



The December 24, 2007 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* featured a fascinating cover story on, "A Return to Ritual: Why Many Modern Worshipers Are Embracing Tradition":

*"Something curious is happening in the wide world of faith, something that defies easy explanation . . . Put simply, the development is a return to tradition and orthodoxy, to past practices, observances, and customary ways of worshipping . . . ancient liturgical practices, including creedal declarations, public confession, and Communion. . ."*

*"Daniel Wallace, a professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, which trains pastors for interdenominational or nondenominational churches, says there is a growing appetite for something more than 'worship that is a glorified Bible class . . .'"*

*"But how do tradition and orthodox practices enable attempts to build a stronger spiritual life? Talk to Carl Anderson, the senior pastor of Trinity Fellowship Church, Richardson, Texas, and you get an idea. 'Seven or eight years ago, there was a sense of disconnectedness and loneliness in our church life,' he says. The entrepreneurial model adopted by so many evangelical*

*churches, with its emphasis on seeker-friendly nontraditional services and programs, had been successful in helping Trinity build its congregation, Anderson explains. But it was less successful in holding on to church members and deepening their faith or their ties with fellow congregants. Searching for more rootedness, Anderson sought to reconnect with the historical church. . . to emphasize the power of liturgy to direct worship toward God and 'not be all about me,' he says. Anderson also stressed how liturgy 'is about us—and not just this church but the connection with other Christians.' Adopting the weekly Eucharist, saying the Nicene Creed every two or three weeks, following the church calendar, Trinity reshaped its worship practices . . ."*

***Something curious is happening in the wide world of faith, a return to tradition and orthodoxy, to past practices, observances, and customary ways of worshipping.***

***U.S. News & World Report  
December 24, 2007***

As this article notes, one of the blessings of traditional worship is the strong connection with other Christians, across denominations, language, culture and even time. A student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis reported such an experience on a mission trip to Haiti:

*"All of us were witnesses of the joyful, expressive, uplifting worship of the Haitian Lutherans. The liturgy was from The Lutheran Hymnal but was written in French. Though we felt an immense separation between the two cultures, the liturgy and familiar hymns, sung with intense reverence and feeling, quickly bridged the language barrier."*

What a joy it is to be visiting somewhere, perhaps far distant, and yet worship with your fellow Lutherans using the same liturgy and hymns to which you are accustomed in your home church. You have probably had similar experiences in Missouri Synod congregations all across the United States. I myself have even experienced this at Lutheran churches in Jerusalem and Kenya!

Rev. Victor Samuel was a member of my former congregation in Lawrence, Kansas, a native of India who was a life-long Lutheran and a retired United States foreign civil service worker. After immigrating to Lawrence from India he studied at the seminary and became a Missouri Synod pastor. He visited several churches in Lawrence before locating ours. I'll never forget his comment: "I knew I'd finally found the right church when the service started, because it's just like back in India, except in English!"

Dr. A.L. Barry, former LCMS Synodical President, commented in his booklet *The Unchanging Feast: The Nature and Basis of Lutheran Worship*:

*"We do not want in our church a watered-down Lutheranism or a poor imitation of another denomination's style of worship. . . Our Synod has considered uniformity in our worship practices to be a great strength, not a weakness. I believe we need to seriously reconsider attitudes which would tend to move toward everyone doing 'their own thing' when it comes to worship and liturgy. It would be helpful if we could encourage and promote uniformity in ceremonies, not as if this is necessary for salvation or commanded by God, but for the good this would do our common mission work, being able to present a united front across our country and a consistent Lutheran identity from city to city and from state to state."*

The rationale given for disposing of traditional Lutheran worship in favor of

so-called “contemporary” worship is that this is supposedly necessary in order to reach out to the unchurched and attract them to our services. But, the fact is, our own congregation has an unusually large percentage of members from non-Lutheran backgrounds, many of whom have specifically mentioned that they felt “at home” and “comfortable” with our way of worship.

Rev. Peter E. Bastien, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, put it this way:

*“Suggesting that we push aside the liturgy for new forms of worship based on models derived from the entertainment industry, is shifting the paradigm from a eucharistic [worship as thanking and glorifying God] to an individualistic, self-indulgent, acquisitive model so pervasive in modern American life, to which the church should be the antidote. . . I have dedicated my life to the service and promotion of the Lutheran tradition. I do not believe it to be an irrelevant relic of an ethnic past, but a powerful alternative to the trivialized condition of modern, secularized humanity.”*

Dr. Barry concludes with a beautiful, moving vision:

*“On any given Sunday there are more than one million men, women, and children gathered together in congregations of the Missouri Synod to worship and praise their good and gracious God. As I think about this fact, I can almost see in my mind’s eye this huge, vast multitude of people. . . As I glance out over this Sunday morning*

*congregation, a congregation of more than one million people, I see a whole variety of people. I look over here and see a young family with their two small children, people from the Baby Boom generation, assembled together as a family in the Lord’s house—a neat young family in the Lord. My eyes move on and I see, sitting side by side a married couple, life-long members of our Synod, rooted strongly in the Word and sound doctrine and in our confessional heritage of liturgical worship. I look a little farther out over this congregation and I see here a single mother with her children. Over there I see a widow, and over there a person who has just gone through a painful divorce and is now all alone in church. I see a person who is sick, another who is troubled by a serious family problem, another who is unemployed, yet another who is poor and struggling, and on and on it goes. I see a whole variety of people and happily I see a growing number of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and a wide variety of cultures—truly a picture of what heaven will be like. And as I look out over this congregation I feel a great sensitivity for the worship needs of all of these many brothers and sisters in Christ in this, our Missouri Synod confessional family.*

*“But now my eyes begin to focus on something else. I see a Bible in the pulpit and in the pew racks I see copies of Lutheran Worship or The Lutheran Hymnal. I see an organ over there and a choir over here. I see on the altar the elements for the Lord’s Supper and I see the Baptismal font. I hear the pastor, in the stead and by the command of Jesus Christ, pronouncing the absolution of sins. And as my eyes move from one spot to still another in this kaleidoscopic view of Lutheran—yes, Lutheran—worship among us, I pause, look heavenward and say, ‘O God, do hold before us with great clarity and purity that unchanging feast that is ours in a fast-changing world. Do not allow anything from within or from without to dilute or destroy that great Christocentric heritage of worship with which you have blessed this, our beloved Synod. Amen.’”*



## 2007 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](http://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 10%, from 53 in 2006 to 59 in 2007. This continues a steady rise in recent years. A good indicator is the Sunday after Christmas, which often has lower attendance. In 2002 attendance on this Sunday was 5; by 2007 it had jumped to 53.

If the Children’s Christmas Program is included, average attendance at all special services such as Lent, Advent and Thanksgiving was 58, nearly matching our Sunday attendance. Excluding the Children’s Christmas Program (150), average attendance at these services was still a very good 51.

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.” So, we give all thanks and praise to God for these blessings, and pray that He grant continued growth to 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

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Volume 6

Number 1

Pastor Kevin Vogts



**As of December 31, 2007**

Total Offerings Budgeted  
 Year-to-Date ..... \$131,700  
 Total Offerings Received  
 Year-to-Date ..... \$136,817  
 Total Budget Surplus  
 Year-to-Date ..... \$5,117

Holy Cross was again blessed in 2007 with a record level of contributions, which allowed us not only to meet but to exceed our budget. Our Preschool and After School Care programs also had a positive year.

In addition to regular contributions, there were many special gifts, including donations for the new *Lutheran Service Book* and extra gifts toward the building project.

Because we have set our giving to missions at 10% of general offerings, the higher level of offerings also meant a substantial increase in congregational giving to missions. In fact, we praise the Lord that our congregation has the highest per-communicant member giving to missions in the LCMS South Dakota District.

As a District-sponsored mission congregation, Holy Cross has been a beneficiary over the years of generous mission support from the District. However, this subsidy is declining each year, and will soon be concluded.

We give thanks to God for this continued healthy trend in our finances. Our thanks also to Dennis and Jeri Melstad for doing such excellent jobs respectively 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 2008!

*"Give to the LORD the glory due His name. Bring an offering, and come into His courts." (Psalm 96:8)*



# 2007 Poinsettia Donations

Thank you to all who donated a record 23 poinsettias to beautify our church this Christmas, and to all who helped decorate. The first service in our current sanctuary was Christmas Eve, 1997. So, this year marked a decade of Christmas celebrations—and the final Christmas—in this facility. The church was especially beautiful for the last Christmas in our "old" sanctuary!

<u>Given By</u>	<u>In Memory or Honor Of</u>
Ryan, Angel, Nicole & Caden Dial	Grandparents
Rob & Heidi Finkral	Heidi's Brothers
Kelly & Susan Greene	
Betty & Gary Gunderson	Grandparents
Carroll & Janet Gustman	Parents
Terri & Delores Hageman (2)	Husband/Father Everett Hageman
Denise Honner	
Doug & Sue Jansen	Paul Jansen
Mark & Mindy Krause	Toby Meister
Mark & Mindy Krause	Nick Pinneke
Doug & Janet Martin (2)	
Harold & Mary Mettenbrink	
Todd Peters	Mr. & Mrs. Walter & Edith Peters
Todd Peters	Rev. Carl and Dorcas Brueggemann
Ginny Peterson	Bob Peterson
Ginny Peterson	Ginny's Parents
Mabel Schibonski	Elmer Schibonski
Randy & Deb Stein	
Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts	Leroy Vogts
Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts	Grandparents
Jeannette & Ron Yockey	Ted Beasley
Jeannette & Ron Yockey	Yvonne Beasley



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# NEW MEMBERS

*Darla Bauer*  
By Transfer from  
Immanuel Lutheran Church,  
Spirit Lake, Iowa

*Welcome to the Holy Cross  
Family of Faith!*

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**ASH**  
WEDNESDAY

Easter falls unusually early this year, and Lent begins with our Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, February 6 at 7:00pm. Lent services will continue at 7:00pm each Wednesday evening during Lent.

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

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## Sunday Morning Bible Study

The seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany together form the cycle in the Church Year which focuses on the appearance of Christ in our world. Epiphany is really "the rest of the Christmas story," and during Epiphany we are continuing our study in Adult Bible Class on Sunday mornings at



# VERY GOD OF VERY GOD

## 2008 Epiphany Sermon Series on the Divinity of Christ

During the Advent and Christmas seasons we focus on the *humanity* of Christ, as we confess in the Nicene Creed, "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man."

During the Epiphany season which follows, we focus on another, corresponding teaching of the Nicene Creed, the *divinity* of Christ: "The only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."

This is the main point of distinction between Christianity and all other religions. Many other faiths, such as Islam, are willing to admit that Jesus of Nazareth was a great *man*. But, Christians profess He is more than a man, He is in fact, "*very God of very God*."

We base this belief on the witness of the Scriptures, in which He is given divine *names*, does divine *works*, possesses divine *attributes*, and has divine *glory*.

January 13

"*Very God of Very God:  
His Divine Names*"  
Matthew 3:13-17

January 27

"*Very God of Very God:  
His Divine Attributes*"  
John 1:29-51

January 20

"*Very God of Very God:  
His Divine Works*"  
John 2:1-11

February 3

"*Very God of Very God:  
His Divine Glory*"  
Matthew 17:1-9

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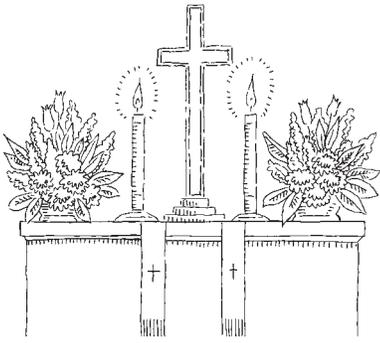
10:30am, "*Joy to the World: The Christmas Story in Scripture and Song.*"

We are looking at the Old Testament prophecies of the birth of the Messiah, which we traditionally focus on during the Advent season, and their New Testament fulfillment, which we celebrate during Christmas and Epiphany. As the title of the class indicates, we are also looking at — and singing! — favorite carols based on these Scriptures.

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## Offering Envelopes

Anyone wishing new offering envelopes for 2008 please ask Sue Jansen, Jeri Melstad, or Mabel Schibonski. If you have envelopes left you may use them up before getting new ones. They do not need to correspond to a particular date. Any questions call Sue at 232-0280.



## 2008 Flower Calendar

The flower calendar for 2008 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.

December 2

Teri & Dolores Hageman  
In Memory of Everett Hageman

February 24

Jon & Gail Dorr

## New Portals of Prayer

The new Portals of Prayer devotional booklets for January through March, 2008 are available in the church entryway. Our thanks to Mabel Schibonski for providing these for our church. Take copies to share with friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, etc. Start off the New Year with the Lord!



Thank you to the entire congregation for the generous Christmas gift certificate, and to the many individual members who gave cards and gifts.

*Rev. Kevin and Terese Vogts*

Thank you for your donation [from the offering at the Women's Christmas Dinner] of cookie dough, DVD's and a DVD player. We greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity—these are wonderful items that are greatly needed at our Women's and Children's Center.

*Jackson Recovery Centers*



## Crucifers

January 6

Sarah Vogts

January 13

Jacob Vogts

January 20

A.J. Michels

January 27

Zachary Selby



## Acolytes

January 6

Evan Steemken

January 13

Tyler Fletcher

January 20

Dylan Sawyer

January 27

Trevor Vilhauer



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!

January 6

Vogts

January 13, 20, 27

Need Volunteers



## Record of Fellowship Attendance Pads

The Board of Elders has decided to begin using attendance pads to record attendance of both members as well as guests.

Everyone is asked to please complete sometime during each service the "Record of Fellowship" located in a folder at both ends of each pew. (We are using two attendance pads for each pew because in the new sanctuary some of the pews will be quite long.)

We will still have a traditional Guest Register, but hopefully adding this new system will help us have better records of names, addresses, and those in attendance. Also, the Board of Elders wants to do a better job of tracking the attendance of members.



**Missionaries  
of the Month**

Our congregation has designated a tithe of 10% of our general offerings to support the work of our District and Synod. Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services specific missionaries around the world who are supported in this way by our congregation.



January 6  
*Rev. Michael and Yoko Piescer*  
Japan



January 13  
*Karen Rubel*  
London, England



January 20  
*Rev. Dale and Cheri Talsma*  
Jamaica



January 27  
*Sharon Owens*  
Macau



*By Rev. Michael Piescer*  
LCMS Missionary in Japan

Last month, Trey Hillman, professional baseball manager, visited Seibo Gakuen Lutheran School. Trey was a successful minor league manager for the New York Yankees for a number of years before he came to manage a professional baseball team in Japan five years ago. Last year, his team, the Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters, won the Japanese World Series. This year, they are back in the Japanese World Series as defending champions. So, Trey is well-known in Japan, where baseball was introduced by American troops after World War II and is now the most popular sport.

Trey often speaks at churches, schools, and other places in Japan to share his faith in Jesus. Recently, Trey's team just happened to have a game nearby, which coincided with our closing ceremony for the first semester, so we asked him to come and share with our 1,300 students. The school is operated by the Lutheran Church as a mission outreach and virtually none of the students are Christian.

Trey sang two worship songs—much to the surprise of our teachers and students. (He has a great voice.) We had a short interview and then he shared his faith. Finally, at the end of his talk, he signed four baseballs and gave them to the school.

Even though our students are known for being talkative during gatherings, they didn't make a sound. Some who aren't very interested in Christianity made sure they were sitting near the front. I got e-mails from parents thanking us for asking Trey to come and speak. God really used his message to touch many of the lives of our students with the Gospel.



*By Karen Rubel*  
LCMS Missionary in England

Our church celebrated a harvest festival at the beginning of October. Because Thanksgiving finds its roots in the British harvest, I designed our children's program around the theme of Thanksgiving. The children spent the day learning about the joy Jesus brings us through the story of the 10 lepers (Luke 18), singing, and by making cards for our homebound congregation members out of our thankfulness to Jesus for all He has done for us. It was a great day, and it was exciting to see the children learn and get excited about what they were learning.

A week after our children's program, I received an e-mail from the mother of one of the children. In her e-mail, she thanked me for the children's program and invited me over for a cup of tea and to share a Bible story with her and her daughters. It was completely unexpected, and it was impossible to say no! God had worked through this children's program to give me a second opportunity to share the Gospel with this family! So, sometimes it feels like I'm not making an impact. When that happens, I can now look back on this children's program and see that it's not me, but Christ, sending His Spirit through His Word through me, and His Word always has an impact. His Word is always effective. What a comfort that is when I begin the Lord's work here in London each morning!



## Quarterly Meeting and Potluck January 27

Everyone is invited to a congregational potluck dinner following the Sunday School hour on January 27. After the potluck, everyone is also invited to stay for the Quarterly Business Meeting.

All adult members of the congregation are automatically voting members. You are encouraged to help administer the business affairs of your congregation.

The following have consented to serve as officers and board members of the congregation for 2008. This slate will be approved at the Quarterly Business Meeting on January 27.



President  
Doug Martin

Secretary  
Denise Fletcher

Treasurer  
Dennis Melstad

Financial Secretary  
Susan Jansen

### Board of Elders

Jon Dorr  
Rob Finkral  
Carroll Gustman  
Doug Jansen  
Joey Schroeder  
Ron Yockey

### Board of Education

Chair Vacant  
Daniell Bargstadt  
Janet Martin  
Terry Vogts

### Board of Evangelism

Gail Dorr, Chair



Over 20 members gathered for the Women's Christmas Dinner, served by Grahams at the Country Inn meeting room, on December 10. Betty Gunderson and Ginny Peterson made the arrangements and decorated, and Pastor Vogts gave the devotion. Following the ornament exchange there was a Christmas offering which was used to purchase two boxes of cookie dough, a DVD player, and eleven movies as a Christmas gift for the women and children at Jackson Recovery Center.

### Board of Church Properties

Ryan Dial, Chair  
Justin Benson  
Greg Huibregtse

We list members' birthdays and anniversaries in the newsletter each month and the bulletin each week. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the church office at 232-9117 or email [holycross@longlines.com](mailto:holycross@longlines.com).

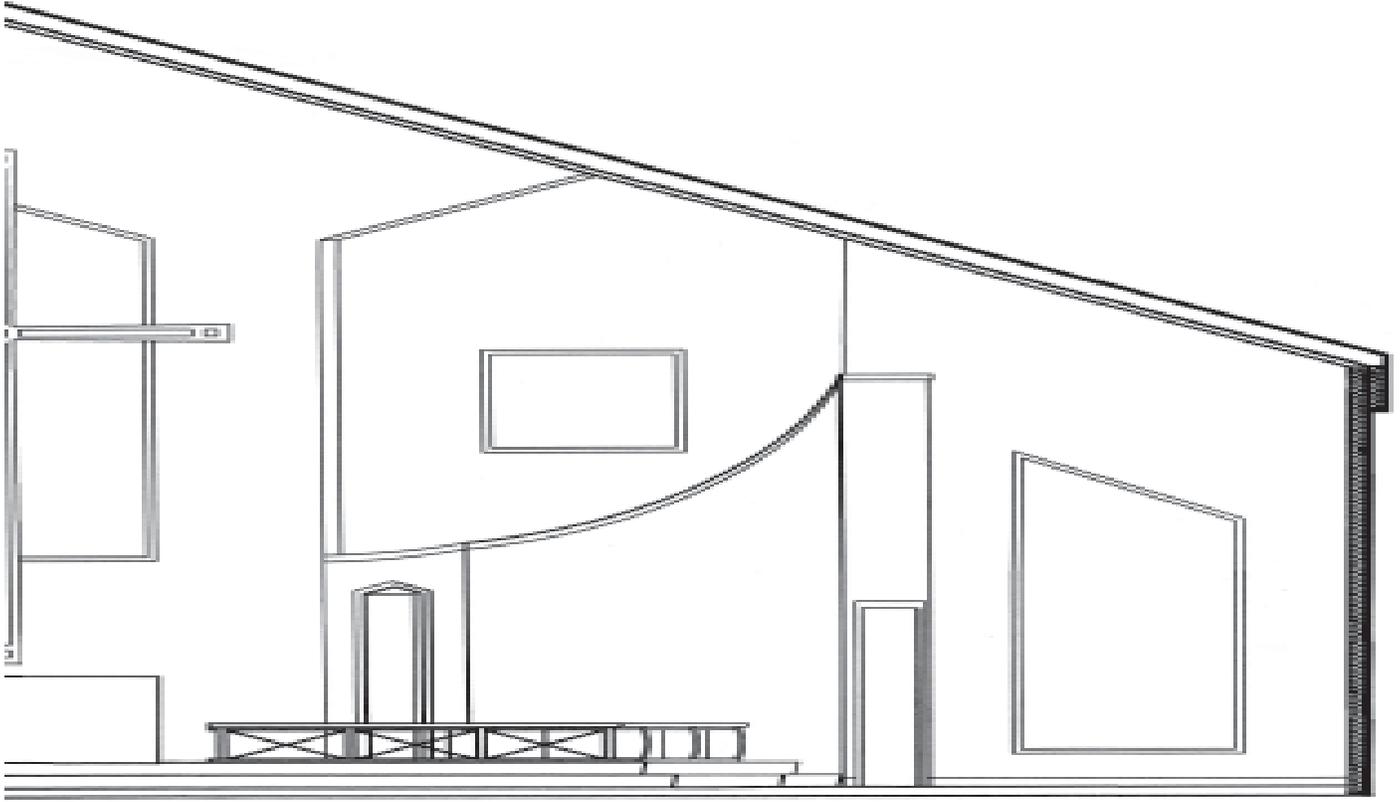


Greg Huibregtse, January 4  
Terri Hageman January 10  
Denise Honner, January 10  
Mandy Baier, January 13  
Rob Finkral, January 15  
Janet Martin, January 20  
Erin Fletcher, January 24  
Caitlyn Bargstadt, January 30



Elders for January  
Rob Finkral & Carroll Gustman

Next Elders Meeting  
February 7, 7:00pm



Sanctuary Addition Interior Elevation



Return Service Requested

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

**Crossnotes**  
Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church