



April 2017

The Power to Live with Mystery

"....He is going ahead of you...you will see him, just as he told you." (Mark 16:7)

"... 'Is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' 'It is not for you to know....but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses.'" (Acts 1:6-8)

When St. Paul wrote "we walk by faith and not by sight," he did not intend this as some religious slogan. It is the absolute truth, but knowing it is true doesn't lessen the difficulty of accepting it and living by it. Before the disciples saw their resurrected Lord, they huddled in fear and uncertainty. They certainly were not found assembled in bleachers to watch the Lord burst from the tomb, even though *he said he would*. Before they would ever lay eyes on him, they were first given a message that he had risen from the dead. There was no physical evidence, no sighting, of a risen Jesus. It was a promise only. Before Jesus' ascension, after the disciples saw Jesus and spent time with him, this pattern of "walking by faith and not by sight" continued. Finally, they asked their burning question: "Is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" What a disappointing answer they received after all they had been through. "It is not for you to know...*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses.*" From this, we get a pretty good definition of faith as "the power to live with mystery."

Why would we expect it to be any different for us? When we worry and wonder about our futures and are not able to see the way, the word of faith still comes: "He is going ahead of you... You will see him." "It is not for you to know, but you will receive power." When your congregation faces challenges or trials or impatiently waits for the next pastor, the word of faith comes: "He is going ahead of you...You will see him." "It is not for you to know, but you will receive power."

The only sure thing in this life is that the risen Lord is faithful. This is the absolute truth. In Him, "*we live and move and have our being.*" (Acts 17:28) That is the power to walk by faith and not by sight. It is power enough to live with what we cannot understand. It is the power to live with mystery.

In Christ,
Pastor Randy Freund,
AD Service Coordinator





Theology, Church, Mission



Creative Callings

New Creation Lutheran Church, Perham, MN

It began as a creative and unlikely arrangement between a large congregation and a small one.
It involved a pastor and two youth directors who had never met.
It morphed into support for Augustana's Service Coordinator and a pastoral intern.
It is currently the ministry setting for two part-time pastors and a youth director.

In 2013, New Creation Lutheran Church (NCLC) was searching for a part-time pastor. At about the same time, Atonement Lutheran in Fargo was searching for an interim pastor. Both congregations agreed to an arrangement that allowed Pastor Randy Freund to accept a call to both settings, but no one could have seen what would come next.

A recent college graduate, Ben Pedersen, took a part-time youth director position at NCLC to accompany Freund. Through the Atonement connection, Ben met one of Atonement's Youth Directors (Brandon Foster), who was pursuing an M. Div. Ben (who lives in Fargo, ND) needed a youth ministry mentor and Brandon had years of experience. A relationship was born.

NCLC needed regular pulpit supply. Brandon needed an internship site and supervisor. A creative ministry arrangement soon began.

But that was not the end of it. About the time the interim position in Fargo was completed, the Augustana Service Coordinator position opened up and was offered to Freund. Because NCLC had a good relationship and connection to the new pastoral intern, Brandon, NCLC felt they could continue this arrangement through Brandon. This allowed NCLC to feel comfortable having Pastor Freund serve the Augustana District and New Creation. This worked well until Brandon graduated from seminary. He received and accepted a call to Columbus, NE, around the time that the Augustana District saw the need to increase time for the Service Coordinator. The solution? NCLC decided to call another part-time pastor. Pastor Linda Nicklason (Nevis, MN) accepted the call and began her ministry in January of 2017.

NCLC is a small congregation with an average worship attendance of 80-85. Many people might be surprised to see that, within 4 years, it has given part-time staff support to a pastoral intern, a youth director, two pastors and the Augustana District Service Coordinator. It is what NCLC calls "messy ministry."

Has it always worked smoothly and come without sacrifice? No
Is it the path the people of NCLC envisioned in 2013 when they formed a call committee? No
Did NCLC's pastors or youth director ever imagine their ministries would involve
this much road time (Fargo, ND, Nevis and Vining MN)? No.
Does it serve the gospel? Yes, and that "yes" is the only one that really matters.



Theology, Church, Mission

SAVE THE DATE

**COMING
UP**

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
(See more information and registration information attached to this email)*

SOLA EDUCATION FESTIVAL

June 9-10 at Abounding Joy in St. Cloud, MN

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT WOW (Women of the Word) ANNUAL GATHERING

Saturday, September 16, 2017

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Richfield, WI

Go to the Augustana District Website or Facebook page for registration information on these events. You can sign-up for regular emails from AD by emailing office@augustanadistrict.org and requesting to be included in emails.

