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Devotion

"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do . . ." Romans 8:3a

For as long as I've known anything about God I've known I was saved by faith, not works. I learned it at home. I learned it in Sunday School and Confirmation. I learned it in worship. It's been the beating heart at the center of everything I've ever believed. . . . at least in theory. It's what I know I'm supposed to say. It's what I preach and teach. It's what I confess.

But in my heart of hearts, where the old sinner is alive and well, I have always wanted to be righteous under the law. I've always wanted to get things right – make the right choices, do the right thing, be the right way. Far from being unleashed to sin boldly, the promise that has shaped my life has made me want to be worthy of it. But the law doesn't work that way. It never declares you worthy, only unworthy.

For the past month or so my parents have both been dealing with significant health issues. Neither can really be left unattended for very long at the moment. Wanting to be a good daughter according to the fourth commandment, I have been trying to help out. One day mom had a doctor's appointment, so I loaded them both up in the car and off we went. When we got there, they told us that mom needed to go to the lab, down the hall and to the right. So we started heading that direction, with mom using dad's walker and dad using his cane. We got to the hall that led to the lab and dad announced he had to use the bathroom. So he kept going straight ahead to the restrooms and mom took off down the hall toward the lab.

And I, the good daughter who would be righteous under the law, stood there watching them both go, trying to do a quick mental calculation of which one was least likely to fall or get lost along the way. It was a moment of utter defeat. There was no way to honor both father and mother, so I had to pick. Suddenly the absolute futility of my efforts became crystal clear to me. This is not a game I'm going to win.

In that same moment of utter defeat, the promise that has been the beating heart of my faith was no longer an abstraction. There was no way I was going to get this right, but another has already defeated the death I am working so hard to postpone.

God in Jesus Christ has done what the law could not do. That's not a theological abstraction. It's not a nice religious turn of phrase. It's not a doctrinal position. It is our only hope. It is the light in our deepest darkness. It is the life that is being brought out of the death that is all around, and it is most certainly true.

Pastor Julie Smith, LCMC Coordinator for Districts and Fellowships

Tragedy and Good News Mixed Together: News from the Front Lines of Witness

PRESIDENT WAGNEW ANDAGRE OF THE NORTH CENTRAL ETHIOPIA SYNOD (NCES)



The Augustana District through one of its congregations, Living Word, in Moses Lake, WA., supports a major training program for pastors and evangelists of the NCES. President Wagnew leads this effort and recently shared both experiences of tragedy and wonderful news of the

Good News of Jesus Christ breaking through in heartwarming ways.

Tragedy has struck in a horrific expression of hatred. The NCES with its congregations is in the Amharic region of the country, the largest tribal area in the country. Due to a major drought 30 some years ago a large number of people from Amhara fled to another predominant tribal area, Oromo. In recent months about 700 of these Amharic people were attacked by a renegade group from Oromo and massacred. Hatred too often runs deep and strikes out in evil ways.

More recently one of the trainees of President. Wagnew planted a congregation in a very troubled area. Things were going well, but then he was stoned three times for his efforts, the last one leaving him near death. Some of our brothers and sisters, bearing witness to the good news of Jesus Christ that receive our support, pay with their lives for proclaiming that Good News.

On a more uplifting note, President Wagnew reported that 30 Muslims were recently baptized. Four of them came from a 99% Muslim area, which has been very hostile to Christian witness.

Great darkness at times is overcome by the Light of Christ shining in that darkness. That Light we believe in will not be overcome by the dark, demonic powers of the evil one. Thanks be to God.

Pastor Paul Knudson

Do you, or your congregation, ever purchase books, supplies, or gifts through Amazon? Have you heard of the Amazon Smile program? Every time you shop through Amazon you can have a percentage of your purchase donated to the Augustana District. Just go to smile.amazon.com/charity to search for the Augustana District in Hutchinson, MN. Select that as your charity and each time you shop through Amazon Smile a percentage of that purchase will go to the district. It costs you nothing extra and it supports the district with each purchase that you make. What could be easier? If you have questions or need help in getting set up with the program please contact the district office for help at office@augustanadistrict.org.



New Congregation:

Tahoma Lutheran, Maple Valley, WA

New Clergy:

Pastor Horacio Castillo, Buckley, WA

Pastor Mark Nassen, Hope Lutheran Church,
Huron, SD

Women of the Word

The annual gathering of the Women of the Word was held at the New Hope Lutheran Church in Comfrey, Minnesota, on Saturday, September 17. There were 66 women in attendance from 22 churches across the synod as well as members from four churches that joined via Zoom.

The theme for the gathering this year was "Ministry Through Music" and was carried out through the decorations, music and speakers. Throughout the day, the theme verse, "Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence with singing" (Psalm 100:2) was continually reinforced.

"Soul's Inspiration," a group of singers from the church, started the day with a beautiful hymn sing. The group was accompanied by organist, Laurie Fredin, and Pastor Patricia Baglien on the guitar. Pastor Patricia had served the church in the late 1990's at which time the church was destroyed by a tornado. Pastor Patricia was instrumental in organizing the "Soul's Inspiration" group.

The Communion service was led by Pastor John Hopper of New Hope Lutheran. During the service we

were privileged to watch a video of his granddaughter, Lauren Hopper, playing and singing a song she had written, based on Psalm 46, which she had entitled "Be Still and Know That I Am God." She shared how she wrote this song during a difficult time in her life. The speakers for the day were Pastor Diane Oderman and Pastor Patricia Baglien. Both women shared inspiring thoughts on singing and music that has been important throughout the centuries in worship services. Pastor Patricia played the guitar and sang original songs during her presentation.

The offering for the day was designated for Samaritan Purse ~ Operation Christmas Child. Items were also donated for the OCC Shoebox program and a very large wooden box filled with those donations. The shoeboxes will be filled by members of New Hope Lutheran when they work with their community to fill many shoeboxes for this project. They packed 143 boxes last year and with these additional generous donations they hope to fill more this year.

New WOW officers were elected during the business portion of our meeting.



Officers Left to Right: Jan Kreie (Faith Lutheran, Hutchinson, MN) member at large; Carreen Pierson (Faith Lutheran, Hutchinson, MN) vice-coordinator; Marcia Heinje (Living Word Lutheran, Milbank, SD) secretary; Jodi Dalsgaard (St John's, Springfield, MN) coordinator; Linda Anderson (St. John's, Springfield, MN) member at large; Not pictured: Diane Anderson

(Christ the King, Hutchinson, MN) treasurer; Jane Evers (New Hope, Comfrey, MN) ex-officio member.

You can Save The Date for the 2023 annual WOW gathering which will be held at St. John's Lutheran in Springfield, MN, on September 16. See you there!



Law, Gospel, Our Only Hope:

- ✚ May we fear, love and trust God – and know the purpose of the law. Give us ears to know that the gospel is more gracious and merciful than the law.
- ✚ Thank you for the law – may it drive us to the mercy of God ... just as the mercy frees us to live fully and freely in Christ and therefore, it is our only hope!!



About the LCMC gathering in Lakeville:

- ✚ May all who attended return to their daily tasks renewed and refreshed in your Word.
- ✚ May the speakers inspire and encourage.
- ✚ May the business attended be guided into goals defined and actuated tasks.

How should we pray for our Ethiopian brothers and sisters who face persecution and harsh times?

- ✚ That all followers of Christ who experience persecution would receive strength from the Lord to remain faithful.
- ✚ That your name will be glorified as you strengthen them.
- ✚ We give thanks that we can help them recover and keep them in our prayers.
- ✚ That their government will strive to keep all people safe and protect them from usurpers.
- ✚ That the light of the gospel will shine brightly over the darkness of evil.

- ✚ May the church be strengthened for war against the vast evil conspiracy – give us eyes to see it, minds to understand it, wisdom to expose it, and the courage and endurance to fight it.
- ✚ May those elected or appointed to leadership positions, be blessed with God's guidance and wisdom.

WOW Gathering thanks:

Glory to You for the praise through music, fellowship, worship, and Word that flowed at the WOW gathering. All who gathered and joined in zoom were encouraged and blessed at New Hope Lutheran Church in Comfrey. May faith continue to be strengthened for service through all the women in Augustana District.

Financial Update

Here is a quick update on the district finances through the end of August 2022. Total giving to date is at 42% of the total that was budgeted for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, that means we are operating at a net income of \$2,240.

Thank you to all who financially support the district with your regular giving.



Just a reminder that although the Augustana District does not have set annual dues as many organizations do, the district does depend on your personal and congregational giving to be able to

provide the staff and services that are here to support your congregations. Please, prayerfully consider how you (and your congregation) can support the district and it's work both financially and by becoming involved with the districts work.

Contributions should be sent to:

Augustana District
335 Main Street S.
Hutchinson, MN 55350

You can give electronically on the website augustanadistrict.org and scroll about ¾ of the way down the page.

Church Staff Openings

Here are the current staff openings we have listed at the Augustana District website. Please visit <https://augustanadistrict.org/staff-openings/> to learn more about each listed position and additional details.

- ◆ Pastor or Interim Pastor | Wang Lutheran Church | Maynard MN
- ◆ Church Secretary | St. John's Lutheran Church | Springfield MN
- ◆ Organist | Our Savior's Lutheran Church | Lamberton MN
- ◆ Lead Pastor | Christ the King Lutheran Church | Hutchinson MN
- ◆ Pastor | Our Savior's Lutheran Church | Lamberton MN
- ◆ Pastor | Faith Lutheran Church | Montecello MN
- ◆ Solo Pastor | Zion Lutheran Church | Kerrville TX
- ◆ Interim Pastor | Abounding Joy Lutheran | St. Cloud MN
- ◆ Full-time Pastor | Samhold Lutheran Church | Gonvick MN
- ◆ Pastor | Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church | Buffalo Lake MN
- ◆ Associate Pastor | Shepherd of the Hills | Hubertus WI
- ◆ Part-time/Half-time Pastor | Pioneer Lutheran Church | White SD
- ◆ Lead Pastor | New Hope Lutheran Church | Comfrey MN
- ◆ Part-time Pastor | Our Redeemer Lutheran Church | Badger MN
- ◆ FT Senior Pastor | Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Big Sandy | McGregor MN

Do you have a leadership position in your congregation, clergy or lay, that you need to have filled? Is your church a member of Augustana District? Does your congregation have an internship opportunity available for a seminarian? If so, please send your complete information (in a Word or PDF document) to office@augustanadistrict.org

AD Prayer Warriors

Did you know that you can submit your personal or congregational prayers to the district and they will be shared with the AD prayer warriors? Would you like to be a prayer warrior for the district?

"³Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on." -Mark 2:3-4

As the men in scripture helped get the paralyzed man to Jesus for some personal attention, we will lift your prayer requests to Him.

The mission of our prayer support includes:

- ✦ Praying for our congregations
- ✦ Praying for our pastors, staff, and leaders
- ✦ Lifting up events, current activities, and mission focuses in prayer

If you wish to be added as a prayer warrior or want to submit a prayer please visit <https://augustanadistrict.org/prayer-warriors/> to submit your information.





Address Service Requested

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AUGUSTANA DISTRICT



AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONVOCATION OF THE CROSS
February 6 - 7, 2023, at the Best Western Plus
in Bloomington, MN. A block of rooms, at a
discounted rate, have been reserved through
January 5, 2023.

Event registration opening soon!

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONFIRMATION RETREAT
March 3-5, 2023, at Luther Crest in Alexandria, MN
Registration will be open soon.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT CONVENTION

May 6, 2023, at Mount Carmel in Alexandria, MN
Registration will be open after the first of the
year.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT'S WOMEN OF THE WORD FALL
GATHERING will be Saturday, September 16, 2023
at St. John's Lutheran Church in Springfield, MN.

For additional information, or to register for any
or all of these events, please go to our website
at augustanadistrict.org. You can also watch
for more information here, in the monthly
newsletters, as it becomes available.

If you are sharing this newsletter or getting it
from your church, you can sign up for your own
copy to be sent directly to your e-mail address.
Just go to the district website and navigate to the
bottom of the homepage.