

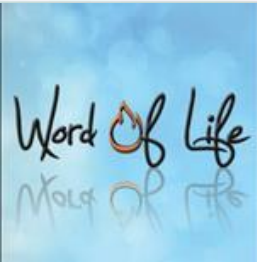


Augustana District

February 2018

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www.augustanadistrict.org



“WHAT HAVE YOU TO DO WITH US, JESUS OF NAZARETH?” (Mark 1:24)

Could a demon-possessed man be asking a question that we also ask? We may not want to admit it, but it is nonetheless true.

As I was preparing to write this monthly reflection, there were, admittedly, two other things on my mind. The annual Augustana District Theological Conference will soon occur under the theme, “Lutheran Pastors for Changing Times.” Pastors and congregations face unique challenges, some of which we hope to address at this year’s conference. Preaching the gospel is a bold and daring exercise in a time like ours.

Also on my mind was the Gospel text for January 28, Mark 1:21-28. There Jesus enters the synagogue and is confronted by a possessed man who asks this question, “WHAT HAVE YOU TO DO WITH US, JESUS OF NAZARETH?” The demon knows the answer. Jesus has everything to do with him. Jesus is a threat and the demon knows his time is up. Even the religious experts knew there was something different with Jesus present. They were amazed and stunned by what they saw and sensed in Jesus.

The demon’s question is our question also. The truth is, Jesus has everything to do with us. Without our asking or invitation, he has decided to get his life all tangled up with ours. It is a take-over. There is no question about that. This comes as a threat to our wills before it can ever be received as the promise of His grace.

Flannery O’Connor was a gifted author and theologian, who died far too early. She was masterful at describing Jesus’ power and authority in much the same way as the possessed man. She has much to say in a time such as ours. Lamenting the “state of religion,” she once put it this way:

“One of the effects of modern (theology) has been gradually to turn religion into poetry and therapy, to make truth vaguer and vaguer and more and more relative, to banish intellectual distinctions, to depend on feeling instead of thought, and gradually to come to believe that God has no power, that he cannot communicate with us, cannot reveal himself to us, indeed has not done so, and that religion is our own sweet invention.”

Jesus has everything to do with us. “No strength of ours can match his might,” Luther wrote. “It is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me,” declared St. Paul. (Galatians 2:20) The idea that Jesus is simply a sunny addition to our already nice lives overlooks a most important fact about the human heart. If the human heart is indeed “a factory of idols,” sinners will always resist God and create idols to believe in and hang onto. This means that, as sinners, we resist God and create idols to believe in and hang onto. But God has sent his Son to do something about this. In fact, He has come to take over our lives, by dethroning anything or anyone we fear, love or trust more than God. Could there be any better news than that?

“What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?” Thank God, the answer is “Everything!”

In Christ,
Pastor Randy Freund,
Augustana District Service Coordinator



Augustana District

AD Theology, Church, Mission



Would you like to be more involved with the Augustana District from your home or from your church?

- Do you enjoy working on websites or being plugged in on social media? Would you like to take that hobby and put it to good use with the district?
- Do you like playing with Publisher to design newsletters, advertisements and brochures?
- Do you enjoy talking on the phone? the district is looking for volunteers to occasionally make phone calls (following a script).
- Are you interested in sitting on one of the boards of the AD but think that you live too far away to participate? If you have a computer, or access to one, you can join a board. Most of our meetings are now done with many participants joining via ZOOM—an online program that brings people from all over the world close together in working and planning for the district.

There are many creative and exciting ways that you can become an active volunteer with the district. If you have a talent that you would like to share as a volunteer with the Augustana District please contact Pastor Randy Freund, Service Coordinator at rfreund@newcreationperham.org or Wendy Magruder, Administrative Assistant at office@augustanadistrict.org.



Theology, Church, Mission

Save the Date

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE 2018 ~ Just 3 days away ~ Contact the office at office@augustanadistrict.org if you decide to attend as a walk-in. You MUST register via the website to pay with a credit card.

"Lutheran Pastors for Changing Times"

Monday, February 5 - Tuesday, February 6, 2018

Sioux Falls Seminary, 2100 Summit Ave., Sioux Falls, SD.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONFIRMATION RETREAT 2018 "Martin Luther" ~ Register Now!

Friday, March 2 - Sunday, March 4

Luther Crest in Alexandria, MN

You can download a registration brochure from this email and registration is available on the website for those wishing to use a debit or credit card! Deadline to register is fast approaching ~ February 14.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONVENTION 2018

Saturday, May 5, 2018

Faith Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, MN

Watch for details and registration information to arrive soon!

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT WOW (Women of the Word) ANNUAL GATHERING

Saturday, September 15, 2018

Peace Lutheran Church, Watertown, MN

Please remind your church council to prayerfully consider their financial support of the AD for the 2018 fiscal year.

This can be done by filling out the pledge card that was mailed out last November and return it to the office at: Faith Lutheran Church 335 Main St. S. ~ Hutchinson, MN 55350. If the card has been misplaced or your church did not receive a pledge card, please contact the office for a new one or just mail/e-mail your commitment to the office at finco@augustanadistrict.org. Thank you for faithfully supporting the AD through your prayers and financial support.



Multiply x 2
Magnify

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