Dakota District, which will be phased out by 2010.*

*Lord willing, I see our congregation continuing to generously support mission work—just as our own mission congregation has been supported—through offerings to District and Synod.*

*Lord willing, I see our congregation completing a building project which will enhance our outreach efforts. Dr. Doug Martin, congregational president, is appointing a long-range planning and building committee to begin considering our needs and options.*

*Lord willing, I see our congregation working together in the unity of the Spirit, and having a reputation for peace, harmony, and love.*

*Lord willing, I see our congregation and its members remaining faithful in doctrine and practice to the teachings of God's Word.*

Our congregation has had some setbacks during its brief history, some of which you may not be aware of: difficulties securing a building site; the founding Pastor accepting another Call; and, most of all, an extended pastoral vacancy of nearly three years prior to my arrival. Also, since the time the congregation was founded there have been unforeseen changes in the community and its primary employers, which resulted in slower than anticipated growth and the loss of some key members of Holy Cross who were transferred or took positions elsewhere. All of this led for a time to a loss of momentum for our congregation.

However, God has graciously brought our congregation through all these challenges. In the past two years we have been blessed with dozens of new members. Worship attendance has more than doubled. Our Preschool is serving more children than ever and is financially stable. Offerings have increased significantly. We have had very successful new events and activities.

The Dakota Dunes community is growing faster than ever. And, Lord willing, I see our congregation continuing to grow too.

*Pastor Kevin Vogts*



*by Pastor Kevin Vogts*

My two-week mission trip to Kenya in December was deeply inspiring and I plan to give a complete presentation at some later date. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya was founded in 1948 by mission groups from several Scandinavian countries, Finland, Norway and Denmark. The ELCK enjoyed good growth, but about five years ago these mission groups began withdrawing their missionaries and financial support, due to declining contributions to their mission organizations.

## Crossnotes

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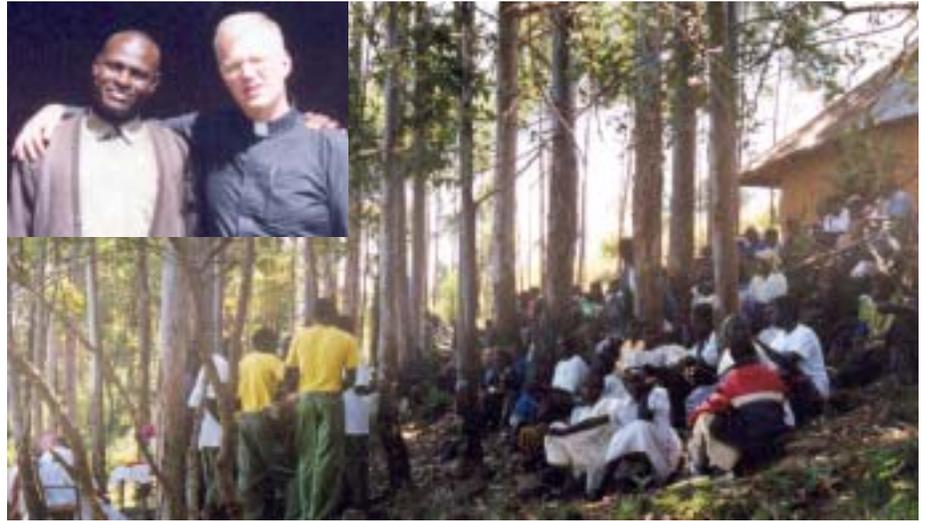
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*Volume 3*

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Pastor Vogts preached on December 5th to a congregation of over 200 gathered on a mountaintop in western Kenya. The inset photo shows him with Abner, a who served the congregation as a seminary student and has now been called as their pastor. Abner and Pastor Vogts are seated in the lower left corner of the main photo, watching one of five choirs which performed that day. At the top of the hillside is the present church building, which they have outgrown and is now used as a fellowship hall. A much larger new sanctuary is being constructed just behind it.

Unfortunately, the people, pastors and leaders of the ELCK were not prepared for this abrupt transition. For example, for over 40 years they never took an offering in any of their churches; everything was always paid for by the missionaries. At about the same time there was an economic crisis in Kenya that left the already poor people of the ELCK destitute.

As a result, the ELCK found itself in a financial crisis that nearly led to bankruptcy. God works in wondrous ways, and at the very moment that their unpaid taxes actually threatened a government shut-down of their denomination, they happened to come into contact with Rev. Matthew Harrison, Executive Secretary for World Relief for The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. They had little previous contact with the LCMS. Because of the Scandinavian background of the mission groups working with them their American contacts instead had been with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. However, the ELCA had also withdrawn support from the ELCK.

The leadership of the LCMS was therefore unfamiliar with the ELCK, and unaware of the extreme crisis they faced.

Rev. Harrison immediately provided stop-gap funding to pay enough of their back taxes to avert the immediate crisis, and then he visited to develop with them a program of long term solutions. What they don't need is just a new source of subsidy. What they do need is to develop the resources and ability to support themselves.

In addition to the back taxes, a pressing need was to provide some support for the approximately 130 pastors and 70 deaconesses serving their congregations full-time. They should each receive a salary of about \$250 per month, but most have not been paid at all for over three years. Rather than simply give them a handout, last year LCMS World Relief provided 65 pastors with dairy cows, costing about \$300 each. This gives their families milk and perhaps some income from selling the surplus. On our visit we with met with dozens of these pastors to determine if this pilot project had been successful. It was so heartwarming to hear what an enormous difference this gift from our Synod has made for their families. Many a pastor told me with tears streaming down his face that he was so happy and grateful to the LCMS to be able to give his children milk. The pilot project was

such a success that for Christmas the LCMS provided the all remaining pastors and deaconesses with their own cows.



**Rev. Matthew Harrison, Executive Secretary of LCMS World Relief, presents a cow to a grateful pastor. All 200 pastors and deaconesses in the ELCK received a cow from the LCMS, which helps them feed their families and sell some surplus milk.**

Another pilot program involved a model chicken farm operation, producing both eggs and broilers. It too was very successful and will be duplicated at ELCK churches across the country. This will provide work and income for some members of the churches, with the profits being used to pay the pastors' salaries.

What was so inspiring for me is that since the Scandinavian missionaries departed and left them largely on their own, despite their extreme poverty they have not only continued but radically expanded and accelerated evangelistic outreach all across Kenya. They are having extraordinary success in the most difficult circumstances. One example is literally a Lutheran revival among the Masai, a very traditional warrior tribe. Pastor Joseph Momposhi grew up as a Masai warrior and became a Christian, through the preaching of Finnish Lutheran missionaries, at age 27. He attended the ELCK seminary and has had enormous success in reaching his own people. Shortly after becoming a pastor he had a mass baptism of nearly 100 of his fellow Masai, including his own mother. A unique experience was visiting the home of your fellow Lutherans in her traditional Masai hut-made of dung!

**Over 225 people crowded the church for the Children's Christmas Program on December 12. Many people commented how very nice our program is each year. Photos by Paul Kaardal/Two Rivers Times**



On Sunday, all the LCMS pastors in our group preached at different churches. I had the privilege of preaching for over 200 Kenyan Lutherans on top of a mountain. It was an outdoor service because they have long outgrown the church-about the size of ours-which was built by the missionaries, and a new, much larger church is under construction. The weather was perfect, the view spectacular, and the fresh pineapple-cut from tress right there on the church property-delicious! The order of worship and hymns were virtually identical to ours, except translated into the native language Luo. "Pastor Abner" has served them as a seminary student and by now has probably been installed as their permanent pastor. He left a good paying, steady job as a professional truck driver to study at the ELCK seminary for five years, knowing that he might not even receive a salary as a pastor. After a dinner at church I visited with him and his three young children in their home. His wife was away at school to become an elementary teacher, so that her salary can help support their family.

A great strength of the ELCK is their very conservative theology and strong adherence to the Bible as the Word of God. I visited their seminary and "talked shop" at length with most of the students there and dozens of other ELCK pastors. I was astounded at the high quality of the seminary education they are receiving-including full courses of Greek and Hebrew, in the middle of an African jungle!-and the extremely high level of their students' and pastors' theological knowledge. I would easily put the education their seminarians are receiving and the educational level and quality of their pastors on a par with the LCMS. The lay people also showed a very high level of Biblical and doctrinal knowledge.

There is so much more I could-and will-say, but the main theme of my visit is that, although your brothers and sisters in Christ in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya have very little materially, spiritually they are rich, and they are doing a spectacular job-really beyond comprehension-sharing the riches of Lutheran theology with their fellow Kenyans.



# Poinsettia Donations



Thank you to all who donated poinsettias to beautify our church this Christmas, and to all who helped decorate. The church was especially beautiful for our Christmas celebrations!

## Given By

Mike & Daniell Bargstadt (4)  
 Doug & Sue Jansen  
 Ginny Peterson (6)  
 Mabel Schibonski  
 Joey & Marcy Schroeder  
 Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts  
 Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts

## In Memory or Honor Of

Hope, Love, Laughter and Joy  
 Paul Jansen  
 Bob Peterson  
 Elmer Schibonski  
 Kelly Schroeder  
 Leroy Vogts  
 Grandparents



## *Virginia Peterson*

Ginny joins by transfer from Trinity Lutheran Church, Sioux City. She is involved in many charitable and community causes and enjoys travel and spending time with her grandchildren. She is at home in Dakota Dunes at 935 Spyglass Circle.

## *Dan, Mary and Rebecca Lee*

The Lees join by transfer from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fayetteville, Arkansas. Dan is originally from Sergeant Bluff and moved back to this area to become controller for Tyson Foods. Mary is originally from Kansas City and is a teacher in our own Holy Cross Preschool. Rebecca is expecting a little brother in April. They are at home in Dakota Dunes at 498 Bison Trail (605-235-1015)

Welcome to the Holy Cross family of faith! These and other new members will be formally welcomed on our next New Member Sunday, tentatively scheduled for May 15.

If you have an interest in joining Holy Cross please contact Pastor Vogts (232-9117 or 232-4013).

## *Sermon Themes for February*



February 6

*The Inspiration of Scripture*

2 Peter 1:20

February 9 (Ash Wednesday 7:00pm)

*"Christ Knocking at the Door"*

Matthew 7:7

February 13

*"Fighting Temptation"*

Matthew 4:1-11

February 16 (Lent Service 7:00pm)

*"Nativity"*

Luke 2:14

February 20

*"The Woman at the Well"*

John 4:5-26

February 23 (Lent Service 7:00pm)

*"Baptism"*

Titus 3:5

February 27

*"The Blind Beggar"*

John 9:13-17, 34-39



## *New Organ Installed*

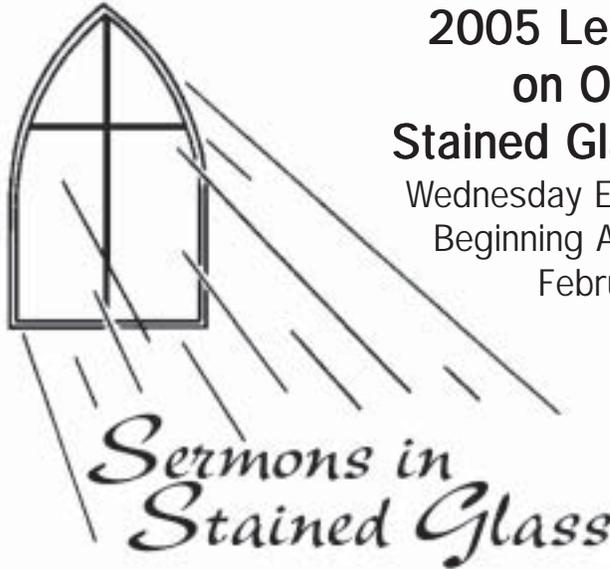
Our new Johannus organ was installed just in time to be used for the first time on Christmas Eve. We also used the carillon function of the organ to play beautiful chimes outside the church that evening. Another nice feature is the ability to record services for playback when our organist is absent.

Many positive comments have been received and it has already enhanced our worship. Our thanks to the couple who donated this fine instrument, which will beautify our services for many years, both in our present facility and our permanent sanctuary when it is built. We are tentatively planning a grand dedication of our new organ, sanctuary furnishings, and stained-glass windows for Pentecost Sunday, May 15.



In Adult Bible Class we are currently studying "The Lessons of the Lord," the weekly Scripture readings in worship, including the history of how this system developed, how they are selected, and an in-depth look at that Sunday's readings.

Join in this Adult Bible Class on Sundays at 10:45am to learn more about "The Lessons of the Lord" and how they can bless you on your weekly walk with God.



## 2005 Lent Services on Our New Stained Glass Windows

Wednesday Evenings 7:00pm  
Beginning Ash Wednesday  
February 9th



Ash Wednesday, February 9  
"Christ Knocking at the Door"



March 9  
"Resurrection and Ascension"



February 16  
"Nativity"



March 16  
"Good Shepherd"



February 23  
"Baptism"



Maundy Thursday, March 24  
"Last Supper"



March 2  
"Gethsemane"



Good Friday, March 25  
"Crucifixion"

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## Concordia Calls Seminary Graduate

Concordia Lutheran Church, Sioux City recently voted to call a seminary graduate to serve as their new pastor. This request goes to the Synod's Board of Assignments, which matches up all the requests with the available candidates.

Lord willing, a suitable new graduate will be available for them and they will receive their new pastor sometime this summer, at which time Pastor Vogts will conclude service to them as vacancy pastor.

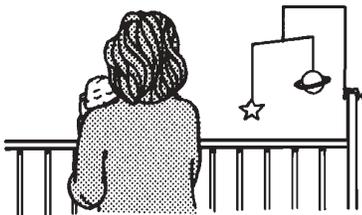
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## Lenten Booklets and Portals of Prayer

Lenten devotional booklets courtesy of Lutheran Hour Ministries are available in the church entryway.

Also, a new issue of the excellent daily devotional booklet *Portals of Prayer* will begin in January and

Take copies of these devotional booklets for yourself—perhaps extra copies to keep them both at home and work—and to share with friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, etc.



## Nursery

February 6  
Janet Martin

February 13  
Daniell Bargstadt

February 20  
Diana Kaardal

February 27  
Vogtses



Our sympathy to Doug and Sue Jansen upon the death in a helicopter accident in Iraq of their daughter Julie's brother-in-law, Cpl. Nathan Schubert.

*"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." (Revelation 14:13)*

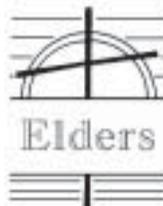
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## 2005 Flower Calendar

The new flower calendar for 2005 is on the bulletin board at the back of the church. Occasions to remember include anniversaries, birthdays, in memory of loved ones, etc. Flowers may be obtained anywhere and you may provide your own vase or use one of the assortment in the church kitchen.



February 6  
Doug & Sue Jansen  
In Memory of Nathan Schubert



February 6  
Mike Bargstadt

February 9 (Ash Wednesday 7:00pm)  
Greg Huibregtse

February 13  
Dennis Melstad

February 16 (Lent Service 7:00pm)  
Dennis Melstad

February 20  
Greg Huibregtse

February 23 (Lent Service 7:00pm)  
Doug Jansen

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February 27  
Joey Schroeder



February 6  
Kendall Martin

February 9 (Ash Wednesday 7:00pm)  
Jacob Vogts

February 13  
Casey Johnson

February 16 (Lent Service 7:00pm)  
Kylie Martin

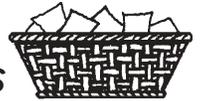
February 20  
Austin Munns

February 23 (Lent Service 7:00pm)  
Brandon Dolan

February 27  
Alex Kaardal

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## Record Contributions and Mission Giving



Holy Cross was blessed in 2004 with a record level of contributions, which allowed us to avoid a projected deficit and instead end the year in the black. Our Preschool and After School Care programs also had a positive year, ending with a substantial surplus.

In addition to regular contributions, there were many special gifts, for our new stained glass windows, organ, etc. And because we have set our giving to missions at 10% of general offerings, the higher level of offerings also meant an increase in congregational giving to missions by 75% over our commitment!

Praise the Lord for this dramatic improvement in our finances. Our thanks to Dennis Melstad and Jason Bietz for doing an excellent job as the church and preschool treasurers. It makes their jobs a lot easier when the funds are readily available—so let's all help make their jobs easier again in 2005!



## Benefit Chili Supper

February 19th

A Benefit Chili Supper will be held at Holy Cross on Saturday, February 19 from 4:00-7:00pm for our member Jane Michels, who is recovering from cancer surgery.

Please plan to attend and sign up on the bulletin board if you can bring a dessert. Also needed are disposable serving bowls, small paper plates, plastic silverware, cups and napkins. If you can donate any of these items please call Jane's daughter Jennifer Wolfe at 204-1116.

## Donate Lilies for Easter



Sign up on the bulletin board to donate lilies to beautify our church at Easter. Note whom or what they are in memory or honor of. As we focus on the promise of the resurrection, Easter is a wonderful occasion to remember loved ones.

Cost is only \$5 per plant. To get this good price we must have our order in by February 25th. Put payment in offering marked "Easter Lilies." You are also *welcome* to bring plants you purchase elsewhere or receive as gifts. Please still sign up, noting you will bring your own plants

## Missionaries of the Month

Each month we remember in prayer in our worship specific missionaries sponsored around the world by our congregation, through our Synod and related organizations. You are encour-

aged to remember them also in your personal and family prayers.

February 6

*Matthew Wasmund  
Taiwan*

February 13

*Ted Krey  
Venezuela*

February 20

*Tim and Chikako Drawabugh  
Japan*

February 27

*Michael and Ann Wade  
Argentina*

## HANDBELL CHOIR

Concordia Lutheran Church, Sioux City has agreed to loan their handbells to Holy Cross, and Jill Ellickson has agreed to begin directing a handbell choir! We will begin with some simple arrangements of familiar tunes. We need about a half-dozen interested choir members. Open to both adults and children who can read music. Rehearsals will be about once a week and will be arranged according to the choir members' schedules.

We would like to have the handbell choir play for worship a few times before breaking for the summer. If you have some interest sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board. For more information contact Pastor Vogts.

## Childrens Bulletins and Activity Bags

We now have children's worship bulletins available each Sunday, for ages 3-6 and 7-12. We also have activity bags with coloring sheets, etc. Our thanks to Daniell Bargstadt for putting these together and Jeri Melstad for duplicating the children's bulletins.



## LCMS Aids Tsunami Victims

LCMS members are giving record-breaking amounts to help bring relief to the millions affected by the December 26th South Asia earthquake and tsunami. LCMS World Relief has received more than \$2 million in tsunami-relief donations, and the inter-Lutheran Lutheran World Relief, which the LCMS also supports, received more than \$6 million.

The Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation matched the first \$100,000 that came to LCMS World Relief for tsunami aid. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans offered \$3 million to Lutheran World Relief—an outright gift of \$1 million and \$2 million in funds to match tsunami-related gifts from Thrivent members.

"We thank all those who are giving so unselfishly in record amounts to bring Christian compassion after the tsunami," said Rev. Matthew Harrison, executive director of LCMS World Relief/ Human Care.

Among those killed by the tsunami were the president of the Lutheran Church in Sri Lanka, Rev. Ranjith Fernando, and his wife Darshini. The train they were riding in was swept away by the wave, killing over 1,000 passengers.

Our congregation is receiving donations for this disaster. Simply place your offering in the plate marked "Tsunami Relief." Donations also may be made through the Synod's Web-based "Mission and Ministry Giving Catalog" by going to <http://catalog.lcms.org>, clicking on "LCMS World Relief" and then on "Help Tsunami Victims in Asia."



# Crossnotes

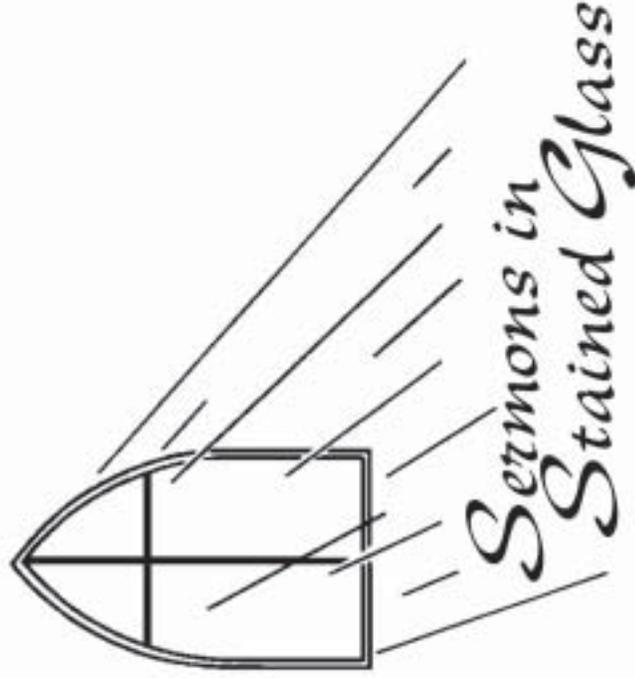
Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church

Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor

149 Bison Trail

Dakota Dunes, SD 57049

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



## 2005 Lent Services on Our New Stained Glass Windows

Wednesday Evenings, 7:00pm

Beginning Ash Wednesday, February 9th

Ash Wednesday, February 9  
"Christ Knocking at the Door"

March 9  
"Resurrection"

February 16  
"Nativity"

March 16  
"Good Shepherd"

February 23  
"Baptism"

Mundy Thursday, March 24  
"Last Supper"

March 2  
"Gethsemane"

Good Friday, March 25  
"Crucifixion"