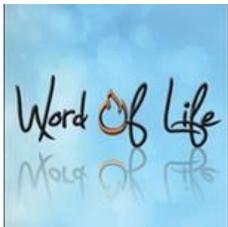




January 2017

District Update

With this New Year comes a new communication piece from the Augustana District. Once a month you will receive a brief Biblical Reflection and a reminder of upcoming events. There will also be another piece called “*Creative Callings*.” As many of you know, I firmly believe that one of the ways the Augustana District can serve congregations, communities and districts, as well as mentor strong leaders and pastors, is through creative staffing arrangements. I have seen a number of places where this is being done and will highlight these in a monthly “*Creative Callings*”. I am hopeful that this will generate discussion, ideas and solutions that can help congregations serve the gospel within their particular context. Please feel free to contact me with any creative staffing solutions for future publications.



*“And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new!”
Revelation 21:5*

The book of Revelation was written in a time of desperation, discouragement, persecution and fear. It gave early Christians hope, encouragement and boldness precisely, when it seemed there was no reason to have any of this. This old word echoes through time and space to speak to us and to our world. These words are similar to the ones Paul also writes, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

What does all this newness really mean? “Newness” is not about what we feel, sense or experience. It is the daily death to life reality that Christ Jesus works in us. In order to understand this newness, we must first conclude that either Christ Jesus is the lamb who was slain and who has begun his reign or he is not. It is really that simple.

Despite what we feel or worry about in 2017 and despite what it may bring for our world or our lives, it is still the case: Christ Jesus is either the lamb who was slain who has begun his reign in our world and in our lives or he is not. The fact that Jesus IS who he said he is, and DOES what His Word promises it does, is the only way we can face the New Year with hope, courage and boldness - like followers before us. This is true even when our eyes cannot see it or our hearts sense it. Christ Jesus is the first word and the last word in all things. For as that “loud voice from the throne” proclaims: “It is done! I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.” *That* is newness and promise enough with which to begin this New Year!



Theology, Church, Mission



Creative Callings

*New Life Lutheran Church, Duluth, MN
Arndt Braaten, Pastor of Faith and Health*

Arndt Braaten serves as a full time medical doctor in the Duluth community. His congregation, New Life Lutheran Church (NLLC) called him to be Pastor of Faith and Health. On December 11th, I had the privilege of preaching and participating in the installation service for Arndt, along with David Norland (Pastor of New Life/endorsed AD pastor) and Brad Jenson (BTM/endorsed AD pastor).

How does this work? For quite some time, Arndt has been working with the medical community to address the spiritual and physical aspects that are a part of health and healing. He helped develop a “Faith and Health Initiative” through Essentia Health. This allows Arndt to spend more time with patients and incorporate the spiritual and physical elements that are a part of healing. His congregation has called him to this (non-stipendiary) position as a way to serve his congregation and community as a NLLC deployed staff member. As Pastor of Faith and Health, he serves as an outreach of New Life Lutheran to the medical community as one of the community’s doctors. Through this creative calling, Arndt’s gifts and expertise in the medical field and his theological gifts are used in both the congregation and the clinic.

For more information contact Arndt Braaten at braaten1@msn.com, Dave Norland at dnorland@hotmail.com, or Brad Jenson at bcjenson@charter.net.

In Christ, Pastor Randy Freund, Service Coordinator



SAVE THE DATES!

ANNUAL THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE ~ Luther 500 Years Later ~

February 6-7, 2017 At Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, MN

Please go to augustanadistrict.org for more information and to register.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONFIRMATION RETREAT

March 10-12, 2017 Luther Crest, Alexandria, MN

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT ANNUAL CONVENTION

April 28, 2017 Christ the King Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, MN

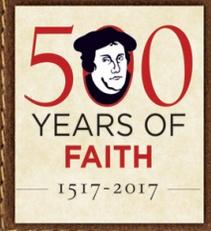
Plan to stay overnight after the Convention and drive to St. John’s in Howard Lake, MN on April 29 for a special event celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT WOW (Women of the Word) ANNUAL GATHERING

Saturday, September 16, 2017

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in New Richland, WI

Watch your email or go to the Augustana District Website or Facebook page for registration information on these events.



Standing firm in the faith for 500 years!

