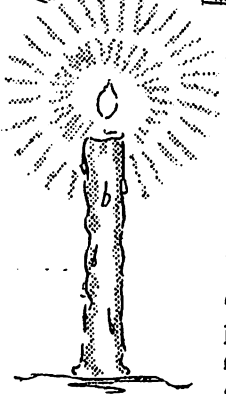


OUR SAVIOR'S "G.I.S."

Vol. 1 No. 7 - October-November 1944 Our Savior's United Luth. Church



A D V E N T

This issue will probably reach you who now are "somewhere" in China, in the South Pacific, or in Europe, "some time" before Christmas.

The Advent Season, which this year begins on the third of December, has a charm of its own. It carries with it some of the fragrance of Christmas candles for it is an old and good custom to light one candle on the first Sunday in Advent, two on the second, etc. Advent kindles the spirit of hope and expectation. This year we are in a special way longingly looking forward to a Christmas that again will bring peace on earth.

We wish you all, wherever you are, a Blessed Advent Season. May God Himself tune our hearts for the joyful Christmas Gospel that within a few weeks anew shall be proclaimed on earth.

"Advent" means, you recall, "He comes". Christ, Who came to earth to be born in the manger, shall come again in majesty and glory as He with His holy angels appears in the clouds. He told us to be ready, "for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). But few were prepared for His first coming, although it had been foretold repeatedly during many centuries. Let us be ready for the second coming, in faith and obedience to His word, irrespective of the opinions of men.

Getting ready for His coming in the clouds is an excellent way to prepare our hearts to receive the joyful Christmas tidings and to enable us to do our part to establish true peace on earth. Where Christ is permitted to rule, peace will also reign.

The time of preparation or waiting is often hard and trying, but by the Grace of God we may be given power to experience that such a period has its own beauty and joy. "Fret not, fear not, faint not", for He comes. That is the wondrous message of Advent. He Who came shall come again. Fear not, but have faith in Him.

Trusting in Him let us unite in prayer, using the words of one of our old Advent hymns:

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus now appear!
Arise, Thou Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption, that brings us unto Thee!

God be praised that we assuredly know it is true what is written in the last chapter of the Old Testament (Malachi 4:2): "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healings in its wings".

May God be near unto you during the Advent Season and fill your hearts with faith, hope and joy. The Lord bless you and keep you!

Sincerely yours,
Paul C. Nyholm

P.S. - A CHRISTMAS CHIMES, sent you by our Brotherhood, a Christmas letter, and the last copy of the WELLS OF SALVATION, are on their way to you. We hope they may contribute to bring you true Christmas joy. Should they for some reason not reach you, please let us know.

P.N.

Chaplain Rasmussen tells more of his interesting experiences; "Not long ago I had the chance to get a ride over to Corsica and see Lauritz Pedersen. He was the Chaplain who was stationed at Ft. Sheridan when we had that Servicemen's Evening and the Ladies served supper. I saw a couple of the men that remembered that night at our church. He is still with the same unit. We only had one evening together as I had to go back the next morning, but we sat up most of the night and talked. It was refreshing to be with one of our own again and talk with him about our Synod and all such. Then last week I had a trip to Rome. Saw all the old churches and all the richness and beauty. It was inspiring to see, but one couldn't help but think that it is true as someone has said that the church no longer can say with Peter 'Silver and gold have I none, but what I have I give unto Thee'. And sometimes I fear that the power of the church has not increased with the great increase in wealth. These were of course always Catholic churches. There is a Lutheran Church there in Rome, but it is built on the grounds of the German Embassy, and they said it was closed so I didn't make any effort to see it. What made the deepest impression on me, I think, was the catacombs where the early Christians worshipped their God and where many of them were compelled to hide. Quite a contrast between stark bareness of the places these Christians worship and then the lush grandeur of the Vatican. Talked the other day at one of my services with a young man from our church at Council Bluffs who has just joined our group. I didn't have long to talk with him as I had to go to another service, but he is coming over some evening and chat. I am usually in my office every evening and there is always someone who comes and sits and talks. This 'individual chatting' with the men is some of the most important work I do. Often they will come and seem not to have anything in particular, but usually it doesn't take long before they bring up that which really was on their mind. We have had rain I guess for the last ten or twelve days, so it is a little muddy especially since my tent is located at the far end of an orchard and the ground between is soft and sticky. Last night I almost fell into a trench which was half filled with water. Fortunately I caught myself so I only got a little wet. I am a little stiff tonight. I foolishly forgot how old I am and played football with some of the men. I can hardly move my arm and knee. So I guess I'll have to stick to ping-pong. Now I'll close with my best regards to all." Take it easy, P.G.R. We want you back all in one piece.

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Officer: "Why were you late to formation?" Private: "I squeezed out too much toothpaste and had a hard time getting it back in the tube, sir."

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Cpl. Andrew L. Nielsen certainly gets around - he starts out in France and in six days we hear from him again in Belgium: "Everything here (France) is still rolling along fine. They don't censor mail or send it back to the A.P.O. while we are on the move. In many of the larger towns that we go through, the French people ring the bells in the steeples of the churches as our convoy goes on its way. In one of these towns a French girl gave us some homemade biscuits and a large glass of jam, which was really good. They don't expect anything in return, but we usually give them candy, cigarettes or something they don't have. - - Am now in Belgium, it didn't look very inviting, but the people were very nice. After we were about twenty or thirty miles inside the country the people are a much better class and the country much nicer. The people here give us wine, beer, apples, pears and kisses from the pretty Belgian girls to all the G.I.'s along the road." We're afraid you're going to make some of the South Pacific boys jealous, Lawrence!

Arne A. Nielsen A.M.M. 1/C, a newcomer to our family circle, writes to us from somewhere in the Marshall Islands: "As I look back, and it's a long time at that, around four or five years anyway, I don't find a single familiar trace which might cause me to remember any of you, but don't feel disheartened, my memory is ever incorrigible to say the least. I'm delighted nevertheless with the pastor's and your concern for me, and might I add a thousand thanks for the G.I. News. So it's news you want is it? Well, let's see - I can't tell you which atoll I'm on, nor can I tell you about my unit, what we've done or now do. Got an evening paper or radio handy? Chuckle, chuckle. Perhaps you'll be satisfied with a resume of my travels and generalities since last New Years Day. We boarded one of our warships the eve of December 31st. On the following morning we cast off and headed out to sea, leaving the 'Golden Gate' far behind on the horizon. Most of us didn't realize then on the other side, it too symbolized America. We were going away from it now, jubilant in spirits, heeding only the desire for excitement and the fight. Many of those swell kids I knew well. I use the past tense, they died in our Campaign of the Marshalls! We stayed at Pearl Harbor for a couple of months preparing for what was to come, then, fully equipped, we started on our journey here, to oust the Nip, to establish bases and airfields. As for myself, my particular space aboard that converted transport was down, way, way down in the bowels of the hold - there were others too, like sar dines - we prayed plenty, especially at dawn and dusk, when the submarines strike. We arrived on the scene here about eleven days later and waded up the beaches to hoist 'Old Glory'. We've been here ever since, and we're getting mighty, mighty eager to see that hunk of span peek over the bounding main, this time heading towards it. What we'd like isn't what we want this time - in due time, yes, but there's much to be done out here yet. With the Lord's help we'll do it, and some day soon we'll all be back there with you again, but until then we're plenty satisfied with 'our hopes' and 'your prayers!'. You can sure count on us, Arne - you really did yourself proud, and we'll be looking for a repeat!

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Rastus: "Here's a telegram from our boss in Africe. He's sending us some lion's tails." Sam: "Lion's tails? Whut in de world am you talkin' about?" Rastus: "Read dis telegram. He says 'Just captured two lions. Sending details by mail!'"

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Cpl. Johnny Nasser sends us a little news from the South Pacific again: "A few lines before the candle flickers out to thank you for the Communion card and the Big Little Paper. Have gone to Communion quite a lot since being here. Since there are no churches here, or no regular places to hold services, it's really marvelous how the Chaplains find room and places so as to give us G.I.'s the opportunity to attend services. Credit must be given to the Chaplains on how they conduct Communion with their makeshift altars, the noise of air-craft overhead, and with the large attendance we have it's really surprising. I enjoyed the paper very much this time and am sorry to hear that Kenny is still in the hospital. Sure hope the kid gets better from the visit of Mom and the other 'Certain Party'." Believe it really did do him some good, Johnny. Let's hear from you again, Corporal!

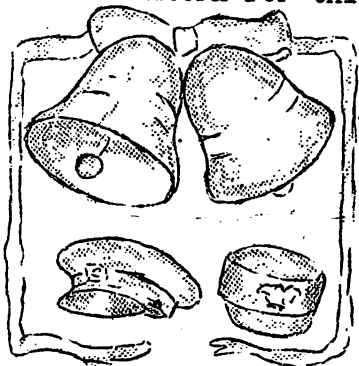
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Pvt. Robert Becker has had a little sojourn in the hospital in New York, so he tells us: "Was so good to get the paper. I have been in the hospital for five days. Nothing very serious, just an appendicitis attack. They decided that it would not be necessary to operate this time. The worst part of it is that I missed a whole week of school, and I'm having a little difficulty catching up with the rest of the class. Those little 'appendages' certainly can cause a big distrubance at the most inopportune times." Here's hoping you're up and around again, Bob!

The Rasmussen family had a very pleasant surprise recently, for that big hunk of sailor, "Wally" and his "little" brother, Pvt. Bill, came home at the same time. Sure was grand to see both boys in church together, and we hope that it won't be too long before you're home again. We thought, however, it was just about time that we had something in our paper about Bill and his experiences - as you all remember he's stationed at Ft. Sill, Okla., so with the help of his very sweet wife, Mabel, we have gathered the following: "I've been quite an old crab around here the past few days. I have a boil inside my nose and one side of my face is a sad sight. This morning at the dispensary, the Captain was looking at my nose when another Captain came in. He saw my name plate which we all wear over our breast pocket, and asked me in perfect Danish if I understood him. I rattled off a line, and he said that was the first time he had ever been answered like that. He, however, couldn't speak any more. --- I haven't had a dry stitch on for two days, as it's been raining and raining. We finally got some heat on and now at least our clothes can get dry. I put on dry ones this morning, but the rain had them soaked in fifteen minutes and to add to our fun, we had to stand retreat in the rain! We all went to church this morning and had a full church. All the officers and practically all the men fell out all slicked up and looking good. We had the band and colors to lead and from all reports were one good-looking outfit marching down the streets to church. One said they sure didn't look like sixth week trainees." Well, Wally, we'll be looking for a letter from you now, for after all you can't let your "little" brother show you up when it comes to writing. (Maybe we'd better explain the expression of "little" brother. We were all amazed to see the two boys together for Wally towers way over Bill.

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She was on her way home from a first aid course when she saw a man lying prone in the middle of the sidewalk. His face was cradled on one arm and the other arm was twisted under him in a peculiar position. Without a moment's hesitation she got down on her knees and went to work. "Lady" said the victim after a few moments, "I don't know what you're doing, but I wish you'd quit tickling me. I'm trying to hold a lantern for this fellow down in the manhole."



SURPRISE! SURPRISE!! SURPRISE!!! WEDDING BELLS!!
SPLICED, HITCHED AND DOUBLE-STITCHED - WHO? Cpl. Jessie Norman -
WHEN? October 8th, 1944 - WHERE? Somewhere in England -
TO WHOM? Pfc. Johnny Stewart - CONGRATULATIONS!!!
 May love keep both your hearts in tune and make life one long honeymoon. Now, how about elucidating a bit, Jessie - we're all anxious to hear the details, so don't forget us, Mrs. John Stewart!

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Bob Haley, A.O.M.B. 3/C celebrated his golden birthday, 20 years young, on the 20th of October. How did you like that swell big surprise birthday package that arrived in Norfolk that day, Bob? Bob's Mom was the birthday package! Happy Birthday, Sailor! The following is the latest comment from his direction: "That was swell of Aage to make up those pictures of P.G.R., and I hope you will note that in your next P.I. issue. (Ed. Note: Your every wish is our command!) I'm not kidding, I really was glad to get that picture of P.G.R. and it just fits in my wallet. I also enjoyed the 'Midget'. Those papers are really something to talk about, and I hope people give as much co-operation to the church after the war as they do now."

Ensign Thorwald Larsen tells more of his sorties, the sites and situations: "This short missive is being written out to sea. The weather today is ideal with a breeze blowing and a perfectly calm sea. In these Pacific waters little, if any, rough weather is encountered, making it pleasant sailing. Our time out here is not as limited as in island ports or anchorages where we usually spend all spare time ashore. No doubt you understand our reasons for desiring to spend as much time on land as permissible. It is during these shore ventures that many fellow officers are encountered who treat us to whatever the island's hospitality facilities may be. We enjoy movies, sports, comradeship and religious affiliations with our respective faiths. There are many items of interest concerning the voyage so far that I would like to relate, but topics of militaristic nature are strictly "taboo". One point I believe can be told, is my visiting of a Japanese group of shrines. This was on an island that has been in the possession of the Japanese far before Pearl Harbor. A tour by jeep around safe sectors this shrine was pointed out. Later on foot, I explored the shrines and grounds surrounding it. As we approached the shrine there was evidence of heavy fighting that had taken place. The major building was partially demolished as the Japs were using it as a vantage point in the battle. Consequently, there was little the American forces could do but demolish the stronghold to rid it of the foe. Within the place were hundreds of rounds of ammunition, Jap rations, blueprints, etc. This was evidence for me of how the Japs are even brutal to their religious sanctuaries. Later on during my journey I encountered several working parties of Japanese prisoners. What a surprise it was to find out the ranging ages of these enemy soldiers. Boys as young as thirteen were fighting as well as men of forty. We have a mighty and fanatical group of men to conquer as yet, before Victory will be complete. It has been a terrific battle to overcome these men regardless of their status on an island five miles square or seventy-five miles square. The islands I have been to where the Japs have been fighting have been these sizes. Oftentimes I have thought of how great it will be again to return to Chicago and be in familiar church surroundings. Little did we realize at the time how fortunate we were to be there among our friends - but this is one of the hard lessons life teaches through experience. Enclosed in a letter that arrived several weeks ago were the signatures of many old friends and acquaintances. I certainly was both thrilled and glad to know that all these still remembered me."

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A minister, traveling on one of those way-trains that stop at every station on the side line, was reading his Bible. "Find anything about the railroad in that book?" asked the conductor, as he reached for the minister's ticket. "Yes" replied the minister. "In the very first chapter it says that the Lord made every creeping thing."

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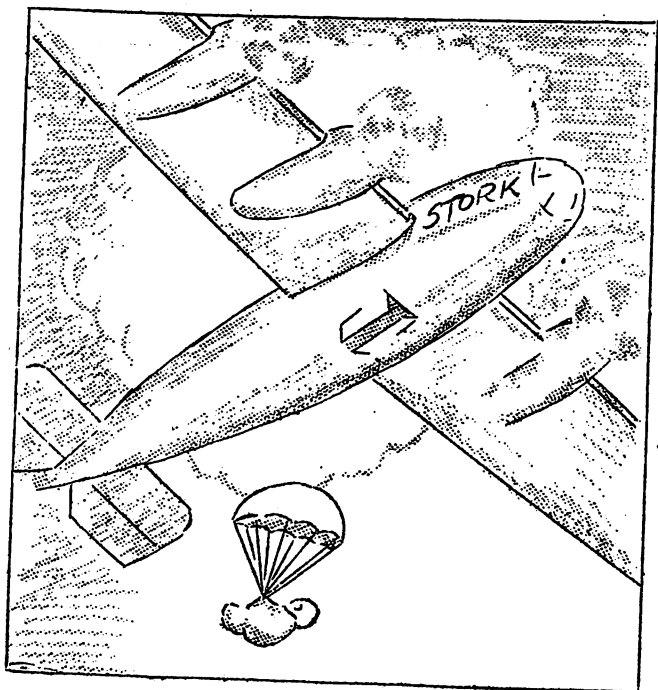
Gordon Pederson Q.M. 3/C has hoveed into port and dropped us a line: "I always spend hours thinking after I have read the G.I. news. Can so well recall the swell times many of us had together. Am sure it has grown quite a lot since it was first published, and who knows to what extreme it may grow. I have shown it to buddies and I know they have written their churches and suggested a similar paper. Thanks for publishing a complete list of all the fellows in the service and their addresses. Through you I have been able to communicate with several of my old friends and am naturally always trying to conquer new ones. Of the past seventy days sixty of them have been spent at sea. Am now an assistant to the navigation officer. I do such things as plot a course, take star sights, sun sights and other small things, MAINLY PAINTING - this seems to be one of the Navy's most popular occupations. I believe I have spread enough paint on ship's bulkheads to completely cover a whole village. Perhaps I am exaggerating a little, but not too much. Hello to everyone at church, and thank the person who originated that V-mail birthday letter." Take a bow, Pastor Nyholm, that was your idea.

Roy Harris G.M. 3/C, our Jungle-Happy Sailor, has been doing a little bartering and exchanging with our black friends - he says: "Just came back from a little mission. We did a little trading with the natives again and at this island they smoked, so we were able to use cigarettes for our bartering. Besides, I still haven't replenished my supply of mattress covers from the last time. I was able to get a few beautiful cat eyes this time - they really are shiny and bright. Am going to try and have a ring made of one of them when I get back. We also were able to go deep into the jungle and do some hunting - two native boys went along as guides and at the end of our expedition we had two wild pigs and a number of wild pigeons (M-m-m-m fresh pork chops). It was really a lot of fun and broke up the monotony of patrolling. I tried to make conversation with a couple of native women, but they wouldn't say much and then walked away. Maybe I've lost my technique or my skin isn't quite dark enough yet. We brought back a native canoe to use to go from our buoy to the show over on the beach, because sometimes we miss the Show Boat and then there isn't any way to get ashore. No, I don't know just how hot it gets out here, but when I'm cleaning my guns in the sun the pieces get so hot I have one awful time picking them up and putting them back together. No thermometers out here. I think that new paper the Luther League is publishing is really all right - it shows they aren't going to let the G.I. News get all the credit for journalism. The motorized fr eckles have found a new home, my cheeks now, wish I could get rid of them some way. Well, tomorrow is my laundry day, so tonight I'll have to gather all of my clothes together. Gee, it's swell not to have to wash your own clothes again, although I still have to wash my own socks, they just won't take them." (Sniff, sniff, could that be the reason, we wonder?????)

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S-2/C Harold Andreassen is still in the hospital in Shoemaker, California, and he writes to us - "Thank you again for the G.I. paper, which I have already read and enjoyed to the last punctuation mark. The picture of Chaplain Rasmussen which was in the paper is a very good one of him. One thing strange in his letter this time, though, he didn't mention anything about his much-liked coffee, or perhaps he has given it up to smoking cigars. Right? (Ed. Note: Don't you ever believe it - he's a good Dane, Harold!) The Doctor here recommends having a few liberties to get away from the routine and atmosphere around the hospital, so I have done just that. Every minute out, of course, being enjoyed with my wife. She is now living in a small town about 8 miles from the hospital, making it more convenient for both of us."

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We're full of surprises this time -

And happy to be handing out the joyful information that the Lt. Tony Bangs have a new announcer - a boy - broadcasting from their station. He made his first appearance on Tuesday, October 24, 1944. Proud Papa is "beaming" on another page!

Here's a letter from China from our "Front-Page Crasher" S/Sgt. Frank Rasmussen - and no fooling, his picture was in the Chicago Sun a couple of weeks ago. He says: "First of all I want to thank you all for the birthday greeting. It did come a few weeks late, but it sure is good to get mail from all the folks. I've been pretty busy the last month and a half so now I have a little time and have to catch up on my letter writing. The paper arrives in good shape and it sure is a help. I like to look it over and see if I know the fellows that write. As it turns out I've been away for some time, so I don't remember many of the names. How is the Nielsen boy? Never mind, I see he is doing O.K. in France. I've been wondering how he was getting on. He and I went into the Army the same day in '41. It's been a long time - I sure hope it's over soon so that we can all get home again. The news sounds very good over here. We get it about once a week when we can get down to where there is a radio. Here's hoping I see you all soon." We sincerely hope so too, Frank, and for the benefit of all those who didn't see the picture, it was Frank, with four Chinese soldiers, grinning as he held up a captured Jap flag!

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Two workmen sat down to eat their lunch and one began unwrapping a parcel about 18 to 20 inches long. "What's that?" asked his friend. "Well, my wife is away, so I made a pie for myself."
"A bit long, ain't it?"
"Of course it's long - it's rhubarb!"

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Pvt. Victor Sorby, recuperating somewhere at an English base hospital, crashed two Chicago papers a couple of weeks ago - namely The Daily News and Chicago Sun. Now we'll give out with some good news: "My foot is feeling pretty good, am able to walk on it quite well. Have a slight limp which should work out with time. This English weather is something I don't like, it's either raining out or raining in, there seems to be no letup, rain, rain, rain. Have put on all the weight I lost in France and then some. Right now I tip the scales at 180 lbs." Keep up the good work, Vic, at least the English rain isn't dampening your spirits!

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Hubby: "On my way to South America I saw a lot of beautiful panoramas."
Wife: "I thought you promised me you wouldn't run around with those native women."

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Tec/4 Art Johnson finally landed across the "pond" and writes from Tent City in England: "Have been here just one day now. Got off the ship yesterday and came here by train and bus. Enjoyed the train ride very much and seeing the strange sights. The trains here are really small and odd looking, especially the box cars. I got quite a kick out of the houses with their many chimneys, and a few still have thatched roofs. The towns and countryside are all neat and orderly and everything looks just so. The weather here is sure damp and cold, but we're getting used to it gradually. Last night I just about froze, but tonight things will be different cause I'll have my bed made better. We're living in six-man tents now." Then Art writes a few days later - "We moved from our tent city and are now located in a regular camp with brick barracks. There are 22 men in the room here. We sleep on straw mattresses on double-deck beds. I'm on top. Heat is supplied by a small fireplace, which is going now cause it's rather damp and cold from the rain today." Looks like you fellows in England all agree that it's a very wet place!



Three of our boys in church at one time!
It hasn't happened before! Lt. Tony Bang
(center) is getting some good advice from
Papa Bill Rasmussen (right) on how to bring
up a family - and Sailor Wally Rasmussen
(left) is getting an earful for the future!

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Pfc. Harold Rasmussen (another proud Papa) has written a lovely poem to his little son, who was one year old on the 20th of September:

SON

You came to us from heaven, son,
On this September day,
Your Mom and Dad both love you so
You've made their life so gay

They sent you down by air mail
We couldn't seem to wait
Cause when you came from heaven, son
We met you at the gate

Mommy took you in her arms
And held you to her breast
For you had travelled awfully far
She knew you needed rest

Then Daddy stood and looked at you
His heart was full of love
He thanked our Mommy and the folks
Who sent you from above

Daddy

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