

# adoramus

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A Newsletter for those who Appreciate and Participate in Worship and the Arts

Winter 2005

## The LBW and Me ... *"My Lutheran clothes fit very nicely, thank you!"*

I love the Lutheran Book of Worship. I love its colour, I love the embossed gold cross on the front cover and I love the weight of it. You hold it in your hand and you know you have a thing of substance ... not just literally, but it turns out ... figuratively as well.

I grew up on a farm 7 miles north of the little hamlet of Gwynne, which is between Wetaskiwin and Camrose, and was baptized into the Lutheran faith at age seven. My sister was 14. I'm not sure why that particular time in our lives was chosen for our baptism, but it may have had something to do with the fact that we were always a little behind everybody in everything we did. We didn't have a telephone. If we needed to communicate with someone, we drove two miles down the road to Hagstrom's house to use their phone. We didn't have power or running water. We used coal-oil lanterns and brought our water to the house in icy buckets from the well. We drove around in vehicles from the 40's when our neighbours were driving the latest 60's models. I'm sure you get the idea. I do know why that particular religion was chosen for us. It had everything to do with the fact that my mother was of Swedish descent and *all* Swedes were Lutheran, even if they didn't go to church.

Anyway, the day chosen for our baptism was a sunny summer Saturday in 1960. We dressed up nicer than we usually did for our Saturday trip to town, and I went inside a church, the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Wetaskiwin, for the first time in my life. It was cool and quiet and kind of dusky feeling with only the sunlight streaming in through the windows. The Pastor was there to meet us and we were baptized at the font with gentle, quiet words I could only understand the feeling of and marked with the sign of the cross on our foreheads. It felt strange, but somehow important. That was the *last* time I was in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

After our baptism, Mom started driving us to the Crooked Lake Church, which housed everything from church services to community meetings, to Helping Hand Club craft sales and suppers, and was just a few miles away. The only pastors who came out to preach were Baptist, so that is how I grew up and where I stayed, even when we left the farm and moved to town, a Lutheran in Baptist clothing ... until I got married.

As luck would have it, my new husband was a died-in-the-wool Lutheran of good German stock, so I elected to make the switch. After all, I had been baptized Lutheran. The transition, I'll admit, was a little rough. There were so many differences. Some days I couldn't help wearing my Baptist hat, some days I wore my Lutheran one. Some days I didn't know what to wear. I took adult confirmation classes and struggled with Luther's Small ▷



Catechism and with memorizing the Apostles Creed. Who was this Luther guy anyway and how come he's so important? And what on earth is Reformation Sunday? During church services, it took me forever, it seemed, to figure out that hymn number 35 was not *found* on page 35. I'm not sure exactly when I realized that I was home. This gentle, tradition steeped faith just sort of melted into my bones. My Lutheran clothes fit very nicely, thank you, just as they fit generations of people before me.

In the end, unhappily, my marriage failed, but my faith in my God and my Church kept growing ... which, finally, after taking you down a long and winding road, brings me back to the LBW!

In my earlier Lutheran life, I had assumed that the LBW was too lofty for mere mortals like me to use with any satisfaction on any day but Sunday, and then only with the guidance and leadership of the Pastor. The chanting, the responses that were so automatic for the congregation felt like a strange new language to my tongue. For a long time I concentrated more on the sound and rhythm of the words than on what they meant. Then one day about 10 years ago I discovered, written for me, words I had been speaking for years. Right there on page 56 in the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness it said loud and clear ... "Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen." It was exactly what I needed to hear at that time.

Then I began to wonder what else in that mysterious book might also be for me. I started at the very beginning, and as I paged through it ... all the stuff you don't use on regular Sundays, I was amazed. Why hadn't I noticed all this before ... prayers and petitions for every occasion, beautiful seldom used liturgies ... there was *life* in the LBW beyond Communion setting 1. The English language was used here in a rich and poetic way, but not beyond the powers of my comprehension, as I had feared. I did not need an interpreter.

Right off the bat, on page 9, was the Church Calendar where it lists all Sundays and Principal Festivals. That in itself was not particularly interesting. What puzzled me were the little notations in red that appear after each listing. The "B" and the "P" after the First Sunday in Advent. The "G" after the Second Sunday after the Epiphany. Suddenly, the lights went on! I

had watched, without comprehending, the changing colours in the banners and paraments, and marveled at the wisdom of the ladies who were in charge. "B" was for blue! "P" was for purple. "G" was for green. Who knew? I was empowered with my new knowledge and understanding!

Page 13 brought me the Prayers of the Day, Psalms and Lessons; prayers for every Sunday and Festival Day with appropriate scriptures listed below for further study.

"Stir up our hearts, O Lord" ... Isn't that a beautiful way to move us lovingly into action? "Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only son." ... the prayer for the Second Sunday in Advent.

"Lord God, mercifully receive the prayers of your people. Help us to understand the things we ought to do and give us grace and power to do them." ... the prayer for the Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

"Oh, God, your Son chose the path which led to pain before joy, and the cross before glory. Plant his cross in our hearts, so that in its power and love we may come at last to joy and glory." ... a prayer for Monday in Holy Week. "Plant his cross in our hearts ... that is what I needed, what I still need and what we all need, not just on the appropriate Monday in Holy Week, but every day all year long.

I was hooked. Page 42 revealed Petitions, Intercessions and Thanksgivings ... beautifully written prayers I began to use for my personal devotions. "Almighty God, draw my heart to you, guide my mind, fill my imagination, control my will, so that I may be wholly yours. Use me as you will, always to your glory and the welfare of your people." and "Bless me O God, with a reverent sense of your presence, that I may be at peace."

My friend, Linda Wolfe, is a Catholic. Every year they do what they call a Ladies Cursillo, where they closet themselves in their church for three days for meditation and healing. It is a wonderful time of fellowship and problem solving. Last year, she was in charge of organizing the Cursillo and on a coffee visit one day, she told me that she was having difficulty finding an appropriate prayer for healing. So, out came the LBW and into the Hobbema Catholic Church went the Lutheran prayer for General Intercession. "Watch dear Lord, with those who wake or watch or weep, and give your angels ▷

charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, rest the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous. In your love, give us all this through Jesus Christ our Lord." (pg 50)

There is something here for everyone ... prayers for families, artists and musicians. There is even a prayer for our enemies, which must have been read by an Anglican pastor in Edmonton during the 2004 season Stanley Cup playoffs. On a sign in front of their church, these words were posted. "Jesus said we should pray for our enemies. GO FLAMES GO!"

The Athanasian Creed on page 54 explained for me the "small c" catholic faith. It is a serious look at what our faith requires of us, and ends by saying those who have done good will enter eternal life and those who have done evil will not. You don't have to have a doctorate in theology to get the point.

The Service Liturgies begin on page 57. Words of praise to God set to music and repeated Sunday after Sunday ... as comfortable as slipping into a good set of Lutheran slippers. From time to time I am still surprised when I come across a passage in the Bible

## The Carol ... A brief history

Traditional carols were based upon dance music, and did not appear in a religious context until the fifteenth century, when they had become "respectable". At that time, people were thinking vividly of many of the Bible stories, and there was a drawing together of minstrel, literary, and folk poetry. People wanted something with more life than the old Latin office hymns and plainsong melodies. The carol was the perfect musical form to fulfill that desire.

Variety in the method of singing is very important in a traditional carol. The verses should never be sung straight through all in the same way. Instead, more interest is created with unison voices alternating with harmonies, solo, instrumental sections or congregational singing.

All old carols are not just about Christmas either, since many festival days have carols written especially for them. The singing of these songs is a way for us to increase the element of joy in our worship. **A**

that has been word for word, set to the music I sing on Sundays. Like, "Lord, now you let your servant go in peace ..." (pg 93) from Luke, Chapter 2. I always wondered who wrote those beautiful words!

There is a section for recommended scripture readings for each day for the entire Church year. The Psalms, music in and of themselves, are included in their entirety.

And after all that, you finally get to the hymns. Where else can you readily find text that was first written in the 1500's? "Oh God, I love thee; not that my poor love may win me entrance to thy heaven above, nor yet that strangers to thy love must know the bitterness of everlasting woe. But Jesus, thou art mine and I am thine; clasped to thy bosom by thine arms divine, who on the cruel cross for me hast borne the nails, the spear and man's un pitying scorn." (# 491) Now, what's not to love about words like these? Shakespeare would have been proud. ▷

## Leadership Program for Musicians

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Two years ago, the Women's World Day of Prayer was held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Falun, the second church in our two point parish. One of the women attending was my friend Jeanne Thiessen, a member of an evangelical, non-Lutheran church. She is an artist whose love of God is evident in the vibrant colours and lush brush strokes in her paintings. She too, in that short space of time, fell in love with the LBW, so we gifted her with one of the churches hymnals.

She uses it for her own devotions regularly, as the spirit moves her. On days when she feels cut off or closed to God, she looks in the prayer section and randomly selects something to pray. The liturgy gives her a sense of peace, and she hums or chants to her own tune because she doesn't read music. The LBW never fails to open her heart to God's Holy Spirit.

My own LBW is beginning to get a little dog-eared with use. It has paper clips, post-it notes, slips of paper tucked inside it marking spots of interest to me. No matter where you open it, it falls flat, leaves open and ready to impart their wisdom. It even acts as a sort of diary, because within its pages, are always several notices or bulletins that catalogue recent events in my life. Funeral notices, an old church bulletin kept to remind me to read more of Ephesians, lots of stuff!

Following my families' time honoured tradition of being just a little behind, I came to "Lutheranism" at a later time in my life. I was confirmed in the time-honoured tradition, by the "letter of the law" so to speak, but it was the LBW that really taught me about my faith.

It has been a grand journey, and I'm still learning. **A**

**Remember  
to tell us ....**

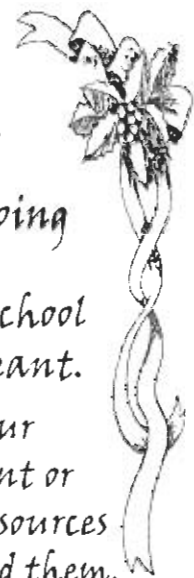
*what you are doing  
in your church  
for a Sunday School  
Christmas Pageant.*

*Please tell us your  
favourites, present or  
past, list your resources  
and where to find them.*

*We will share this information  
in Adoramus in early 2006.*

*Please address your response to:*

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## Whistle While you Pray ...

During the minister's prayer one Sunday, there was a loud whistle from one of the back pews.

Gary's mother was horrified.  
She pinched him into  
silence and after  
church asked,  
"Gary, whatever  
made you do such  
a thing?"

Gary answered  
soberly, "I asked  
God to teach me  
to whistle ....  
and He just  
then did!" **A**

