

The Certain and Knowable Mystery of Christ

“When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ. ... This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs” (Eph. 3:4, 6).

CNN was showing a special entitled “The Mystery of Jesus” on the television in a restaurant I was in recently. Although the volume was turned down, I believe I would not be far off in saying that their report was not the most kind to Jesus. It was clear that the “Mystery of Jesus” cast doubt on His existence and activities.



The Bible uses the word “mystery” in a far different way. Mystery, for one, is not a secret that cannot be understood but only doubted. Paul writes in Romans 16:25,26 that “the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed,” that is, the revelation of Jesus Christ. If one desires to know God, then hear of Jesus Christ.

The mystery is that God “was manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). Paul, in the same passage, even goes so far as to say that this is a “great mystery.” One should not doubt the truthfulness of this fact, only believe it.

Another mystery is associated with Jesus, and this is appropriate for the Epiphany season of the church year. In God’s plan the Gentiles are included as co-heirs of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The fact is—and this is no mystery—all believers constitute the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). The nation of Israel today no longer has any theological significance other than being the place where God planted His Seed in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

The Gentiles are exhibiting a new air of audacity. I visited a bookstore the other day where the shelf holding books on atheism had been nearly emptied. My, atheism must be a hot topic!

Christ’s children need not fear ... or doubt. The mystery of God is real and true, and this message is the power that converts unbelievers and destroys everything that is false (2 Cor. 10:4,5). The Gospel marches on as God sees fit. He has been doing this for quite a few years!

The people of the Rocky Mountain District, by the Spirit’s power, place an explicit trust in this knowable and certain God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to *ignite church and culture for Christ!*



Nurturing the Faith - March 2009 Gathering

The Nurturing the Faith gathering is fast approaching. Rev. David Langewisch will share the week with over 500 participants from Lutheran churches and schools during the four-day workshop series, which will focus on the personal, spiritual development of each participant.

The objective of Nurturing the Faith is to equip the educator for effective sharing and teaching of the Word by studying God's Word, experiencing personal, spiritual growth, and developing faith-filled relationships. Nurturing the Faith gatherings for 2009 are designed for preschool, elementary, and high school educators, DCEs, pastors, Sunday school teachers, youth workers, Board of Education and Congregation chairpersons, and others who are involved in the education of children.

Dates:

March 9- Immanuel Lutheran Church & School Albuquerque, NM

March 10-Immanuel Lutheran Church & School- Loveland, CO

March 12- Lutheran High School- Parker, CO

March 13- St Paul Lutheran Church & School- Ogden, UT

Further information regarding the gatherings, registration fee, schedule for the day, registration form, as well as a biography of the presenter will be sent out early February.

Monique Hjalmsquist
Rocky Mountain District- LCMS
303-695-8001 ext. 18

A First for Salt Lake City Lutheran High School

By Charles Gebhardt, Principal



On Monday, December 8, Pastor Brooks called me to say that a student of ours was ready to be baptized. He wanted me to ask Bo if he were willing to be baptized on Thursday at our weekly chapel service. He was! God's kingdom grew by one more that day! It was so cool! Bo was grinning throughout the whole service. His mom, dad, and two-year-old sister were baptized at Grace, Sandy, Utah, on Sunday! Four more names written in the Book of Life due in part to the Spirit's work at Salt Lake Lutheran High School! This was the first baptism of a high school student that I have been a part of in my 15 years as a principal. Needless to say, I'm on an emotional "high" and will be for several days

if not weeks! Just thought you would like to know.

(Pictured above from L to R: Rev. Dana Brooks, Bo, and Rev. Alan Borcher.)



Bo with his family, Principal Gebhardt, and the pastors

Who Said This?

It is true that the present economic conditions throughout the world induce us, if we do not keep our vision clear, to curtail church activities. No doubt, money is more scarce than in previous years. All the more, we must keep before us the lesson of history: first, that the more evil the days, the greater the prospect of success in our Christian work; and secondly, when children of God are eager to promote their Savior's glory, the Lord supplies the necessary means and blesses them.



Though these words sound quite contemporary, they were actually spoken by Dr. Friedrich Pfotenhauer, past president of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, in his report to the 1932 synodical convention. We do well to heed President Pfotenhauer's words in our days of economic uncertainty. This is a time for clear vision and devoted mission, as we remain confident that our gracious God is true to His every promise. This is a time for bold and faithful stewardship, as we remain confident that our Lord will abundantly bless us. This is a time for all of our leaders to hold high the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we remain confident that our gracious God will use that glorious Gospel message to enliven and equip His people.

"You are the light of the world," Jesus tells us. *"Let your light shine"* (Matthew 5:14, 16). Yes, let your light shine in 2009!

Contact information for Rev. Tom Schoech, District Development Director, 303.695.8001 or Thomas.schoech@rm.lcms.org

A Great Time for Consecrated Stewards

During these months of economic stress, many folks are taking a serious look at their personal and family finances. What better a time to minister to them through the "Consecrated Stewards" program!

"Consecrated Stewards" is a Scripture-based, Christ-centered stewardship program designed to help Christians be better managers of the gifts God has entrusted to them. Produced by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, the program is available for use by synodical congregations. Congregations that work their way through "Consecrated

Stewards” have generally seen a 25% increase in their members’ giving. However, the chief benefit is a greater awareness on the part of participants of their role as Christian stewards in the whole scope of their daily lives.

For more information about Consecrated Stewards, please contact Mr. Gary Johnson or Rev. Tom Schoech in the district office (303-695-8001). References of congregations that have already used Consecrated Stewards can be provided. If program costs are a concern, please give us a call to see how we can help.

Light of the Valley Lutheran Church Begins Worship **3383 W. 12600 South** **Riverton, UT 84065**

Riverton, UT – Light of the Valley Lutheran Church (LOVLC) announces today that it officially opened the doors for its first worship service on Sunday, December 14, 2008. After two years of planning, Light of the Valley will offer regularly scheduled Sunday School classes and worship services at 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. respectively. LOVLC will offer people on the south end of the Salt Lake Valley a confessional Lutheran setting for the first time, with an emphasis on Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins.

LOVLC offered many exciting Christmas worship opportunities, including an **Advent worship service on December 17th, at 7:00 p.m.**; another regular **Sunday worship service on December 21st, a Christmas Eve worship service at 5:00 p.m.** with an opportunity for



fellowship as members and visitors alike decorated the Christmas tree together that evening; a **formal worship service with communion at 11:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve**; a **Christmas morning worship service at 10:30 a.m.**; and then regular Sunday School classes and worship services each Sunday following.

“Light of the Valley has been richly blessed in all the efforts to establish this new church body on the west side of the valley. While everything has been a lot of work, involving the tireless efforts of many people to reach this point, the fruits of their labors and prayers have been answered. All glory be to God alone,” says Al Borcher, Senior Pastor of Light of the Valley Lutheran Church.

Pictured: Gayle and Rev. Alan Borcher

About Light of the Valley Lutheran Church

Light of the Valley Lutheran Church is a member church of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The LCMS has nearly 2.3 million members in the United States, is a leader in parochial education with 1,336 preschools, 977 elementary schools, 109 high schools, 10 colleges, and 2 seminaries in the U.S., and they have an international presence in 88 countries around the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Rev. Alan Borchert 801-571-6769
gnaborcher@hotmail.com

Click here for an article from the Salt Lake City tribune about Pastor Borchert and Light of the Valley.

http://www.sltrib.com/faith/ci_11255177

New Mission in Gypsum, CO Going “Down Valley” To Take the Church to “Them”

The Vail Valley is an interesting place. On the East end of the valley are ski slopes and multi-million dollar homes. On the West end of the valley, about a one hour drive “down valley” from Vail is Gypsum. Gypsum is home to a drywall factory, mobile homes, and a growing middle class of professionals and small business owners. The vast majority of people down valley commute “up valley” to work. Gracious Savior Lutheran Church is conveniently located in Edwards approximately halfway between Vail and Gypsum. Still, we noticed a disturbing trend. People from our congregation who moved “down valley” stopped coming to worship. We also noticed that few people who were moving into the rapidly growing down valley region were coming to Gracious Savior Lutheran Church. Since people were already commuting up valley five days a week, it was hard to drive a long distance to church on Sunday.

Last year we decided to take church to them. We began as a small group in my home studying Acts. The plan was to use my basement as the church on Sunday evenings. It didn’t work very well. Many families with young children live down valley. Sunday evenings did not work well for these families that were eating dinner, putting their little ones to bed, and getting their older kids ready for the school week. We also discovered that new people were a little intimidated going to a stranger’s house for a worship service even if they were invited by a friend. They didn’t come.

In October 2008 we used a different approach. Having recruited ten families to help with the down valley service, we launched it at an elementary school. Grace Fellowship is currently averaging 60 people in worship at an 11:00 a.m. Sunday service. Worship is in the carpeted school gym. Sunday School is in the cafeteria. Approximately half of the worshipers are folks from Gracious Savior who wanted to be a part of this mission opportunity and half are new to our congregation. The fun part is this: half of the worshipers are 11 years old or younger. Most churches have a worship service and also have a Sunday School. We have a Sunday School and also have a worship service. We do have our challenging moments. Who do you get to teach Sunday School when kids outnumber the adults? Where do you store two truck loads of equipment and materials for a church? How do you have a worship service when *half* the congregation is playing on the tumbling mats left out by the elementary school? Ultimately, the down valley worship service has been an incredible success. Our folks from Gracious Savior get to serve Jesus in an exciting and new way. They also get to invite their neighbors to worship for the first time. Our new folks get a place close to their homes to worship Jesus. Most of these new people grew up in Christian homes, but have not gone to church for a very long time. They needed someone to bring church to them.

Grace Fellowship is a ministry of Gracious Savior Lutheran Church. We are one church in two locations. Both sites gather together for worship in the new Vail Christian High School auditorium once a quarter. We had a Reformation worship service and Christmas Eve worship together. One governing Church Council and one Board of Elders oversees both groups. Perhaps one day Grace Fellowship will grow up to be an independent congregation. Perhaps they will grow into their own facility. Until then, we're having a blast serving our Lord and the *entire* Vail valley.

Pastor Jason Haynes
Gracious Savior Lutheran Church
Edwards, CO

CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY ... WITH OLD SNEAKERS

The Evangelism Board at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Highlands Ranch, CO, highlighted “America Recycles Day” (ARD) with a community outreach project. Joining forces with the “Reuse-a-Shoe” global project, they publicized it on the church’s message board on Highlands Ranch Parkway, in the local newspapers, and on the ARD national website. Did you know that athletic shoes can be ground up into material to make sports surfaces and playgrounds?



A weatherproof drop box was placed at the church’s front door, available 24 / 7 for two weeks, allowing members, Early Learning Center families, and residents of the local community to make donations at their convenience. An invitation to join in worship services was posted in the window above the drop box.

At the end of the two-week collection period, the

Junior Youth group made a service project out of counting, sorting, and weighing the shoes. In all, 253 pounds of shoes were collected, with 346 shoes going to the recycling center, and two large bags of still usable shoes taken to Goodwill. The results were shared in a “thank you” on the church’s message board.

The community appreciated the church’s green efforts, and everyone enjoyed the uniqueness of the project.



Pam Hummel
phummel@qwest.net

Lutheran Chorale Auditions

The Lutheran Chorale hosts auditions for the coming season at 6:30 p.m. on Mondays, January 12 and 19, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 2100 Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood, prior to rehearsal. A prepared piece is not necessary. Performing works this season include Bach, Pachelbel, Rutter, and others. All voices welcome. For more information, call 303-526-2607, or email lthomprn@msn.com Also check the web site: <http://www.thelutheranchorale.org>

HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER?



Ten years ago, the Debt Assistance Committee chose Romans 10:14 as the appropriate verse for the program to help Pastors repay their educational debt. “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

No, this does not excuse laymen and laywomen from our obligation to, and our joy in, telling others the Good News. The verse does tell us how important our “preachers” are to us, and to the task of “going and telling”. Imagine your congregation without a pastor. Yes, you will get a vacancy pastor, or quest preachers, but they will be only part time. Yes, all the members will help the congregation carry on, but we need a pastor to preach, to teach and to care for souls.

Thirty of our 200 plus Pastors in our Rocky Mountain District have educational debt to repay. This is one more financial burden for them and their families. Please pray for them and for all our Pastors, and please consider a gift to the Debt Assistance program, either for current use, or for investment in the endowment fund for future use.

Call Paul Gutknecht at 303.465.1236 with any questions.

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH SEEKING ORGANIST

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Englewood, Colorado, is seeking to hire a part-time organist to play for Sunday morning worship and seasonal midweek services (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week). This position would include four paid Sundays off each year. Familiarity with Lutheran hymnody is preferred. For more information about salary or to apply for the position, please contact Pastor Chris Matthis: (303) 781-5887 or csmatthis81@hotmail.com. Resumes may be mailed, sent via e-mail, or faxed to (303) 781-7471. Our address is 3695 S. Acoma St., Englewood, CO.

Pastor Chris
Immanuel, Englewood

CALLS EXTENDED

Grace, El Paso, TX to Rev. Alan Kornacki, Jr. Candidate Status, Morgan City, IA

CALLS ACCEPTED

Rev. Thomas Thierfelder, Associate Pastor, Tree of Life, Garland, TX, to Messiah, Aspen, CO
Rev. Roger Wohletz, Immanuel, Shobonier, IL to Christ, Denver, CO
Rev. Greg Zillinger, St. Peter, Hannover, ND to Shepherd of the Hills, Centennial, CO as
Associate Pastor

CALLS DECLINED

Rev. Jeffrey Ryan, Redeemer, Delta, CO to Gethsemane, Northglenn, CO
Dr. Jayson Galler, Grace, Elgin, TX to Grace, El Paso, TX

Transfers

Rev. Barr Chittick, Candidate, FL/GA Dist. to RMD
Vera Benecke, Emeritus, Northern Illinois Dist. to RMD
Tara Wolf, DCE, Candidate, NI Dist. to RMD
Rebekah Ptacnik, Candidate Status, IDW, to RMD

Change of Status

Rev. Carlton Hein, Mt. Olive, Loveland, CO to Candidate Status
Rev. Robert “Joe” Burnham, Associate, Peace With Christ, Aurora, CO to Non- Candidate
Status
Vickie Kleinsasser, University Hills, Denver, CO to Non-Candidate Status



Upcoming Events – Rocky Mountain District

January

16 School Ministry Meeting
18 LCEF Sunday
26-27 RMD Board of Directors Meeting

February

- 4-5 Frontera Meeting –ALB., NM
- 19 -22 District Stewardship Conference in Tempe, AZ, Sponsored by Michigan District
- 27 Spiritual Growth Team Meeting at RMD 10:30 -3:30

March

- 2-3 RMD Board of Directors Meeting
- 12 Conversations of Grace Web-Meeting

Nurturing the Faith Workshops

- 9 New Mexico
- 10 North Denver
- 12 South Denver
- 13 Utah

June

- 18-20 Rocky Mountain District Convention - DoubleTree Hotel, Denver, CO

November

- 6-7 Conversations of Grace Conference –Albuquerque, NM

We Encourage your Prayers



O heavenly Father, we ask that Your hand of blessing be with **Jacob** and **Lindsey Golter** who were united in holy matrimony on December 27. Bless them with an awareness of Your presence throughout their years together as husband and wife. Amen. (Jacob is the older son of President Randall and Elizabeth Golter. Lindsey is the daughter of Bill and Cheryl Bryant.)

Gracious Lord Jesus, we entrust **Joe Grein** to Your loving care as he begins a cycle of chemo treatments for his cancer. Bless Joe and his loved ones with Your peace so that their minds are free from worry and their hearts free from fear over the next several weeks. Amen. (Joe is the son of **Kevin Grein** who is the LCEF vice-president in charge of loans.)

We thank You, heavenly Father, for Your goodness that was with us throughout the year now past. We beseech You to care for us in this new year as You will best, granting us those spiritual and temporal gifts we need. Throughout this year before us, we ask that Your Son Jesus keep us

by His side so that we not lag behind with regrets nor run ahead with worries. We especially thank You, Father, for the forgiveness of our sins. Bestow on us that which is needed for us to grow in faith in Your love in Christ and to become more fruitful in Christian living. In good days, let us not forget You. In difficult days, help us to count on You for strength, courage, and hope. Thank You for hearing our prayer for the sake of Jesus our Savior. May Your peace that You bestowed on us last year be with us during each day of this coming year, blessing our journey through life. Amen.

Father, You tell us in Your Word, "It is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4). Therefore, open the hearts of those who do not know You that they may believe Your Word of truth. Open their eyes of faith as You did for the travelers on the road to Emmaus that they may see Your Son as their Savior. Open the hearts of Your children to trust that You will be with them as they reach out to those who are spiritually lost. Open the eyes of faith of Your saints to see the opportunities You give us to touch the lives of those living in the darkness of not knowing Jesus. Fill us with the desire to reach others with Your saving Gospel, confessing Jesus with our lips and our lives. Thank You that we can pray in His name. Amen.