

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

The *Omaha World Herald* recently had an amazing-but-true article explaining that the latest trend among vegetarians is . . . eating meat!

“CONCORD, N.H. (AP)— Even after five years, Christy Pugh has no trouble sticking to her vegetarian diet. The secret to her success? Eating meat.

“Sometimes I feel like I'm a bad vegetarian, that I'm not strict enough or good enough,” the 28-year-old bookkeeper from Concord said. ‘I really like vegetarian food, but I'm just not 100% committed.’

“Pugh is one of a growing number of vegetarians whose loose adherence to the meat-free diet is transforming a decades-old movement and the industry that feeds it. . . Publishers of vegetarian magazines also are taking notice. . . many have softened their approach to meatless diets, even at risk of alienating the true vegetarians. . . Now the recipes regularly include meat. . . A similar change occurred at the 30-year-old *Vegetarian Times*, considered the standard-bearer of vegetarianism. . . the changes were made after a survey showed that 70 percent of the magazine's 300,000 plus readers weren't vegetarian.”

No, I am not making this up! Although not a vegetarian myself, I can certainly sympathize with the “true believer” vegetarians, who are described in the article as very distraught over having their movement hijacked by meat-eaters. For, it reminds me of the clergy, bishops, even entire denominations, who, like “meat-eating vegetarians,” openly renounce the basic tenets of the faith and yet want to still be considered Christian.

Perhaps the most startling recent example of this trend is Bishop Joe Sprague of Chicago, from a major denomination, who in a 2002 lecture at Iliff Seminary in Denver repudiated traditional Christian beliefs about Jesus' deity, virgin birth, and physical resurrection as “idolatry.” He described the virgin birth as a “theological myth,” and blasphemously asserted instead that Jesus was born as the human son of Joseph and Mary, through “natural procreation,” and “did not possess transhuman, supernatural powers.”

Rather than a resurrected Jesus, he believes in an abstract “resurrected Jesus power,” and he pointedly rejected the central teaching of Scripture, that Christ died on the cross for the sins of humanity: “Obviously, such an understanding . . . leaves no room for me to affirm the substitutionary atonement theory that portrays Jesus' blood on the cross as satisfying an angry deity through one majestic sacrificial human death. . . The concept of a blood sacrifice is superstition at best . . .”

Not surprisingly, he said he must “dissent from christocentric exclusivism which holds that Jesus is the only way to God's gift of salvation,” which he described as “arrogant.” From his speech, it was not clear whether this Christian bishop even believes in a personal deity, or only in a more abstract life force. “God is not a supreme being out there in the beyond,” he said.

Unfortunately, Bishop Sprague is just one of many bishops, professors and other clergy from several mainline denominations who recently have openly rejected the fundamental teachings of Christianity:

- Several years ago Fortress Press published a book by Gerd Luedemann, professor of theology at the University of Gottingen, asserting that Christ did *not* rise from the dead and his body rotted in the grave. He says the four

accounts of, and many other references to, Christ's resurrection in the New Testament are based only on a mythical legend, not a real event.

- Consider the implications of what *Christian Dogmatics*, also published by Fortress Press, asserts concerning Holy Baptism and Holy Communion: “we cannot be certain that Jesus mandated any continuing rites for his followers”! Thus, this standard, widely-used seminary textbook concludes that Christ never spoke the Words of Institution establishing these Sacraments, but they are merely later traditions concocted by the Church. Concerning the Bible, *Christian Dogmatics* says: “Today it is impossible to assume the literal historicity of all things recorded. What the biblical authors report is not accepted as a literal transcript of the factual course of events.”

- Bishop John Shelby Spong, also from a mainline denomination, has written several books rejecting in detail all the major tenets of Christianity, and once actually preached an Easter Sunday sermon in his cathedral expounding on why Christ did *not* rise from the dead! He has called for the repudiation of Christianity in favor of creating a new religion, better suited to the 21st century.

- In a famous case in yet another mainline denomination, a clergyman was allowed to remain in good standing even though he refuses to state just the simple confession “Jesus is God.” He adamantly asserts he cannot say this, because he doesn't believe that Jesus is God.

- A survey of clergy in one of the largest denominations in the United States asked, “I accept Jesus' physical resurrection as an objective historical fact in the same sense that Lincoln's physical death was a historical fact.” Only 49% agreed, 51% disagreed. This same survey asked, “Do you believe the

Bible to be the Word of God?" Astoundingly, only 18% said "Yes," 82% said "No."

• Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, head of another mainline denomination, admitted: "Broadly speaking, [our] Church is in conflict with Scripture. The only way to justify it is to say, well, Jesus talks about the Spirit guiding the church and guiding believers and bringing to their awareness things they cannot deal with yet. So one would have to say that the mind of Christ operative in the church over time . . . has led the church to in effect contradict the words of the Gospel."

How can those who so openly reject these basic tenets of the faith still consider themselves Christians? In the same way that those who eat meat can still be considered vegetarians!

The article about "meat-eating vegetarians" says that they are called "flexitarians." There is a great deal of pressure in our world today for Christians to be religious "flexitarians," to discard those Biblical teachings which are considered "politically incorrect" and out-of-step with modern thinking, and be more "flexible" on doctrinal and moral issues.

St. Paul warned of this in 2 Timothy 4:3-4: "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."

Crossnotes

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April, 2004

Volume 2

Number 4



Community Easter Sunrise Service

Easter Sunday, April 11

Sunrise Service—7:00am

Easter Breakfast—8:00am

Second Easter Service with Holy Communion—9:30am

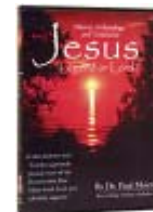
All Events Held at Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Freewill Offering Taken to Defray Breakfast Expenses

All Invited—Everyone Welcome!

It is important to note that, though we lament these developments in some other denominations, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod does *not* teach that only members of the Missouri Synod are going to heaven. The first President of the LCMS, Dr. C.F.W. Walther, put it this way: "Though we esteem our Church highly, may this abominable fanatical notion be far from us, that our Lutheran Church is the alone-saving Church! The true Church extends throughout the world and is found in all denominations . . . Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ and is a member of his spiritual body is a member of the Church. . ."

St. Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 10:12, "So, if you think you are standing firm, take heed that you do not fall." We are grateful that our own church body has perhaps the two largest seminaries in the United States which still teach unreservedly that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, Word of God. But, we must always "take heed" against the trend to become religious "flexitarians," and firmly stick to the teachings of God's Word.

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Jesus: Legend or Lord?

Is there any evidence for Jesus outside the Bible? Is the Biblical account of Jesus historically and factually accurate?

We are exploring these and other important question about Jesus' life, crucifixion and resurrection in a new eight-week Bible Class, featuring a DVD with Rev. Dr. Paul Maier, a Lutheran pastor, noted author, and professor of ancient history at Western Michigan State University.

Each week we see a 25-30 minute segment of Dr. Maier's captivating presentation, followed by time for discussion. Everyone is invited to join in Sundays at 10:30am for this fascinating look at Jesus as seen from the perspective of a noted historian.



Missionaries of the Month

Each month we remember in prayer in our worship specific missionaries sponsored around the world by our congregation, through our Synod and related organizations. You are encouraged to remember them also in your personal and family prayers.

April 4
Stefanie Antoine
Guatemala

Stefanie teaches in Guatemala City and also travels to the eastern and west coasts assisting The Lutheran Church of Guatemala in reaching out to others. Pray for her safety in this country in which there has been unrest and violence against Christian missionaries.

April 11
Rev. Douglas & Barbara Reinders
Russia

Rev. Reinders teaches theology in the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church which is in partnership with the LCMS in Russia. Give thanks for the great success of our outreach in this former Communist country, a miracle that could not have been imagined 15 years ago, and pray for continued growth of the Lutheran Church there.

April 18
Laina Baily
Hungary

Laina teaches English as a second language. Pray that God would use her as a tool through which the Holy Spirit can create saving faith in the lives of people of Hungary.

April 25
Roy and Sandy Culley
Taiwan

After completing one missionary tour of service, the Culleys have re-

Easter Lily Donations



Thank you to all those who donated so many beautiful lilies to beautify our church this Easter. Any additional donations will be included in the May newsletter.

Given By

In Memory or Honor Of

Mike & Daniell Bargstadt	Father, George Bargstadt
Doug & Sue Jansen	Father & Paul
Paul & Diana Kaardal	Jetmund Kaardal
Doug & Janet Martin	Grandparents
Jane Michels	Husband, Jim Michels
Mable Schibonski	Husband, Elmer Schibonski
Joey & Marcy Schroeder	Sister, Kelly Schroeder
Lyle & Linda Schuknecht	Fathers, Eldred & Donald
Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts	Father, Leroy Vogts, & Grandparents
Ron & Jeannette Yockey	Parents

Any Additional Donations Will Be Included in the May Newsletter

turned to teach at Concordia Academy in Taiwan. Pray that the Lord will keep them safe in a country that is experiencing severe political strife and upheaval and that their work may not be hindered by the struggles in that country.

encouraged to reserve a place for your child, or if you have friends, neighbors, relatives, etc. that may be interested please let them know to reserve a place, so that they will not be disappointed.

Classes include Mom's Day Out for two year-olds, and Preschool sessions for three, four and five year-olds. Holy Cross Preschool is blessed with a dedicated, professional staff, and an excellent facility. Most of all, education takes place in a loving, Christian atmosphere.

Holy Cross also offers After School Care. Children thru 6th grade enjoy a variety of supervised activities from 3:00pm-6:00pm. Bus service is provided directly to Holy Cross from both Dakota Valley and Sacred Heart.

For more information speak with Board of Education chair Terese Vogts or call 235-1688.

"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord" (Psalm 78:4).



Register Now for Preschool

We praise God that over 25 children are already registered for Holy Cross Preschool for next year! Classes this year were all full or nearly full, so you are

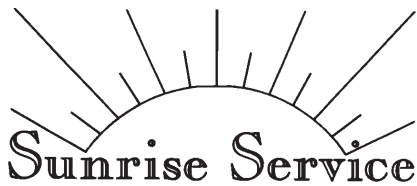
Easter Egg Hunt



Holy Cross is again sponsoring a Community Easter Egg Hunt, on Saturday, April 10 (day before Easter) at 10:30am on the church grounds. This event is for the entire community, and all children up to age 10 are welcome. In case of rain, it will be held inside the church. (Pray for good weather!)

Last year over 40 children attended and this year we are preparing for about double that number. There will be plenty of eggs, prizes, snacks and an Easter video. There are no charges or fees for this free community event.

We already have enough eggs and prize items but donations to help defray expenses would be appreciated. Place in offering plate marked "Easter Egg Hunt."



Community Sunrise Service at Holy Cross

You are invited to a Community Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, April 11 at 7:00am, held in the sanctuary at Holy Cross. This simple service will feature the Easter story and favorite Easter hymns. A second Easter Service, with Holy Communion, will be held at 9:30am.

Along with Christmas Eve Candlelight Services, the Easter Sunrise Service is one of the most moving and meaningful worship opportunities of the year. It is especially memorable for children.

Holy Week

SCHEDULE



Maundy Thursday

April 8, 7:00pm
"This Is the Feast of Victory"
 Exodus 12:1-14

Jesus, I Will Ponder Now, On Your Holy Passion!

Bring your family and holiday guests to celebrate the real significance of Easter. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite family, friends, neighbors, etc.—everyone enjoys Easter Sunrise services!



April 9, 7:00pm
"We Preach Christ Crucified"
 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

additional donations will be listed in future newsletters.

A sign-up sheet to provide flowers for worship in 2004 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.

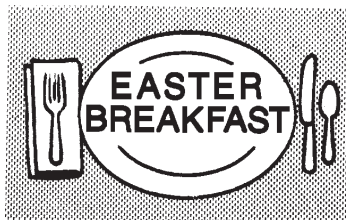
March 7
 Mabel Schibonski
 Elmer's Birthday

March 14
 Doug & Janet Martin
 Doug's Birthday

March 21
 Joey, Marcy & Bryce Schroeder
 Brady's Birthday

April 11
 Paul & Diana Kaardal
 Alex's Birthday
 See Also Easter Lily List

April 18
 Rev. Kevin & Terese Vogts
 Kevin's Birthday



Following the Easter Sunrise service, everyone is invited to stay for an Easter Breakfast, also at the church, sponsored by the Board of Evangelism. A free-will offering will be taken to help defray expenses for the breakfast.

Flowers in Worship



Thank you for these flower donations to beautify our worship. Any

April 25
Joey, Marcy & Bryce Schroeder
Brady's Baptism Birthday



. . . Joey Schroeder for permanently mounting the coat racks on an attractive board, with help from Doug Jansen in installation.

. . . Doug Jansen for the new stands to receive the individual Communion cups.

. . . Doug Jansen and Paul Kaardal for assembling the new cabinet in the entryway, which was purchased with memorial funds.

. . . Jacob and Pastor Vogts for creating the "old rugged cross" for Lent from a Christmas tree trunk.



April 4
Kylie Martin

April 11
Jacob Vogts

April 18
Casey Johnson

April 25
Austin Munns



April 4
Dennis Melstad

Community Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, April 10 • 10:30am

On Church Grounds at
Dakota Dunes Boulevard and Bison Trail

Up to Age 10 • Plenty of Eggs!

Prizes • Snacks • Easter Video

All Children Invited—Non-Members Welcome!

No Charges or Fees

April 11
Mike Bargstadt

April 18
Joey Schroeder

April 25
Greg Huibregtse



by Todd Roeske
Philippines

In 1995, missionaries Don and Joanne Treglown and my wife Kim and I sat together at a hotel in General Santos City. As our children played in the pool, we prayed and planned for our work among the Tagakaulo people. At that point, there was only one Tagakaulo congregation. In faith, we set a goal. We said that by God's power, we would *urgently plant a Tagakaulo Lutheran Church body* that is: firmly based in God's Word, training leaders and members and evangelizing the lost!

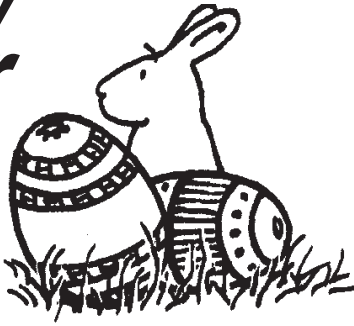


We said that we would know that we had reached that goal when we had 5-8 Tagakaulo Pastors trained. Those pastors would be firmly based in God's Word. They would be capable of train-

ing others, and they would be the equippers to spur the Tagakaulo members on to sharing the Gospel with their family, friends, and neighbors.

It has been almost nine years since that meeting. There is now a Tagakaulo Lutheran Church body, The Tagakaulo Lutheran Church of Christ in the Philippines, with 20 plus congregations. Three new congregations are in formation. There are 12 men studying to be Pastors. Very probably nine or more of those will graduate in March, 2005. It looks like, by God's grace, our goal is becoming a reality. When I think of the wonderful privilege that God has given me to be a part of this work, I am humbled and amazed. I have made mistake after mistake and yet God has made the Church here a reality—Praise God!

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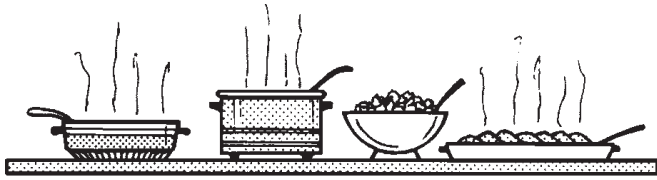
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For More Information Call 232-9117



Rev. Kevin Vogts, Pastor
149 Bison Trail P.O. Box 1902
Dakota Dunes, SD 57049

Crossnotes
Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church

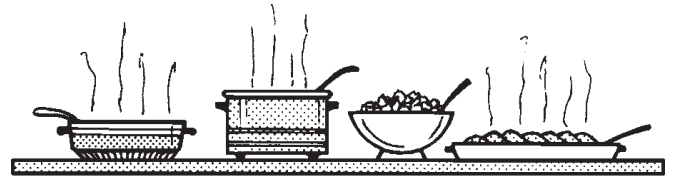


Potluck Dinner and Quarterly Voters Meeting

Sunday, April 18
After Worship
(Approximately 11:30am)

Please come for a delicious dinner and fellowship, and then stay, if you are able, for the quarterly meeting to help administer the business affairs of our congregation.

Everyone is asked to please bring a main dish and either a side dish, salad, or dessert.

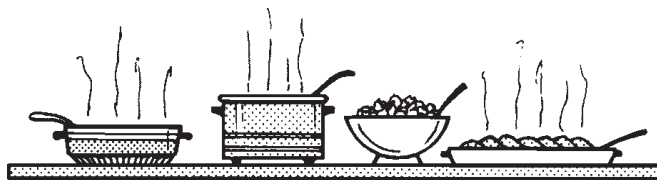


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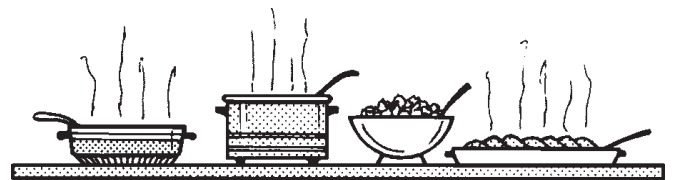


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