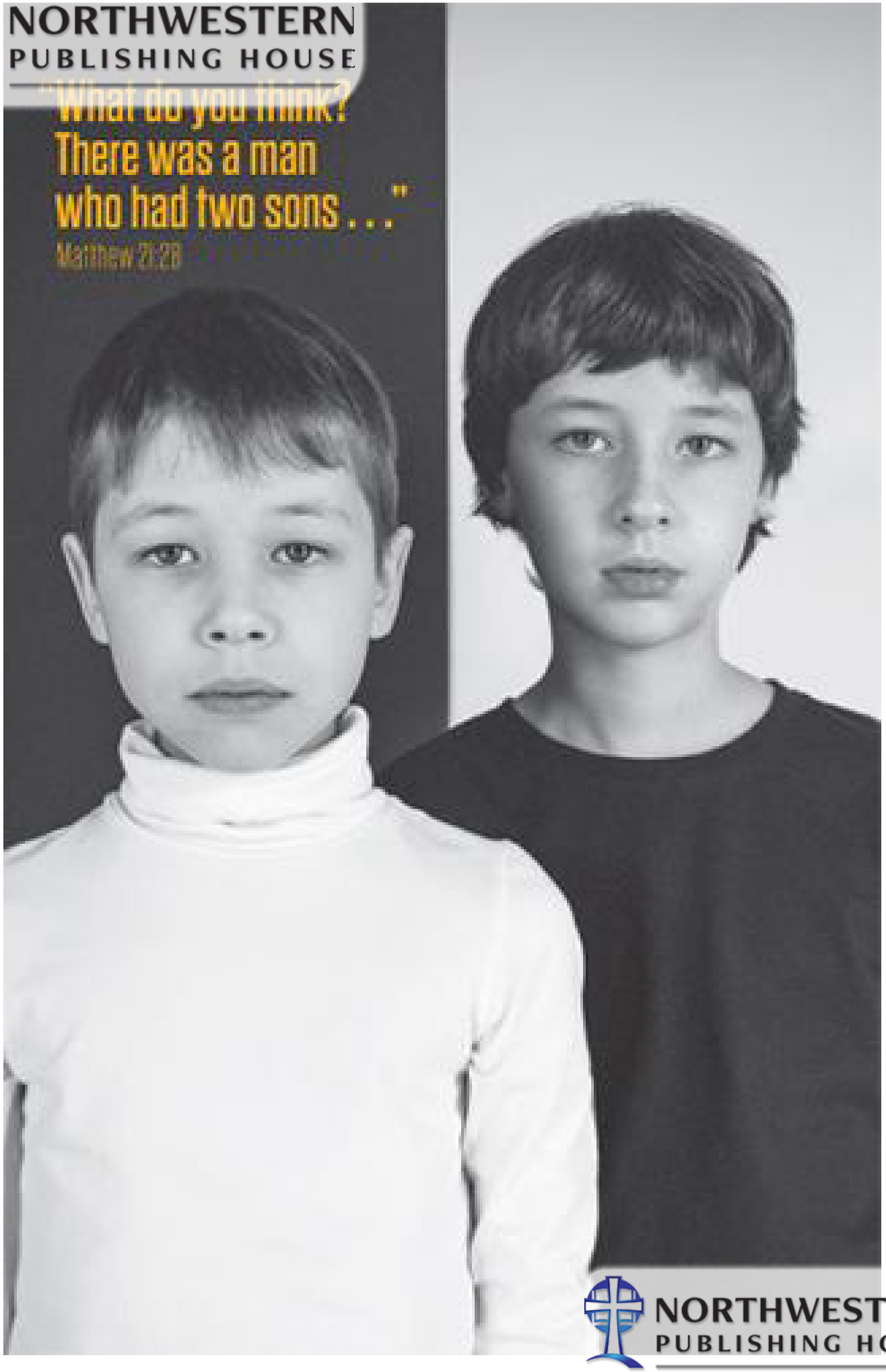


NORTHWESTERN
PUBLISHING HOUSE

Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

4465 South Blosser Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455
Office: 805-937-0339
www.starlutheran.org
Pastor Michael Foley

Worship Service

Sunday, September 27, 2026 10:00 a.m.

The Eighteenth Sunday after PENTECOST

Theme of the day: Our God wants real repentance that leads to true obedience. One day everyone will bow before Jesus and confess him as Lord. Some will do so in grief and others in joy. God wants real repentance from every sinner that they might bend the knee to Christ in true obedience and confess with gladness that Jesus is Lord.

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

Families are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of "HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE." This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God's inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

OPENING HYMN: # 526 **"What Wondrous Love Is This"**

♫ **What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!**
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb, who is the great I AM,
while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
while millions join the theme, I will sing.

Please stand for last verse:

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing his love for me,
and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
and through eternity I'll sing on.

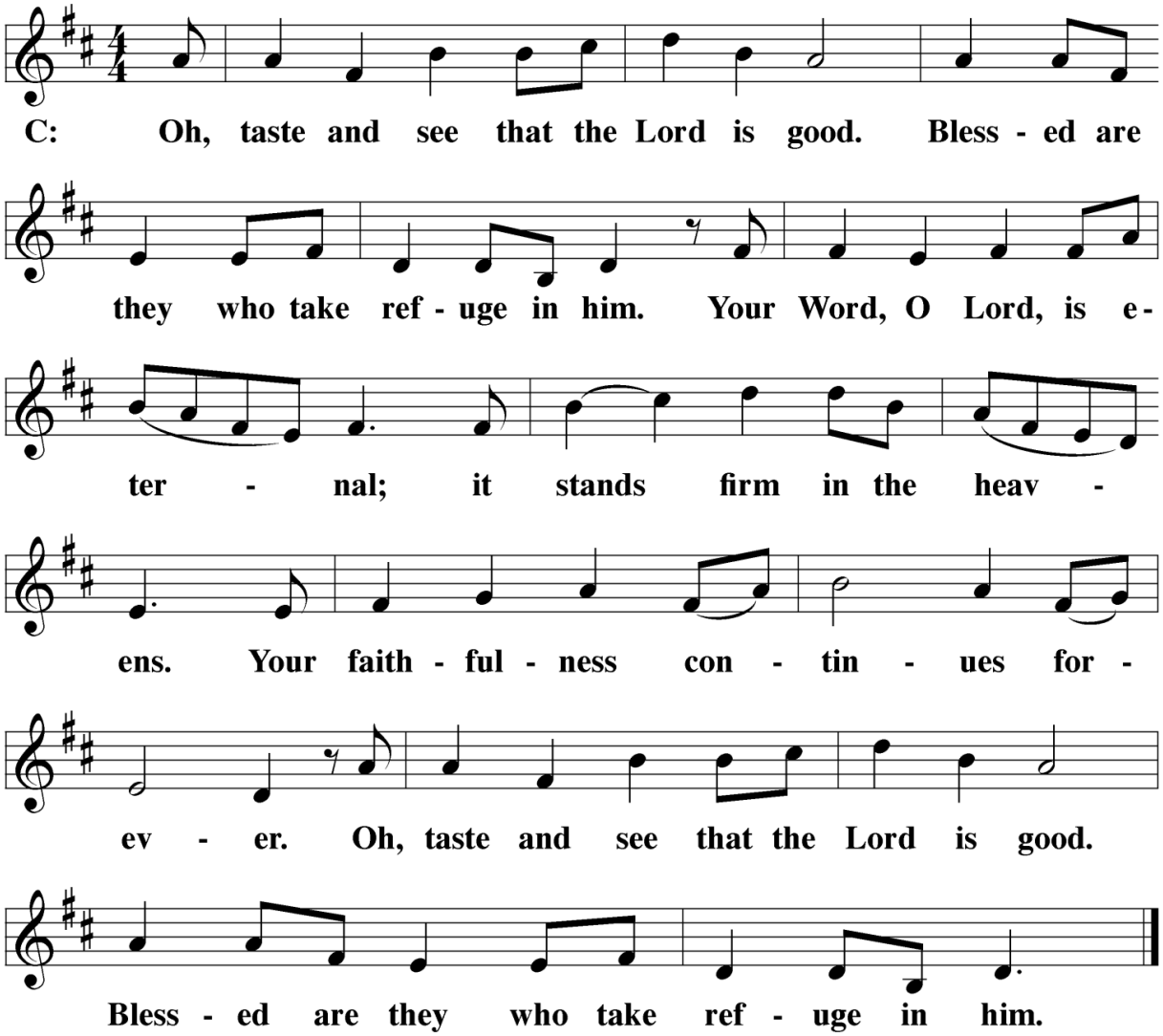
Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.
Congregation: And also with you. *(spoken)*

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.
C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.



M: Mercifully grant, O God, that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, for without your help we are unable to please you; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

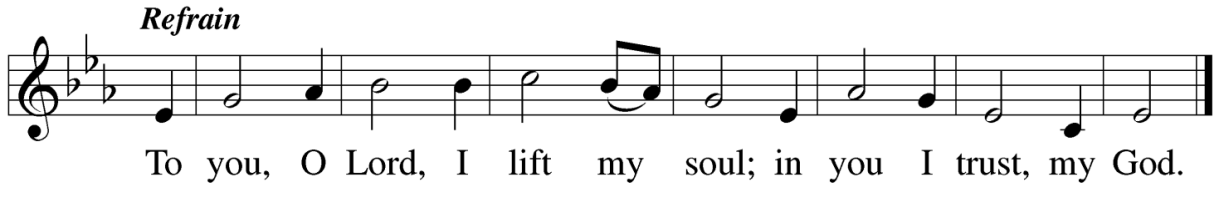
C: ♫ Amen.

Please be seated.

FIRST LESSON: Philippians 2:1-11

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, [2]then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being united in spirit, and having one mind. [3]Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility consider one another better than yourselves. [4]Let each of you look carefully not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

[5]Indeed, let this attitude be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. [6]Though he was by nature God, he did not consider equality with God as a prize to be displayed, [7]but he emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant. When he was born in human likeness, and his appearance was like that of any other man, [8]he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. [9]Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, [10]so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11]and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

PSALM OF THE DAY: Psalm 25

To you, O LORD, I lift <u>up</u> my soul;*
in you I trust, <u>O</u> my God.

Remember, O LORD, your great mer<u>cy</u> and love,*
for they are <u>from</u> of old.

Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways;*
according to your love remember me,
for you are good, O LORD.

Refrain

Turn to me and be gracious to me,*
for I am lonely and afflicted.

Look upon my affliction and my distress*
and take away all my sins.

Guard my life and rescue me,*
for I take refuge in you.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain

M: Alleluia. The sacrifices God wants are a broken spirit. A broken and crushed heart, O God, you will not despise. Alleluia.
(Psalm 51:17)

C: ♫ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
These words are written that we may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 21:23-32

[23]When Jesus went into the temple courts, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him while he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things?" and "Who gave you this authority?"
[24]Jesus answered them, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer it, I will tell you by what authority I do these things. [25]The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

They discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' [26]But if we say, 'From men,' we are afraid of the crowd, since they all regard John as a prophet." [27]So they answered Jesus, "We do not know."

He said to them, "Then I will not tell you by what authority I do these things."

[28]"What do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' [29]He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. [30]He came to the second and said the same thing. The second son answered, 'I will go, sir,' but he did not go. [31]Which of the two did the will of his father?"

They said to him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Amen I tell you: The tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. [32]For John came to you in the way of righteousness, but you did not believe him. However, the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him. Even when you saw this, you did not change your mind and believe him.

HYMN: # 655 **"Before You, God, the Judge of All"**

♫ **Before you, God, the Judge of all,**
with grief and shame I humbly fall.
I see my sins against you, Lord,
my sins of thought and deed and word.
They press me sore; to you I flee: O God, be merciful to me!

O Lord, my God, to you I pray:
O cast me not in wrath away!
Let your good Spirit ne'er depart,
but let him draw to you my heart
that truly penitent I be: O God, be merciful to me!

O Jesus, let your precious blood
be to my soul a cleansing flood.
Turn not, O Lord, your guest away,
but grant that justified I may
go to my house at peace to be: O God, be merciful to me!

SERMON: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

The word of the LORD came to me.

[2]What do you mean, you who keep repeating this proverb concerning the soil of Israel, "Fathers eat sour grapes, and their sons' teeth are set on edge"? [3]As surely as I live, declares the LORD God, you will never again use this proverb in Israel. [4]Indeed, all souls are mine. The soul of the father is mine just like the soul of the son. The soul who sins is the one who will die.

[25]But you say, "The LORD's way is not fair." Listen now, house of Israel. Is it my way that is not fair? Is it not your ways that are not fair? [26]If a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and practices unrighteousness, he will die because of it. Because of the unrighteousness that he has practiced, he will die.

[27]But if a wicked man turns from his wickedness that he has done and practices justice and righteousness, he will preserve his life. [28]Because he has seen and turned away from all the rebellious acts that he had committed, he will surely live, and he will not die. [29]But the house of Israel says, "The LORD's way is not fair." Is it really my ways that are not fair, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not fair?

[30]Therefore, I will judge each one of you according to his ways, O house of Israel, declares the LORD God. Repent and turn away from all your rebellious acts, so that you will not set out a stumbling block that makes you guilty. [31]Throw off from yourselves all your rebellious actions by which you have rebelled, and obtain a new heart and a new spirit for yourselves. Why should you die, O house of Israel? [32]For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies, declares the LORD God. So repent and live

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN: # 737 **"Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way"**

♫ **Lord, help us walk your servant way**
wherever love may lead
and, bending low, forgetting self,
each serve the other's need.

You came to earth, O Christ, as Lord,
but pow'r you laid aside.
You lived your years in servanthood,
in lowliness you died.

No golden scepter but a towel
you place within the hands
of those who seek to follow you
and live by your commands.

You bid us bend our human pride
nor count ourselves above
the lowest place, the meanest task
that waits the gift of love.

Lord, help us walk your servant way
wherever love may lead
and, bending low, forgetting self,
each serve the other's need.

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace.
Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: ♫ Amen. Amen. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: # 927 **"Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing"**

♫ Lord, dismiss us with your blessing;
fill our hearts with joy and peace.
Let us each, your love possessing,
triumph in redeeming grace.
O refresh us, O refresh us,
trav'ling through this wilderness.

Thanks we give and adoration
for the gospel's joyful sound;
may the fruits of your salvation
in our hearts and lives abound!
Ever faithful, ever faithful
to your truth may we be found.

So whene'er the signal's given
us from earth to call away,
borne on angels' wings to heaven,
glad the summons to obey,
may we ever, may we ever
reign with Christ in endless day.

WELS CONNECTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God by the Evers in celebration of Laura's birthday.

PRAYERS: Remember to pray for: little Elias, Dennis Douglas, George Caravana, Molly Webb, Kathy Jones, Art Amarillas, Melinda Brown, Alice Taubman, Monica, Rylan Downs, Jeff Brown, Aaron Taubman, Marlene Washburn, Helen Cummings, Delores Bass, Rick Stovall, Suzy Garvin, Linda Wilkinson, Kathie Stillwater, Louise Perry, Phil Schaaf, and Ilene Trevarrow.

LWMS RALLY October 10, Crown of Life Lutheran, Yucaipa; registration starts at 8:30 a.m.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday	**ESL** (English as a Second Language), **6:00 p.m.**
Thursday	**Bible Class, 10:00 a.m.**
	ESL, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Sunday	**Bible Class & Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.**
	Worship with Holy Communion, 10:00 a.m.

Joint Reformation Service

St Paul's First Lutheran Church
5244 Tujunga Ave
North Hollywood, CA 91601

Sunday, October 25 - 4:00 p.m.

Speaker: MLC Professor Paul Koelpin

www.starlutheran.org