

Devotional: What Do You Believe?

While studying the Apostles' Creed in my confirmation class, the question came up "what does it mean to believe?" We first explored "what do we want to believe?" The answer was unanimously "we want to believe what is true." That led to the question of who can we believe, where can we find truth? This is where the complications arose. There were various answers. Some said we believe our parents. Others said we believe our teachers. Still others said the news. In discussion we determined that these sources were not always reliable and many times their truth or half-truth was based upon gossip or opinion, either their own or someone else's. We are reminded of an old proverb "Believe nothing you hear, and only one half that you see." The final agreement was that the only source of truth was the Bible.

That being established, let's consider what the world believes again as it relates to our faith. There are two ways to believe, one is to believe what you read and are taught about God. That is acquired knowledge. Acquired knowledge can result in believing about almost anything that offers enough persuasive information.

The second way is to believe in God. So back to the Apostles' Creed. What do you mean when you say "I believe in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit." Notice the little word in. This type of belief includes what is taught about God and believing with your whole heart that he is who He says he is. (The First Commandment says: *I am the LORD your God. . . . You shall have no other gods* (Exodus 20:2-3). This type of belief also means trusting unwaveringly that He will do all that He promises; *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord,"* (Isaiah 40:10).

Those who believe in God believe everything written about God in Scripture. Jesus said in: John 6:29, *"The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."* Because we trust in God and His Word, we continually pray for forgiveness and help to preserve our belief in Him. God always keeps His promises.

Pastor Fran Hill
Hazel Run Lutheran Church
Hazel Run, MN



AUGUSTANA WITNESSES newsletter

In This Issue...

Devotional	1
Mission Minute	2
2024 Confirmation Retreat	3
Church Plant.....	4
Financial's	4
LCMC Note	4
Convention.....	5
1st Call Retreat	5
WoW	6
Scholarship	6
Church Salary Report	Cover

Staff Stuff

Pr. Randy Freund.. ... Service Coordinator
director@augustanadistrict.org

Pr. Becky Hand Program Coordinator
b.hand@augustanadistrict.org

Wendy Magruder. Office Assistant
office@augustanadistrict.org

Mailing Address
Augustana District
335 Main St. S.
Hutchinson MN 55350

Phone..... 320.234.8403
Web www.augustanadistrict.org

Mission Update

Standing with the Tabor Congregation Remains Vital to Our Witness as the Augustana District

The Augustana District is entering our 11th year of partnership with the Tabor Congregation. It has been as much of a blessing to us as it has been for the Tabor Congregation's amazing evangelical witnesses throughout the vast country of Ethiopia and now, also into Ghana.

We are humbled by their ongoing passion to bear witness to Jesus Christ. In a recent report they shared that through their fifty plus outreach centers they presently have nearly 2,000 baptized members worshipping. Along the way many of these centers have become able to be on their own and have become independent congregations themselves and are sending out witnesses to Jesus Christ. We praise God that we have the honor of helping them go forward boldly through our small but significant gifts and support.

Our Giving Encourages our Partners and Enhances the Endeavor to Build Simple Churches

People often gather outside or in very small and simple structures to begin witnessing in one of Tabor's Outreach Centers. Our gifts primarily go to support the base congregation, Tabor in Hawassa, to cover a portion of evangelists' needs.

When possible, the elders at Tabor may direct some funds, when available, to assist in providing a modest structure like the one shown here.



In 2024 We are Invited to Renew our Generous Giving to This Dynamic Partnership

Our giving in 2023 dipped about 20% for the first time. The Board of World Missions urges you and your congregations to support the renewing of our commitment to this marvelous partnership. In 2024, the BWM will seek to provide more extensive updates to keep you abreast of how our offerings truly help multiply the witness of our Tabor partners.

Pastor Paul Knudson,
Board of World Missions



He has Risen! Easter Greetings to you all and your families. Also, we would like to give Easter Greetings to all the members of Augustana District. May the Lord Bless you all abundantly.

From Asad Masih and family

Augustana District Confirmation Retreat - March 2024

"The Truth Will Set You Free." John 8:32

In early March 170 youth and adults from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and all the way from Michigan, gathered at the beautiful Inspiration Point Camp in Vining, MN for the 10th annual Augustana District Confirmation Retreat.

A team of leaders spent months planning and were bold (but careful) in planning to make the 10th year memorable - different but impactful. It was a new location, a different itinerary, but the same mighty retreat with solid theology and intentional learning. Warm fellowship, a weekend to refill. (For young and old!) Crazy adventures. New friendships.

During the weekend, students were encouraged to think about the multiple lies with which they are bombarded with every day in their hallways, their homes, from their friends, on their phones, in the media. The conversations got real! Through a series of stations (led by Augustana District pastors/leaders), students reflected on worldly lies about money, relationships, voices, hypocrites, and lies we hear about God.

The stations held space for meaningful conversations and left room for ridiculous fun and growing together - as individuals, as a church group, and as a district.

The youth settled into the important truth revealed in the Bible: Only Jesus can make us truly free! They were reminded of Whose they are. Where freedom is found. The Truth. THE Truth that is FOR THEM. (And for you!)

The adult leaders gathered for a Bible study and discussion led by Pastor Culynn Curtis. The youth groups had team building opportunities with the amazing staff from Inspiration Point.

Not only did these teenagers learn a ton but they also worshipped hard and loud. The chapel was FILLED with their

singing. It was powerful!

The students were challenged with adventure course activities, spent time in some awesome game rooms and activities, and had time to build new friendships. Churches were offered individual church time, and our final night found everyone enjoying s'mores at the biggest bonfire party ever!

The AD strives to nurture our young people. Teach them. Learn alongside them. Have fun with them. Create opportunities that will fill their ears with Truth - about them and about God.

Start making plans now to bring your confirmation youth to the 2025 retreat and join the fun February 28 - March 2.



Church Plant Update

We Planted a Church ~ The Table is Three!

Dear friends,

This March, The Table Ministry turned THREE! What started out as part of the Augustana District's 2020 Initiative has grown into a caring, blossoming congregation.

I'm overwhelmed with gratitude, hope, excitement, and so much love for each and every congregation in the AD - for YOU!

During our Birthday Worship Service, I shared some of the many beautiful things our tables have done - as a community, we have held space for anger and fear, brokenness and reconciliation, sickness and in health, grief and new beginnings. In a world that divides, we knit together. In a life that labels, we include. New friends. Milestones. We've done life together. With God in the driver's seat ... we have built a church! THANK YOU ... for living out what it means to be church. Not the building. The people. YOU. Loving and serving our neighbors.



There are so many hands and feet to give credit to. Our Leadership. Our volunteers. Shenanigans Sports Bar and Grill. Our partner congregations - YOU.

Now, on to year four. We continue to look to the future. Dream. Plan. Wonder what is next. While we pray for trust in His plan. We want to say THANK YOU for all the ways

you show up - with financial support, your time, your care and PRAYERS. For all the ways you have set The Table. For building God's Church. YOU are appreciated. YOUR fingerprint on The Table matters.

We are THREE! Yippee!

God Bless.

Much Love & Peace,
Pastor Erica, The Table Ministry

End of Year Finances

The financial situation of the district continues to move in the right direction. THANK YOU! The District Council and staff encourage you to make plans now to attend the District Convention on April 27 to learn more about the finances of the district, how things have gone this past year, and what exciting things the future holds.

PLEASE SCAN
TO HELP



LCMC Note

Does your congregation receive the quarterly LCMC newsletter By the Word? The 2024 First Quarter copy is available now, and you can find it on the LCMC.net website under NEWS >> By the Word, or by using the QR code below.



The early bird registration rates ended on April 4 but you still have about twelve days to get your registration in before the final deadline on April 17.

Thank you for your timely registration. It is really appreciated, and makes the preparations and meal planning go so much smoother.

See you at Mount Carmel in just a few short weeks!



“Free in Christ” has arguably been the most notable and referenced theme of LCMC. How is it best understood in the context of the other three LCMC themes (Accountable to One Another, Grounded Scriptures and Confessions, and Carry out the Great Commission)? How is it best understood in the broader context of Galatians? Dr. Steve Turnbull will help us explore these questions.

Registration is now open!

See full details at the website:

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



Calling All First Call Pastors and Seminary Students! You are invited to a special retreat designed just for you!

The Augustana District understands the challenges of a first call and would like to help you navigate some of those challenges by offering this retreat.

Enjoy time with colleagues and build connections and relationships with fellow pastors in the district.

Registration is now open!

See full details at the website

augustanadistrict.org/events/1st-call-retreat/

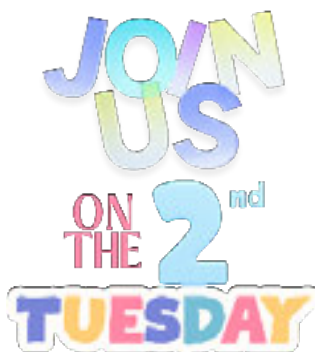


Church Administrative Staff Support Group

For Church Administrators | Secretaries | HR Professionals | Finance Coordinators

This administrative support group meets monthly. It includes experienced staff as well as new ones.

The support group meets via Zoom the second Tuesday of each month from noon – 1 p.m. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 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@augustanadistrict.org), or scan the QR Code.



A Word From WOW

Christ has Risen! He has Risen Indeed! Alleluia!
We have so many reasons to Rejoice in our Savior,
King Jesus!

I'm Sue DeJong from Living Word Lutheran Church in Milbank, SD. I was elected as a WOW member at large officer for the Augustana District this past September. This is a new experience for me. I thank God for the opportunity to serve the women of the LCMC Augustana District.

My husband of 50 years, Tim, and I have been blessed with four children, their spouses and 11 grandchildren. They keep us busy and bring so much joy into our lives along with some craziness!

Living Word Lutheran Church is truly a congregation in mission for Christ. We are blessed over and over by the spirit of generosity and charity from our congregation members. The willing hands and feet of Living Word are active in our circles, Sunday School, VBS, Impact the World Missions, Quilters, and more.

Our circles present the annual St. Lucia Breakfast during Advent, offer fundraising for the youth camp fund, help pack Mercy Meals, Hygiene kits and Layettes for Orphan Grain Train, help to supply items to local food pantries and so much more locally and throughout the world. We are blessed to be women in mission!

I am beyond blessed to be able to be a part of the 2024 ALWM Vietnam Mission Team this coming June, along with congregation member, Vicki Stregre. We will join four other team members from the United States. Please keep us in your prayers. May the people we encounter see Christ in us through our words and actions. To God alone be all glory, honor and praise.

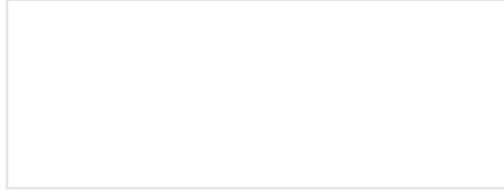
Thank you for this opportunity to share my passion for souls through missions with you.
Our great Redeemer lives!

May God's Peace be yours.
Your Sister in Christ,
Sue DeJong

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/





Address Service Requested

Hutchinson, MN 55350

335 Main St S.

Augustana District

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 *ChurchSalary 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.

ChurchSalary
MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION
REPORT

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