



September 2017

"For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3

Two different churches. Two different denominations. Two different pastors?

"Could we work together and get one pastor to serve both congregations?" It was a simple and practical question from neighbors who knew each other, but were from different churches. Leaders from both congregations met to consider the options for their futures. They faced the same challenges with which many congregations are wrestling.

However, before we could talk about the organizational, personal and political hurdles behind that good question, there was something more basic to address. Why the church? What is the church? What is at stake? These questions led to a great conversation and discussion. The many good answers posted on the flip chart seemed to boil down to this one point: the church exists to "tell the story of Jesus" and to "proclaim the gospel."

I pressed this further. What is the gospel? What does the "Jesus story" proclaim and tell us? It was here that we began to consider key scripture passages like Colossians 3:3: "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Added to this one others like Romans 6:4 were considered: "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death." Once you start down this path, you have to add Galatians 2:19-20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" and Philippians 1:21 "For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain."

Think of the implications of these verses! As a denomination, organization, congregation or parishioner, we have no identity apart from Christ. There is no "I" that even exists apart from Christ. Dr. Roy Harrisville liked to say it this way: "We have been baked into the same cake with Jesus."

Since our identity and life IS Christ, it became clear that before we could talk about the many obstacles behind that good question of possibly finding one pastor to serve two congregations, there was something deeper and more basic at stake. The primary question was not so much: "Could we work together and get one pastor so serve both congregations?" The bigger and more important question was: "How radical a Gospel are we bold enough to proclaim?" That is a question for all congregations. There is much at stake here. Jesus' life, death and resurrection make a claim on our lives. We are buried with him by baptism. Our lives and our very identity are completely tied to His. He is our life. This is the truth the church was created to tell. What is clear is that His church needs bold proclaimers to tell the story of Jesus; the Gospel.

In Christ,
Pastor Randy Freund,
Augustana District Service Coordinator





Theology, Church, Mission



*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.*

No Church, No Congregation, No Problem

Since God creates out of nothing, he doesn't require much to get started. It's impossible for us, but certainly not for the Creator and Sustainer of all things. Approximately 10 years ago there were some disgruntled church members that began to meet for Bible Study. The 'problem' at their home church wasn't one problem. Each person seemed to have a different difficulty. During the time of the thinking and praying and waiting for the responses from the powers-at-be the Bible Study grew.

The awaited response for help and answers at long last came but the advice for 18 months of mediation was unacceptable to people who had already suffered 18 months of tension. The group Bible Study was being led by a trained lay minister. The group decided, in a member's backyard, to form a new church, to worship together and to call the lay minister to serve them. After some months of prayer and soul searching the new church was formed. The lay minister, trained to support and assist a pastor began looking for more education. The Institute of Lutheran Theology offered her the opportunity to continue serving her congregation while pursuing an MDIV. Things fell into the place. The congregation will celebrate its tenth anniversary as we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the reformation. God did a lot with very little.

The lay minister turned LCMC ordained pastor had been supply preaching for a neighboring ELCA church for years. When that small congregation's pastor retired, they called their supply preacher and worked it out with the bishop's office. Two small congregations share a pastor and are good sister churches despite the different affiliations. Christ bridges gaps and knocks down walls. God moved and made new things happen. The Creator is pretty creative still, and doesn't need a lot of starting material.

Pastor Becky Hand
Life in Grace Lutheran Church
Odessa, TX



Theology, Church, Mission

Save the Date

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT WOW (Women of the Word) ANNUAL GATHERING "Endurance"

Saturday, September 16, 2017

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Richfield, WI

Registration information is now on the Augustana District Website at augustanadistrict.org

Registration deadline is September 7!

LCMC 17th ANNUAL GATHERING "We Confess Our Faith"

October 8-11, 2017

Hilton Minneapolis, 1001 S. Marquette Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403

For more information and to register please go to lcmc.net/annual-gathering

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

"Shaping the Next Generation of Pastoral Leaders"

Monday, February 5 - Tuesday, February 6, 2018

The event will be held at the Sioux Falls Seminary 2100 Summit Ave., Sioux Falls, SD.

A block of rooms have been set aside at the ClubHouse Hotel and Suites 2320 S. Louise Ave.

Call 866-534-8700 and refer to the Augustana District to receive the blocked room rate of \$119/night

Block rooms not booked by January 4, 2018 will be released.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONVENTION 2018

Saturday, April 28, 2018

Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, MN

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.

An invitation from ILT – Forde Fest II, Sept 25-26

Here's the link for online registration

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/forde-fest-ii-tickets-37292852927>

Contact: Rev. Timothy J. Swenson

605-692-9337 work

preachermantim@gmail.com



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