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DEVOTIONAL The Key

"[Jesus spoke, saying,] 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.'" [Revelation 1:17b-18]

We have a lot of keys, and it indicates a need for locking things up.

Some people have one car and others have several, but they all need to be "secured". It used to be what you were most concerned with was losing the vehicle. Nowadays, it is more pressing to keep your data within the vehicle from being pilfered. Either way, security is increasingly difficult to keep up with for cars, boats, and trucks. (Not to mention computer and phone hacking, or theft of your home's title...) Yikes! These are all things that are important to you; perhaps you would even cite them as "vital."

Locks and keys have long been a part of security for people. In the book of Judges, Eglon, king of Moab, had locks on his doors. City gates could be sealed, so those miscreants with evil intent would be at least slowed down. Ehud got in to Eglon to slay him anyway, and then secured the roof chamber behind him.

Locks, and other security measures are for the good of things and protection of life and livelihood. Did Jesus ever have to worry about such things? Jesus lived and dwelt among us, but when he died the soldiers were casting lots for his clothes. It was all he had. Consider how much stuff we truly need, compared to Jesus' scant demands. We hardly know what it is to live such a lifestyle, so we get to learn about locking up things.

What do you most wish you could lock up? Many of our most prized possessions are relationships, and not stuff. Can you lock people up with you, and still have them love you? Not in my world, and not in yours either. Such imprisonment would not generate affection, but disdain and contempt.

Jesus does not offer his love and our future with him as an eternal cloister of one, just for you. God does not treat you as a brutal lover, chaining you to Him in compulsory salvation. You can forego His invitation, and take what is behind the curtain that is without Him.

To spurn the invitation of the King of Love is to invite an eternal solitary existence. If hell were not real and eternal, why would Christ Jesus bring it up at all? It is for your good and mine, not as a threat but as a reality.

Jesus Himself is the Key to lift you from your self-centered realm and bring you safely to Him. His proof is in the

forgiveness He has already given for all your sins, paid for in advance.

Pastor Nathan Hanson

MISSION MINUTE

All India Masihi Jamat (AIMJ) Ministry Report

Through the AIMJ ministry in July, 177 people were baptized, 228 seekers participated in camps that introduced Jesus Christ, 182 women attended fellowship

meetings, a total of 104 youths studied in six separate gatherings, and 367 children were taught Bible messages in three different programs.

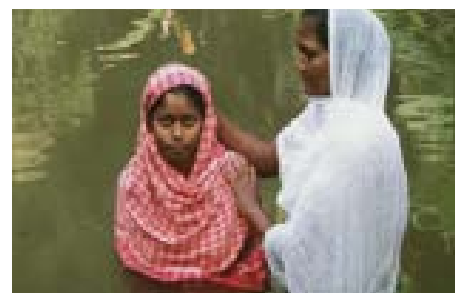
Aafreen Quareshi, Bankura, West Bengal

I am Aafreen Quareshi. I come from an orthodox Muslim family. I have been taught the teachings of Quran and the teachings of Islam since I [was a] little kid. While I was studying in college, I made a friend who was a Muslim but got some literature regarding Christianity. He told me to read the books as they told about Jesus from Quran. The books were: ***Sin and Atonement in Islam and Christianity, Do you know God's salvation is ready for you*** and ***What do you think about Jesus Christ?*** I took the books and began reading them. I found it very interesting to read. So I continued reading the books but could not understand a lot of things and that is when I called brother Seikh Tanmoy whose number was inside the book. He was once a Muslim like me but he told me that he left Islam because he found the real truth. He would meet with me 2-3 times a week outside my college to clarify my doubts. This happened during the final semester of college and after that I was married. I told about my new faith to my wife and asked her if she was interested. She felt that I had joined a cult but after reading those books for the next 7 months, she



too started to have little faith in Christ. We cleared our doubts with brother Seikh Tanmoy and also began reading Bible. Some of the verses which we liked are - **Matthew 28:11** "While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened" and **Acts 4:12** - "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Our faith in Christ grew more and more and we accepted Christ by April 2020. Our parents and family came to know about our faith. They criticized us and even threatened us. But our faith was stronger than any of their threats. By God's grace nothing happened and as our faith grew more and so we decided to be baptized on 23 June 2021 and started our new life. We were baptized by Pr. S.K Jana because brother Seikh Tanmoy was infected by Covid-19. Please pray so that we could become the living testaments of our Lord's work and also bring our families to Christ. Also, pray for the healthy recovery of brother Seikh Tanmoy.



Special Prayer Request

We request you to continue praying for cyclone affected people in the East Medinipur coastal belt area- Ramnagar 1&2 where AIMJ has been working. The impact of the cyclone is still there in surrounding areas. They have been trying to rebuild their houses and for that they are trying to get state government funds but it is very hard as there are many families and the application process is difficult. Please pray for them as they try to restart their life. Please pray that they could also get help from the government.



Also pray for our FCRA renewal. Without FCRA, we will not be able to receive foreign funds. We have already submitted the relevant documents to the concerned department. They are now visiting all our board members and all our project areas one by one to check if we really work and also to see if we are indulged in religious activities which involve conversion of people (especially the Hindus). Please pray that we may get the FCRA renewal certificate in time without any interruption.



Partners in Ethiopia Facing Life and Death Crisis: A Call to Prayer - A Call to Action

Before we are called to act, we need to pray for both the nation of Ethiopia and our mission partners caught in the middle of the horror that goes with bloody conflict. Sometimes crises are manageable. Others call for prayers poured out upon the throne of God. Only through our Lord's guidance will human responses of governments and Christians bring hope and, one day, healing.

The battle is between the present national government led by its Christian Prime Minister and the region of Tigray, whose residents had held power for over twenty years, years marked by major corruption. In seeking to regain that power, the former leaders have sought to cast the present government as a force that would, through genocide, destroy masses of people from Tigray. Our partners on the ground strongly disagree and support their government.



Presently, the forces from Tigray are striking out at their perceived enemies in an area where one of our mission partners, the North Central Ethiopia Synod of EECMY, has many congregations. Seeking to flee bloodshed, people of this area, including pastors, are fleeing to the city of Dessie in desperation. Villages have been destroyed, rapes and killings of many are occurring.

Pastor Wagnew Andagre, president of the NCES, is seeking with others to reach out to their people with basic survival needs and spiritual encouragement. They are inviting us to respond, as our Lord leads. As you pray, pray for our Augustana District, its congregations, and leaders. Pray that we will discern how we may stand with our brothers and sisters in Christ in this hour of great need.

Pastor Paul Knudson

PREACH THE WORD



Pastors and Congregations,

I ask that you please forward this information to your respective council presidents.

There are currently LCMC congregations, and congregations desiring to transition to LCMC, who have reached out to us looking for pastoral support, direction, and encouragement. This presents us with a great opportunity to serve our brothers and sisters.

I am hoping that you, and your respective church councils, would be part of a plan to support these congregations (many without pastors). The main concern is pulpit supply, but also some pastoral coverage and transitional ministry needs. Each situation presents a different challenge, and I would be willing to help discern the particular needs for each one. There are both short-term and long-term needs. The first step in helping is to see who might be available.

The Word of God needs to be heard and proclaimed in the many pulpits that are empty. Just as our congregation's support mission and outreach through our local ministries, could the extension of pastoral staff and other resources also be a part of a new outreach? This would require coordination, but first we need conversation and mutual agreements between pastors and councils.

We are looking at a two-prong approach (one short-term and one long-term goal):

- Agreement and willingness to provide pastoral leadership and support to congregations who request it.
- Train, encourage and support lay preachers within your respective congregations who could also assist with long term needs. The vision would be to develop pastoral teams (pastors and lay persons) who would be available for longer term transitional and/or interim ministry support.

In whatever timely way is possible, could you please contact me and indicate how you and your congregation might be willing to serve (occasional pulpit supply, resources/support, pastoral coverage, congregational prayer partner).

Let me know of any questions or concerns you or your council may have.

Again, this kind of ministry and outreach remains an emerging one for LCMC and the Augustana District. Thank you!

In Christ,

Pastor Randy Freund

Augustana District Service Coordinator
director@augustanadistrict.org

If you know of a pastor or congregation interested in Augustana,
or you would like to connect with us, please let us know!

2022 Confirmation Retreat



Pause



Play



Refresh

Is your congregation getting your confirmation schedule in place? Would you like to bring your students to the district confirmation retreat along with other students from the district?

This year the retreat will be March 4 - 6, 2022, at Luther Crest camp in Alexandria, MN. The retreat is led by Augustana District pastors, but each congregation is

asked to send their own chaperone's to stay for the entire weekend.

The planning team is still working out all of the details but they wanted you to get the dates to your staff members that do the confirmation planning so you can get it on your schedule.

Please Keep in Your Prayers...

✝ Prayer request from AIJM (All India Masihi Jamat), our mission partners in northern India:

1 -- In August Muslim groups severely attacked several Christian leaders causing them to be hospitalized. We are asked to pray for the speedy recovery and safety of all. We also pray that law enforcement and the government will seek to protect all of their citizens and maintain peace. We pray that they will continue to witness to Christ.

2 – Ask God to keep the cyclone-affected people rebuilding and restarting their lives. Again, may the government be willing to use its resources to help people through these terrible times.

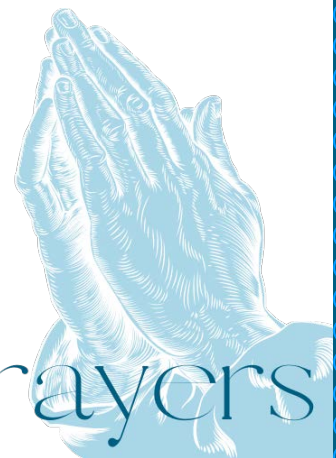
3 – May all the proper paperwork and approval be accepted by the government so the missions can continue to receive gifts from afar.

✝ Prayers for our partners in Ethiopia who are caught in the midst of bloody conflicts between an old corrupt government and a newer Christian government.

✝ All praise to Christ, who provides us the keys to the kingdom!!

✝ May God grant AD WOW (Women of the Word) a meaningful gathering. As Your Word is preached, may we have ears to hear and willing hearts to respond. Raise up new officers.

✝ Guide and inspire all the plans that have been made and will be executed at the LCMC Gathering in Columbus in early October. Grant all safe travel, warm fellowship, and a renewing of purpose.





Important LCMC News and Information

The Augustana District is working with LCMC in an effort to update congregational and pastoral information the LCMC is encouraging pastors and congregations to join districts and fellowships. In a review of this information, we noted that some congregations are not listed on the LCMC website as a part of the Augustana District. Assuming you still desire to be associated with the Augustana District, would you please check and update your information on the LCMC website. We are not able to do this for you. If you have any trouble, contact Cathy Nichol at cathy@lcmc.net or one of the Augustana District staff.

If you are heading to the upcoming LCMC Gathering in Columbus, Ohio, October 3 - 6, remember to sign up for

the Augustana District dinner and meeting on Monday night!

⇒ **FELLOWSHIP DINNER:** 6:00PM Monday - Reserved seating is available so please register if you would like to sit with the Augustana District and a seat will be saved for you. Tickets for this optional activity are \$30 per person.

⇒ **DISTRICT MEETINGS:** 7:15 PM - A meeting for the district will take place also on Monday evening.

⇒ **VENDOR TABLES:** Don't forget to look for the AD staffed vendor tables too!

See more info at

<https://www.lcmc.net/annual-gathering>

Hidden Treasure 2022 Convocation - Convention Meeting

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." ~2 Corinthians 4:7



THE WORD ALONE

Thursday May 5, 2022

"Where's the Truth"

Retreat/conversation with Dr. Steven Paulson (Supper on your own)

6:00 PM Registration*/Check-In

7:00PM Reception

7:30PM Presentation by Dr. Paulson

*While the emphasis for this event focuses on raising up the next generation of ministry leaders, all pastors are encouraged to invite ANYONE interested in parish ministry.



THE PREACHED WORD

Friday May 6, 2022

"Luther's Outlaw God"

Annual Convocation of the Cross

Dr. Steve Paulson

Schedule TBD



May 5 - 7, 2022
at
Mt. Carmel
in Alexandria, MN.



THE SENT WORD

Saturday May 7, 2022

"Jesus' Life/Our Bodies"

Annual District Convention

Schedule TBD

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/

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:

- Part-time Pastor | Our Redeemer Lutheran, Church, Badger MN
- Pastor | Hope Lutheran Church, Huron SD
- Pastor | Resurrection Lutheran Church, Mankato MN
- Seminarian Intern | Faith Fellowship Lutheran, Church, Odessa TX
- Full-time Pastor | St. John's Lutheran Church, Springfield, MN



FINANCIAL REPORT

As always, we thank you and your congregations for your continued support during these past summer months. While our income is currently \$2,500 short of our expenses, we hope to make that up this Fall. We ask that you don't forget to provide your prayers and support to our AD Ministry Partners overseas.

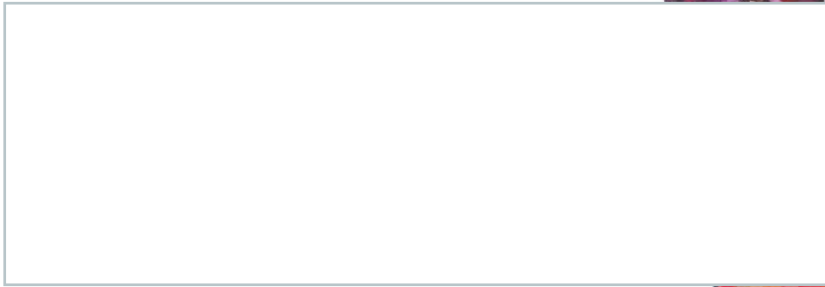
We recently received an email from one of our partners in Ethiopia explaining how desperate the situation is there due to political persecution. Thousands of Christians have been displaced from their homes and are being robbed, raped, and murdered.

This includes members of congregations that we support. In the coming weeks we hope to provide more information on how you and your congregation can support these and other Augustana District mission efforts.

Warm Regards,

Eric Knutson

Augustana District Treasurer



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**Save
the
date**

Augustana District Sunday.. .October 2021 (any Sunday)

LCMC Annual Meeting..October 3 - 6, 2021

Confirmation Retreat.March 4 - 6, 2022

2022 Convocation/ AD Convention May 5 - 7, 2022