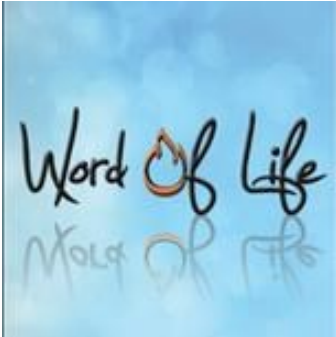




Augustana District

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June 2017

"Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven." (Luke 24:50-51)

We have all seen the artwork. The verses above place an image in our heads. We confess it every Sunday. Of course, I am referring to Jesus' Ascension. At times, however, we confuse the image (an upward ascent) with the meaning (Jesus' sovereign rule over heaven AND earth). The image of this upward ascent should not be confused with the downward (earthbound) meaning.

It is surely not the case that Jesus reigns on high to watch, wait and calculate our earthly work until He comes "to judge the living and the dead." Jesus' "farewell discourse" (particularly in John) and his ascension into heaven did not mark some move to a better vantage point to note what we have not done or should have done on earth.

The story of Jesus remains the story of what *we could never* do and what *only He can do*. The Ascended Lord does not become like the angry owner who leaves and one day returns to lash out at servants who bury the one talent he entrusted to them in fear. It is not about the worry that we will squander the opportunity to turn a profit (or better, steward his gifts). The anger and disappointment come because we are too afraid of him to take any risks. That is the lesson of the Parable of the Talents.

With the Ascension, the focus of God's saving work does not somehow shift now to us and our earthly accomplishments. It is still on God. It is still on how God takes a big risk on us. God simply wants us to take him at His Word. Freedom, risk and playfulness are all a part of the Lord's Sovereign reign. Part of the proof of this is seen in the next big event. God sends us the Holy Spirit in a powerful way at Pentecost. The Church is born.

But what does that church look like? It is messy. It is creative. There is confusion. There are bold, daring, "we've never done it this way before" ways of operating. It is the same Lord now as on the first Pentecost, the same Church, and the same Holy Spirit. It is just a different time.

To what kind of creative and risky freedom and boldness is the Lord calling your congregation? Only God really knows, but you are sure to find out. Why? Because the church and its mission belong finally and only to the Lord of the Church. No other reign or rule can match the power of the Sovereign Lord of the Universe.

In Christ,
Pastor Randy Freund, AD Service Coordinator





Theology, Church, Mission



Hazel Run Lutheran Church is a small church located in Hazel Run, MN located in Yellow Medicine County. Hazel Run, MN is approximately 36 miles north of Marshall, MN. According to the 2014 census, the population is 61. The average attendance at Hazel Run Lutheran Church is 40. Of course, we as pastors understand that the attendance is not the focus.

HRLC was looking for somebody to fill the pulpit and supply worship service leadership in July 2016. They asked for help from the Institute of Lutheran Theology where I started attending in the fall of 2016. Because of the distance from Brookings, SD, it was not very practical.

After two semesters at the ILT, it was time to look towards an internship. Hazel Run Lutheran Church was still looking for a pastor. Because of the initial conversation in the fall of 2016, there was an opportunity to meet and further a relationship. This worked out very well for both parties in the end. To get the internship requirement that the Augustana District and ILT require, paired with the number of congregations without a preacher, some new designs and ideas need to be implemented.

In my case, the Institute of Lutheran Theology is online which allows distance learning through available technology. This allows me to attend seminary while attending to the sheep of the fold in Hazel Run, MN. This solves the problem of serving and education, but what about a mentor for internship requirements?

In this case, Living Word in Marshall, MN has offered to be a mentor to an intern of Hazel Run, MN. Yes, there is some distance that needs to be traveled. Yes, there are going to be hiccups along the road. But we designed a syllabus that allows communication and participation between both places. The best part, we get to bridge a partnership between two locations that are one body in Christ.

With the country churches looking for a preacher and unable to find seminarians willing to take a call in rural churches, with seminarians that are looking for internship, and less churches willing to take on the extra financial burden, new creative ways are needed.

What does this look like in action? Well, I will have to get back to you on this one. It is experimental for both churches and the people involved. As always, we know that God will make sure that the sheep will have a shepherd. God always hears the cries of His children, and will always work to provide one. In my case, I will participate in services at Living Word once per month, and attend a bible study with Living Word. The two-way communication and relationship is truly a way to support and pastor to those that need a preacher. We all need a preacher! So let's be creative and rely on the Word that gives forgiveness, and new creation.

Cody Mills

Do you know of a church that has implemented a Creative Calling? Please let us know about it so that we can share your ideas by contacting Randy Freund at director@augustanadistrict.org.



Theology, Church, Mission

Save the Date

SOLA EDUCATION FESTIVAL

June 9-10, 2017

Abounding Joy in St. Cloud, MN.

Find more information and register at:

<https://www.solapublishing.com/sola-education-event-registration>

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT WOW (Women of the Word) ANNUAL GATHERING

Saturday, September 16, 2017

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Richfield, WI

Registration information coming soon!

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

Monday, February 5 - Tuesday, February 6, 2018

The event will be held at the Sioux Falls Seminary in Sioux Falls, SD.

Hotel information to follow soon.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONVENTION 2018 ~ Saturday, April 28, 2018 Location TBD

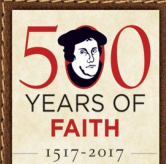
Go to the Augustana District Website or Facebook page for registration information on these events. You can sign-up for regular e-mails from AD by emailing office@augustanadistrict.org and requesting to be included in e-mails.



Multiply x 2

AD Magnify

Acts 12:24 "The Word of the Lord continued to grow and be multiplied"



Standing
firm in the
faith for
500 years!

