

Dementions of faith

by [Martin E. Marty](#) in the [March 17, 1999](#) issue

Among the church bulletin misprints you readers have sent us recently was one from a church in Livonia, Michigan, which had this "Question for Godparents": "Do you promise to support and encourage the parents in their convenient vows?" (That might be good for grown-ups in both parties in Washington, D.C.)

A Lutheran church newsletter invites us to a course on "The Jesus I Never Knew," which promises us "life-changing discoveries about the person of Jesus, PhD." (He did really well on his orals.)

Two consecutive lines from a Spokane folder: "September Board of Trustees Meeting Cancelled. Turn to God, Rejoice in Hope." To whom else shall we turn when the trustees are off duty?

A Glens Falls, New York, church newsletter hopes that you will attend Pastor Riley's "popular series of programs. This year's subject will be the Dementions of Faith, Hope and Love." But the greatest of these is Madness.

A Unitarian chapel in Kirkwood, Missouri, is so progressive that even the asphalt is in motion: "Parking Lot Moves Forward."

You'd think this announcement is from Lutherans at Lake Wobegon, where guilt goes public, and not their kin in Platteville, New York: "It was wonderful for the kids to see the guilts they had worked on hanging up for display."

Then there are the other kinds of Lutherans, including these from Luther Memorial Church in Chicago: "Flea Market/Bake Sale/Light Lunch/Donations Accepted," with this punch line: "No Clothes." An Edenic experience.

A really big bulletin came from worldcounc@aol.com, where the World Council's communications officer had to send around an erratum, lest anti-WCC folks think the organization works with a new Bible. The earlier release had announced the theme for 2000, "Blessed be God. . . who has blessed us in Christ (Effusions 1:3)."

Congregationalists and other non-Episcopal Christians will be bothered and bewildered over this Massachusetts Episcopal church's announcement: "Bishop Walmsley will bewitch us on June 22 for the rite of confirmation."

At Redeemer Lutheran Church of Hinsdale, Illinois, my former pastor and now a bishop's associate, Paul Landahl, installed a new pastor and, according to the worship folder, asked the congregation if they would "pray for him, help and humor him for his work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?" How can they not, if they treat him as they pledge to?

Another church's bulletin after a funeral carried a note of thanks to "Pastor Keith, also those who prepared and served the lunch and the ushers." Take them with a grain of salt.

At a Twinsburg, Ohio, church the readers of the bulletin learned how electronically up-to-date the congregation is as they prayed: "May the souls of the faithful reset in peace."

And a United Methodist Church we'll keep anonymous has this new take on commemoration: "The flowers on the altar are given in celebration of the tenth anniversary of Jim's heart attack."

A church, or a gas station, or worse? A United Methodist Church in Seattle publishes thanks: "Your donation allows us to continue servicing the poor and homeless." Go and do thou likewise.