



WISCONSIN  
LUTHERAN  
INSTITUTIONAL  
MINISTRIES

# COMPASSION

Summer 2006

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## A "SECRET" CHRISTIAN

by Chaplain Ken Wenzel

Have you ever met a "secret" Christian? Remember Joseph of Arimathea? John tells us: "*Joseph was a disciple of Jesus but secretly because he was afraid of the Jews.*" (John 19:38) Not until Jesus' burial did Joseph reveal his faith. His once secret faith is now publicly proclaimed in the passion history of Christ.

Lu was a mother whose infant was very sick in the hospital. As the pediatric chaplain, I stopped by to see how things were going. She told me that she was Hmong and that her husband was a leading shaman for her people. She talked about some of their spiritual practices which sounded strange to my Christian ears.

### HER LEARNING ABOUT JESUS HAD TO BE A SECRET

Then she surprised me. She put all the Hmong practices in a bag of superstition and called them "foolish." She told me that she was a "secret" Christian. She had to attend some of the foolish practices to please her husband, but her heart was far from the pagan rituals. Through some friends she had come to learn about Jesus. She looked to Him as her Lord and Savior. She

knew only a little about Jesus. She had to be very careful in her learning and believing. It was a secret. Her husband had hints of her interest in Christianity. He was determined to not let her become a Christian, but she already was. Similar to Joseph she was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because she was afraid of her husband.

### MAYBE SOME DAY SHE WOULD REVEAL HER SECRET

Since her husband was gone that day, she gladly sat down with me to learn more about Jesus. I was surprised how much she knew from short talks with her friends. She was eager to learn more and

SECRET - CONTINUED ON PG 4



## MEET THE STAFF: WELCOME PASTOR JOSEPH RADSEK



Pastor Joe Radsek is the newest member of the WLIM staff. He is a second career pastor with a "blue collar" background, who comes to WLIM after

13 years of parish ministry experience at Redeemer Lutheran Church of Cedarburg, WI. During his time at Redeemer, Pastor Radsek also served as a prison chaplain at the Ozaukee County Jail. At WLIM, Pastor Radsek will continue to do prison ministry and will serve as Resource Development Director. He will join other workers in making WLIM presentations in schools and to adult groups, will guest preach for WLIM Sundays in area congregations, and will bring additional computer expertise to the WLIM office.

Pastor Radsek's wife, Dawn, is an RN who works in the cancer treatment unit of Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee. The Radseks have been blessed with three daughters, Mrs. Kami Jo Lipps of Holman, WI; Kyra, a student at Flagler College, in St. Augustine, FL and Katelyn, a student at MATC. The family has recently purchased a home and moved to West Bend, WI.

In his spare time, Pastor Radsek is an avid cyclist who logs thousands of miles a year, riding outdoors even during those frosty days of Wisconsin winters.

We welcome Pastor Radsek in the Savior's name and pray that our Heavenly Father will richly bless his ministry at WLIM!

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# TO GOD BE THE GLORY

You are familiar with the hymn, "To God be the glory, great things He has done." This verse reminds me of Isaiah's inspired words, "Our Lord and our God has done glorious things, amazing things, wondrous things, miraculous things."

The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies, the work of His hands." (Ps 19:1) Praise to His glorious name the whole earth is filled with His glory." (Ps 72:19) For proof we have the mountains, the seas, the fertile farmlands and the desert in blossom, the Lord's beauty and splendor.

## DON'T MISS THE SIGNS OF GOD'S GLORY

But often those "behind the walls" do not see these signs of God's glory. WLIM takes very seriously the responsibility of sharing God's glory to those in institutions that often fail to understand the glory and love of the Triune God. WLIM proclaims to thousands in institutions, "The Lord will be your everlasting light, your God will be your Glory."

This important message is not easily understood or believed by those with problems, temptations, suffering, sickness, loss of freedom or perhaps facing death. But the Holy Spirit works through the Word, and many do come to know the glory that will be revealed to us when we meet Jesus face-to-face.

**Glory be to him who loved us and washed us from each spot and stain.  
Glory be to him who calls us to share this news in institutions.**

Would you also share the glory? WLIM continues to train lay volunteers for work in nursing homes, county jails, mental health facilities and sometimes the penitentiary. Join with us. Share this amazing message with those in institutions:

*Glory be to Jesus, who in bitter pain,*

*Poured for me the lifeblood from his sacred veins.*

*Grace and life eternal in that blood I find.*

*Bless be his compassion, infinitely kind.*

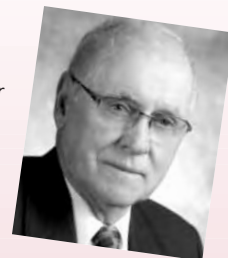
*Lift we, then, our voices, swell the flood;*

*Louder, still and louder, Praise the precious blood.*

*- Christian Worship #103*

Lay Ministry Coordinator Franklin Gauger

Franklin Gauger recruits, trains, and communicates with lay ministry volunteers and leads Bible classes in area retirement and assisted living centers.



# AFRAID TO SHARE JESUS?

There was a time when I was reluctant to visit people that were dying. It was just emotional. I was afraid of choking up and not being able to talk. I thought this was a sign of weakness or immaturity, but I found encouragement from reading about Jesus' emotions when he talked with Mary and Martha about the death of Lazarus. (John 11:35) Now I'm pretty much over my fears and I want to encourage you, too, to share your faith.

## IT'S GUARANTEED IN WRITING

It was in the summer of 2003 when I met Larry in his room at the Lutheran Home in Milwaukee. Larry was a 77 year old lifetime bachelor and severely diabetic. His right leg had been amputated and he had a stubborn infection in his left foot. He was not very talkative, but he was cooperative when I asked him questions. He was baptized in a Lutheran church, but when his family moved he never went back to church. He was drafted into the Army near the end of WWII and served in Japan. When we talked about the destruction of Nagasaki by an atom bomb and the many civilians who died, I saw an opportunity to ask him if he ever thought about death. I asked him, "If you died today do you know for sure where your soul would be?" When he didn't answer, I helped him by asking, "Would you be heaven or hell?" I told him that I am 100% sure that when I die I will be in heaven. And, I have that guarantee in writing. It's written by God Himself in the Bible. Then I asked Larry another question, "If God asked you, 'Why should I let you into Heaven,' what would you say?"

## DON'T BE AFRAID TO SHARE JESUS

After another long silent pause I asked, "Well, what do you think most people would say?" As expected, he came up with the popular wrong answers like, "I try to obey all the laws... I don't smoke or drink," so we looked at several Bible passages to find the correct answers. Just as we finished it was time for him to go to lunch. I told him I would like to tell him more about heaven, but I wouldn't be able to come back for two weeks because I was going out of state.

Two weeks later I had a voice message from the Volunteer Director that Larry had died. I was really shocked and experienced mixed feelings. Did I wait too long to talk about the Savior? We did talk about the way to heaven.



After reading Larry's obituary I decided to go to the funeral home to meet his family. I told the family that I didn't know if Larry had a saving faith when he died, but we had talked about the way to heaven. They seemed very appreciative of my visits to Larry and, as I left the funeral home, I thanked God that I had the opportunity to also talk to the family about my Savior.

## SHARING THE SAVIOR'S HOUSE

This is an experience I had with just one resident out of many that I have called on during the past few years. I've had visits with some who are not Lutheran, but it's not my purpose to try to convert them to our Lutheran faith. I simply share the Savior's love and forgiveness.

I might do more in my visits than some others may feel comfortable doing, but that's okay because it's God pleasing just to sit and listen with empathy to a lonely person in a nursing home. Recall what Jesus told his disciples before his ascension: "I tell you the truth. Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me." (Matt 24:40)

The Lord will bless your efforts to share his Word. We never know when the Holy Spirit will bring a dying person to a saving faith!

*Gene Schultz*  
*Lay Volunteer and former Board Member*



## OUR NEW DISPLAY

SECRET – CONTINUED FROM PG 1

did. When I offered to give her a Bible to take home, she was thankful but refused because she was afraid of her husband. I felt bad, but she cheered me up by telling me that she would keep learning more about Jesus in bits and pieces. Maybe some day she would be able to go public with her faith. In Jesus' name we prayed for blessings on her sick baby and on her secret journey with Christ. Pray for the safety and comfort of the "secret" Christians in the world!

Chaplain Wenzel's primary ministry is conducted at the University Hospital and the Children's Hospital, as well as two other Madison, WI area hospitals. A 1973 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Chaplain Wenzel joined WLIM in 1997.



## NEEDED: MENTORS FOR EX-OFFENDERS

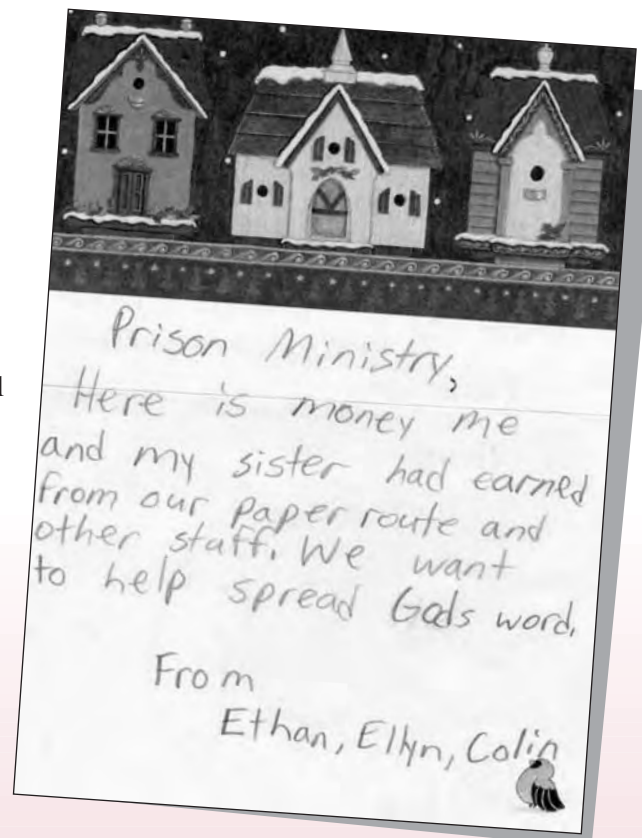
WLIM is pleased to have received a grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to provide training to lay volunteers interested in mentoring newly released ex-offenders. Might you be interested? For more information, please contact Pastor Bob Pasbrig at WLIM at 888-214-6490 or email: pasbrig@wlim.net.



WLIM thanks the Martin Club Charities of Milwaukee for their recent gift to the ministry. Their special gift covered most of the cost of this new table top display. The new display has already been used a number of times at recent WELS gatherings, including district conventions.

## WE ARE THANKFUL OF EVERY GIFT

WLIM is very thankful for every gift, both large and small. The following letter recently came with a very special gift.



# THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN THEY'RE SMARTER THAN YOU THINK



Little Michael and Daniel were watching a movie when I arrived. Fortunately, they were all right with the interruption. Sometimes human contact holds something even more valuable than movie special effects and rapid-fire action. I explained who I was, the “church lady” who comes for Bible studies on Thursdays. I asked what their names were and Michael proudly said that his name came from an angel who fought the devil in the Bible. Michael seemed energetic, talkative and sharp.

## SHARING A BIBLE STORY

The Bible story I shared that day was the Rich Fool. I had a colorful book illustrating the story. Michael relayed some parts of the story to me before we even started. He also went on to tell the story of David and Goliath, a favorite of his. Michael had a gift for remembering details and telling stories with enthusiasm. I couldn't help but think of how God could use this talented little boy for His service. We began talking about how the rich man had many things, but had not seen them as gifts from God. Then I asked, “What has God given you as gifts from Him?” Daniel said a home and family. Michael replied, “He has my mom in prison.” What an odd answer I thought. It turned out that Michael had not seen his mom since he was young and somehow he was sure that her prison stay was something she needed. He was very sad that she did not read the Bible or pray.

## A CHILD'S HOPE

Michael's well-grounded faith had come from his foster family who regularly brought him to church. But then he explained that soon he would be in a new foster home. I know how such a major change can be very hard for children. But Michael had a concern of his own. He said, “I wonder if my new family will take me to church.” We prayed about that. Michael then

witnessed to Daniel and me by quoting a verse that he had been taught. He said he wasn't sure where it was in the Bible, but He knew that God said, “When our father or mother forsake us, God will be there for us.” How true, Michael, how true. And that's what really matters, not how much money we have or even what home we live in, but that the Lord is with us. Only then can we have confidence and peace.

## A PRAYER FOR A GOOD CHRISTIAN FOSTER HOME

I also wonder what Michael's new family will be like. I have heard stories of awful homes, but all I can do is pray for him. This experience prompts me to encourage foster care, especially in good, Christian homes. If God would so lead you, perhaps you could be bringing a “Michael” to church.

As I was leaving the unit, Michael ran up to me with a beautiful flower that he had made out of paper. Call me a packrat, but I'll be keeping that flower on my desk. It is a reminder of an attitude we all need, a reminder of what really is important and valuable – God's care and protection.

*Deaconess Sarah Owens*



*Deaconess Owens works with children and teens in the Milwaukee County Children's Court Center, in the Behavioral Health Treatment Center and various other institutions throughout the state.*

## SPECIAL GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

Your memorial or special gifts to the WLIM operating fund or any WLIM special fund (youth ministry, Grace Oasis, nursing home ministry, etc.) are most appreciated.

<i>IN MEMORY OF</i>	<i>GIVEN BY</i>
Russell Neubauer	Mrs. May Neubauer
Lois Phinney	Rev/Mrs. Elwood Habermann
Wilfred Keller	Mrs. Betty Naumann
Rev. W.G. Hoffmann	Mr/Mrs. Wally Schulz
Richard Raabe	Mrs. Mildred K. Schultz
Gerald Kastens	Rev/Mrs. Charles Iles
Gerald Kastens	Sgt. Charles & Lynn Iles and daughters
Gerald Kastens	Heidi Iles
Gerald Kastens	Peter & Rebecca Iles
Mr. Eisenman	Mrs. Lucille Eisenman
Evelyn Pappenfuss	Mr/Mrs. Earl Pappenfuss
William H. Buchholz	Mr. Willis Buchholz
Cordelia Swenson	Mr/Mrs. Donald Babinec
Gerald Kastens	Mr/Mrs. Kevin Klug & children
Gerald Kastens	Mr/Mrs. Brian Ertman & family

<i>IN HONOR OF</i>	<i>GIVEN BY</i>
Pastor Walter Moll Retirement	Mr. Louis
Trinity Menominee, MI Pastors	Mr/Mrs. Aldo Visintin
Marvin and Gretchen Koch 50th Wedding Anniversary	Jean Mayer
Marvin and Gretchen Koch 50th Wedding Anniversary	Mr/Mrs. Fritz
Marvin and Gretchen Koch 50th Wedding Anniversary	Mr/Mrs. Kenneth Whitby

Dozens of WLIM supporters multiply their gifts to WLIM through the Thrivent “GivingPlus” program. If you are a member of Thrivent (or are willing to become an associate member), call the WLIM office (888-214-6490) and a GivingPlus application form will be mailed to you.

## WHO YA GONNA CALL?

A familiar and often used line in the 1984 movie, “Ghostbusters” was “who ya gonna call . . . Ghostbusters.” WLIM is not the Ghostbusters, but we want you to call Wisconsin Lutheran Institutional Ministries whenever someone you know is incarcerated.

Whether the person in a WELS member or not and whether they’re in a prison or a jail, call WLIM at (414) 259-8122, or 888-214-6490 (e-mail, [wlim@wlim.net](mailto:wlim@wlim.net)). Call even if the prisoner may have already been released.

You may also call our synod’s Special Ministries office in Milwaukee (414-256-3241) or call (507-354-3130), the office of the WELS Prison Ministry. These offices and WLIM share information with each other. A WLIM chaplain will make contact with inmates in the WLIM service area and the WELS Prison Ministry includes any WELS members who are in prison on their “Ministry by Mail” mailing list.

Because I serve at the Dodge Correctional Institution, the intake prison for men who are coming into the Wisconsin state correctional system, I also serve as WLIM’s unofficial “clearing house” for Wisconsin state inmates. After visiting an inmate at Dodge, I refer any inmates being moved elsewhere in the system to the appropriate WLIM chaplain or WELS pastor serving that facility. You may e-mail me (Chaplain Charles Iles) at: [charlesiles@yahoo.com](mailto:charlesiles@yahoo.com).

Even though WLIM is not the Ghostbusters, we want you to call to us whenever someone you know is incarcerated.

*Chaplain Charles Iles, Sr.*

*Chaplain Charles Iles, Sr. is a 1975 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and joined WLIM in 2000 after 25 years of parish ministry in Missouri, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. He serves at several state prisons and the Mental Health Institute.*



# DIVINE TRANSPLANT TO HEAVEN

What is the difference between human and divine transplants? People transplant themselves into different houses and cities. People are placed on a national registry and must wait their turn at the hospital for organ transplants. All human transplants are temporary, and only for our life on earth.

On the other hand, divine transplants have eternal dimensions. God transplanted a rib from Adam to Eve for the procreation of bodies and eternal souls. God transplanted Abraham to the promised land for the coming of the eternal Savior of “all the nations.” God transplanted His Son into mankind to make the needed sacrifice so that sinners can heal with eternal peace and forgiveness. In death the Lord transplants the souls of believers – and some day their bodies - into the eternal blessings of heaven. So what is the difference between human and divine transplants? Human transplants are at best temporary and can be ruined or lost. Divine transplants are forever.

## THE TEMPTING GIFT

Annie needed a lung transplant. Her lungs were badly diseased. She was also very angry and confused about her life and faith. Some of her family and friends were not connected to any faith group, while others were Christian. Like in the case of Job, some of her friends gave her bad advice and told her to live better and pray harder. Confused, Annie concluded that she needed to live rightly with God for better health. She worried that her angry thoughts, bad words, and doubts in the hospital not only kept her in trouble with God, but also hindered her physical healing.

Annie and I had some very long visits about Jesus’ saving death upon the cross for all of her guilt. She came to understand about God’s peace, comfort, and promises. As we prayed for her earthly transplant, we began to talk about her transplanted life on earth and her transplanted life someday in heaven. On earth, a transplanted lung would be a gift from a human donor and a great blessing from God. Yet it would be only a temporary gift. All



people someday will die. With her human transplant, Annie could go home, live with her family, and even learn more about Jesus. On earth she could live with God’s saving peace and become a special blessing to others.

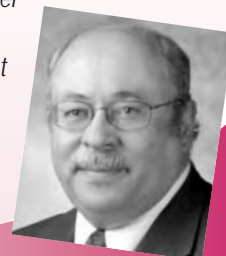
Annie became critically ill. In her last hours she finally received a lung transplant. After a few days she amazingly regained her strength. We were able to continue our visits. She went home with a thankful and renewed spirit. Later, she returned to the hospital with heart complications. Our visits were limited and her condition became worse. Her earthly transplant was working, but she died from a different complication.

## THE ETERNAL GIFT

Now the divine eternal transplant took place. Because Jesus was her Savior, the Lord transplanted her soul into paradise forever. Someday her body will also be forever raised, changed, and reunited with her soul. Christ, the Son of God, donated his whole body and life on the cross for our forgiveness. By this gift of grace Jesus can now transplant our life with its body and soul from a sin-stained world into heaven where, “there won’t be any more death. There won’t be any grief, crying, or pain, because the first things have disappeared.” (Rev. 21:4) Divine transplants are the ultimate! They are eternal! In Jesus, register now!

*Chaplain Kenneth Wenzel*

*Chaplain Wenzel's primary ministry is conducted at the University Hospital and the Children's Hospital, as well as two other Madison, WI area hospitals. A 1973 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Chaplain Wenzel joined WLIM in 1997.*





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## OUR MISSION

*“To Share God's Law And  
The Saving Gospel of  
Jesus Christ With People  
Who Are Institutionalized.”*

## PLAN TO ATTEND WLIM'S ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE

Saturday, November 11, 2006

Mt. Olive Ev. Lutheran Church  
Appleton, WI

The 2006 WLIM Annual Meeting & Conference is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the mission work that is being done to share the Gospel with the institutionalized.

You'll enjoy the opportunity to spend a full day learning and sharing information about the mission opportunities to do God's work in institutions, serving people in prisons & jails, hospitals, nursing & convalescent homes, alcohol, drug & mental health centers, child & adolescent treatment centers and juvenile detention centers.

This is a day you won't want to miss! For more information, or to register,

**CALL: 888-214-6490**

### STIMULATING SESSIONS TO BUILD ON

Attendees will have an opportunity to attend and participate in a number of stimulating sessions on a variety of ministry topics during the day.

