

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2019

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The questions that have been in the thoughts of the church ... what is God's Vision for us?

Devotional Thoughts by Pr. Thorstad

This past year (2018), my congregation (St. Peter's Lutheran Church) reached 175 years in running.

The first members of the church came from now Modern Day Germany due to persecution of their faith and their ability to provide education to their children. Services were conducted in the German Language until the late 1940's and the current church building is designed from the original church in Walmore, Germany.

The altar and hand paintings around the whole sanctuary are a testament to the heritage of the church and a beauty that is long forgotten in newer churches today. One could say that St. Peter's is grounded in heritage and tradition, something we as Lutherans believe is important.

Heritage and tradition are indeed important

and can help maintain the course of the church but at the end of the day, those two things are not what has sustained this church to reach 175 years. It ultimately

came to God's vision and hope for this church and in its ministry for those in the community which has changed over the past 175 years. Vision is what kept the blood flowing through the veins of this church and that vision was to proclaim the Gospel to all people.

The past month or so we have spent time looking at the vision of the church. Looking at God's

vision for the church isn't an easy task and it isn't something that will be done any time soon because so often we confuse plans with visions.

When we look at the first reading for the sixth Sunday of Easter which began our look at vision. The text in Acts 16:9-15

"Are we really doing everything to fulfill this vision? Are we just on Auto Pilot? Is there something we are doing that maybe we should stop doing? Is there something we should be doing but we aren't? Is there something we are doing, but could do better?" Finally, "Are we willing to get back on the path that God has for us?"

shares of Paul's second missionary journey as they planned to proclaim the message of the Gospels to the Gentiles. But as the text read's, Paul and his companions kept running into dead ends and the Holy Spirit kept pushing them in a different direction then they had planned. As they begin to head in a new direction, the Holy Spirit again stops them and finally by way of a vision from God, point's Paul to meet a woman from the city of Thyatira.

When one reflects on this text, we see God working in Paul and his companions to head in the direction that He desires of them, not what they had planned. While at the same time, the vision to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles is still being fulfilled, it just took a few redirects to get to the right path. What took place was God's Holy Spirit working in Paul to be attuned to where God wants them to go, not where they think they should be headed.

One would believe that in 175 years, the church got off God's vision and got in their own path and flow and became comfortable how things were going. But then the Holy Spirit jumped in and began to shake things up a little bit to help the church get back on the right track.

The questions that have been in the thoughts of the church here is what is God's Vision for us? The answer for the most part is what has been laid out in the churches constitution which says, "this congregation

shall be to glorify God and help in the extension of His Kingdom among all people for their salvation by proclaiming the Christian faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures." Which for the most part is strongly connected to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.

The next few questions that have been asked are: "Are we really doing everything to fulfill this vision? Are we just on Auto Pilot? Is there something we are doing that maybe we should stop doing? Is there something we should be doing but we aren't? Is there something we are doing, but could do better?" Finally, "Are we willing to get back on the path that God has for us?"

We can have the greatest plans and the greatest programs but if it isn't in God's Vision for us as a church it is pointless, because everywhere else has the greatest plans and programs. But what we offer is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. So why don't we let His Holy Spirit lead us just as it lead Paul and his companions in Acts 16.

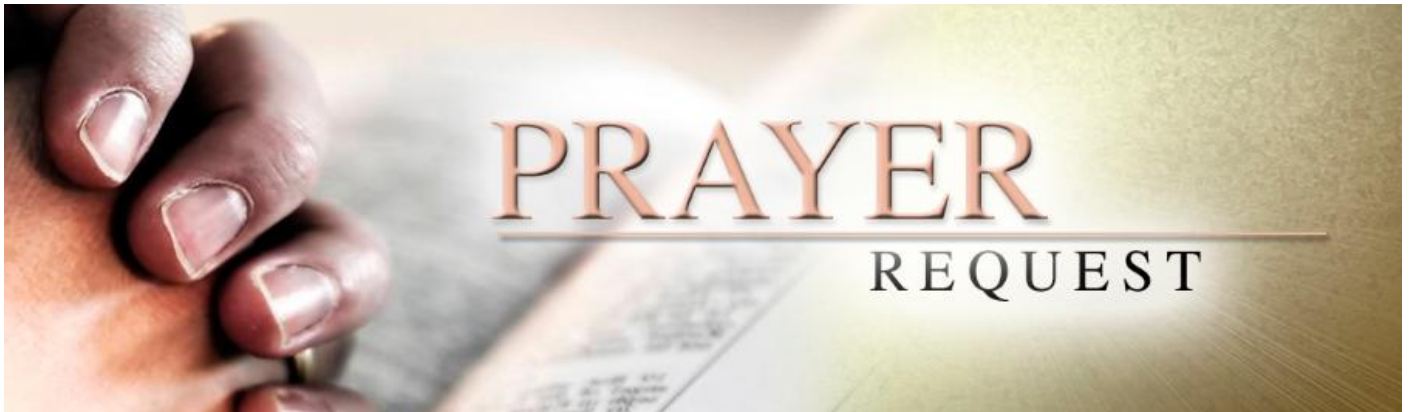
Heavenly Father, we pray that you will lead us by your Holy Spirit to help us fulfill the vision you have for us as a church and association. Help us to be faithful to your will and not our own. Help us to proclaim the Gospel to all people in all places so that they too may know of your Son Jesus Christ, in whom we pray. Amen.



Introducing Pastor Thomas Thorstad Augustana District Council Member and Pastor at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Sanborn, New York

Pastor Tom, is currently the Pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Sanborn, NY, A LCMC and Augustana District congregation. Prior to coming to St. Peter's he served as a missionary for eight years in a small communist country with his wife Deuane, called Moon in English, a native of Laos. Pastor Tom and Deuane have three boys: Abraham, David and Joseph. He has a Master of Divinity

(TCU) and a Master of Theology in Biblical Studies (GTS) from schools based in East Asia. He is rostered with LCMC as a Certified Lutheran Minister and is endorsement with the Augustana District. While overseas he served in various regional leadership positions as the Network Director and on the Executive committee of the network for a 13 country multi- denomination and mission regional network.



Prayers Around the World for Our Fellow Heirs in Christ

- The civil unrest in Ethiopia and the battles and persecutions occurring there. Christians are suffering.
- Flood victims in Assam, India
- Blessings for Young Adult Missions Internship as ground work is laid for the maiden mission trips.

Mission Minute from the Board of World Missions

Below is a message from our mission partners in the Tabor Congregation of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. The Augustana District entered into a formal partnership with the Tabor congregation in 2014 after a visit from an AD delegation. Our partnership agreement was to fund 50% of all missionaries that Tabor raised up and sent out. Since then the Tabor mission has boomed and they have sent out so many missionaries that we have been unable to keep up our 50% support target. If you do not already, please consider supporting

this mission partnership. If you already support this partnership please consider increasing what you already give. The message below will give you a glimpse of the incredible ministry that the Tabor congregation is doing. Please note, this is ONE congregation in the EECMY! Praise God for the work that He is doing in and through them. May each of the congregations of the AD and the LCMC have the same heart to take the Gospel to the nations that the Tabor congregation does!

"I do all this for the sake of gospel that I may share in its blessings."
(1Cor. 9:23)

Dear Augustana District,

We understand that all of your efforts are for the sake of expanding the kingdom of God. We are bound together in this same mission that is given to us in God's love. Our partnership is God's Mission. We are working together in many ways: consultation, financial support and prayers, among others. Our mission work in the country of Ethiopia extends to seven regions among nine. Through our mission partnership 40 mission centers and 29 outreaches have been established throughout Ethiopia.

Currently 40 missionaries and 22 outreach evangelists are serving all over the country, as well. In those areas we have holistic services which are serving the whole person: soul, flesh and spirit. Through this approach we address unreached nations, ethnic groups and unchurched people in the surrounding areas. We teach the converts, baptize and make disciples of Jesus to continue the spread of the Gospel. Based on our vision, mission and goal we present a report especially in relation to your partnership as follows:



1. Serving at seven regions in the country
2. 40 mission centers
3. 29 outreaches and Bible study centers
4. 62 ministers and over 700 volunteers are serving God's Mission
5. Augustana District has given 3,694,917 Ethiopian Birr in financial support
 - a. Based on this we have done the following activities this year:
 - i. planned to reach 11,510 people and reached 11,776 people which is 102.3 %
 - ii. Among the above, 105 people repented and 207 converted
 - iii. 778 attending confirmation classes and 544 salvation classes
 - iv. 78 baptized in the first two quarters of 2019

6. We have purchased 325m² with 330,000 Ethiopian Birr for two outreach centers in Chafee Cottijabessa
7. We erected worship houses for Wotara by 232,200 and Golijota 100,000 with total cost of 332, 200 Birr which came from your partnership



Ministry Opportunities:

† Prayers for God's provision in our mission. Having missional hearts and minds in our congregations.

† Leaders, ministers and congregants committing to mission work.

† That mission work would become a greater priority in manpower and budget allocation.



Ministry Challenges:

† Harsh treatment from other religious groups in our outreach and mission areas.

† Financial Constraints that inhibit our ability to do more.

† Lack of adequate mission experience in our people to expand our mission abroad.

Thank you for your support in this partnership. We seek to give God the glory in all we say and do.

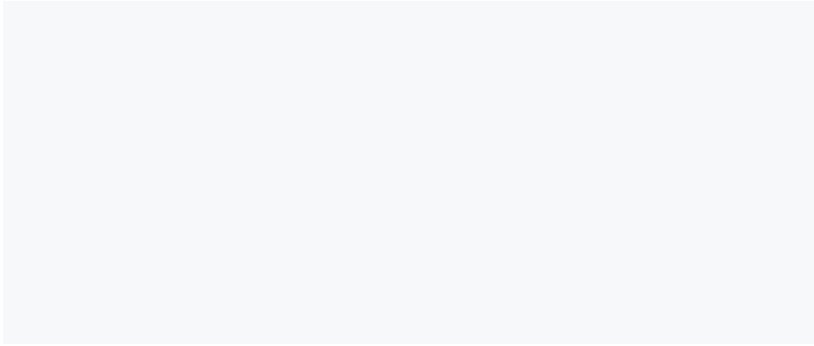
Yours in Christ,
Rev. Amenu Arsie
Head of Mission & Evangelism Department
Tabor Congregation
EECMY



New this year - a retreat weekend for High School Students.

This retreat will be held December 6-8 at Luther Crest in Alexandria, MN.

[Registration is now open](#)



Address Service Requested

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT
335 Main Street S.
Hutchinson MN 55350



THEOLOGY • CHURCH • MISSION



Registration is now open for the
2019 Annual Gathering
Women of the Word

When: September 21, 2019 from 8a.m. - 3 p.m

Visit www.augustanadistrict.org for the registration form & printable collateral

Registration Deadline is Saturday, September 14.
Watch for a special e-mail next week with more
details on the WOW Gathering!