

The EVANGEL

Issue No. 182—March-April 2017

A Publication of The American Association of Lutheran Churches



Inside this Issue...

- Pg. 2 — From the Editor
- Pg. 3 — From the Presiding Pastor
- Pg. 4 — The Balance of Love
- Pg. 5 — What To Do Today
- Pg. 6-7 — Find the Right Path
- Pg. 8 — The Theology of the
Lord's Supper
- Pg. 9 — 2016 Road to
Reformation Seminar
- Pg. 10 — New Year's Worship
Service
- Pg. 10 — Reformation Celebration
- Pg. 11 — Faith Lutheran Live
Nativity

Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2007 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Used by permission.

All rights reserved.

Editor: Lisa Cooper

Layout & Design: Lynette Macias

Letter From the Editor

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! This edition is the last of the three-part series on Faith, Hope, and Love. Let's think about love for a moment. If you were to find any passage in your Bible that deals with the theme of love, what would it be? You might first flip to John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Or perhaps 1 Corinthians 13, "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude...Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (v. 4-7). Or maybe you think of Jesus summarizing the law where he says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and will all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

It is clear that the theme of love permeates scripture. But how do these passages all relate to us? Without a right understanding of God's love for us, we cannot adequately understand the primary message of the Christian faith: that Jesus, out of love for his creation, became man, fulfilled all righteousness, suffered at our hands, and died a brutal and bloody death. He then rose again from the dead. He did these things so that we could be reconciled to God. This is the ultimate expression of love, the most clear picture of perfect compassion. We did nothing to deserve this glorious gift, nor could we ever perfectly respond in praise. The love of God shown to us in the sacrifice of Christ illustrates the incredible span of God's love for us.

Now, thanks to the grace extended to us, we can go and love and serve our neighbor. We can seek to embody the self-giving, humble love of Christ in our everyday vocations. 1 John 4:9-12 summarizes this beautifully:

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."

Let us consider the love of God, and how it relates to our unity as the American Association of Lutheran Churches. We are bound together by the love of Christ. Let us consider how incredible it is that the love shown to us is purely a gift of God, not merited by our works or our holiness. Let us consider, especially with the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Reformation, how the theme of love is integral to the message of justification by grace through faith.

In Christ,
Lisa Cooper

God is Love

by TAALC Presiding Pastor Rev. Dr. Curtis Leins

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4: 7-10)

High in a desert canyon of Arizona, a perennial spring bubbles to the surface. It is located at approximately 4,100 feet above sea level and is known as Fossil Creek. At its headwaters, this tributary of the Verde (Green) River yields 20,000 gallons per minute; that is 29 million gallons per day! Strangely placed in a desert wilderness, this river of life produces a glorious green habitat for a myriad of plants and animals. Its brilliant, blue waters, deep pools, and spectacular waterfalls make Fossil Creek a water wonderland! In short, this perpetual stream of water is the source of a breathtaking display of life, in the most inhospitable of locals.

Love is from God

In the epistle text before us, the Apostle John teaches us about another source; God is the source of love. This love of God is unlike any human form of love. All human love is tainted with selfishness, personal aggrandizement, and self-indulgence. God's love is completely different. It is selfless, sacrificial, and unceasing. God's love is displayed in its fullness in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, God's Son. Upon the cross, Christ manifests His love as an atonement for our sins and as the divine gift of eternal life for all who believe in Him.

The love of God in Jesus Christ creates and sustains life. He is the river of life that bubbles up and flows across the parched and lifeless desert of our lives. He is the river of life that washes away our soul-sickness and sin. He is the river of life that perpetually nourishes us, welling up in our souls unto eternal life.

There is more. Just as Fossil Creek transforms its surrounding desert, Jesus Christ transforms us. To have been touched by the river of Jesus is to be loved fully, perfectly, and completely. Regardless of our unworthi-

ness, Jesus loves us! And, His love changes us. Just as Fossil Creek changes the desert into a water-world, the love of Jesus transforms us into children of God.

Born of God

Through our Baptism, we have been washed in the river of Jesus. Through the Sacrament of the Altar, our spiritual thirst is fully satisfied by the body and blood of Christ. Now, the love of Jesus is IN us and has become our source of new and abundant life. Not only are we loved, we have become lovers ourselves.

It is not that God has imposed a new requirement upon us: "You had better love others." It is instead that God has placed a new heart within us: "You cannot help but love others." We are new in Christ Jesus. We are newly born as children of God who display in our lives the love of Christ that we ourselves have received. When we live in love, we are representatives of Jesus. We re-present Him with our lives of forgiveness, mercy, kindness, and service. We cannot help but do such things because of who we have become. We are children of God who cannot help but do what pleases our Lord. It is He who is in us and His love that moves us.

The river of Christ is running through our hearts. Therefore, let us resolve to lift up our heads this new year and see the sorrows, suffering, and insufficiency of those around us. As members of the body of Christ, let us determine to be the heart and hands of Jesus. By His grace, may we extend the Kingdom of God beyond ourselves. The river of Christ flows in our hearts and there is a thirsty world all around us. Let's offer them a drink!

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

The Balance of Love

by Rev. Richard P. Shields, President of American Lutheran Theological Seminary

Love is the hallmark of Christians. The night Jesus was betrayed, He said to His disciples: “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 14:34-35 CSB). Love can be challenging for all of us. It’s easy to love someone who is “lovable,” but challenging when the other person is not. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “love your enemies.” So love is that comprehensive.

For theology students who will become pastors/deaconesses there is an additional issue with love, and it is very subtle. It isn’t as easy to identify as the above. The challenge may not even be seen as a problem. What is it? In seminary we encourage a commitment to the Bible—in life, in study, in teaching. By becoming well-versed in the study of Scripture and theology, the person begins to love the topics, the discussion, the engagement. And for this we also rejoice.

But how many of us face the consequences of this: namely, love of studying and discussing (often in the form of arguing) theology takes priority over loving the other person? That is, we may love the argument more than the person. We want to be right, lovingly of course, but being right is of utmost importance. The reality is that we do not exchange one for the other. We remain firm in our commitment to Scripture and the doctrines contained in it. But we also have live as disciples of Jesus Christ. As such we do not have the option of making “love one another” part of an exchange.

The balance that we seek in training theologians/pastors/deaconesses is to maintain both a love for Scripture/doctrine, and love for others. To live out that balance is a daily challenge, but as we love one another, we encourage each other. May that be a mark of every professor, every student, every pastor, every deaconess, every member.

In love,
Pastor Shields

What To Do Today

by Angela Wagner

An earnest prayer: *Lord, I come to you for wisdom and direction. Direct my day so that I may serve you in the way you have planned for me. Show me where you want me and what I can do to best serve your kingdom. I often feel overwhelmed with all the needs of this world. Lord, guide my path. Amen.*

I wanted God to tell me what to do. I am a list maker and was recovering from law-heavy theology; but don't all of us yearn for direction on some level? I would have preferred He deliver it to me in a 5-year-plan complete with short-term action steps. But then one day I was told it might be better to focus on the *immediate future* instead of the long term.

I was at a women's conference and the speaker suggested a new life perspective that would drastically change my mindset. She could relate to the need for a 5-year-plan, but proposed we ditch the plan and ask God, 'what do you need from me TODAY?' It was a radical idea but I was intrigued. She argued that people right in front of us need us far more than the imaginary future premise on which we tend to focus.

She didn't know it but what she was proposing was the doctrine of vocation, an element of God's order than Luther brought into public view. The idea that we each have various roles to play in our lives; where we serve our neighbor in order to carry out part of God's greatest commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself." I discovered all of this when I took her advice to heart and started asking God what he needed from me RIGHT NOW. The answer was love.

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:36-40

Over and over as I earnestly asked God to direct me, He showed me love. Love God, love your spouse, love your kids. Love the neighbor who brings you a casserole when you have a death in the family, but also love the stranger who stole your parking spot. Love the young girl ringing up your groceries, and the one contemplating her unplanned pregnancy.

I hadn't seen the need in front of me so clearly until then. When I read Gene Veith's *Spirituality of the Cross*, I discovered the wisdom and joy that can be found in the doctrine of vocation. And as I grew into my vocations, I discovered a variety of ministries in which I had been called to love: the ministry of being a wife, the ministry of interruptions (also called parenting), the ministry of being a friend. Sister, daughter, citizenship, church membership, employee, boss.. The list is long, but not so long we feel the pressure to save the world. God commands us to love those He has placed in our lives. He has prepared good works for us in advance, and now we get to walk in those opportunities to love and serve one another.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." Ephesians 2:10

It might feel overly-simplified, but the world and its problems are too big for each of us to tackle all at once. Which is why Jesus came. He accomplished all we could not in the greatest act of love. As such He is our Savior and our example.

It turns out the commandment to love answers big questions and small ones. It addresses long term plans and how you respond to a snarky remark from a co-worker.

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8

What does God need me to do TODAY? Keep loving one another earnestly. It may not include my envisioned checklist or schedule, but love grounds us in the Word, in the Triune God, and in one another.

Finding the Right Path

by Rev. Dave Spotts

"How do you find..."
"Where are we?"

On campus during the summer visit times or at the beginning of a school term people could use a good map and a compass. Parents, new students, and other visitors frequently ask me for directions because I look like I belong there. If I tell them the administration building is northwest, they won't find it. But if I point, they will.

What does it look like a little later?

Reality hits.

Students know where their classes, food, and work are.

Do they have a map? Do they have a compass? There's more to life and work than knowing where to go for classes. We run into moral and ethical challenges. We have to figure out how to navigate through waters which are absolutely foreign to us. Many of our young adults need more help than they expect.

Some of the signs are pretty obvious. I'd like to give you two examples from recent history, one in September of this year, another from October.

September. A drunk student says something rude to another student late in the evening. Within an hour, about 50 students, many of them drunk, are yelling at one another. I think I counted seven officers on the police reports. A fraternity is suspended, though the conflict began among four females. The University administration apologizes. It is not altogether clear what they apologized for. I have not been able to speak with the chancellor and clarify. In this incident, it seems clear that some people need their maps and compasses.

October. A student being inducted into a fraternity goes to the hospital with alcohol poisoning. No, you shouldn't drink that much vodka that fast. Another fraternity is chastised by the University. Some people forgot their maps. They lost their compasses.

Many of the young people in our society have been raised with no map, no compass. They have been told to "do the right thing" but have been left to figure out what that right thing might be. At the same time, they are taught actively that right and wrong will differ for different people. Do what is right. But we won't tell you what is right. Do what is right. But when you do wrong you will be sorry.

We send our young people to a University campus without the tools they need. They have no map. They have no compass. Within a few weeks we can overhear phone conversations in which young people are angry and disillusioned. They had high hopes which are crumbling. Within a few months, or a few years, some of us who can be identified as pastors find that young people come to us, if they are brave enough.

"I got involved in drugs and promiscuity. I thought it would be fun. It sucked me in and I don't know how to escape. I'm ashamed. I'm lost."

"I needed to keep my grades up so I started paying for research papers. I've been cheating on all my tests and assignments. I have no idea how to learn. I know I'm lying in all that I do, but I don't know how to escape."

"I found out that I'm not as smart as I thought I was. I can't do it all. I turned to performance enhancing drugs. Then I added narcotics to try to rest. So now I'm stupid and buzzed all the time. I can't quit. I'm trapped."

No map. No compass.

Do you think it takes courage to stand up in church and say that you are a sinner, that you have sinned against God and your fellow man, and that you need God's mercy? Try getting the courage together to have that talk with a parent. Try having the talk with a pastor after all your culture has told you about Christianity having no answers. It takes some guts. In a certain way, we have to come to the end of ourselves so we can seek help.

My job with Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is to help people seek that help as soon as possible. I'd rather see a campus where nobody is stuck in a bad way. I'd rather see a campus where people know who to turn to if they need a map or a compass. I'd rather see a whole world that worked that way. We have a lot to do on the way there. And all the while I have to remember that I'm not a map. I'm not a compass.

We confess that it is only through the forgiveness available in Jesus that anybody will find the stability to stand in this challenging world. It is only in Christ that we find our identity. He is the only compass who works. And his Word is the sure revelation of who we are and who he is. This is where we find our location.

Please join with me in prayer as we seek to reach to this University community. We want to care not only for the students, but also for the thousands of faculty, staff, and administration members. They all face special challenges of their own. Every last person in the community needs a compass. Everyone needs a map. And when we aren't quite certain where we are located on that map, a pastor who is familiar with the territory is awfully helpful. We may not be the map or the compass, but we know who is.

Please, if you have not already done so, join our group of 1000 prayer supporters. Sign up for the email newsletter, follow us on Facebook and Twitter, interact with our blog, and pray for our community.

Please consider being one of the Wittenberg Door 300—a kind group of people who contribute financially on a regular basis. We are not up to 300 as yet, and we will certainly not turn away any extra contributors. There is always something that could stand to be done, almost all of which costs money in one way or another.

Here's what we are doing with those resources. I spend a lot of my ministry work week on campus, being visible to students, staff, faculty, and administrators. I'm available to the community. I wear the clerical "uniform" to give a sign, and it's clear to most everyone. There's a pastor on duty on call, there for you.

In that campus time I'm building Bible discussion groups. Right now there are two going on a weekly basis. We look at the lectionary readings for the week, as well as anything else the occasion brings up. Soon I expect to have a third group starting. My goal is five. By God's grace we are able to look to the Scripture and see what God would say to us.

Not everyone in the community can or will come to a Bible discussion. We can deal with that. I go and visit people in different place - their work sites, offices, catching people in the hallways and the common areas. They know I'm there to encourage them, to pray for them, and to pray with them. Just as the pastor visiting in the hospital often ends up ministering to family, friends, and medical staff, the campus pastor ends up meeting and ministering to others all the time. And yes, we have one of the largest hospital systems in Missouri. That's part of my parish too. My goal is to make visit and prayer contact with approximately 60 people per month. So far, we're up to about 30.

Communicating with one another and with God is central to our finding our place on the map and our understanding the compass. We promise to make ourselves available anywhere on or near campus that there is interest.

There are more opportunities before us in a community of some 50,000 than we can ever take up. By God's grace, with your partnership, we can bring the Gospel, the true, unhindered news of God's grace for sinners, that news which every one of us needs working in our lives, to more and more people. What outcome are we looking for? Some is very hard to measure. But we can get some indicator of it as we see men and women committed to Christ, living out their commitment in the context of the local church, and working out that Christian walk for the rest of their lives. It's a great opportunity and a great outcome.

Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry believes that God's Word is powerful and active. Thank you for joining with us as we watch the Word of God at work.

The Theology of the Lord's Supper

by Rev. Dan Dapelo

During the 2016 TAALC Pastor's Conference, 3 pastors from TAALC gave presentations on the Sacrament of the Altar, or Holy Communion. Each presentation was informative about our doctrinal heritage, insightful about how our churches receive the Lord's Supper, and instrumental to our future as a church body.

The first presentation, given by Rev. Eric Ishimaru, dealt with the history and the theology of the Lord's Supper. At the time of the Reformation, Holy Communion had become a bit of a parody of what it once was. The practice of the Church had become radically different than what the Scriptures stated. The three major theological issues in the Sacrament that were disputed and fought by Luther in the Reformation were: 1) The priest's work of re-sacrificing the elements (bread and wine) had taken precedent over the miracle of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. In summary, the action in worship was no longer placed upon God's gift to man, but more upon man's action to God. 2) The priest's moral status affected the efficacy of the Sacrament. Namely, the work of God in the Sacrament was more dependent on the moral state of the one giving. 3) Though Jesus states, *'this is my body... this is my blood,'* it is only a symbolic meaning, or simply that He could only be present spiritually. In essence, Luther refuted the view of Zwingli that Communion is a mere commemoration. 4) Luther countered Calvin's view as well, which states that Christ is only present spiritually in the body and blood. Luther defended the Lord's Supper in



the Reformation, and we still defend it today. It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted for us Christians to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins.

The second presentation, given by Rev. Rich Shields, showed the various ways our churches practice Holy Communion. It was incredible to see the vast array of uniqueness in each congregation of The AALC! Rev. Shields revealed how some congregations use different hymnals

and liturgies, some receive Communion more frequently than others, some use only a chalice, while others use only individual cups. Rev. Shields summed it up well, stating: "We are common in confession, yet very different in how it is put together."

The final presentation, given by Rev. Joe Dapelo, stated that the leadership of The AALC and Commission for Doctrine and Church Relations(CDCR) is working on solidifying an official position for our church body. Currently, The AALC has no official position on the admission to the Lord's Supper. Over the last number of years, a position has been asked about by our members, pastors, and those interested in The AALC. As a result, the CDCR has evaluated a number of documents and are in the process of formulating a position paper to bring before the church body. The goal is to equip the pastors and congregations of The AALC with a clear and concise exposition on the Scriptures. The hope is to have a document ready for the General Convention in 2018, so keep your eyes open to what will be coming!

2016 Road to Reformation Seminar: Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms

By Don Mathsen

Approximately 125 individuals from throughout North Dakota and Northwestern Minnesota attended the 2016 “Road to Reformation” Seminar on Friday, November 4, 2016, in Grand Forks, ND, at the Hilton Garden Inn. Initiated by Kongsvinger Lutheran Church of rural Oslo, MN, the Seminar was jointly sponsored by 14 congregations within the region representing churches affiliated with four different Lutheran groups and Lutheran student groups from the UND and NDSU campuses.

The theme of the Seminar was “Moral Decline in America – Will the Election Matter?” The specific topics under that theme were the doctrines of “Natural Law” and the “Two Kingdoms.” Both topics were part of the discourse of the 16th century Reformation and have significant implications for understanding a Christian worldview toward our citizenship in the “Heavenly Kingdom” and the “Civil Kingdom” in today’s culture and church.

The concept of ‘natural law’ was probably new to most in the audience. Dr. Maas gave an in-depth presentation on the somewhat abstract topic, explaining how the Ten Commandments—while the revealed declaration of God’s law—were a manifestation of the ‘law written on the heart’ of all men (i.e. it was a sin to commit murder, steal, commit adultery, etc. long before the Ten Commandments). Likewise, all men and women today have that same law written on their hearts even if they’ve never entered the church door or don’t acknowledge it. Therefore, the appeal for morality can be made outside of the Bible. In today’s society, that may be the most effective approach. Society has changed such that once the Bible is thrown into the discussion, a lot of folks just ‘tune out’ as if someone is trying to ‘throw their religion’ on them or to promote a political agenda.

Pastor Rosebrough gave a brief history of how much of the visible church today has adopted a theology departing from sound Biblical exegesis with roots in movements of the late 1700’s. Specifically, he read from the sermons of Harry Emerson Fosdick in the 1920’s to illustrate how the deviation from Biblical teaching has come primarily from within the church—not secular society. He stated the secular press often does a better job of pointing out false teaching in the church today than what comes from pulpits because few pastors want to be in dispute with fellow churchmen. Thus, the relationship of the Two Kingdoms is important to understand today since we have, in a general sense, developed two sides within the American church using politics to promote different social agendas. With the understanding of the Two Kingdoms of the Reformation, the Christian has different responsibilities within the right-hand kingdom of the Church and the left-hand kingdom of Civil Government just as the Two Kingdoms have different roles as they impact society.

The recordings of the Seminar presentations are posted at
<http://www.kongsvingerchurch.org/special-events/>



Top Photo: Seminar Attendees while Pastor Chris Rosebrough Speaks. Middle Photo: Seminar Attendees During Break. Bottom Photo: Seminar Attendees while Dr. Korey Maas Speaks

New Year's Worship Service

by Rev. Joe Marsh

Worship services on New Year's Day are traditionally nothing to shout about. Often people are worn out from the holiday and family celebrations. However, January 1 of 2017 was a special day for the people of Calvary Lutheran Congregation in St. Paul, MN.

We were blessed with a Christmas Cantata that morning (the second Sunday of Christmas) presented by a neighboring Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Church, Emanuel Lutheran from Inver Grove Heights, MN. The pastor of Emanuel, Rev. Tom Evans, generously changed their normal morning schedule so that 50 or more of their members could lead our worship service.

In addition to their choir, they brought along about a dozen instrumentalists with violins, drums, horns, and other instruments directed by their Music Director Amy Schutte. One of our congregation members commented on how moving the music was for her, saying, "I wept through the whole thing."

We can never repay Emanuel for their kindness. It was an unusually generous gift from our brothers and sisters in Christ. Sometimes we get so involved with our own projects and programs we forget to reach out to other Christians with God's Love. Thanks Emanuel for you gift!



Photo by Rev. Joe Marsh

The American Association of Lutheran Churches invites you to attend
The 500th Anniversary of The Reformation Celebration
 October 31-November 1, 2017
 Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Deephaven in Wayzata, MN
 18360 Minnetonka Blvd, Wayzata, MN 55391-3232



Registration Fee: \$75 per person

Registration Deadline: September 1, 2017

Make checks payable to: The AALC

Mail Payment and Registration Form to:

The AALC 921 E. Dupont Road #920 Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Please detach the Registration form here, fill out the information, and include with payment.

The 500th Anniversary of The Reformation Celebration

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Congregational Membership: _____ Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Faith Lutheran's Sixth Annual Live Nativity

by Lori Leonard Reyman

Faith Lutheran Church of Holstein, Iowa held its 6th Annual Live Nativity Portrait Event on Saturday, Dec. 3 in front of the church, which is located on the town's Main Street. The event has been held each year since this relatively young congregation has owned its church building situated along U.S. Route 59 in Western Iowa, a highway which extends from the Canadian to the Mexican border.

Faith Lutheran was organized in the fall of 2010 after several long-time members of the local ELCA church, bound together by a common belief in the inerrancy of the Scriptures began gathering together to pray and worship. After forming their own congregation, they purchased one of Holstein's historic Main St. brick buildings – which had through the years housed a grocery store, restaurants and several bars – in January 2011, and converted it into their church home. Every Christmas since they opened their doors they have hosted this unique Live Nativity event in conjunction with the town's annual downtown Christmas celebration on the first Saturday of December.

Complete with live sheep, goats, calves, donkeys, straw bales and characters in costume, the event offers passersby the opportunity to not only enjoy the scene, but to don a costume, join in and have a free portrait taken with the true "star" of Christmas. Participants are encouraged to use the portrait as their annual Christmas card or just enjoy the photo as a keepsake.

"Everyone loves to go to the mall and have their kids pose with Santa, and that's great," says Bridget Friedrichsen, who, as part of the Faith in Action Committee, helps organize the event every year. "But we wanted to offer families the option of having their portrait taken in a setting that commemorates the true meaning of Christmas."

The church offers the costumes for Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds and wise men, as well as providing the animals, stable backdrop, and a professional photographer for no cost. Faith members dress up as all the characters to make sure the Nativity is always posed and ready for anyone driving or walking by. But as visitors and guests stop, they are encouraged to step into the scene as well.

In addition to Friedrichsen, Sheryl Leonard, Lori Leonard Reyman and Tracy Terry serve on the Faith in Action Committee, and the entire congregation chips in one way or another to set up, organize, help with costumes, play a character, visit with guests, gather contact information and clean up.

We have had several newspapers and radio stations cover our event and our pastor and committee members have been on television promoting the event over the years. It has generated a lot of attention, and every time there's a mention in the media, we are getting the word out about Jesus' birth, doing what Jesus' commanded of us in the Great Commission, to 'go' and spread the news and make disciples.



Photo by Lori Leonard Reyman

Characters and crew for the 2016 Faith Lutheran Live Nativity Portrait Event in Holstein, Iowa, included (from left): Angel Olivia Schechinger; Wise Man Ron Parker; Wise Man Pastor Chris Schroder; Shepherd Noah Schroder; Photographer/Crew Lori Leonard Reyman; Shepherd Blake Friedrichsen; Angel Sara Schroder; "Joseph" Alan Friedrichsen; "Mary" Bridget Friedrichsen; Angel Katrina Van Norman; Shepherd Tyler Friedrichsen; Shepherd Calder Schechinger; Wise Man Mark Leonard; Crew Sheryl Leonard; Crew Erin Leonard; Shepherd Boyd Meyer; Crew Lana Conover; Angel Alice Friedrichsen; Shepherd Dave Borchers and (not pictured) Crew Deb Friedrichsen; Crew Tracy Terry.

The American Association of Lutheran Churches

921 East Dupont Road, #920

Fort Wayne, IN 46825-1551

Address Service Requested



The
**American Association
of Lutheran Churches**

The Evangel — Issue 182

March/April 2017

The American Association of Lutheran Churches

Phone: (260) 452-3213

Fax: (260) 452-3215

Email: theaalc@taalc.org

Visit Us On The Web
www.taalc.org

The Evangel

The Evangel, a publication of The American Association of Lutheran Churches, is published bimonthly. A one-year subscription is \$10.00.

Mail your check and this form to:

The AALC

921 East Dupont Rd #920

Fort Wayne IN 46825-1551

_____ New Subscription _____ Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Congregation _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Subscription \$ _____

Additional donation for The AALC \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____