

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” – Colossians 4:6

As I write this article, I’m looking around my office at all the mementos that have been gifted to me over the years by thoughtful parishioners. October is, after all, Pastor’s Appreciation Month, and many of us who are blessed to serve as clergy will be showered in the coming weeks with heartfelt cards, keepsakes, or maybe even the occasional Starbucks gift card. (It is Pumpkin Spice Latte season, after all.)

And while the notes, wall hangings, and gift cards are appreciated, and while I’ll be forever grateful that members of my fold take time to remember me, I truly wonder if there isn’t something more Pastors are needing, not just in the month of October but all year long.

This letter the apostle Paul writes to the Christians living in Colossae is perhaps one of his shortest prison epistles, but the reason for his writing is predictable. As is always the case, descension has arisen in the church, seeking to divide the body of believers. There are disagreements festering over the worship of angels, human regulations concerning eating and drinking practices, and the dual nature of Christ as both man and God. And once Paul has removed these stumbling blocks that have been laid in their path, the final instruction he gives before the closing greeting is this: season your conversations with salt.

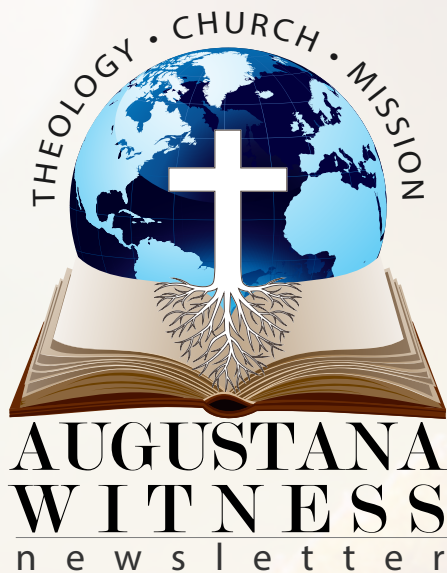
What might come as a shock to parishioner and Pastor alike is that descension, division and disagreements in the Church are nothing new. Paul was rarely five miles out of town and the Church he had just planted already had people at each other’s throats. Sometimes discord and dissent within the body of Christ is over theology, while other times (and perhaps more commonly) it comes over optics, like carpet color or how people should be scheduled for their turn on the coffee fellowship rotation. Either way, Paul tells us to speak with salty grace.

Because without salt, a dish is incomplete. I am well acquainted with friends and family who are on low sodium diets, having to cook without salt, and they all speak in unison: it isn’t the same; it misses the mark. Without grace, a conversation is incomplete. Without mercy, a conversation just isn’t the same. Without patience and understanding, a conversation misses the mark.

So, perhaps this is what your Pastor might need this month; a little grace. Perhaps they might need you to interpret their words and actions in the best possible light, or in the kindest way. (See Luther’s explanation on the Eighth Commandment.) Remember always that your congregation has called a Pastor into a holy vocation, but the Pastor themselves, including me, are no less broken than you. So, throw a little salt their way. And a Starbucks gift card wouldn’t hurt either. Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Aaron Deutsch
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN



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NCES Partners in Training Face Life and Death Challenges

Pastors throughout the North Central Ethiopia Synod come monthly for a weekend of continuing education led by their synod president, Wagnew Andagre. It began with a simple understanding that these pastors needed a deeper understanding of the faith, and of Scripture, but in the face of civil war and tribal strife, they have needed much more in order to persevere in witness.



Home damaged in the civil war.

intimidation and more, these pastors have needed more than just this training. Recently, AD congregations and members stepped up and raised an additional \$50,000 to assist with meeting some of these life and death challenges. Unfortunately, the strife among these people has not gone away. Your prayers are very much needed. We will need to stand ready to offer ongoing support for our fellow believers in NCES.

One AD congregation, Living Word in Moses Lake, WA, has been regularly and faithfully, supporting this mission by donating \$10,000 or more annually for ongoing training. With the recent civil war that led to devastating damage to churches,

You can find a full Board of World Missions update via this link:

augustanadistrict.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023.10.BWM-Update.pdf



Financial Update by Augustana District Council Chair, Pr. Julie Smith

These are exciting times for the Augustana District. The district continues to grow, with new congregations joining and new pastors seeking AD endorsement. For those of us who have been hanging around the district since the beginning, it's inspiring to see a new generation of pastors rising up who share the theological commitments of Augustana. And it is also gratifying to see that congregations are, in fact, looking for the kinds of relationships, services, and mutual accountability that drove the formation of the district in the first place.

We are seeing more churches looking for assistance in the call process, which usually involves some travel for staff or board members. There are more and more international missions that are hoping to build relationships with Augustana. The Board for World Mission is working hard to carefully vet these potential mission partners. As our geographic footprint in the United States continues to grow our District Service Coordinator's travel expectations are no longer confined to a few hours in the car. The success of the confirmation retreat is now resulting in the addition of a high school retreat. Congregations in

conflict are reaching out to the district in search of assistance. The Boards for Congregational Services and Christian Education continue to seek ways to faithfully meet the needs of Augustana congregations.

Our hope is that the work that the Augustana District is engaged in is valuable to your congregation. We hope that it strengthens you as you carry out the mission of the Gospel in your location. We hope that it is faithful to our theological commitments and is a reliable and trustworthy resource. There's nothing we do as a district that doesn't have the work of congregations forefront in our minds.

With this in mind, we hope your congregation will financially support the work of the Augustana District. As you plan your congregational benevolence budget, or your own personal year-end giving, please consider the work that we do together in the Augustana District. Your financial support would be greatly appreciated and put to good use on your behalf and on behalf of the mission of the Gospel.

Women of the Word: 2023 Gathering Recap



SJLC WOW with their quilting mission and wall hanging door prize



A special thank you to the SJLC men and youth who served at this event

The annual Fall Gathering of the Augustana District Women of the Word was held on Saturday, September 16 at St. John's Lutheran in Springfield, MN with 78 women in attendance. These women were joined by five women from Morris, MN, 17 women from NY, 12 women from Nevis, MN and a lady from Washington state via live stream. It was a day of fellowship, music, and inspiration. The theme verse for the day was: *"Behold God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid for the Lord God is my strength and my song and he has become my salvation."* Isaiah 12:2

The congregation of St John's offered hospitality to the Fall Gathering 2023 throughout the day with the help of their men and youth serving the coffee and refreshments in the morning and the delicious noon meal. These events offered an opportunity for fellowship and sharing. The women had opportunities throughout the day to look at displays: Faith Lutheran of Hutchinson shared information on the WOW Fall Gathering 2024 which will be held on September 21, 2023, with featured guest speaker, Gretchen Ronnevik; the Gideons; St. Johns WOW with their quilting mission and a wall hanging for a door prize; and Amanda Peterson, Springfield with her crafts.

The group was welcomed by Jodi Dalsgaard, the WOW Coordinator. Pastor Julie Smith, the Coordinator for District and Fellowship for the LCMC led the attendees in the morning worship service which included Holy Communion. Pastor

Julie preached her message from Hebrews and spoke of how it reviewed the stories of the Old Testament. God chose individuals not because they were good, but because of their faith and their trust in the Lord. This faith had been planted in them by the Lord. Faith over fear – faith is under constant attack. People of faith trust God. People with fear trust self.

Pastor Julie also gave an update on the LCMC happenings. The Annual gathering of the LCMC will be held in St. Charles, MO on Oct. 1-4 with around 650 participants expected.

The day continued with the approval of minutes from last year's meeting and the filing of the treasurer report.

There were two speakers during the day. Pastor Erica Varcoe from the Table Ministry in Sioux Falls and Pastor Jennifer Bennet from Faith Lutheran in Castle Rock, CO.

Officers were elected and installed by Pastor Julie Smith. Hymn sings were held throughout the day.



Left to right: Jennifer Howey, vice-coordinator; Diane Anderson, Treasurer; Jan Kreie, Coordinator; Marcia Heinje, Secretary; Diane Anderson, Member At Large; Sue DeJong, Member At Large; and Jodi Dalsgaard, coordinator ex-officio.

CONGREGATIONS TO PRAY FOR IN OCTOBER

As you, the Augustana District, continue to pray for one another, we ask you to lift up the following churches as we move through August:

- ✝ Resurrection Lutheran Church, Mankato, Spring Valley Lutheran, Viborg, SD
- ✝ St. James Lutheran Church, Niagara Falls, NY
- ✝ St. John's Congregation, Flanagan, Ill
- ✝ St. John's Evangelical Lutheran, Stacy, MN
- ✝ St. John's Lutheran Church Hecla, SD

- ✝ St. John's Lutheran Church Howard Lake, MN
- ✝ St. John's Lutheran Church Springfield, MN
- ✝ St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Stewart, MN

* Please note that the last two churches were accidentally omitted from the monthly prayer email so please add them to your prayer lists.



2024 ANNUAL THEOLOGICAL CONVENTION

"THE HEART OF THE MATTER: WHOSE WILL BE DONE?"

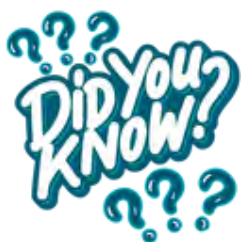
We live in a world saturated with ideas of "Free-will" while being a church that confesses that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. Join us for Augustana District's annual Convocation of the Cross as Pastor Marney Fritts, Dr. Ken Jones, and Pastor Scott Grorud discuss how the bound will affects theology, church, and mission while helping to preach nothing but Christ and him crucified for the forgiveness of your sins.



"This, therefore, is also essentially necessary and wholesome for Christians to know: That God foreknows nothing by contingency, but that He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His immutable, eternal, and infallible will. By this thunderbolt, "Free-will" is thrown prostrate, and utterly dashed to pieces. Those, therefore, who would assert "Free-will" must either deny this thunderbolt, or pretend not to see it, or push it from them." – Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio* Section 9

Registration is open! For full details, please visit:

augustanadistrict.org/events/2024-annual-theological-convention/



... That the Augustana District has four active boards? The Board of World Missions, Board of Congregational Services, Board of Theology and Ministry, and the Board of Christian Education. You can find a description of what each board does and how it can be of service to your congregation on the website at augustanadistrict.org/boards/



Church Support Staff Support Group

Church Administrator/Secretary/HR/Finance Coordinator Support Group



This new administrative support group met for the first time in July. There are experienced admins as well as new admins in the group. A couple of pastors who are on their own without any support staff are also joining the group for some support in the office part of their jobs.

The support group meets the second Tuesday of each month from noon – 1 p.m. and the next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 10. Participants are welcome to enjoy their lunch while we talk. If you are interested in taking part in these conversations please contact the district office for the Zoom link at 320-234-8403 or office@augustanadistrict.org.

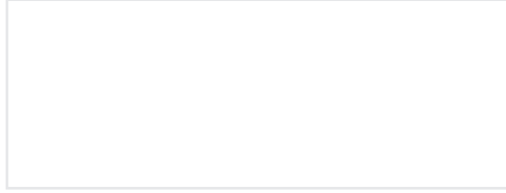
Church Staff Openings

Do you have a leadership position in your congregation, clergy or lay, that you must fill? Is your church a member of the Augustana District? Does your congregation have an internship opportunity available for a seminarian?

If you've answered "yes" to any of these questions, we invite you to list them on the Augustana District website. Current position openings:

- ◆ Pastoral Leader/Solo Pastor, Faith Community Lutheran Church, Slayton MN
- ◆ Full-time Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church, Springfield MN
- ◆ Director of Youth Ministry, Living Word Lutheran Church, Marshall MN
- ◆ Pastor, Abounding Joy Lutheran Church, St. Cloud MN
- ◆ Pastor, New Hope Lutheran Church, Comfrey MN
- ◆ Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Kent WA
- ◆ Pastor, Living Word Lutheran Church, Milbank SD
- ◆ Lead Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church, Fosston MN
- ◆ Pastor (full-time), Trinity Lutheran Church, Carrington ND
- ◆ Solo Pastor, Faith Community Lutheran Church, Slayton MN
- ◆ Worship Leader, Living Word Lutheran Church, Marshall MN
- ◆ Organist, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Lamberton MN
- ◆ Pastor, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Lamberton MN
- ◆ Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Monticello MN
- ◆ Part-time Pastor, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Badger MN





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Augustana District

HAPPENING MEA WEEKEND!

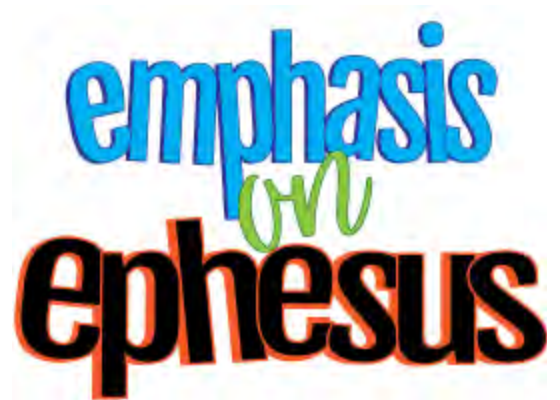
**Deadline to register is
October 10**

The First Annual AD High School Retreat!

October 20-22, 2023 • Camp Okoboji • Milford, IA.

This is a retreat focused on studying Ephesians, led by pastors from the Augustana District. Please help spread the word about this event to both high school students and parents during fall kick-off events and orientations. For full details visit:

www.augustanadistrict.org/events/2023-hs-retreat/



**CHURCHES: PLEASE ADD THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR
CALENDAR AND/OR NEWSLETTER TO INFORM YOUR
HIGH SCHOOLERS & PARENTS!**