

The Augustana Insert

Our Lord Is Calling A Journey, a Vision, a Partnership

Reflections from Pastor Paul Knudson, Chairperson of the Augustana District Board of World Missions



Pastor Knudson (left) with other representatives who traveled to Ethiopia.

Imagine a church body with this strategic vision: in the next five years reach out to 30 million unbelievers, more than triple the number of pastors to 10,000, double the number of evangelists to 16,000, train 400,000 lay ministers in deeper Bible knowledge, have 30 PhD- and 200 Masters-level teachers for your seminaries, and send out 50 missionaries to foreign lands. This is just some of the strategic vision of the Ethiopia Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).

It was a thrill for some twenty representatives of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, the North American Lutheran Church, the Association of Renewing Churches and others to walk with our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia for nearly two weeks in late April. We were there not only to be inspired by powerful Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered worship and presentations. We were there to begin a mutually necessary partnership for the sake of the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. This church body issued a Macedonian call to us, and we came away knowing we need to issue the same call to them to come over and help us.

The Mekane Yesus Church has 5.8 million baptized members, adding nearly 500,000 in the last couple years alone. Many of them are very poor, living in rural areas. Most are from two major tribes, and often they are living and bearing witness in overwhelmingly Muslim communities. Challenges abound. Yet they are resilient and committed to bear witness to the redemptive love of Jesus Christ for all people.

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In the weeks and months ahead, you will learn of the significant leadership role our Augustana District can and needs to play in bringing people together to make this partnership real. We have been invited to jump start this relationship by partnering with the Central Synod of EECMY. This is the largest synod with nearly 750,000 members. We will be learning of their needs and how we can help in ways that are sustainable and critically important for them moving forward, but do not create dependency. They in turn will have much to give to us inspiring us for bold witness.

Keep your eyes and ears open for future news. I know I for one will be seeking to find ways to bring the message directly to you. These are exciting days to live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ making disciples near and far.



“That You May Proclaim”



Highlights from the Augustana District Convention

Some 115 delegates, members, and guests gathered on Saturday, April 28, at Christ the King Lutheran Church (Hutchinson, MN) for the 3rd Annual Augustana District Convention. Twenty-five member churches were represented, along with another 7 guest congregations.

Opening worship's preacher, Janine Rew-Werling of Hosanna Lutheran Church (Watertown, SD) challenged the gathering "... to fulfill the privilege of proclaiming Jesus Christ who raises us to new life."

District Council chair Randy Freund reported: "There is a place for structure and for organization. Congregations need resources and Augustana exists to assist."

The director of Sola Publishing and pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church (Maple Lake, MN), Steven King, delivered the keynote address, "The Importance and Value of Teaching the Word." He reminded participants that the Holy Spirit comes to us through the Word, and that God has called us to be "instruments of the Word."

Service Coordinator and pastor at Christ the King, Mark Richardson, stated that the Augustana District "... is becoming what we said we would." While the gathering of congregations into the district continues, the "recruiting phase" is slowing and the services and ministries provided by the District are increasing. Richardson reported that the Augustana District had doubled in size since the convention a year ago.

Four of the boards have been functioning effectively, and each gave a report. The two missions boards - "Domestic" and "Global" - have been especially active and encouraging vitality in congregations and resources for world mission. A resolution was passed to combine the Board of Theological Education and the Board of Publications into a single Board of Christian Education, which will focus on enhancing and supporting congregational education at all levels.

In elections, Emilie Wildey (St. Matthew's, Stewart MN) was elected, and Gaylen Lerohl (Living Word, Alexandria MN) was re-elected, to the District Council; and Pr. Dave

Christensen (Living Word, Marshall MN) was re-elected to the Board of Theology and Ministry, along with new members Pr. Janine Rew-werling, Pr. AJ Kluver (Living Word, Alexandria MN), and Pr. Steve Bliss (St. Olaf, Bode IA).

A budget of \$71,643 was presented by district council member Eric Knutson and, following inspiring words from council member Bill Swope, was adopted unanimously.

For many, the highlight of the convention were the inspiring and exciting presentations by four pastors who "told the story" of their mission start-up churches in Sartell MN (Abounding Joy, Pr. Tom Wright), Milbank SD (Living Word, Pr. Craig Werling), Mankato MN (Resurrection, Pr. Greg Lenz), and Alexandria MN (Living Word, Pr. AJ Kluver). These new churches, along with many others, are off to terrific starts, and the lively presence of the Holy Spirit working through the living Word is evident in each.

The hospitality provided by Christ the King was outstanding. Lunch was prepared and served by the Vision Honduras mission group.

Augustana District Announcements

- The District Council will meet Saturday, June 23, in Hutchinson, MN.
- The Rev. Brian Nehring will be ordained and installed as pastor of New Hope Lutheran Church, Comfrey, MN, on Sunday, June 3. Welcome!
- The Rev. Own Derrick was installed as pastor of Hazel Run Lutheran Church, Hazel Run, MN, on Sunday, March 18. Welcome!
- The Rev. Teresa Jacobson was installed as pastor of Grace and Our Savior's Lutheran Churches in Menno, SD, on Sunday, March 25. Blessings upon you!
- Fahlun and Our Savior's Lutheran Churches of Nelson, MN are in call process.
- St. John's Lutheran Church of Springfield, MN, continues in call process, and is being served by interim pastor Julie Smith.
- A new congregation, Christ's Victory, has been established in Redwood Falls, MN. Blessings upon you!
- Blessings are extended to Hope Lutheran Church of Huron, SD, upon their 1st Anniversary on May 20.
- Blessings are extended to Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church, Detroit Lakes, MN, as they enter into a time of intentional study and eventual call process.

