

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT NEWSLETTER APRIL 2019

335 Main St S • Hutchinson, MN 55350 • 320.587.2093



THEOLOGY CHURCH MISSION

This is the April Newsletter, and I'm very, very tempted to Celebrate and scream out on these pages that "He is Risen!" This is the Good News after all! This makes all things new, and bright and shiny. This is the source of our hope.

However, at this writing, and most likely at your reading, it is still Lent. "Alleluias" are not yet allowed. It is still time for somberness and reflection. The dancing must hold off. So, I'm caught between the journey to the cross and the resurrection after the cross. Here we stand (or sit or recline) between seeing the cross dragged down the dusty street by our beloved Savior and seeing the empty cross that could not hold him in death. We stand in the middle of the 'before' and the 'after' shot of the renovation.

The renovation: If you've renovated your house or your business you know it is difficult and painful, to say the least. It doesn't sound so bad in the discussions with the contractor; but once into the "job," difficulties will arise, and on top of those, additional problems will appear, and on top of those, seemingly insurmountable issues will take root. The dust makes it hard to breathe, and the lack of oxygen makes it hard to think, and the lack of thought makes it's hard to get along with the workers.

A renovation is not fun. It is painful and difficult. It makes you wonder why we would ever undertake such a task.

We undertake the task because we look to the

other side. We plan the desired end and decide the pain to get there is worth it. We look at the current state of the space, and we recognize the potential if the work is done. We look at the space from the "before" condition and envision the "after" condition.

Isn't this the same as Christianity? Aren't we the "before" and "after" in Christ. Don't we recognize our need for transformation? Don't we see our sin, greed, and selfishness? Don't we see the potential of being confident in Christ? Don't we see that if we were truly dependent on him, we could give up the angst of trying to make things happen by ourselves? Could we give up the impossible task of trying to renovate ourselves?

When we look at the "before" of ourselves, we see what needs to be fixed and changed and re-molded. But don't forget that there is an "after" of you too. The "after" is the perfect child of God, saved by grace through faith. It is the "after" of you that God sees.

Currently, we are in the middle, caught in the renovation. We are stuck in the "before," and can see the layout of the "after." We follow Jesus to the cross, and we celebrate the resurrection. We are both/and. We are both sinner and saint, both "before" and "after," both pre-reno and post-resurrection.

Even as we approach Holy Week, our hearts sing out a muffled "alleluia" for the glory to come. We live in this in-between place, between "before"

and "after," between a sinner and saint, between Lent and Easter, between the cross, dragged down the dusty road and the empty, powerless cross of the crucified. Here we stand.

Here we live. Praise be to God who sees the "after" of us and makes us his resurrection project. He lives through the pain and the dust. He is willing to wait, willing to endure, willing to keep working on the saint within the sinner. It's hard to not cry out, "Alleluia!" Even in the midst of Lent.

Peace be with you,

Pastor Becky Hand
Life in Grace,
Odessa, TX



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Yes we do! Dear Pastors, if you write a devotional piece for your congregation's newsletter, we'd love to share it with the district. Please forward one or two of your articles for the district newsletter to Wendy, the AD administrative assistant for the district. Submissions can be sent to office@augustanadistrict.org and are due by the 20th of each month. Thank you!



Conflict Resolution Workshop



Friday, May 10, 2019 ~ 2- 6PM
at Living Word Lutheran
Church in Alexandria, MN

Registration is due by May 3
and the cost is \$15 per person
which includes a light supper.

Visit the AD website at
augustanadistrict.org and
register today!

www.augustanadistrict.org



It's time once again for the Augustana District Convention. All member churches are encouraged to send delegates, and all interested people are warmly invited to attend. The convention will begin with a 9:00 a.m. registration and a 10:00 a.m. welcome and opening worship. Convention will conclude around 5:00 p.m. Further details and information is available on the district's website. This year the district will again offer a streaming option for churches that are not able to physically send delegates to the convention. You can stream the meeting right to your church and vote from there.

May 11, 2019

LOOKING BACK
ON WHAT GOD HAS DONE...

“So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”
Isaiah 55:11

LOOKING TOGETHER
AS THE AUGUSTANA DISTRICT...

“I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”
Philippians 1:6

LOOKING AHEAD
TO WHAT WE CAN-
NOT SEE...

“Because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen.” II
Corinthians 4:18a

Register at
augustanadistrict.org
Deadline April 28, 2019

Hey Augustana District family,

Join us for a week of family camp at Mount Carmel this summer from July 13-July 19 as we explore the "Sounds of the Holy Spirit".

The 1st-century church has a lot in common with the 21st-century church. Discover again the power and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Our Guest Teacher will be Pastor Randy Freund, the Service Coordinator for Augustana District, LCMC and pastor at New Creation Lutheran Church, Perham, MN.

Guest Worship Leaders will be Milt and Andrew Scott. You can register directly with Mount Carmel by filling out the registration form inside and mailing it directly to Mount Carmel or by registering online at Mt. Carmel Ministries

I hope to see you there!
Pr. Randy Freund, Augustana District Service Coordinator



July 13 - 19

Register directly at
www.mountcarmelministries.com

“One must be careful of books, and what is inside them, for words have the power to change us.”

– Cassandra Clare



Two years ago, Jon Gowin came across an old, tattered copy of Luther’s Small Catechism. Recognizing the name “Martin Luther,” he bought it for 25 cents and took it home, not realizing that God would use it to change him and his family radically.

Jon’s mother grew up Lutheran in North Dakota, and his father grew up Methodist in Minnesota. After getting married, they transitioned into popular Evangelicalism. So, Jon grew up in churches that heavily emphasized progressive sanctification (personal growth in holy living).

Such an emphasis tends to produce law-oriented Christians, who – depending on their success or failure in trying to improve – swing back and forth between feelings of pride and feelings of despair. This was the case with Jon, and also his wife Odette who grew up Roman Catholic. They were both preoccupied with works righteousness.

In studying the Catechism, Jon and Odette were confronted with the reality that “we daily commit many sins,” for which we need daily forgiveness. God “daily forgives all my sins abundantly, and the sins of all believers.” This happens through the Lord’s Prayer, the Lord’s Supper, and Confession and Absolution. As Luther says, “Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.”¹

We rely on God for faith to believe and contrition to repent, and also the desire and ability to resist the will of the devil, the world, and our own flesh. God does all this for us day after day, and in the process – if we do not resist – God produces in us “the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.”² As Gerhard Forde puts it,

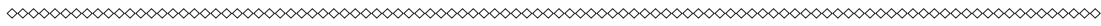
“Sanctification...is perhaps best defined as the art of getting used to the unconditional justification wrought by the grace of God for Jesus’ sake. It is what happens when we are grasped by the fact that God alone justifies. It is being made holy, and as such, it is not our work. It is the work of the Spirit who is called Holy.”³

This understanding of the Christian life was revolutionary for Jon and Odette. Their focus shifted from themselves to Christ and the Gospel – the amazing truth that God “justifies the ungodly.”⁴ Feelings of pride and despair gave way to a profound sense of peace. They proceeded to become members of a local Lutheran church through adult instruction, and the baptism of their children, Joshua, and Abigail.



By the end of this year, the Gowins will return to Gambia, West Africa, to serve as missionaries. Jon grew up as a missionary kid in Gambia and neighboring Senegal, and he served for ten years in Gambia as an agriculture missionary. Odette is actually from Gambia.

Jon and Odette will be involved in evangelism through showing "The Jesus Film," translating and teaching Luther's Small Catechism and other parts of The Book of Concord, and helping farmers and gardeners by improving local agriculture. Meanwhile, Jon is pursuing a Master of Divinity to be ordained as a Lutheran missionary pastor.



¹Luther's Small Catechism | ²Philippians 1:11 ESV | ³"A Lutheran View of Sanctification" in Five Views of Sanctification | ⁴Romans 4:5 ESV

Do you have a Minute

Is there a special mission close to the heart of your church? We would love to hear about it. Please send us a Mission Minute about your favorite mission. We'd love to share their story! Send your mission ideas to Wendy Magruder at office@augustanadistrict.org.

to Share?

A Prayer For Easter Sunday

Young Ernie and his family were invited to have Easter Sunday lunch at his grandmother's house in Monkey's Eyebrow, Arizona. USA. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Ernie received his plate he started eating straight away.

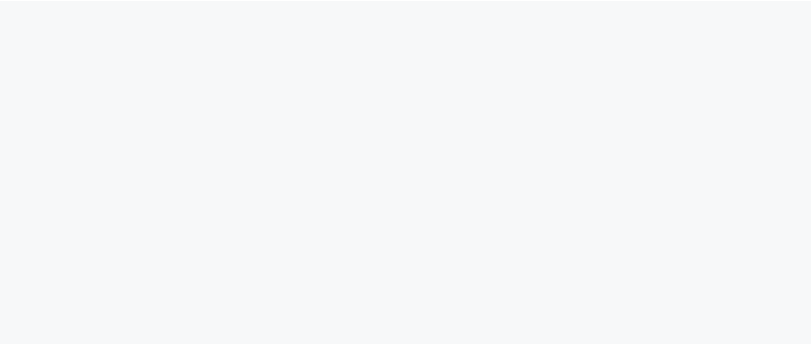
'Ernie, wait until we say grace,' demanded his father.

'I don't have to,' the five year old replied.

'Of course you do, Ernest,' his mother insisted rather forcefully. 'We always say a prayer before eating at our house.'

'That's at our house,' Ernie explained, 'but this is Grandma's house, and she knows how to cook.'





Address Service Requested

AD
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Christ sacrifice
He is life rejoice joy
Jesus hope crucifixion
SAVIOR
RISEN
REDEEMER amazing grace
LOVE mercy
StudioJRU