

Kaiserslautern Lutheran

Nr. 22

Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr' vergehet nun und nimmermehr

Summer 2024

"Ministry" is one of those words that has been used in so many situations in church life that it has become almost meaningless, that is, until we can truly define what it means. We speak of the Office of the Ministry in a formal sense, but then there's also the "ministry" of a particular pastor. Sometimes you hear about various aspects of a pastor's ministry: prison ministry, singles or couples ministry, youth or senior ministry, and so on. And then the works of the congregation are also described in terms of "ministry," such as coffee/donut ministry or children's ministry. When it's all said and done, is there anything then, according to this usage, that wouldn't fall under the category "ministry"? If everything is considered "ministry," then nothing is "ministry."

In the New Testament, the word "ministry" is translated from the Greek word "diakonia," meaning simply "service." "Ministry," means "service," so any form of service could be described in terms of "ministry." For example, in John 12:26, Jesus says: "If any man serve [diakonh] me, let Him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant [diakonos] be." To minister is to serve. This service is in the first place any service to one's neighbor and in the second place serving the neighbor by giving him God's Word. We see this most clearly distinguished in Acts 6, when the first *deacons* [diakonoi] were consecrated. The Twelve called the multitude of the

disciples unto them, and said, "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and *serve* [diakonein] tables . . . But we will give ourselves continually

Christian Buzzwords: "Ministry"

By Pastor Jensen

to prayer, and to the *ministry* [diakonia] of the Word" Here you see that the disciples leave the ministry/service of serving tables and enter the ministry/service of the Word. They will now focus almost exclusively on serving God's Word to people. From that point on, "ministry" is used for the ministry of the Word, that is, the preaching and teaching of pastors (See 2 Cor 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; Eph 4:12; Col 4:17; 2 Tim 4:5).

In the Augsburg Confession, the founding document of Lutheranism, article V on the Ministry begins like this: "So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted." From this, you might hear talk about "word and sacrament ministry" as the focal point of what the Church is all about. Any other services or ministries in the congregation or wider church ought to support this one ministry of preaching God's Word and administering the Sacraments. There's always a danger in the church for the secondary work of the church to

overshadow the main works: the teaching of God's Word and administration of the Sacraments. This is the ultimate work of the ministry/service in the Church.

Since the 1960s or so, it has been popular to speak about "lay ministry" in our church body. For example, there was and still is a degree program at Concordia Wisconsin called "lay ministry," although a few years ago they changed the name to "director of church ministries." A lay minister is a layman (non-ordained) who serves in a helping role to the pastor (the minister). The term "laity" comes from the Greek word for people (laos). The biblical distinction in the church between those who teach and those who learn, between those who speak and those who hear, between the clergy and the laity, began to break down in the 20th century as Christians embraced the egalitarianism of the modern world. The roles of pastor and people became confused and we still struggle with this confusion today. Pastors end up taking upon themselves tasks the laity ought to handle, such as the day-to-day operations of the church, maintaining the building, finances, organizing the potluck. The laity end up taking upon themselves tasks the pastors ought to handle, such as preaching, teaching, reading the lessons, and administering the Sacraments. In fact, oftentimes these tasks of the clergy are forced upon the people by pastors who want to seem more egalitarian. In the end, there is

confusion over roles and the body of Christ suffers. The hand wants to do what the foot does and the eye wants to do the task of the nose. God has knit together the body in a beautiful way, but modern man in his pride wants to alter what God has ordained.

Another example of confusion in our ranks between the ministry of Word and Sacrament and the service the laity can offer is the 1974 book published by Concordia Publishing House entitled "Everyone a Minister." In a way, an emphasis on volunteering at church is helpful. The problem, though, is when the ministers do what is actually given to the laity and when the laity do what is actually given to the ministers as servants of God's Word.

In a sense, you could say that everyone is a minister, as we saw from Acts 6. Some minister/serve tables and the temporal affairs of the congregation (the laity), while others minister/serve the congregation with the things of God (the clergy). The problem comes when these two sides of the same coin are made into one side. Again, the motivation for this confusion comes more from the ideas of the world than from the Scriptures. Since about 1940, the World Council of Churches has promoted the egalitarianism of the world, the idea that all are equal not only in dignity, but also in function (the driving force of the Marxist/communist/socialist worldview). These theologians then twist the Scriptures to align more closely with their enlightened perspective (See Winger, *Ephesians*, 461).

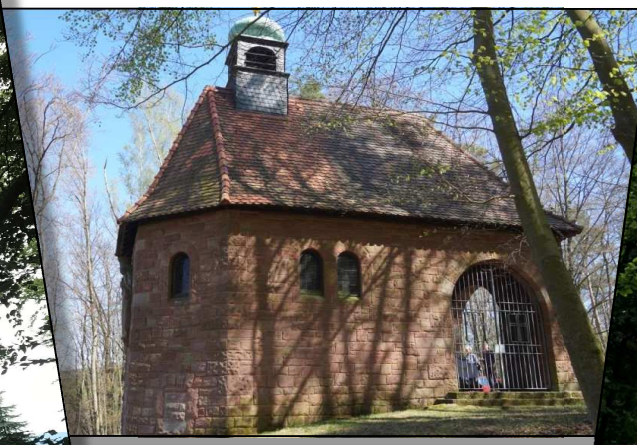
For example, this can be seen in varying interpretations of Ephesians 4:12. Modern versions of the Bible, like the English Standard Version, phrase it so that God gave the various offices in the church, including shepherd and teachers, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until

we all attain to the unity of the faith . . ." Notice how this sounds: Pastors are given to the church to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. This is false. The interpretive commas, here, are deceptive. Older translations of the Bible, for example the King James Version, say: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Pastors are not given as mentors who teach the laity how to be ministers of Word and Sacrament. Pastors are given for a threefold task: 1) to equip or mend/restore the saints, 2) for the work of the ministry/service, and 3) for building up or repairing the body of Christ, the Church. Can you hear the difference the comma makes? In the Greek, three prepositions are used here in a common pattern (pros, eis, eis), which divide the sentence as our commas would. Ephesians 4 is not describing the work of the laity but of the clergy as God's gift to the entire church.

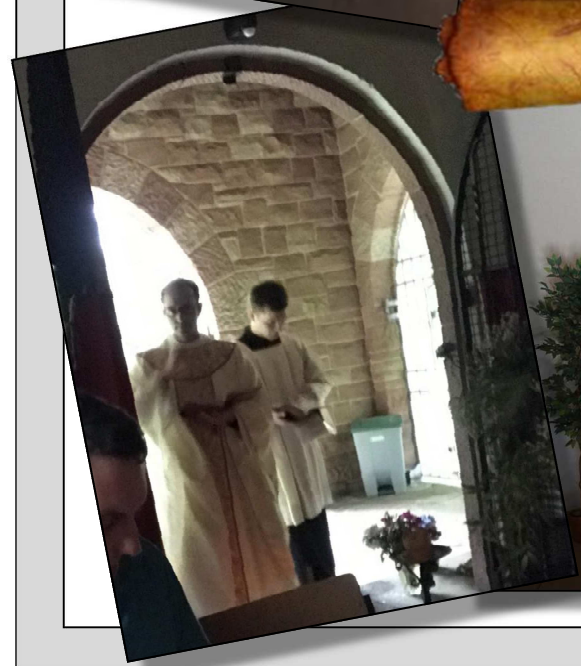
This is not to say that pastors are more important than laity, or that the laity are more important than pastors. Before God there is equality of dignity. In God's eyes, we are all equally sinful, and equally saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Yet God in His wisdom has also established distinct roles for us: in the family, the government, and the church. In the last few hundred years, the world has sought to collapse these distinctions of office into one. There is a general confusion in the world and in the church between equality of people and equality of office or task. The Church must fight for the true distinctions revealed to us in God's Word by our Triune God, who Himself reveals perfectly the dynamic between equality and order. The three persons of the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are equal with each other since they are one God (the immanent Trinity). And yet, in revealing Himself to us, the one LORD in Three persons comes in an orderly way. The Father sends the Son. The

Father and Son together send the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Triune God has a different function, or office. And yet this does not take away from the equality they have as God. So it goes with us as well. All are equal, created in the image of God. And yet in the family there are different roles given to man, woman, and child. In the government, different roles are given to those who govern and those who are governed. And in the church, there is a distinction of office between clergy and laity. There is equality in dignity, yet diversity in action.

As the world seeks to collapse all distinctions and the chaos around us grows, the Church must confess with clarity both the equality of persons and the distinction of office. In the Church, this means being clear about the equal dignity of pastor and laity while also recognizing the roles God has given to each. All Christians are to serve others as they themselves have been served by our LORD. In this sense, all are ministers. And yet the LORD gives to His Church the pastoral office—the ministry/service of Word and Sacrament—for the sake of the whole Body. May we have the courage to maintain the unity and distinctions of God's created order against all the forces seeking to destroy what God has established. Any service can be described as a ministry, yet we must distinguish all service as ministry from the highest ministry of proclaiming God's Word and administering the Sacraments. All members of Christ's Body, the Church, are ministers or servants in a general sense. And yet the Lord gives the ministry of Word and Sacrament—the office of pastor—in a particular way, that the Gospel might be proclaimed publicly, and that the entire Body might be built up in the holy faith and held together in the peace and unity God desires.



Visitation of
Mary
At The
Marienkapelle
Landstuhl, Germany





A Collection of Letters from the Mission Field

Pastor Christian Tiews

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights"

—James 1:17

Yesterday I met "Ali," an Iranian parishioner, in Hamburg's Steindamm district near the central train station, to help him with some logistical issues. This is an area heavily populated with immigrants—mostly from Islamic countries. Walking past a panoply of shisha cafés and Afghan markets, Ali told me about his fellow Iranian barber whom he has been telling about Jesus. Unfortunately, up to now, Farhad hasn't been interested, Ali admitted. We soon came upon a barber shop sandwiched between a Turkish döner snack bar and a discount electronics store. We walked down a few steps and opened the door. A bell chimed. Farhad was busy giving a customer a trim but looked up and gave a big smile when he recognized Ali, who introduced me as his pastor. I noticed that Farhad was wearing a

cross around his neck. Ali explained that this Sunday is Easter and that he hoped that Farhad might join us on the most important day of the year for Christians. Farhad smiled politely. Two chairs down, I noticed another barber clipping away. "Isn't that Mohammad, one of our new visitors at church?" I

whispered to Ali. "Yes, I think so!" he replied, calling over to the man, "Hey, Mohammad, I didn't know you worked here!" Amazed to see us there, Mohammad put his scissors down and greeted us warmly. Farhad looked surprised. "I

a moment of reflection, Farhad asked, "Say, where is your church and what time does that Easter service start? I'd like to check that out..." Ali and I exchanged quick glances. After a few minutes we said goodbye and walked back up to the street. "Wow, that was the Holy Spirit at work..." Ali stated. "Indeed... and here I was wondering why we went to that barber shop in the first place..." Ali grinned. Truly, what we sometimes think are just coincidences, are actually fingerprints of God's handiwork; because every good thing in life comes from Him.

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"If we are faithless, He remains faithful" —2 Tim 2:13



didn't know you're a Christian!" he said. "Sure," Mohammad replied. "I've believed in Jesus for years and I'm going to take classes at their church so I can be baptized." After

Currently on home service in Tulsa, OK. Last Saturday I accompanied our son to the weekly farmers' market. Jeremiah runs a very successful knife-sharpening business (Same Day Sharpening) and is one of the many vendors. At one point I strolled around the various booths, stopping to chat with one vendor whom I have seen at that market for about a decade. "You're still going strong with your health product." "Yeah, I've been here for over 11 years now..." I stuck out my hand and said, "My name is Chris. I'm the dad of Jeremiah, the knife-sharpening guy." "Oh, I know him," he replied. "He's really



popular around here," he observed. "We used to live in Tulsa but deployed to Germany three years ago. I'm a Lutheran pastor and have been sent there as a missionary..." "Lutheran. That's funny... I'm a reforming Roman Catholic." "Reform-ING?" I asked. "Yeah, I grew up Catholic, but I have a lot of issues with the Vatican," he said with a grin. "I quit going to church, but I do read my Bible pretty much every day." "It's wonderful that you're in the Word. Jesus tells us that we do not live by bread alone [Mt 4:4]. But as a Roman Catholic, you can appreciate the power of the Eucharist. You're literally leaving some of His best "vitamins" on the table if you never take Holy Communion. Receiving Christ's true body and blood is how our Lord strengthens our faith in Him. You already believe in Jesus...then why not take all of the gifts He wants you to have?" "Hmm, I never thought of it that way," he mused. After some chit-chat, I said, "Well, I've got to get back to Jeremiah. But continued blessings on your business and, just in case I don't run into you at a future farmers' market, see you in

heaven!" "Yup, see you there," he replied with a wink.

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"For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" –Ruth 1:16

Week 9 of home service, winding down our travels in the U.S. * I recently met a young lady who shared a touching story with me. She and her husband got married a number of years ago and she enjoys a fulfilling job, interacting with many people—even though she does have to spend much of her time in front of a computer. Her husband's vocation, on the other hand, keeps him tethered to a screen. "Sitting in front of

computers all day long..." she told me, shaking her head, "we weren't made to live like this..." And so, she has decided to "retire" from her job. She and her husband will move to another state to join his parents and siblings and work his family's large farm. Having grown up in a rural environment, she knows what awaits her, she admitted: getting up at 3:30 AM every morning to tend to the animals, making breakfast for perhaps a dozen people—go, go, go, sixteen to eighteen hours a day. And yet: she can't wait to work with her hands, to see the fruit of her labor as the seasons change, to raise animals, and to work hand-in-hand and shoulder-to-shoulder with her in-laws. She feels like she's getting married all over again, she remarked. Truly, in matrimony not only are you committing yourself to that individual. In many cases, you're also "marrying" your spouse's entire family—well, at a minimum, his or her parents. God bless this young lady who, similar to Ruth in the eponymous book in the Old Testament, is willing to embrace her husband's entire family, to lodge where his people lodge, and to make his people her people.





Elder's Corner

Insights, thoughts, and inspirational messages

The Simplistic TRUTH of the Gospel.

By Jeff Peterson

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. ²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. **Romans 3:19-24**

How often do you think that we believers make the Gospel message too complicated?

Many people believe that "Jesus has done his part for my salvation, and now it's time to do my part". No, Jesus has done it all!

We like to put rules, requirements, and even works behind the Gospel message, yes, I said works, we too often tie things to the Gospel that are not needed. We muddy the waters so to speak when it comes to speaking God's truth, we take His word out of context, and we try to add our own parameters onto His message of salvation.

The term Gospel comes from the Greek word that means "good news." In the Bible, the good news is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. All His promises of grace, mercy, and eternal life are freely given to us through faith in Jesus. As St Paul wrote, "For all the

promises of God find their Yes in Him."
2 Cor 1:20

So, what is the truth of the Gospel message?

*¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **John 1:1***

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. **John 1:14***

*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. **John 3:16***

*²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. **John 5:24***

*²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." **John 11:25-27***

Do you see the pattern here? God is putting an emphasis on His Word and Believing in His Son Jesus Christ! He is not putting any emphasis on us, the law or works!

The Law shows us we are sinners and that we need a savior, and works are the bi-product of faith in Jesus, and Jesus says that the only way to the father is through Him!

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to

Spotlight Verse

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16

*the Father except through me. **John 14:6***

So, why are we making it so complicated? It's called SIN, sin corrupts us and pulls us away from the Truth and separates us from God. Satan will use sin and temptation to get as close as possible to the truth, to eventually pull you away from God, so you won't believe in God's truth, and you will begin to doubt your own worth in Jesus!

I like how Dr Kari Vo from Lutheran Hour Malaysia stresses the importance of the Gospel.

"The Gospel matters. There is no news in the world so important as this, that God has come into this world to become a Man, to live among us, and to suffer, die, and rise again from the dead, so that we might belong to Him forever. The Gospel is the story of how Jesus is remaking the human race, every one of us who trusts in Him, into children of God. What better news could there be?"

So, let's stop complicating the True message of the Gospel, and stress its importance!

Remember, you are loved, and you are forgiven!



PRO DEO ET PATRIA

"For God and Country"

—The motto of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy,
since July 29th, 1775

From previous newsletters, I've had the pleasure of sharing the story of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps and the way God Calls Pastors and Chaplains through the generations. Other branches have their Chaplain legacies that are just as storied, just as memorialized, and just as interesting. This final article is not intended to compare or elevate any one branch over the other, especially, since the LCMS Endorses all of our military chaplains (Go Army, Beat Navy!)

The reason I'm writing this epilogue is to provide an exciting update to what I thought was the last in a three part series of articles. If you recall, or if you haven't read them; I told the story of how God worked His Word into the hearts of three "generations".

First, an Army Chaplain by the name of Ray Larson catechized my wife Camille at Ft. Riley, Kansas. He was the only Lutheran Chaplain that my wife's family had ever come across in their 7 moves up to that point. Chaplain Larson taught Camille and her brother (the last remaining two confirmands in the class), but another chaplain actually confirmed them. Nothing like a German mother to keep these two kids from dropping out!

It was Chaplain Larson's instruction that came roaring back when Camille married a non-believing Idaho boy (yours truly) who had some questions about her faith. That green Luther's Catechism, which Camille still had at the ready, satisfied this inquiring engineer for a while. But soon, Camille knew it would be best for her husband to attend an adult confirmation class. Fast forward to a baptism, an approved Seminary application, and an Ordination.

Camille's family kept in touch with Chaplain Larson and informed him of the Ordination, Installation, and entry into the Army Chaplain Candidate program. Needless to say, the Word

of the Lord grows and the spiritual legacy was becoming visible. Two pastors who became Army Chaplains, as a result of the Holy Spirit working through Luther's Small Catechism.

Again, fast forward to Ramadi, Iraq in 2008. Chaplain Ayers noticed that a Military Police Soldier from the Kentucky National Guard started to attend the worship services. After a Sunday shift, where he was responsible for the care, custody, and control of captured terrorist detainees; Specialist Joshua Schiff not only came to worship, but hung out afterwards to talk with his chaplain.

After a few conversations, Joshua was handed a Luther's Small Catechism (this time a nice shiny Burgundy colored one that was sent to the desert by our super-supportive Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF) office. The deployment ended a couple weeks later and I



never saw Joshua Schiff again...until I heard his voice on the phone.

Ironically, the phone was ringing in our Naval Air Station Coronado hotel room while Camille and I were getting ready for the MAF Annual Training

Conference Thursday night banquet. "Hello?" The voice on the other end said: "Is this Chaplain Ayers?" "Yes." "This is Joshua Schiff, the MP Soldier from Kentucky, I finally tracked you down because I want to tell you that I'm entering Fort Wayne Theological Seminary to become an LCMS Pastor". Stunned silence...followed by a loud "HOOAH!", and probably a "Praise the Lord!" and an "Amen" or two.

So, Camille and I of course, called Chaplain Larson to tell him that he's now got a spiritual "grandson" as a result of his work with those teenagers in Ft. Riley, KS a few decades before.

Rev. Joshua Schiff indeed became a pastor. And I asked him if he would consider becoming an Army Chaplain. He said no, and that he was quite enjoying parish ministry. That was where I left the last KELC article.

About 6 months ago I received an email from Joshua asking for a letter of recommendation. He was interested in applying to become an Active Duty Army Chaplain!! That was one of the easiest letters I've ever written. Again, fast forward.

This past May, the MAF held their annual training event, this time in St Louis, MO. It was wonderful! I was able to visit Concordia Seminary for the first time since 2006. Much has changed, such as new stained glass windows in the chapel and a remodeled library. But the lovely service

reminded me what hasn't changed: the clear preaching and teaching of Christ and Him crucified for the forgiveness of sins. I thought the trip couldn't get any better.

But on my flight back to Germany, I was able to attend the graduation ceremony for Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course 24-001 with Chaplain Rev. Craig Muehler, the LCMS MAF Endorser. And guess who was graduating? Chaplain (Lieutenant) Joshua Schiff!

We were able to hug, recount our days in Ramadi, Iraq and celebrate what God has done through His Word. Plus, I was finally able to meet his wonderful wife and two children who are excited for the adventure ahead.

Unfortunately, Chaplain Larson passed away in December of last year, so Camille and I will have the joy of sharing this news with his wife Rosanne, celebrating the fact that her husband's legacy continues on.

Here are some photos from the CHBOLC graduation.

Pro Deo Et Patria! (For God and Country!) .

In God's Grip, Chaplain Ray Ayers



Hail & Farewell

Farewell to
CH Sol & DR Tierney Grosskopf as they say goodbye to the US Air Force and head to Chicago, Illinois to work at the University of Chicago Medical Center. It was wonderful to have you with us for FOUR years! God's peace be with you.

Farewell to
Emily Ponziano and kids Eloise, Jonathan and Jacob on their way to Chicago, Illinois. Emily is starting her teaching job and the kids are going to new schools!! God's blessings to you all. Sad to see them go? Its OK, we still have Jim!!

Farewell to
Ray & Camille Ayers as they head to Boise, Idaho at the end of August. Its been a wonderful four years. Ray will still be serving as a US Army Command Chaplain in Salt Lake City, Utah. God's peace be with you.

Summer Birthdays



August

- 1 Marla Arrington
- 1 Anneliese Ayers
- 3 Martin Santen
- 6 Camille Ayers
- 8 Joanna Kiebach
- 12 Brandi Holmes
- 22 Charlotte Blank
- 22 Matthew Simmons
- 25 Jacob Ponziano
- 29 Elizabeth Anglin

September

- 2 Johannes Schnackenberg
- 10 Mason Westphal
- 17 Emily Ponziano
- 18 Dylan Worley
- 24 Tucker Paulsen
- 30 Sebastian Blank

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK & MESSENGER

**Kaiserslautern
Evangelical Lutheran
Church (KELC)**

For news, worship sign-ups
and fellowship events.



Thank you to all who came out and helped with the Potluck dinner on July 19th for the Ukrainian refugees in Kaiserslautern.



Please join us again at the end of August. Date and Signup Genius coming soon.

CONFESSIONS STUDY



On Wednesday nights
at St. Michael's



Please join us in
praying for the
important work of
the Kaiserslautern
Military Resiliency
Center in Landstuhl,
Germany.



KELC Men's Group

Meeting monthly
At 7:00 PM
on Tuesday Evenings as
announced.

At The Green Dragon
in Nanzdietschweiler

The Guzik's House
Hauptstrasse 68
66909 Nanzdietschweiler



Summer Wedding Anniversaries

Happy 33rd Anniversary
to Jeff & Christina
Peterson on August 11th

Happy 37th Anniversary
to Rob & Penny Tuttle
on August 29th

Happy 7th Anniversary
to Martin & Andrea
Santen on Sept. 2nd

Happy 9th Anniversary
to Sebastian & Kristen
Blank on September 5th

Happy 14th Anniversary
to Sven & Mindy
Malenius on Sept. 17th

Happy 5th Anniversary
to Sol & Tierney
Grosskopf on Sept. 21st



A hymn study...

"Oh Morning Star"

Monday Evenings,
To Be Announced

At 6:30 PM

Emma's House
Danzigerstrasse 7
66849 Landstuhl