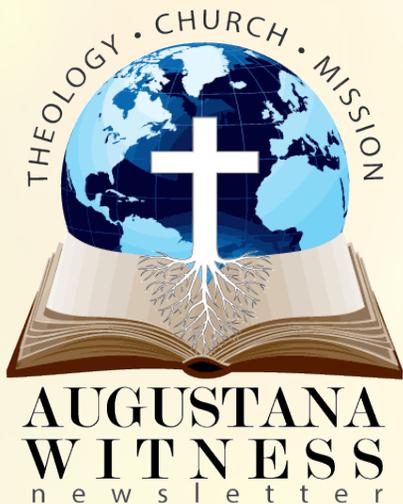


DEVOTIONAL

# A LOSS FOR WORDS



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I was informed last week that, as the Augustana District Council Chairman. I am responsible for this devotional for the newsletter. The deadline is fast approaching, and I cannot think of what to say! A deadline and an empty page do not go well together. Does it surprise you that a pastor is at a loss for words? It happens more often than you know, and more often than I care to admit. A verse from Psalm 46 comes to mind, “Be still and know that I am God.” As I sit here in front of the computer trying to produce something worthwhile for you to read, God is using my speechlessness to remind me who owns this space in the first place. “You can’t think of anything to say? Good. Now maybe you will remember that I am the one who gives you everything in the first place, including every worthwhile word that comes out of your mouth or onto the page. I placed you here to proclaim MY Word, not yours. So be still and know that I am God.”

We can become too impressed with what we say or do, and forget that God is the one who is doing the work, and we are his instrument. As I write this I am listening to the beautiful classical piece, Pachelbel’s “Canon”. Do I give all the credit for that beautiful music to the instruments producing the sounds or the performer playing them, and to the composer who wrote the music? The book of Daniel tells of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, who looked out over his kingdom and thought his own greatness had produced it. God humbled him by making him live like an animal for seven years until he came to himself and recognized that the glory belonged to God, and not to himself. How often do we forget that all we have, and all that we do, and all that we have achieved is due not to our own intelligence or worthiness but due to God? God’s Word never comes back empty, but always accomplishes the purpose He intends for it. God wants us to be still, to take our focus off of ourselves, so we can hear what He is telling us.

When God appeared to Job out of the whirlwind, Job could only reply, “I am unworthy - how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth.” When the prophet Elijah wanted God to show Himself, God came to him not in the great wind, or fire, or earthquake, but as a still small voice. Jesus often went off by himself to pray, to be with his Father in a place of stillness and silence. God humbles me by leaving me speechless, to show me who gives me the words to speak. That is how God works. God brings life out of death. The next time you feel empty or speechless, take the gracious opportunity to “be still and know that I am God.” Turn to His Word and listen to Him. Remember

who you are, and who God is, and the difference between you. Remember that He is God, and you're not. Even when you have a deadline to meet and an empty page in front of you, or any terrible emptiness in the face of fear and suffering, God is the one who

will fill it for you, to overflowing. That is the promise of His Word made flesh, Jesus the crucified and risen savior. Amen. Yes, it shall be so.

Pastor Craig Werling

Augustana District Council Chairman

## WORLD MISSIONS

### Update from our Vetted Ministry the Lutheran Church of Myanmar

We are facing the third wave of Covid in Myanmar. Especially in Tahan, Kalaymyo where we have our district sub-headquarters located. From 1-6 July, 176 people died because of COVID-19. Our church members also were infected by the virus, but no one died until today. We are raising funds to help support the people in Kalaymyo, buying oxygen, medical supplies, and PPE for volunteers in the area. We will donate it to the Local NGO's (Non-Government Agencies or Non-Profits) in the area who have many volunteers to help more families infected by the virus. Kalaymyo needs nearly 2000 oxygen cylinders, but we only have 300 at the moment. More than 60 ministers, pastors from different denominations, died because of Covid in the last three weeks. We

will be very glad if the Augustana District can help in some way. The political situation is still unstable and violence and shooting between the army and People Defense Force still happens in different parts of the country. We ask for your prayers for the country, our church and any support you are able to do for us.

Rev. Martin Lalthangliana,

President of the Lutheran Church of Myanmar

Written on July 9, 2021.

If you are interested in supporting the Lutheran Church of Myanmar, you are welcome to contact Rev. Thomas Thorstad at 716-990-6244 or tomt.lelc@gmail.com. You may also directly contact Rev. Martin at LCMyanmar@gmail.com

### Bole Congregation of Addis Ababa

A member congregation of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), Bole Congregation is located in the business district of the nation's capital city. Its senior pastor is the Rev. Dr. Dawit Yohannes Wario who has had distinguished service with Tabor Congregation of Hawassa, and then Tabor Evangelical College. Bole Congregation was founded in 2001, and is now under redevelopment



in the inner city. Intentional ministry among the city's poor and the establishment of Outreach Posts for Gospel proclamation are the chief endeavors of their strategic plan.

Their website is under development, but you can contact Rev. Dr. Dawit via e-mail at dawitwario@gmail.com

### Report from the North Central Ethiopia Synod, EECMY

In 2018 a delegation from the Augustana District, after their time with our major partner, the Tabor Congregation in Hawassa, Ethiopia, traveled to the city of Dessie to meet with leaders of the North Central Ethiopia Synod (NCES). They went to witness

their leadership training program for their pastors and evangelists. This program is led by President Wagnev Andarge and is noted below. While this partnership currently is exclusively funded through one AD congregation, Living Word Lutheran Church

in Moses Lake, Washington, it is one way the AD is connected to this marvelous extension of our witness through another Ethiopian partnership.

After evangelist, Wagnew Andarge, completed a two-year master's program in Old

Testament studies with help from some AD partners, he returned to begin an innovative training program that has dramatically helped pastors and evangelists be better prepared to bear witness to Jesus Christ. His leadership was so appreciated that he was soon ordained, and in a short time, elected as the new President of the synod.



Rev. Wagnew said "We thank God that support has been given for the training of some 60 students, who come for three days each month from great distances. We thank God for Living Word Lutheran Church in Moses Lake, WA, and for their pastor, Lou Hesse. Without their support

this program could not continue. Because of these well-trained leaders, the work of the Gospel has been spreading mightily, and the church presses forward in spite of all the challenges we are facing at this time."

Rev. Wagnew Andarge

## A Testimony from NCES

"And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19

Our Synod's extraordinary journey with Augustana district was started when a great team visited Ethiopia through Rev. Dr. Gemechis Desta in 2012. Since then, God has used this partnership to mightily bless our Synod by empowering full-time and part-time ministers for the service of the word and sacraments. I myself have been one of the fruits of your generous support as I was studying for my second degree at EGST one of the most standard theological school in Addis Abeba, in 2014. After completing my study, I rose to the highest level of church leadership and now serve the church as president of North Central Ethiopian Synod. Having said this, right now you have to thank God because you have been supporting more than 60 students and been a channel of blessings to the kingdom of God. These students come every month for three days from different areas in a 540 radios sq. km to attend their classes. Had it not been for support from you this



2019 Graduating Class

would remain just a wish. By the grace of the Lord, the dreams of these students and our synod come true through your incredible support. Because of these well trained ministers, the work of the gospel has been spreading mightily and the

church presses forward in spite of all the challenges which we are facing every day. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part on this marvelous achievement and stands beside us in such difficult time. I have also a special appreciation to Pastor Paul and his wife Bobbi Knudson for their unceasing prayer and support. My appreciation also goes to the Moses Lake congregation and their Pastor Lou Hesse for their amazing generosity and the ongoing contributions to our Synod.

I do believe we will remain in touch and our partnership will advance to a higher level.

With much love and respect,  
Rev. Wagnew Andarge  
President of EECMY-NCES

### A special prayer request from Pr. Asad with AIMJ:

We request you to continue praying for 'YAAS'. A cyclone and Covid-19 affected the people in the East Medinipur coastal belt area, Ramnagar 1&2, where AIMJ has been working. 176 families have lost their houses in a cyclone and many are Covid-19 positive. These families include Muneer Child Development Centre students and their families. Please pray for them as they try to restart their lives. They are trying to get state government funds but it is very hard because of the number of families. Please pray that they could also get help from the government.



Prayer Request

*Welcome* to  
**Augustana District**

**New Clergy**  
Pr. Lexy Carson from Oldham, SD  
Pr. Wesley Asheim from Maple Plane, MN  
Pr. Denton Bennet Jr. from Springfield, MN

**New Congregations**  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church and Spring Valley Lutheran Church both located in Viborg, SD

**New Individual Associate Member**  
Pr. Jason Eliot from Victoria, Texas

**Correction from Last Month**  
We welcomed Pr. Jennifer Needham Bennet as a new clergy and her name should have been recognized as **Jennifer Bennet** from Trinity Lutheran and Bethany Lutheran in Jeffers, MN.  
We sincerely apologize for the misprint.

## Returning in 2022! Confirmation Retreat



Pause



Play



Refresh

Confirmation Retreat: March 4-6, 2022, are the dates for the Augustana District Confirmation Retreat for 7-8 grade students at Luther Crest in Alexandria, MN. Make sure to save these dates and include them in your confirmation curriculum planning for this year. Watch for more details in future editions of the Augustana Witness, on our website, and on our Facebook page!

### Technical Tidbit



Did you know that websites are now required by law or by third party agreements (such as Google) to display a Privacy Policy? A privacy policy is a document contained on a website that explains how a website or organization will collect, store, protect, and utilize personal information provided by its users.

Big Tech is now also requiring websites to carry the https:// protocol which involves installation of an SSL certificate. Web sites failing to comply run the risk of search engine suppression.

## CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES

**Now Available on the Augustana District website:**

The Augustana District recently purchased access to the service ChurchSalary.com. This service is available to all AD congregations, and you can find more information and submit a request for information via the website at

[augustanadistrict.org/board-of-congregational-services/](http://augustanadistrict.org/board-of-congregational-services/)

# ChurchSalary REPORT

MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS



There have been a number of new Staff Openings put on the AD website recently. Make sure to check them out. Don't forget that if your congregation has a job opening you can easily post it directly to the AD website on the Church Staff Openings page (under the Church tab) by filling out a simple form.

A list of current openings:

- Full-time Pastor | St. John's Lutheran Church, Springfield MN
- Part-time Pastor | Our Redeemer Lutheran, Church, Badger MN
- Pastor | Hope Lutheran Church, Huron SD
- Part-time Pastor | Sauk Valley Lutheran Church, Osakis MN
- Director of Music & Worship | Christ the King Church, Hutchinson MN
- Pastor | Resurrection Lutheran Church, Mankato MN
- Seminarian Intern | Faith Fellowship Lutheran, Church, Odessa TX

## 2020 initiative

The 2020 Initiative income is \$28,605 as of July 31, 2021.

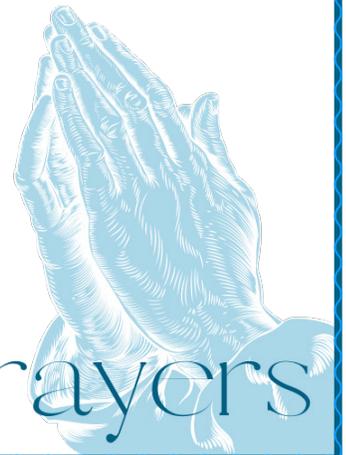
**Did You Know** that you, or your congregation, can financially support the district in a number of ways?

- 1.) Mailing a check to the district office at Augustana District 335 Main St. S. Hutchinson, MN 55350 (please note that all checks should be made out to Augustana District – if you intend to support a specific mission please put that information in the memo portion of the check or the bank will not accept it if it is made out to the specific mission)
- 2.) Making a one time or reoccurring payment with your credit or debit card via the website at [augustanadistrict.org/about-us/help-support-us/](http://augustanadistrict.org/about-us/help-support-us/)

# PRAYERS

- ✝ Bless our mission supports. It is uplifting to hear about those who are helping the sick including those with Covid-19. It is comforting to know that many are providing food to those in need. It is affirming to know that many are able to continue to proclaim Christ during these harsh times. May they all be protected from harm, provided with the resources that are needed, and give thanks to our Lord and Savior. Thank you for the relationship with The Lutheran Church in Myanmar, the North Central Ethiopia Synod of EECMY, the Bole Congregation, and AIMJ. Bless and multiply all efforts to train and develop evangelists, teachers, leaders, and ministers.
- ✝ Bless the transition ministry that is available through Augustana District. May those who have need find Christian guidance and help through these services.
- ✝ May the good news of our salvation be spoken by you Lord – through pastors, preachers, congregations, people of the AD, and all missionaries – worldwide.
- ✝ Speak to us through the busy-ness of our lives – and continue to draw us into the stillness of your presence. Thank you for those times and use them to direct and organize the tasks you are calling us to do.
- ✝ Praises to You, Lord, for the continual offer of forgiveness – we claim the promise that it is sufficient to cover a multitude of sins.
- ✝ May God provide physical safety and spiritual strength to all those we support in our missions. We fear for their safety and yet we pray that Your Word will continue to be spoken to all the dark places in the world.
- ✝ May we give thanks for the certainty of your promise of eternal life. May we not be shaken as the rumors, fears, and truth about this pandemic break into our lives. Grant us flexibility and focus of mission as we worship and fellowship together.

*Hebrews 10:36 "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised." May we walk together as we learn to find endurance and continue as lifelong disciples. May we not grow weary of supporting missions, local and international. May we encourage each other and give witness to Jesus Christ.*



## Prayers



Pick any Sunday in October to share district information and updates with your congregation. The Ambassadors will provide, and you can choose from, bulletin inserts, Power Points or video clips about the district. You could even consider a pulpit swap with another AD pastor. The possibilities are endless... Well, almost!

Watch for more information in the September AW as well as the website and Facebook page as it becomes available.

**Saturday, September 18, 2021**

*Last Call To Register!!*

They are  
**NOT** of the  
**WORLD,**  
just as I am  
**NOT** of the  
**WORLD**  
- John 17:16

- John 17:16

**Women  
of the  
World  
Word**

**Sep 18, 2021**

*Time*

8:30am Coffee/Registration

9:00AM Worship    3:00PM Dismissal

*Guest Speakers*

**Bonnie Wasberg**

Family Consumer Science teacher

**Pr Julie Smith**

AD Council Member & LCMC Coordinator  
of Districts and Fellowships



Virtual Registration also Available

*Location*

Graciously  
Hosted By



**Registration Deadline:  
Before Sep 1, 2021**

Please register by downloading the form  
at the website:

<https://augustanadistrict.org>



**AUGUSTANA DISTRICT**  
335 Main Street S.  
Hutchinson MN 55350  
Address Service Requested



## Germany 2022 Luther Sites - Passion Play

Sept. 25 - Oct. 6, 2022

Join us on a journey through the land of Martin Luther, along with other historic sites, including the Oberammergau Passion Play!

Your Tour Guides:

Rev. Kurtis & Cyndi Bueltmann

Email: [kurtis@bueltmann.org](mailto:kurtis@bueltmann.org)

Ph. 920.299.6912

Rev. Tim & Grace Balfanz

Email: [tbalfanz@me.com](mailto:tbalfanz@me.com)

Ph. 218.255.4206

Bueltmann Tours has been leading trips to Germany since 2000 and makes arrangements directly with people in Germany, which allows us to keep our prices extremely low while also providing an authentic experience. We eat wonderful German meals in and amongst the local people and stay at clean and comfortable hotels. Don't miss this exciting opportunity!

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<https://bit.ly/2RJILGy>

