



Augustana District Reaches Around the World to Hawassa, Ethiopia

As a new Lutheran landscape begins to develop in North America, the Augustana District is leading the way in building relationships with our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia. This past year, the Augustana District sent \$25,000 to Gemechis Buba's project to develop leaders and pastors through a new institution called Building Leaders for a Global Harvest. This gift provided 10% of the start-up costs for this project, which is now underway.

After the Lutheran church in Ethiopia (Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, or EECMY) severed its ties with the ELCA in 2011, LCMC and NALC have committed to stepping in and filling the gap between this fourth-largest Lutheran church in the world and Lutherans in North America. To this end, the Augustana District's Board of World Missions has actively sought a way to meaningfully connect with the EECMY. We believe we have found it through a developing connection with the Tabor congregation in the city of Hawassa, Ethiopia.

This exciting congregation has grown from 368 members in 1996, to 6168 members in 2010. Even more impressively, the Tabor congregation deploys 53 evangelists, and to-date has established 13 new EECMY congregations in the region – even in areas that are predominantly Muslim. It is this evangelistic ministry that most excites our Board of World Missions.

We are pleased to announce that between 11 and 14 people from Augustana District churches (from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and South Dakota) will be traveling to Hawassa this January 9-19, 2014. Their purpose is to further explore the possibilities of an active relationship with the Tabor congregation and its outreach and evangelistic ministries.



Some members of the Tabor congregation.

With the approval of the District Council, the delegation hopes to take a good-faith gift of \$5000 along with them on their trip. We encourage our congregations, as well as individuals, to consider a special Christmas or year-end gift that will help us accomplish this goal.

As many congregations are also entering a time of budget preparation for 2014, consider planning increased support for the Augustana District, as well as a line item toward an anticipated, significant goal for our partnership with the Tabor congregation. Until our delegation returns from their trip, and upon completion of their due diligence, we are not yet in a position to set a specific goal. However, we are quite confident and hopeful that such a goal will be requested in 2014.

Please keep our delegation and the Tabor congregation in your prayers.

Rev. Mark J. Richardson
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Learn about the Augustana District Confirmation Retreat on p. 3.
See more information about the Tabor congregation on p. 5.

Women of the Word Augustana District meet in Watertown, SD, for 4th Annual Gathering

The Fourth Annual Gathering of the Women of the Word – Augustana District was held on September 21, 2013, at the Watertown, SD, Event Center. Approximately 100 people attended from 21 different congregations. The theme for the day was “Empowered by the Spirit,” based on the theme verse from Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the Ends of the Earth.”

Pr. Steve Ferguson began the worship service with Music. Pr. Janine Rew-Werling, of Hosanna Lutheran in Watertown, SD, led the worship service, with Pr. Sara Sorenson, of Long Lake Lutheran and Leola Lutheran in SD, giving the sermon based on the theme verse. An offering was taken and \$1574.51 was divided equally between Building Leaders for Global Harvest, the New Hope Mission Society, and support for seminary students in Ethiopia.

Three workshop sessions were

available to the participants:

1. Pastor Tim Swenson of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) in Brookings, SD, greeted the gathering and presented the programs and studies that are available at ILT.
2. Carolyn Fiskness and Beverly Tellefson of the WOW Board gave a presentation on card making and card giving. Handouts of Bible verse resources to be used on cards in different circumstances were also provided.
3. Pastor Paul Knudson, Chairman of the Mission Board for Augustana District, shared information regarding the missions that Augustana District supports, including the New Hope Mission Society, Building Leaders for Global Harvest, and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).

Many activities were available for the approximately 50 participants who chose to come to Watertown on Friday afternoon. A trolley took the

group to the Mellette House, the Watertown Historical Society, the Terry Redlin Art Center, and to the Past Time Restaurant for dinner.

The next Annual Gathering will be held on Saturday, September 20, 2014, at Living Word Church in Alexandria, MN.

Watch for details in a newsletter coming to you soon!



The WOW Boutique raised money for the Augustana District.



Getting of the trolley at the Mellette House.



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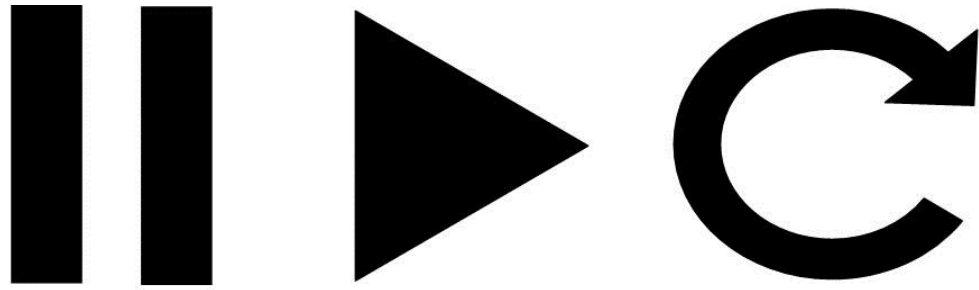
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Augustana District Confirmation Retreat



PAUSE PLAY REFRESH

The Augustana District will provide its first-ever Confirmation Retreat over Presidents' Day weekend, from Saturday, February 15, till noon on Monday, February 17, 2014. The retreat will be held at Green Lake Bible Camp in Spicer, Minnesota.

Meant to augment confirmation instruction in our local churches, the retreat will also offer the opportunity for our youth to experience fellowship with youth from other churches. Open to any LCMC and NALC church, the retreat will focus on the theme "Pause Play Refresh," and (without the kids even knowing it) will examine and integrate themes of Law, Gospel, and the Christian Life. There will, of course, also be plenty of opportunities for fun, recreation, worship, and fellowship to accompany the learning sessions. The retreat is being planned by the district's Board of Christian Education, and will be led by its members and affiliated pastors.

Registration fees will be \$90 per participant (pastors are free). Registration materials will become available in early December, 2013.



Congratulations and blessings to Pastor David Rupp and to Christ's Victory Lutheran Church (Redwood Falls, MN), upon his ordination and installation on September 8. Here's what Pastor Dave writes:

A blessing to the council of Christ's Victory Lutheran Church and the Augustana District! To say it has been an interesting first month as your Pastor would be far too mild in definition! I might choose such words as amazing, fantastic, or phenomenal as more appropriate adjectives! I need to simply say thank you for one of the most memorable days of my life, that of my ordination and installation as your pastor. It was a humbling experience filled with the Grace of God, the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and communion with the Holy Spirit!

Developing Lutheran Ears



The Augustana District / ILT Theological Conference
Best Western Plus, Bloomington, Minnesota
Feb. 2-4, 2014

“Developing Lutheran Ears” will be the theme of the joint Augustana District/Institute of Lutheran Theology Theological Conference. The event will be held February 2-4, 2014, at the Best Western Plus hotel, across the street from the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota.

We are pleased that two well-known Lutheran theologians will be our main presenters on February 3: Dr. Steven Paulson, from Luther Seminary, St. Paul MN, and Dr. Mark Mattes, from Grandview University, Des Moines, IA. We welcome Dr. Paulson back as a regular presenter for this event, and are delighted to welcome Dr. Mattes for the first time. Both are vigorous writers, teachers, and speakers. And both espouse a Lutheran theology in the tradition of Gerhard Forde.

The Tuesday morning session will be led by Pr. Tim Swenson, Dean of ILT, who will connect “Lutheran Ears” to a “Lutheran Voice” in the topic of preaching. Swenson will evaluate anonymously-submitted sermons. Participants will take home sample sermons for the following few weeks.

The event will begin Sunday night, with a Super Bowl party. It will conclude before lunch on Tuesday morning. Registration forms will be available in November.

This event is open to all interested pastors and people from LCMC, NALC, ELCA, and LCMS. Augustana District bylaws require its pastors to attend, and strongly urge congregations and church councils to provide both the funding and time-off to attend this event.



Dr. Steven Paulson

Background of the Tabor Congregation

In January 2014, a delegation from the Augustana District will travel to this congregation to learn about and learn from our Ethiopian brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Tabor congregation is one of more than seven thousand congregations of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). Tabor is found in the city of Hawassa, south of Addis Ababa.

The Tabor congregation is one of the fruits of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM), which came to Ethiopia in 1948. As a result of that work, the Hawassa congregation, which is the mother congregation for Tabor, was established in 1961.

In 1992, due to the rapid growth of the town, the Tabor congregation was established officially as an autonomous congregation on October 19, 1996, with a total of 368 members, of which about 150 were communicant members.

At her establishment, the Tabor congregation had no organized ministries or ministers, except for two evangelists, one guard, and an elders' board. For the basic ministries like Choir, program leaders and sermons ministers were provided by the mother congregation, Hawassa.

Within the last fourteen years, the Tabor congregation has grown dramatically in different directions and ministries. At the end 2010, she had about 107 workers including full time ministers in Hawassa, and more than 300 volunteers for different ministries and activities. These include regular services and kindergarten through secondary schools. Out of 107 ministers and workers, 53 are deployed for evangelistic ministry. The total membership of the congregation in 2010 is 6168, of which 2549 are communicants and about 1000 are children.

Thirteen congregations have been established across the country by the Tabor congregation within the last fourteen years of the establishment, including four in Hawassa. Right now there are about 50 outreach centers in Hawassa, the surrounding areas, and all around the country, with more added each year.

Unconditional Preaching

“The preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified on account of sinners is God’s desired way of being God. That means, according to Luther, that preaching must be categorical. In today’s jargon that means unconditional. Proclamation that gives forgiveness to sinners on account of Christ alone is the only solution for all our problems with God. The only way to end the threat of the unpreached God is by the preached God. That is the presupposition for all Christian preaching.... Only preaching that assumes the bondage of the will for its hearers truly comes to free. Preaching, however, seems to have gotten off the track of late. And when that is the case preaching degenerates into telling cute stories with the preacher taking over as the primary narrator. The preaching then either gives anecdotes or talks about personal experience. Instead, the kind of categorical preaching that Luther describes gives a God who is truly preached. The God whom we discover ourselves is always a hidden God, literally a God not preached. The climax of this hiddenness is that God robs us of all our claims to work salvation by ourselves. Ultimately no preachers can then remain the subjects of their own fantasies. The only way to overcome the problem of the hiddenness of God not preached is by God preached. But that will not happen by attempting to infer God’s will from the law. It happens only when the preaching is categorical, unconditional, just as God did not spare his Son but gave him to captivate our bound wills, drawing all to himself” (Gerhard Forde, *The Captivation of the Will*, pp. 78-79).

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Visit www.AugustanaDistrict.org for more information, including a roster of Augustana District Churches.