

October 2019

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devotional  
OF SIN AND THE SON

Dear AD Family,

Imagine you are sitting in a building looking out a window when a person walks by. Who do you see: a sinner who is far from God, drowning in sin, death and the devil's temptations or a child of God deeply loved and saved in Christ? If we look at the question through the lens of the Augsburg Confession, the answer is both. The same would be true of the person you see in the mirror.

The second and third articles of the Augsburg Confession state:

"Since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost." (Augsburg Confession, article II)

And,

"The Son of God, did assume the human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably enjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men." (AC, III)

The WAY of salvation is through Christ alone, who gives us the gift of grace we need to be set free of this sin through his body and blood. ("For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your doing; it is a gift of God." Ephesians 2:8) God works on us through the Holy Spirit. He calls us to Himself. He creates faith in us as we hear his word. ("Faith comes by hearing and hearing from the word of Christ." Romans 10:17) He frees us to fulfill our purpose – to speak His Word in the world in desperate need of new life. In this way, we are a part of God building his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

This is important today. We live in a world that easily believes the lie: "I'm okay, you're okay." The baseline of this worldview is a desperate need to have my lifestyle accepted by those around us. Scripture, on the other hand, says that I am in desperate need of forgiveness and trusts Christ's blood to wash me clean.

This false viewpoint proclaiming "**I'm okay, you're okay**" says that everyone is essentially good, and that the most important thing is to be kind and accepting to each other. God's Word says we were created good, but upward rebellion to be like God damaged our relationship with one another and God. This is the curse on our lives. It caused our removal from the garden and explains the hurt, suffering, pain and death we witness in our world.

Why is this basic foundation belief so important to proclaim today? A worldview saying: "we're all essentially good", doesn't need a Savior. But we do! His name is Jesus. It is a matter of life and death.

How do we navigate this truth in a world that seems to be winning? Praise God the work has been done for us on the cross! Here are some reminders of this truth:

**Hear God's Word** – Through hearing God's Word, the Holy Spirit works faith in you. Be surrounded with people, places, songs and studies that speak God's Word to you. Read God's Word, and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Go to church to be strengthened in your faith and reminded that you belong to Jesus. When a doubt surfaces in your heart or mind, attack it with a truth from God's Word. When you're too overwhelmed to fight for yourself, reach out to a brother or sister in Christ. Pray. Continually repent of the sins God's Word

convicts you of, and be assured that you are completely forgiven and set free in Jesus Christ. You are God's beloved child, and he's running to you with open arms of forgiveness. (See the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15)

**Speak God's Word** – The Lord has put you in a mission field for the specific purpose of planting the seed of his word. There is nothing we can do to make it grow, but we are called to spread it abundantly! (see the parable of the sower in Matthew 13) When you meet someone, be open to ways the Lord is calling you to plant this seed by speaking the truth in love.

**Trust God's Word** – The Lord promises that his word that goes out from his mouth will not return empty but will accomplish what God desires and achieve the purpose it was sent for. (See Isaiah 55:11) Furthermore, I may plant, another may water the seed, but it is God alone that gives the growth. (see 1 Corinthians 3:7) God's Word is filled with promises. Those promises are for you. And unlike the world, **God always keeps his promises!**

***To God alone be the glory forever and ever. Amen.***



Your sister in Christ,  
Pr. Sarah Carlstrom  
Crossroads Lutheran  
Congregation,  
Dawson, MN



**Pastors and churches, please share this newsletter with your congregation.**

† Lord Jesus, we ask your blessings and direction for young people discerning your call to missionary work. Strengthen and guide those who are chosen by you for such a life direct those still seeking vocation. We love you. In Jesus' name, we ask, amen. Rev. Amenu Arsie, Head of Mission & Evangelism Dept, Tabor, Ethiopia. Prayer for his gifts to lead evangelism in his country.

# PRAYERS AROUND THE and WORLD



for Our Fellow Heirs in Christ



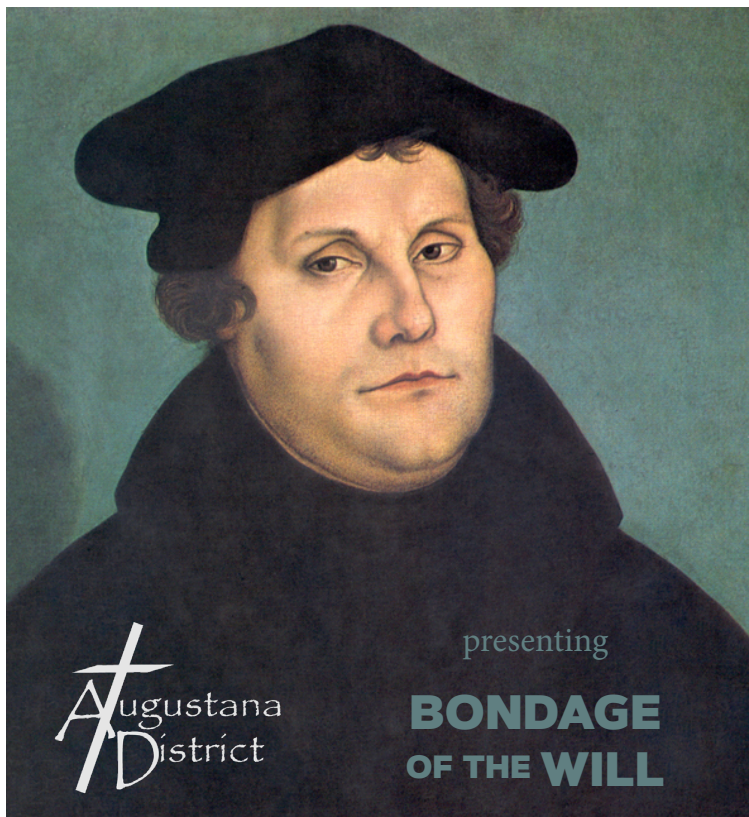
Pause



Play



Refresh



Augustana  
District

presenting

**BONDAGE  
OF THE WILL**

## 2020 Confirmation Retreat

Registration is now open. Please make sure to register early as space is limited.

Brochure and emergency contact form is also available at the site.

Learn More

See full details and registration at  
[augustanadistrict.org/2020-confirmation-retreat/](http://augustanadistrict.org/2020-confirmation-retreat/)

# Mission Minute from the Board of World Missions

Although the office of pastor is entrusted with the Word and Sacraments, there is often a congregational expectation for community involvement. I suppose this enables the pastor "to do the work of an evangelist," as Saint Paul says. I remember the people of Holy Cross being concerned with this when I started my call. Thanks to one of my predecessors, I had an "in" at our community school. Maple Lake, like many small towns, has a very successful school but runs on a very lean budget. I enjoyed a few years of volunteering in kindergarten (it was the only math class I could handle). But one day at the appointed volunteer time, I walked into a dark classroom only to discover that the kindergarten teacher I worked so closely with had gone home sick and because they could not find a substitute teacher, they divided the class into the other sections, making for crowded classrooms and overwhelmed teachers.

This is when I got a wild hair. I had developed a rapport and relationship with these students, and I could probably manage their classroom for an afternoon, even if that meant faking my way through it. Because Maple Lake has become a bedroom community to the Twin Cities, my pastor's study is relatively quiet on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In conversation with the Church Council, the elementary and senior high principals, and my wife, I decided to become a substitute teacher for our community

school. I attended a two-day training in Saint Cloud, MN, applied for a short-term substitute teaching license through the State Department of Education, and can be seen walking through our school on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and the occasional Friday. I always have the "right of refusal," if things are busy at church. Usually, I am given a lesson plan that requires more supervision than teaching, so I can bring along

a ministry project to work on as well.

I am not preaching the gospel of grace in Math class. I have yet to distribute the Sacrament during science class. However, substitute teaching gives me an opportunity to connect with my school-aged children without my vestments. If they find

out I'm in the building, they stop in to say, "Hi," I have also been able to connect with other students, and last year they invited me to emcee and chaperone their junior/senior prom. I have developed some relationships with faculty and staff; even providing pastoral care and officiating the memorial service after the death of a beloved math teacher two years ago. Because the church sees my substitute teaching as an extension of our ministry, we've even had some visitors stop by on Sundays. Saint Paul encouraged the Colossians (3:17), "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." It is not word and sacrament ministry; but it is sharing the love of Jesus with real people, in

*"Truly, Truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." - John 5:24*



the "real world." One sows and another reaps (John 4:37); and we cannot even begin to imagine what the impact will be for the kingdom.



The Lord be with You!

Pastor Culynn Curtis

Lead Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, LCMC,  
Maple Lake, MN

Chair, Board for Theology & Ministry of the Augustana District,  
LCMC

Embrace Everything...?  
Judge nothing...?



**2019  
HIGH SCHOOL  
RETREAT**

**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 open on  
augustanadistrict.org](http://augustanadistrict.org)

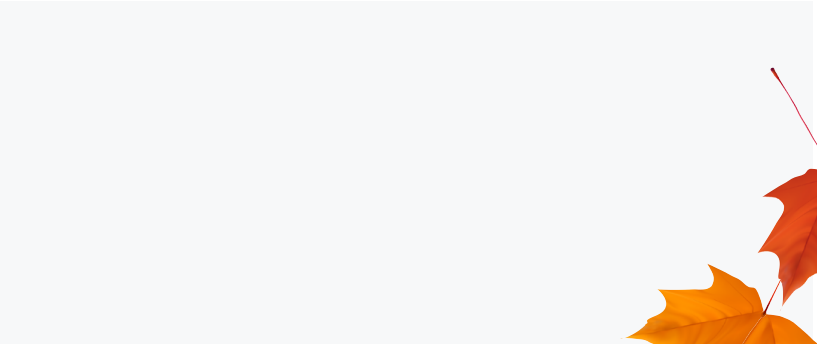


**Theological Conference**

**February 3 - 4, 2020**

Best Western Plus  
1901 Killibrew Dr.  
Bloomington MN 55425

See full details and registration at  
[augustanadistrict.org/annual-theological-conference/](http://augustanadistrict.org/annual-theological-conference/)



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**Save the Dates 2020**

**OCTOBER**

**Confirmation Retreat**  
March 6-8  
Luther Crest  
Alexandria, MN

**Theological Conference**  
February 3-4  
Best Western  
Bloomington, MN

**District Convention**  
Anniversary Banquet  
Friday, May 1  
Christ the King, Hutchinson MN  
Convention  
Saturday, May 2  
Faith Lutheran,  
Hutchinson, MN