



These fascinating insights into the religious convictions of Abraham Lincoln, whom we remember in February along with George Washington on Presidents Day, are adapted from the introduction to a new reprint of Lincoln's Devotional: The Writings That Inspired Lincoln's Personal Spiritual Life (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2006). Originally published in 1852 as The Believer's Daily Treasure: Texts of Scripture Arranged for Every Day of the Year, it is not known how or when Lincoln came into possession of this compilation of Scripture passages arranged for devotional purposes.

This book may actually be the "pocket New Testament" which his close friend and political ally Newton Batemen reported Lincoln pulled from his vest in the winter of 1860-61 to prove that he "carefully read the Bible," or the "pocket edition of the New Testament" which John Hay, Lincoln's private secretary and later Secretary of State, said he had seen Lincoln reading. Lincoln's personal copy of this book was rediscovered in 1956 and authenticated by Lincoln scholars. It is one of the very few books in which Lincoln noted his ownership in his own hand, inscribing "A. Lincoln" on the inside cover. The introduction to the new reprint edition,

from which this article is adapted, is by Dr. Allen C. Guelzo, Henry R. Luce Professor of the Civil War Era at Gettysburg College.

One of the most appealing aspects of Abraham Lincoln's character was his openness and affability as reflected in his sheer accessibility to even the



It is the duty of nations as well as of people to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God ... and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord!

Abraham Lincoln
Thanksgiving Proclamation, 1863

commonest of people. Yet, those who knew Lincoln personally knew that his openness had limits, and that around his personal life and thoughts he drew an

impenetrable shield. Illinois Judge David Davis, who presided over the circuit courts where Lincoln practiced law in the 1850s and later managed the campaign that won Lincoln the Republican presidential nomination in 1860, described Lincoln as "the most reticent, secretive man I ever saw, or expect to see."

On no point was Lincoln's mysterious unwillingness to reveal himself more mysterious than on the subject of religion. Although born into a household of strict and devout frontier Baptists, Lincoln never joined the Baptist church—or any other church, for that matter—never was baptized or made any formal profession of religious faith.

At the same time, however, questions about religion and morality preoccupied Lincoln. He might have had "little faith in the popular religion of the times," wrote John B. Alley, who served in Congress during the Civil War, but "he reflected a great deal upon religious subjects." When he was challenged in 1846 by a political rival to admit that he was an "infidel," Lincoln shot back in reply, "That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or of any denomination of Christians in particular."

His closest friend, the Kentuckian Joshua Speed, wrote that "when I first knew Mr. Lincoln he was skeptical as to the great truths of the Christian Religion." But "after he was elected President," Speed was convinced that "he sought to become a believer—and to make the Bible a preceptor to his faith and a guide of his conduct." Leonard Swett, with whom Lincoln practiced law in Illinois, concluded that the heavier Lincoln's presidential responsibilities weighed on him, the more Lincoln tried to understand those responsibilities in religious terms. "As he became involved in matters of

the gravest importance, full of great responsibility ... a feeling of religious reverence, and belief in God...increased upon him."

Other Lincoln associates insisted that Lincoln had undergone a genuine religious rebirth. After all, Lincoln took more public opportunities than any other president in his generation to appeal to God or Christianity as a source of inspiration or direction. His eloquent (and unrehearsed) farewell address to the town of Springfield as he departed for his inauguration in 1861 affirmed that "without the assistance of the Divine Being" who had always guided American affairs, "I cannot succeed."

And in his first inaugural address, Lincoln appealed to "intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him, who has never yet forsaken this favored land' as the best resources for avoiding civil war. During the war, Lincoln sanctioned a broad expansion of the military chaplaincy—which even then was regarded dubiously by political thinkers eager to separate church and state—invited religious organizations to meet with him in the White House or authorized their use of public buildings in Washington, and in 1864 came close to endorsing a proposal to amend the preamble to the Constitution to include an explicit reference to God.

Above all, his second inaugural address in 1865 was almost a theological meditation on the purposes of God in the war and the need to exercise charity "with firmness in the right, as God give us to see the right." He might never have

joined a church, but he often paid tribute to "the effective and almost unanimous support which the Christian communities are so zealously giving to the country, and to liberty," and they returned the favor by swinging their energies behind his administration. One religious newspaper remarked after Lincoln's re-election in 1864, "There probably never was an election in all our history in which the religion element entered so largely, and nearly all on one side."

On a more personal level, Newton Bateman, who had run alongside Lincoln in Lincoln's failed bid to win the Illinois U.S. Senate seat in 1858, reported that Lincoln had confessed to him in 1860 that he believed that "Christ is God," but was compelled for political reasons to conceal that belief. Charles Maltby, a friend of Lincoln since he was a young man, claimed that Lincoln "held in reverence the Christian religion." And Noah Brooks, the journalist whom Lincoln was ready to tap as his next personal secretary in 1865, reported that Lincoln had described to him "what he called 'a process of crystallization'" on religion just after the election of 1860.

Lincoln was torn between the secularism of the Enlightenment and a strong tug toward the Protestantism into which he was born, a seeker who said he "often wished that I was a more devout man than I am."

Since the bids on our building project are due back mid-February, the Building Committee *might* be able to make a report on the results at this meeting. However, there are many unknown factors at this time, and the committee may also need additional time before making a report to the congregation.

There is, however, other very important business for this meeting, including adopting a budget and elections for 2006. All adult members are automatically voting members, so please plan now to attend and help administer the business affairs of your church.



2006 Increase in Worship Attendance

Each year our congregation reports our annual statistics to our denomination, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. These statistics for all LCMS congregation are posted under the directory feature on the LCMS web site, www.lcms.org.

One key figure reported is "average weekly attendance," the average attendance at regular weekly services. (Advent, Lent, Thanksgiving and other special services are not included.) We rejoice that last year our average weekly attendance increased significantly, from 46 in 2005 to 53 in 2006. This continues a steady climb in recent years, more than doubling the average weekly attendance of 26 in 2001, a remarkably steady annual increase of 15% per year for five years.

We give thanks to God for these blessings, and pray for continued growth for our congregation. "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him, and bless His name" (Psalm 100:4).

Crossnotes

Published Monthly by

Holy Cross Evangelical
Lutheran Church

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February, 2007

Volume 5

Number 2

Building
for the
Future

Congregational Meeting February 18

Everyone is invited to a congregational business meeting on Sunday, February 18. It will be held in place of Bible Class during the Sunday School hour, at 10:30am.



Lent Begins with Ash Wednesday February 21

Lent begins with our Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, February 21 at 7:00pm. Lent services will continue at 7:00pm each Wednesday evening during Lent.

For our Lent services this year our sermon series we will be "I Believe," meditating on the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed (see page 4). The brief services will also feature readings from the Passion story of Jesus' suffering and death, and beloved Lenten hymns.

Bring your family to meditate on our Savior's sacrifice for our salvation.



Caden Dial, February 2
Mike Bargstadt, February 20
Mary Rosene, February 23
Jon Dorr, February 25
Carol Smith, February 25
Vaughn Finkral, February 26
Everett Johnson, February 29
Robert & Karen Brock
February 13, 1999
Jon & Gail Dorr
February 25, 1978

We list members' birthdays and anniversaries in the newsletter each month and the bulletin each week. If



Preschool Open House and Registration Night

Tuesday, March 27
6:00pm-7:30pm

See the Facility Meet the Staff

Register to Reserve Your Child a Place for Next Fall

- Providing quality Christian education in Dakota Dunes since 1996
- Preschool classes for Ages 3-5
- Mom's Day Out program for 2 year olds
- Excellent facility
- Christian atmosphere

For More Information Call 235-1688 - Voicemail Box #2

your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify church secretary Nancy Wiese, 232-9117 mailbox #4 or email nancywiese@longlines.com.



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

February 4
Rev. David and Joyce Erber
Nigeria

February 11
Ron and Mary Harrington
Mexico

February 18
Nathan and Melissa Scheele
Kenya

February 25
Phil and Carolyn Hedemann
Indonesia

Adult Bible Study



Why do Lutherans observe days honoring saints? Is it right for Christians

to serve as soldiers? Even as executioners? Will there be a perfect "millennium" on earth before Jesus comes again?

These are some of the topics we will be considering this month in Adult Bible Class as we continue our look at the Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran Church. Join in Sundays at 10:30am!



February 4
A.J. Michels

February 11
Myron Bose

February 18
Tyler Fletcher

February 21 (Ash Wednesday)
Jacob Vogts

February 25
Evan Steemken

February 28 (Lent Service II)
Dylan Sawyer



February 4
Keegan Johnson

February 11
Justin Peterson



2007 Lent Sermon Series on the Apostles' Creed

Wednesday Evenings
7:00pm

Beginning Ash Wednesday
February 21st

February 21 – Ash Wednesday
“I Believe in Jesus Christ”

March 28 – Lent Service VI
“He Will Come to Judge the
Living and the Dead”

February 28 – Lent Service II
“His Only Son, Our Lord”

April 1 – Palm Sunday
“He Suffered Under
Pontius Pilate”

March 7 – Lent Service III
“Who Was Conceived
by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary”

April 5 – Maundy Thursday
“He Ascended into Heaven
and Sits at the Right Hand
of God, the Father Almighty”

March 14 – Lent Service IV
“He Descended into Hell”

March 21 – Lent Service V
“The Third Day He Rose Again
from the Dead”

April 6 – Good Friday
“He Was Crucified,
Died and Was Buried”

February 18
Kylie Martin

February 21 (Ash Wednesday)
Trevor Vilhauer

February 25
Quinton Bose

February 28 (Lent Service II)
Zachary Selby



February 4
Ron Yockey

February 11
Joey Schroeder

February 18
Greg Huibregtse

February 21 (Ash Wednesday)
Greg Huibregtse

February 25
Mike Bargstadt

February 28 (Lent Service II)
Mike Bargstadt



In the back of the church is a sign up sheet to bring snacks for after worship. You are welcome to bring whatever snacks you wish.

Those bringing snacks are also asked to please prepare the coffee. Instructions are posted near the coffee

maker. Coffee, cups, napkins, plates, etc. are all provided and in the kitchen. Thank you to those providing snacks!

February 4
Finkral

February 11
Vogts

February 18
Gustman

February 25
Martin



Preschool & After School Care Open House March 27

Mark your calendar now for the Holy Cross Preschool and After School Care Open House, to register for the 2007-2008 school year, on Tuesday, March 27 from 6:00pm-7:30pm. Classes include:

Mom's Day Out (2-3 Year Olds)

Tuesdays and Thursdays
8:30am-11:00am
\$90 per month
\$65 Registration Fee

Preschool (3-4 Years Olds)

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
8:20am-11:15am
\$115 per month
\$65 registration Fee

Pre-Kindergarten (4-5 Year Olds)

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
8:20am-11:15am
\$115 per month
\$65 registration Fee

After School Care (Kindergarten-6th Grade)

Bussing available from Dakota Valley and Sacred Heart; follows Dakota Valley school calendar; \$8 per day, \$10 early out days, \$45 registration fee.

Classes always fill up fast, so register early! For more information, or if you are unable to attend the open house, please leave a message at 235-1688 in the Preschool (#2) or After School Care (#3) voicemail box.



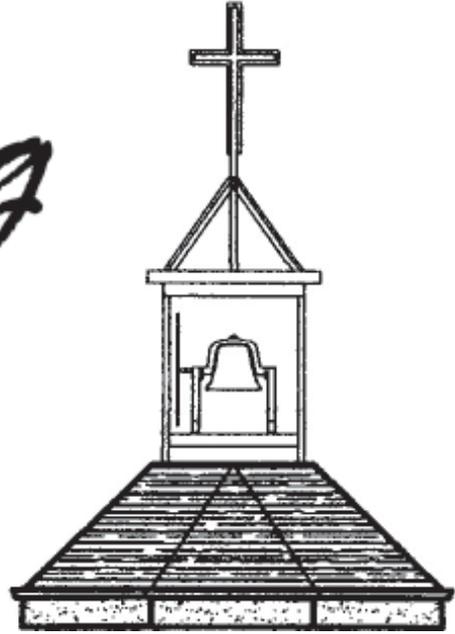
The new flower calendar for 2007 is on the bulletin board at the back of the church. Occasions to remember include anniversaries, birthdays, in memory of loved ones, etc. Flowers may be obtained anywhere and you may provide your own vase or use one of the assortment in the church kitchen.

Lutheran Confessions Backorder Arrives

Last year about two dozen members signed up to purchase our Synod's new edition of the Book of Concord, containing the confessional statements of the Lutheran Church. They were backordered and have just arrived.

If you ordered a copy you may pick it up in the church office. Payment of \$20 per volume may be placed in the offering plate, marked "Book of Concord." If you did not order a copy before but would like to do so now, just let Pastor Vogts know. Thanks for your patience!

Building for the Future



Return Service Requested

Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor
149 Bison Trail
Dakota Dunes, SD 57049

Crossnotes
Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church