



AUGUSTANA WITNESS

newsletter

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Devotional

But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered. (Mark 3:27)

Covert operation. Infiltration. Busting down doors. None of these words or phrases are a part of the beautiful and tender birth narrative we all heard again this year from Luke 2. These are words that have the sound of a CIA special-ops spy novel. Yet, I wonder if there is a connection to be made with such words.

Of course, no one can get into the mind of God. We can only know what has been revealed by God through his Word and the Holy Spirit regarding the coming of his Son, Jesus, who we celebrate at Christmas. However, Scripture itself paints an interesting and telling picture.

Some of those great Advent texts, as well as the Christ the King text, that precedes Advent, paint a mighty and glorious picture of Christ's return. When He comes again, no one will be able to miss it. His presence will thunder and shake the foundations of the world. Paul summarizes the human reaction well: "Every knee shall bow."

What a contrast to Jesus' coming to earth in that little town of Bethlehem. Was it not for a divine tip-off to some scruffy shepherds in the field and three Wise Men from the East, who would have known, that lying in a hidden stall, in a manger, no less, was coming the Lord of the Universe, God with us? Here the hymn says it best: "How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given."

Why did God choose to come this way? No one can fully answer this. But once that child grew up, Jesus himself gave us a clear hint. The situation is dire. It will take a rescue. There is a "strong man," a formidable foe (collectively known as "sin, death and the devil") that threatens and binds God's people. God in Christ must act: "But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered." It is covert. There is infiltration. Doors are broken down. Why? There is a world "God so loves," and people who are indeed loved and need to be saved.

Peace and Joy,
Pastor Randy Freund

2023 AUGUSTANA DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT FOR CONGREGATIONS

A TIME OF CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Much has been said and written about “LCMC 3.0.” The purpose of this report is to frame this within the context and future of the Augustana District. At the last Annual Gathering, participants were asked to provide input around five particular areas of LCMC 3.0. Focus groups met and discussed the following areas: Global Missions, Conflict Management, Intentional Interim Ministry, Clergy Shortage/Next-Gen Leaders/Creative Staffing, Districts and Fellowships.

THE NEW ROLE OF DISTRICTS

In order to resist the temptation of addressing the challenges listed above through the hiring of more LCMC staff, districts have been challenged in new ways. According to the LCMC website, there are currently eight U.S. districts. All of them are considering ways to address at least three of the challenges listed above: Conflict Management, Intentional Interim Ministry, Clergy Shortage/Next-Gen Leaders/Creative Staffing. All district and fellowship leaders will meet in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and Ministry Board (June 26-28, 2024) to address these challenges.

AUGUSTANA DISTRICT

As the Augustana District, we remain committed to the ministry we have always had as a priority. At the same time, we are committed to addressing new needs that arise and other areas of ministry (beyond those listed above). For instance, we added a Sr. High Youth Retreat and a First Call Retreat for pastors in 2023. We plan on continuing both. We are also planning to offer call coach training within the district. As one of the larger and more organized districts in LCMC, we continue to provide an important leadership role for other existing districts, as well as new ones.

THANK YOU

Augustana IS the sum of the congregations that make up our district. THANK YOU for your prayers, financial gifts and support that comes in many ways. We are served well by a dedicated staff, boards and district council. As we look to 2024, Psalm 143:8 comes to mind: *“Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning, for in you I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.”*

In Christ,
Pastor Randy Freund,
Augustana District Service Coordinator

Congregations and Clergy ~ Please print and share this annual report with your congregations at your annual meetings.



lcmc

Did you get a chance to read the Fourth Quarter edition of the LCMC By the Word newsletter? If not you can find a copy at lcmc.net/newsletters to share with your congregation.

World Missions

Big Thank You, An Apology, and A Promise

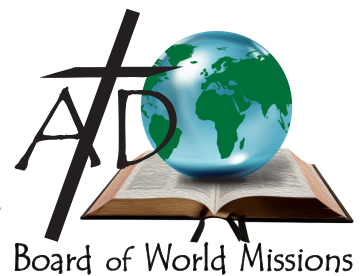
First, on behalf of our partners at the Tabor Congregation, we on the Board of World Missions want to express our profound gratitude for another year of faithful and generous ongoing support for the evangelical outreach of our amazing partners in Ethiopia. Your generosity over these past ten years have enabled this congregation to multiply and keep giving ongoing support for evangelists sent out all across this strife torn country, and now into a foreign land. We will communicate early in the new year what the 2023 total support was. Thank you!

I, Pastor Paul, personally wish to apologize for not being pro-active and disciplined enough to communicate with the leaders of Tabor in timely ways that allow their evangelism coordinator to report to us in writing and with pictures to tell their story. They continue to be faithful in their passion

for great commission witness. We have reason to trust that this congregation and its leaders are good stewards of all that we have sent to them over these many years of partnership.

I, along with Eric Knutson, Chairperson of the BWM, make a promise to our faithful donor congregations and individuals that 2024 will bring you regular and meaningful communications. This is a pledge, not merely a “new year’s resolution,” soon to be forgotten. These communications are essential, and our board understands that.

From Pastor Paul Knudson,
AD Board of World Missions
Communications Coordinator



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Dear Augustana District Congregations and Individuals,

As of 12/30/2023, the district finances are currently showing a net loss of -\$10,567.34. This is the first time in the history of the district that there has been serious concern about not making the approved budget. With just three months left in our fiscal year, we still need \$66,100 to meet the budget. The district council and staff want to thank those of you who have contributed so far this year and would like to ask those congregations (and individuals) who have not been able to support the district up to this point, to prayerfully consider how you might be able to help alleviate this deficit.

Contributions can be sent via check through the USPS to:

Augustana District ~ 335 Main St. S. ~ Hutchinson, MN 55350

or on-line through the district website at:

<https://augustanadistrict.org/general-fund-donation/>

or by scanning the QRCode



Church Administrative Staff Support Group

For Church Administrators | Secretaries | HR Professionals | Finance Coordinators

This administrative support group continues to meet monthly. It includes experienced staff as well as new ones.

WELCOME 2024



The support group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from noon – 1 p.m. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 9. 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, [email Wendy](mailto:wendy@augustana.org), or scan the QR Code.



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:

- ◆ Full-time Youth Director | Christ the King Lutheran Church | Hutchinson MN
- ◆ Pastoral Leader/Solo Pastor | Faith Community Lutheran Church | Slayton MN
- ◆ Full-time Pastor | St. John's Lutheran Church | Springfield 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
- ◆ Worship Leader | Living Word Lutheran Church | Marshall MN
- ◆ Organist | Our Savior's Lutheran Church | Lamberton MN
- ◆ Pastor | Our Savior's Lutheran Church | Lamberton MN
- ◆ Part-time Pastor | Our Redeemer Lutheran Church | Badger MN

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

- John 8:32

March 1 - 3, 2024
Registration is now open!

How do you discern what is TRUTH and what is A LIE? What does Scripture teach us about TRUTH?

Join other confirmation students and Augustana District pastors and leaders for a weekend of fun indoor and outdoor activities at an exciting new location. This year the learning sessions will explore the differences between the world's truth, your truth and experiences, and God's truth. To register, please visit:

<https://augustanadistrict.org/2024-confirmation-retreat/>



OR SCAN ME



CONGREGATIONS TO PRAY FOR IN DECEMBER

This past year we have been praying for up to eight Augustana District congregations per month. When we started this last year we missed the January congregations, so before we move on we would like to ask you to pray this month for the following congregations:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✝ Abounding Joy Lutheran Church, St. Cloud, MN | ✝ Christ Lutheran Church, Blair, NE |
| ✝ Albion Lutheran Church, St James, MN | ✝ Christ the King Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, MN |
| ✝ Bethany Lutheran, Covington, MI | ✝ Christ's Victory Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, MN |
| ✝ Bethany Lutheran Church, Storden, MN | |
| ✝ Bethesda Lutheran Church, Dresser, WI | |



Convocation of the Cross

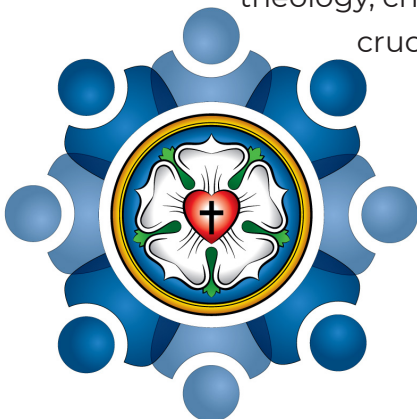
“THE HEART OF THE MATTER: WHOSE WILL BE DONE?”

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.

Registration is open! For full details, please visit:

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

IMPORTANT: REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS JAN. 14
for the Theological Conference blocked rooms and
the Early Bird Registration Rate!



A Word From WOW

Hello, my name is Jennifer Howey, and I am the Chairperson of the Augustana District WOW Chapter. My husband David and I are charter members of New Creation, which started serving the Perham, MN community on Easter Sunday, in 2006 in our local movie theater! At that time, we also hosted Sunday School and praise team practices in our home. In the past I have served on church council, chaired various committees, assisted with VBS, Children's Christmas Programs, and youth groups. David and I continue to be active members, serving in the areas of IT and music.

Professionally I am a licensed social worker. I was honored to work in the medical field for over 20 years.

I have recently experienced the blessings of "When God closes a door, He opens a window." For the last 15 months, I have been the part-time administrative assistant at New Creation. This past September, I was also privileged to facilitate Grief Share, a new ministry at our church. (If you are unfamiliar with GriefShare, I invite you to learn more at griefshare.org)

David and I have three adult children and five grandchildren: four on earth and one angel in heaven. Our oldest son Michael, and his wife Ursula, live in Mexico City, Mexico and are parents to Theo. Our second son, Brian, and his wife Florencia, live in Buenos Aires, Argentina. They have two children, Alexander, and Eliana. Although our sons and their families live far away, we are so thankful for cell phones, FaceTime, and Zoom! Our daughter Katie, and her husband Brandon live in the Perham area. They have a daughter, Sophie, and their angel in heaven, Ila. We are blessed to spend time with them frequently and we "get to" provide after preschool daycare for Sophie.



I am grateful to be involved with WOW in this capacity and New Creation is very excited to be hosting the WOW gathering in Perham in 2025. Pastor Sarah and many of the women of New Creation are looking forward to some exciting plans and activities. Stay tuned for more information regarding our event as the details start coming together.

God Bless,
Jennifer

2024 DISTRICT CONVENTION NOTE

Please note that this event is being moved up a week in 2024 to Saturday, April 27 at Mount Carmel in Alexandria, MN.

Thursday, April 25 and Friday, April 26 the Augustana District will again be hosting a retreat for first call pastors.

Watch for more information coming soon!

SCHOLARSHIP

The Augustana District offers Scholarships to seminary students. You can find information about how to apply on the website at

augustanadistrict.org/theology/scholarship-application/



A Call To Pray

With a very secular society, more than 50% of Montevideo, Uruguay's population declares itself without religion... We want to reach them with the Gospel of Christ!

Be part of a new church plant in Montevideo, Uruguay!

PLEASE PRAY WITH US FOR

- ◆ Montevideo
- ◆ The church planting project
- ◆ The missionaries
- ◆ Financial support

Missionaries Varinia Cuello & Miguel A. Nunez



Missionaries Varinia Cuello & Miguel A. Nunez

Questions? Please contact Pr. Randy Freund at director@augustanadistrict.org



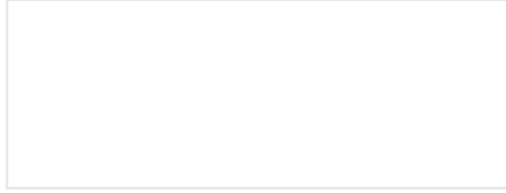
Is your church looking for new staff? Do you find it challenging to determine a fair and competitive salary and compensation package for church staff? The Augustana District has a subscription to *Church Salary Report*, a program that can assist district churches in determining what a competitive package should look like in your specific area.

To get your report:

- Visit augustanadistrict.org
- Click on Boards
- Select Board of Congregational Services
- Scroll to the section
- Fill out the brief questionnaire and submit it.

A report based on your information will be provided by one of the board members, processed through the Church Salary site.

ChurchSalary
MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION
REPORT



Address Service Requested

Hutchinson, MN 55350

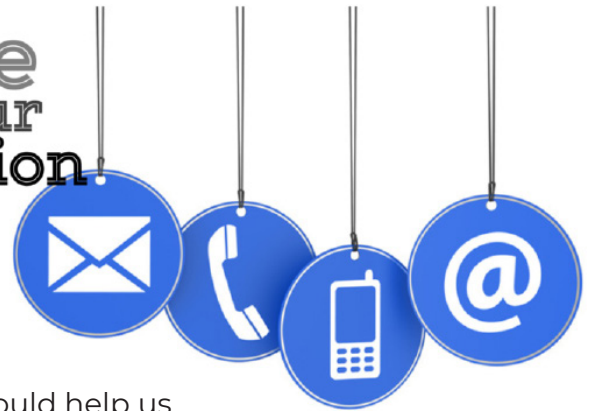
335 Main St S.

Augustana District



Update your Information

Pastor's & Congregations, is
your contact information up to date?



Have you recently changed your contact details such as your address, email, phone number, website URL/domain name? It would help us greatly if you could verify your profile information.

Verify congregational information at www.augustanadistrict.org/church/roster-of-churches/

Verify pastoral information at www.augustanadistrict.org/theology/endorsed-clergy/

If you require changes, please contact the district office at 320.234.8403 or by emailing Wendy at office@augustanadistrict.org.