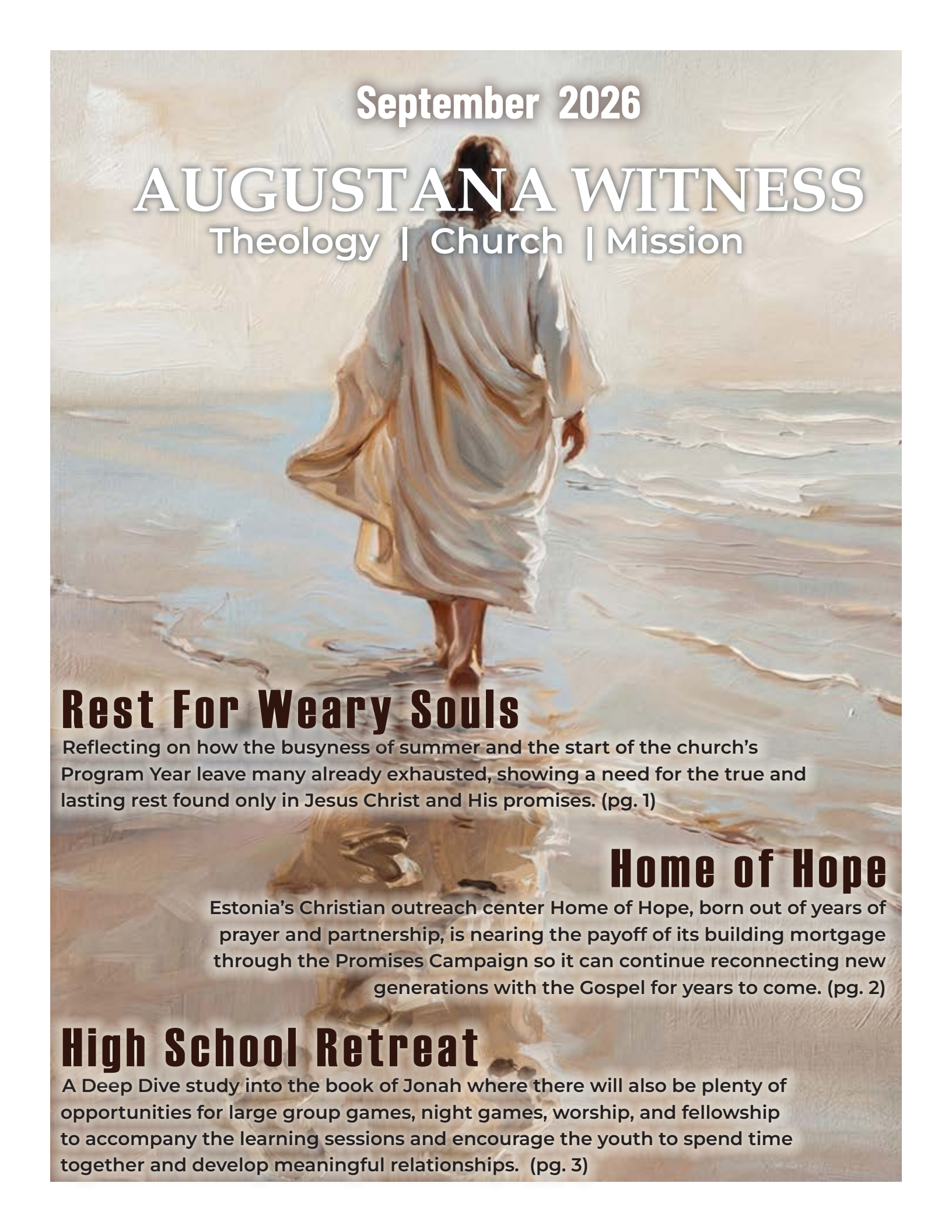




September 2026

AUGUSTANA WITNESS

Theology | Church | Mission

Rest For Weary Souls

Reflecting on how the busyness of summer and the start of the church's Program Year leave many already exhausted, showing a need for the true and lasting rest found only in Jesus Christ and His promises. (pg. 1)

Home of Hope

Estonia's Christian outreach center Home of Hope, born out of years of prayer and partnership, is nearing the payoff of its building mortgage through the Promises Campaign so it can continue reconnecting new generations with the Gospel for years to come. (pg. 2)

High School Retreat

A Deep Dive study into the book of Jonah where there will also be plenty of opportunities for large group games, night games, worship, and fellowship to accompany the learning sessions and encourage the youth to spend time together and develop meaningful relationships. (pg. 3)



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Devotional: Rest for Weary Souls

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” -Matthew 11:28, 30

These words from Jesus might seem strange now that we are transitioning from the summer season to the fall season, or as we also know it in the church, the Program Year. The summer months are supposed to be a time for disconnecting from the hustle and bustle of school, work, and the daily monotony and, many times, demanding routines we have throughout the year. We are supposed to go on vacations, get out of the everyday routines, slow down and take a breath, maybe read one or a couple of books, and create precious memories with friends and family. Our hope, then, is to come back recharged and ready to take on another busy season and Program Year. We are supposed to come back with new ideas, with a different perspective in life, and, finally, we are supposed to be rested. But the opposite is the case. If you have ever gone on vacation, you very well know that when you come back home, the phrase “I need a vacation from my vacation” is all too true.

You see, life still happens, our plans change, illness happens, the hustle and bustle still occur, but with different—and sometimes more demanding—activities. Rather than slowing down, we actually speed up because summer is too short and goes too fast. We end up being busier than the rest of the year, but in a different way, as we try to cram in as many memories as possible. My grandiose plans to slow down, change the

pace of life, get out of the monotony and demanding routine, read a couple of books, and find a new perspective and rest...well, did not happen. At least not the way I was hoping. I had several funerals and families to care for at church, a servant week and a Vacation Bible School to help lead, a week of continuing education, a week of vacation to see family and friends, on top of everything else ministry and family life demands.

And before we know it, we are looking at the fall season and/or Program Year in the face; summer has flown by, but not before having spent the last few weeks preparing and planning for what is to come in life and church in all its different degrees and complexities. We haven’t even begun the year, and we are already tired! So, what do we do? Take a vacation from our “vacation”? No, not at all. We go to the only place where we can truly find rest in the middle of the demands and busyness of life: Jesus Christ and His promise of the forgiveness of our sins, His life and salvation, none other than “for you.” And, in fact, we don’t go to Him. The Good News is that He comes to us whenever and wherever we are. Someone once told me that “change is the only constant in life.” To some degree I concur, but the best and true constant in our life is God in Christ Jesus for us. He claims you in your Baptism, in the Lord’s Supper, and in His unconditional forgiveness in the proclaimed Gospel for you.

So, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as you come back to your routines, to the Program Year, to your monotonous, busy, and demanding lives, hear and rest in the promise Christ can only give: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). The peace of God that surpasses all comprehension

guard your minds and your hearts in Christ Jesus your Lord as you continue to live your life with family, friends, church community, school, work, and in every vocation God calls you. Amen.

Pastor Horacio Castillo

Creator Lutheran Church (Bonney Lake, WA)

Missions:

Tartu Academy of Theology: Home of Hope

We are approaching an important milestone in Estonia. After years of prayer, planning, construction, fundraising, and generous partnership, the Christian outreach center Home of Hope is very close to the end of its establishment journey.

The doors opened at the end of 2019. Since then, the ministry has been active and lively every day, and Home of Hope has become a center where theological education, Bible teaching, youth ministry, pastoral care, Christian media, hospitality, and outreach come together. Annually, we welcome approximately 1,000 visitors and benefit from about 3,000 volunteer hours.

What remains is to pay off the mortgage that was taken out to build this Christian outreach center. Through our Promises Campaign, we are now asking our Christian

friends to help us finish this final step.

Thankfully, to date, 90% has been paid off.

Why does this matter?

Estonia lived for fifty years under atheistic Soviet occupation. Christian continuity was deliberately broken: pastors were killed, imprisoned, or forced to flee; churches were suppressed; and generations grew up separated from the Christian faith. Our mission is therefore not simply to maintain existing church life, but to reconnect new generations with the Gospel. Now we want to make sure this home can serve that mission for generations to come.

Our Promises Campaign is inspired by Joshua 3–4 and the twelve stones Israel carried from the Jordan as a lasting testimony of God’s faithfulness. In the same



Bible School at Home of Hope, spring 2026. Another group of similar size joined by livestream. During its first six years, the Bible School has reached about 350 participants.

way, twelve stones from meaningful places across Estonia will form a memorial at Home of Hope as our testimony to the Estonian people. Each stone represents a \$30,000 step toward completing the mortgage.

We invite the congregations of the Augustana District to become part of this

final chapter. Please pray for our mission, share our story, and consider helping us pay off the Home of Hope loan and complete the Promises Campaign.

Learn more at www.tatest.org/promises.



AUGUSTANA DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT
INGHAM LAKE BIBLE CAMP | WALLINGFORD, IA

October 16 - 18, 2026
REGISTRATION IS
NOW OPEN!

Along with the study into the book of Jonah there will also be plenty of opportunities for large group games, night games, worship, and fellowship to accompany the learning



sessions and encourage the youth to spend time together and develop meaningful relationships. This retreat is planned and led by Youth Directors and leaders of the Augustana District.

See full details at
<https://augustanadistrict.org/events/2026-high-school-retreat/>
Or scan the QR Code above.



CONGREGATIONS

- St. Peter of Luck, Wisconsin
- St. Luke's of Garfield, Minnesota

CLERGY

- Mindy Spangler, Sinai and Lake Campbell Churches, South Dakota
- Traci Hardell from Sandy, Utah



Upcoming FREE Theological Classes

Rev. Dr. Marney Fritts, Theology Coordinator for the Augustana District of LCMC, will be hosting a series of free online classes covering the theological distinctives the District is held together by, and which give the fellow congregations life and nourishment when gathered. The classes will cover topics such as:

- What is in the AD Statement of Faith
- The Law-Gospel Distinction
- The Power of Proclamation: Handing Over the Goods
- Justification and Vocation
- Sanctification as Purely Passive
- On Being Theologians of the Cross
- The Office of Pastor and the Royal Priesthood of Believers



These classes are geared for those congregations that are interested in Augustana District AND for member congregations. The classes will be held via Zoom the third Thursday of the month from 7 – 8 p.m. (CST), September 17, 2026 – March 18, 2027.

The Zoom link may be found at <https://augustanadistrict.org/events/confessing-christ-together/> or by clicking or scanning the QR Code above.

Any questions may be directed to dtc@augustanadistrict.org

LCMC Group Health Plan

Is your council starting to look for lower-cost medical insurance options for your pastor or staff? Are you looking at hiring a new pastor and staff and you want to look into benefit options for them?

Look no further. The LCMC Group Health Plan is available to clergy members and W-2 employees of LCMC that are working twenty (20) hours or more per week. To be eligible to enroll, participants and/or the church and entity they serve must be on the LCMC roster, or be associated with a rostered LCMC church (such as a school or

daycare). LCMC also currently has a group plan in place for Dental, Life and Long-Term Disability through Hahn Financial Group. To learn more, contact Hahn Financial Group, Inc.

You can request more information from:

Hahn Financial Group, Inc.

1000 E 41st St

Sioux Falls, SD 57105

www.HahnFinancialGroup.com

Toll-free: (800) 516-4246

Email: Health@HahnFinancialGroup.com

Let Us Pray: September Prayer Calendar

The Augustana District Prayer Calendar is a simple but powerful way for us to walk together in unity as the body of Christ. This monthly list invites us to uphold one another by name throughout the year, lifting each congregation in the district before the Lord in prayer. The next section outlines unified prayer focuses that help center our petitions on the mission, faithfulness, and vitality of our shared life together. We encourage you to use this intentionally in your congregation during Sunday worship, in prayer groups, Bible studies, staff meetings, or wherever your people gather. As we join our voices before the Father, may he bind us together in Christ, strengthen our witness, and sustain our congregations with his steadfast love.

AD Congregational Prayer Calendar: September 2026

You and your congregation are invited to continue to pray for the Augustana District:

- ✝ Christ's Victory Lutheran Church of Redwood Falls, MN
- ✝ Christus Lutheran Church of Clintonville, WI
- ✝ Faith Community Lutheran , Church of Slayton, MN
- ✝ First Lutheran Church of Britton, SD
- ✝ Living Word Lutheran Church of Alexandria, MN
- ✝ St. John's Lutheran Church of Hecla, SD
- ✝ St John's Lutheran Church of Springfield, MN
- ✝ Zion Lutheran Church of Skanee, MI

Monthly Unified Prayer Points for Individuals and Congregations:

You and your congregation are invited to continue to pray for the Augustana District:

Seminarians

- ✝ Those students already enrolled and taking classes for pastoral education
- ✝ The careful balance of work, home, school and ministry demands



WoW Annual Fall Gathering

September 19, 2026

Registration Closing Sept 7, 2026



Click or scan the QR Code to download the brochure today.



Augustana District Job Opening:

Youth Ministry Facilitator

Are you passionate about equipping leaders, inspiring young people, and helping congregations thrive? The Augustana District is thrilled to invite applications for an exciting new role: Youth Ministry Facilitator!

This new part-time staff position is designed to energize, support, and lift up the youth and family ministries across our district congregations. Working hand in hand with the Augustana District Council and staff, the Facilitator will be a champion for our local ministry leaders, providing fresh resources, steady encouragement, and meaningful opportunities for pastors, youth leaders, and volunteers to connect, collaborate, and grow together. From organizing impactful district youth retreats to building supportive networks for leaders, this role is all about fostering strong connections and empowering the local church.

We are deeply grateful that the initial year of funding for this position has been generously sponsored through an endowed gift from Heritage Lutheran Church in Dell Rapids, South Dakota. This gift is given in loving honor of Adrian and Marcella Krogstad, lifelong students of the Word and passionate lovers of the Gospel message. Their legacy of faith continues to bless and equip the next generation!

WHAT YOU'LL DO

- Serve as a trusted partner to pastors, youth directors, and volunteers, especially in smaller congregations, offering fresh ideas, practical resources, and steady encouragement.
- Facilitate energetic monthly Zoom check-ins where district youth leaders connect, share what's working, solve challenges, and support one another.
- Take the lead on planning and executing high-impact events like our annual High School and Confirmation Retreats, while casting vision for future district-wide gatherings or mission trips.

-Continued next page-

- Build relationships with local youth groups, gather creative ideas across the district, and explore launching a District Youth Council to give high school students an active voice in ministry leadership.
- Share highlights, ideas, and inspiring stories across district communication channels, including our website, newsletter, and social media.
- Keep all district youth and family ministry efforts anchored in sound Lutheran theology and aligned with the core values and beliefs of the Augustana District.
- Participate actively in regular District staff and Council meetings to collaborate, communicate, and align youth ministry with our overarching district mission.

WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR

- At least five years of hands-on experience in youth and family ministry, with a proven track record of encouraging and equipping others.
- A firm foundation in Lutheran theology and a joyful commitment to the core values, standards, and beliefs of the Augustana District.
- Strong interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills, with a collaborative spirit that brings people together.

HOW TO APPLY

Ready to take the next step? We'd love to hear from you! Please submit your resume and a brief cover letter sharing your heart and love for youth ministry to our District Coordinator, Pastor Aaron Deutsch, at adc@augustanadistrict.org. Upon receipt of your application materials, we will follow up with a complete, detailed job description. Applications will be received through Wednesday, September 23rd. Feel free to reach out directly to Pastor Aaron Deutsch at 605-742-4469.



Update
your
Information!



See the new look and check your congregational information on the Augustana District Congregational webpage at <https://augustanadistrict.org/church/roster-of-churches/>. Please let us know if we need to update or change anything by clicking on the "Update Church Information" button at the bottom of that page.

Fond Farewell

At the August 28 meeting of the Augustana District Council, the council received and accepted the resignation of Rev. Becky Hand from her role as District Ambassador Liaison. Moving forward, her responsibilities will be seamlessly folded into the work of our existing district staff. While we will miss her presence on staff, Becky leaves this role with immense joy and gratitude, stepping faithfully into a new season where her time and talents will be focused on new endeavors.

On behalf of the Augustana District staff and council, I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Pastor Becky Hand for her faithful years of service to our district. Becky has been a vital part of Augustana's life and witness for many years, serving with dedication across a variety of roles and capacities. Her love for confessional Lutheran theology, her care for pastors and congregations, and her passion for the international mission of the Gospel have shone brightly through her work, and we are deeply grateful. As Becky transitions into a new call in Caldwell, Texas, and redirects her time toward new projects and interests, please join me in keeping her in prayer, trusting that the Holy Spirit will continue to work in and through her in powerful ways.

Thank you, Becky, for your generous service to the Augustana District, your leadership with our ambassador program, and your ongoing impact across LCMC. We give thanks for you!

Pastor Aaron Deutsch
District Coordinator



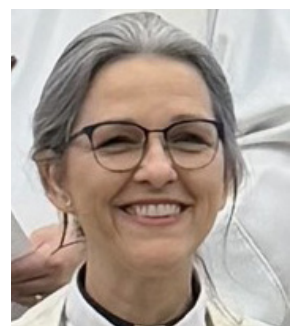
Hello to all. I'm writing to announce that after many years of involvement with AD in addition to serving on staff, I'm stepping down from my position as Ambassador Liaison. I've loved my time in service to the district and will continue to serve-- just in different ways.

I've accepted a new call in Texas and feel that my focus should lie there. Augustana is what drew me to LCMC, so I'll be seeing you at the events either in person or online. I pray God's continued blessing on the district and on the AD leadership. The Ambassador Liaison duties will be continued by Aaron, the district coordinator, and Wendy, the

administrative assistant. You may direct any ambassador questions to them. I'll continue to serve as ambassador for the congregations in Texas, Florida, and Georgia.

To the Ambassadors, thank you, thank you for volunteering to serve the district by keeping congregations up to date and being a contact person for pastors and congregations. You are greatly appreciated! Continue in peace and serve the Lord!

In gratitude,
Becky Hand



Church Staff Openings

We have an a list of church staff openings on our website. If you, or someone you know is looking for a ministry position, we'd love for you to check out the listings! Scan or click the QR Code to learn more or visit www.augustanadistrict.org/church/staff-openings/



Current Listings

- Pastor | New Creation Lutheran Church | Perham, MN
- Lead Pastor | Christus Lutheran Church | Clintonville, WI
- Director of Youth and Family Ministry | Peace Lutheran Church | Watertown, MN
- Full-time Pastor | Living Word Lutheran Church | Milbank, SD
- Senior Pastor | St. Luke's Lutheran Church | Garfield, MN
- Pastor | Grace Lutheran Church | Hayward, WI
- Pastor | Christ Lutheran Church | Blair, NE
- Pastor | Holy Cross Lutheran Church | Glenwood City, WI
- Pasor | St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church | Stacy, MN
- Pastor | Living Word Lutheran Church | Milbank, SD
- Pastor | Aurdal Lutheran Church | Portland, ND
- Pastor | Salem & Sauk Valley Lutheran Parish | Osakis, MN
- Minister of Faith Formation | Holy Cross Lutheran Church | Maple Lake, MN
- Organist | Our Savior's Lutheran Church | Lamberton, MN
- Part-time Pastor | Our Redeemer Lutheran Church | Badger, MN

Online Prayer Gathering

You are welcome to join us regularly or whenever you're able. We meet by Zoom at 9:00 AM on the second Tuesday of each month. If you have specific prayer requests, you may share them during the prayer time or you can email them in advance to prayers@augustanadistrict.org. If you are unable to attend you are still encouraged to send your prayer requests so we may lift them up on your behalf.

Join us for our next meeting on Tuesday - September 8 at 9:00 AM - this link will give you access to the prayer room each month <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85469245577> so you may want to bookmark it.



In Christ,
Pastor Aaron Deutsch
Augustana District Coordinator

Augustana District
335 Main St S.
Hutchinson, MN 55350
Address Service Requested

Administrative Support Group

Office Manager | Pastor | Secretary | Financial Manager | HR Professional | Administrators



You are invited to a monthly support group where experienced and new staff come together to collaborate, share insights, and learn from each other. It's a fantastic opportunity to network and grow in your role.

The support group meets via Zoom the second Tuesday of each month from noon – 1 p.m. Participants are welcome to enjoy their lunch during the meeting. 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](#), or scan the QR Code.

