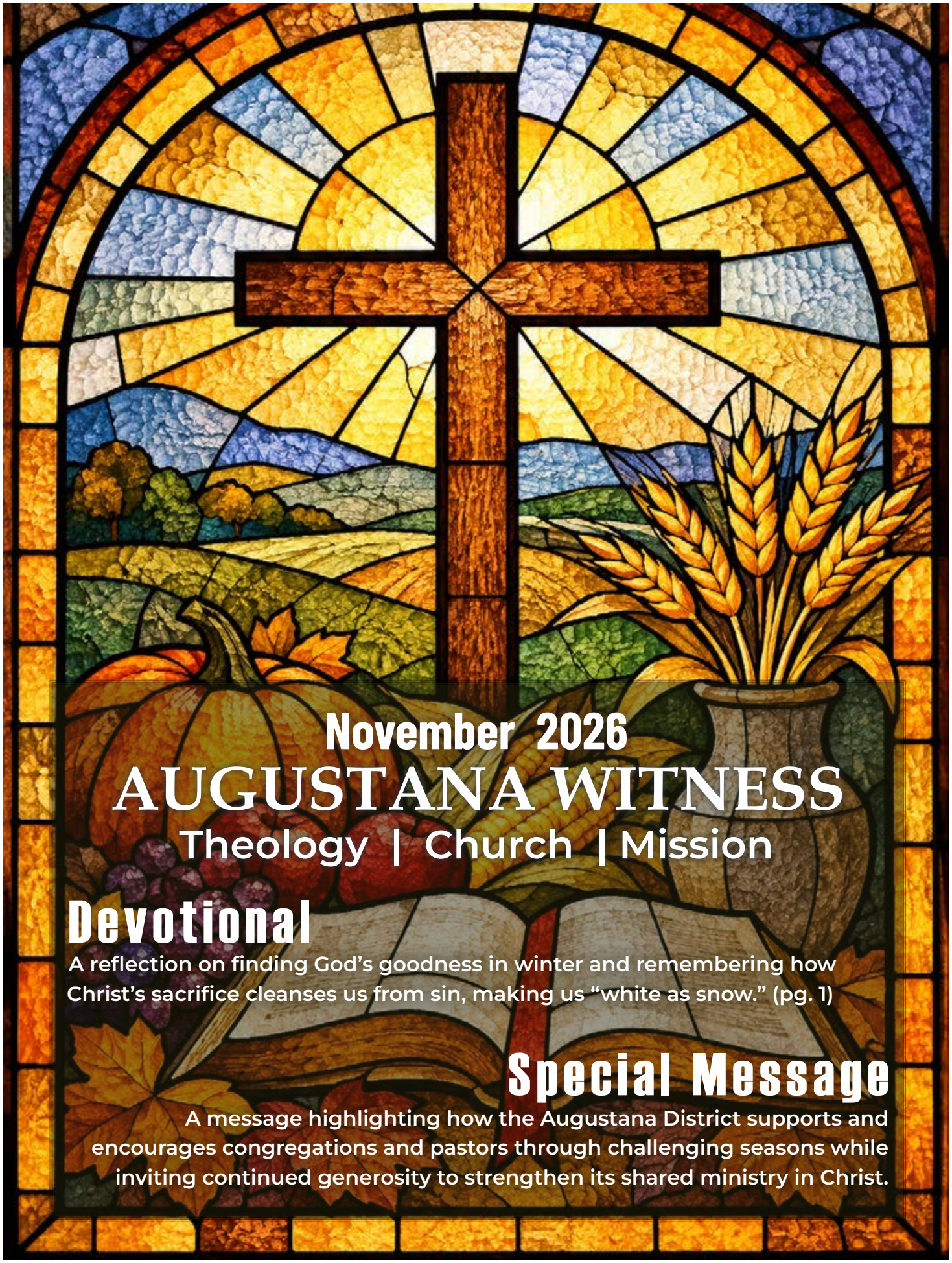


November 2026

AUGUSTANA WITNESS

Theology | Church | Mission

Devotional

A reflection on finding God's goodness in winter and remembering how Christ's sacrifice cleanses us from sin, making us "white as snow." (pg. 1)

Special Message

A message highlighting how the Augustana District supports and encourages congregations and pastors through challenging seasons while inviting continued generosity to strengthen its shared ministry in Christ.



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Augustana District Staff:

Pr. Aaron Deutsch
District Coordinator
adc@augustanadistrict.org

Pr. Nate Hanson
Mission & Stewardship Coordinator
msc@augustanadistrict.org

Pr. Marney Fritts
Theology & Ministry Coodinator
dtc@augustanadistrict.org

Andrea Wollan
Youth Ministry Facilitator
ymf@augustanadistrict.org

Wendy Magruder
Office Administrator
office@augustanadistrict.org

Phone:
320.234.8403

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

Website:
www.augustanadistrict.org

Devotional: White As Snow

We haven't quite hit winter yet, but it's coming. Before long, the red, yellow, and bright orange leaves will be gone, replaced by months of heavy snow and bitter cold. And when it comes, I know a familiar pattern in my heart will emerge: negativity I must fight.

Most mornings, I come downstairs, start the coffee, and glance out the kitchen window to assess "the damage." But how did I get this way? Growing up in New Jersey, snow meant snow forts, sledding, hot chocolate, and maybe—just maybe—a day off school!

Now, even though I love the beauty, I also come to the realization that I'll probably be the only neighbor who hasn't fully cleared his driveway. Winter is no longer the welcome guest it once was. Even Christmas music can sound like a mocking reminder of the slippery roads "coming to town."

I know I am not the only one who sometimes grumbles when we're stuck behind a snowplow or when our fingers freeze while scraping windshields. But doesn't the same God who gives us June sunsets also give us November snow? Perhaps He even uses winter to slow us down and remind us of His breathtaking goodness. In Psalm 51, David cries out for mercy, confessing his sin and pleading for cleansing. He asks God to wash him and declares that God's forgiveness would make him "whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7).

Years ago, while teaching my congregation the book of Hebrews, I was struck by the countless animal sacrifices required under the old covenant. Yet Hebrews 10:4 tells us that "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." Then came Jesus. He offered Himself as the final, once-for-all sacrifice for sin. What animal sacrifices could never accomplish, Christ accomplished through His death. And for those who trust in Him, His grace brings cleansing no winter storm could ever illustrate fully. Better still, our sin is not merely covered up; through Christ, we are forgiven and made clean before God.

So, this winter, when we are tempted to grumble at the sight of snow, let us remember something greater than the inconvenience outside our windows: the mercy of God that has cleansed our hearts.

May every snowfall you see this winter remind you of the grace of God that covers your sin and our Savior, who makes us white as snow.

Pastor Steve Olcott
Christ the King Lutheran Church



From the Augustana District Coordinator

Dear friends in Christ,

My four-year-old daughter, Ruth, has recently taken an interest in gymnastics. During her first week trying the uneven bars, she watched wide-eyed as a talented high school gymnast demonstrated her skills. I could tell right away that my daughter was hooked. On the drive home, I asked Ruth what she thought. “Daddy, what was that big net for underneath the high bars?” It was a safety net. While the high school gymnast didn’t seem to need it, Ruth and her friends appreciated having it there when it was their turn. As Ruth talked about getting better at gymnastics and someday being as good as that high school gymnast, she made one final observation: “Well, maybe I won’t need a safety net either!” But that’s not how it works. No matter how talented, experienced, or confident we become, sooner or later, we all need a safety net.

I’ve come to think of the Augustana District in much the same way. No congregation is immune to challenges, difficult seasons, or uncertain days. Pastors, too, sometimes face circumstances they never anticipated. That’s where the Augustana District comes in. A safety net doesn’t prevent every fall, but it provides support when one happens.

Through your generosity, the Augustana District walks alongside congregations and pastors, offering encouragement, resources, and guidance. This past year, our staff has answered questions ranging from Sunday School curriculum to church council impasses. We’ve traveled thousands of miles to lead call committee seminars, assist with congregational conflict, and offer mission workshops. We’ve developed new learning opportunities, including Confessing Christ Together, our virtual theology study, and welcomed a Youth Ministry Facilitator to connect those serving children, youth, and families throughout the district. These are just a few examples of how your gifts help make this work possible. Through our events, educational opportunities, resources, and experienced staff, we seek to be a dependable partner to the congregations and pastors we serve.

Of course, the Augustana District doesn’t do the saving. We, too, are held by the One to whom we point others. Jesus Christ is our sure foundation and lasting hope. Through His death and resurrection, God has redeemed us, forgiven our sins, and reconciled us to Himself. The cross and empty tomb stand at the heart of everything we do. Our purpose is to encourage and equip God’s people to remain faithful to Christ, proclaim His saving Word, and serve their neighbors.

I’m grateful we have the opportunity to do this work together. To those who already support the Augustana District through personal gifts, thank you. Your generosity helps sustain this ministry and makes it possible for us to serve congregations and pastors throughout our district. If you haven’t yet made a personal gift, I invite you to consider doing so. A monthly or quarterly gift, or even a special offering, helps us plan for the work ahead and respond when needs arise. Every gift is an opportunity to participate in the ministry we share. There are always congregations and pastors to

encourage, challenges to navigate, and opportunities to proclaim Christ.

How can we better nurture the local body of Christ? Where can we respond to God's people's hurts with the healing comfort of His mercy? And how can we prepare more workers for the harvest? These are questions we continue to ask, trusting God to provide the wisdom and resources needed for the work He has given us.

As members of the Augustana District, we do not walk alone. We bear one another's burdens and encourage one another in the faith we share. Thank you for being part of this work and helping us serve Christ's Church.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Aaron Deutsch
Augustana District Coordinator



- **Theological Convocation**
  February 7-9 ~ Bloomington, MN
- **Confirmation Retreat**
  February 26-28 ~ Vining, MN
- **Men's Conference**
  April 17 - Hutchinson, MN
- **First Call Pastors Retreat**
  April 22-23 ~ Alexandria, MN
- **District Convention**
  April 24 ~ Alexandria, MN

Augustana District Scholarship Changes

In the past, the Augustana District has offered a one-time scholarship award for seminary students. The district council has recently approved two exciting changes to the scholarship program.

First of all, certificate program students can now apply for a scholarship up to $750 along with the (up to) $2,000 award for seminary students. Awards will be paid directly to the seminary for fall or winter classes.

Secondly, scholarship applications are now offered twice a year, once in January and again in July. Application deadlines are June 30 and December 30 of each year. Applications can be submitted on the Augustana District website at https://augustanadistrict.org/theology/scholarship-application/

Let Us Pray: November 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: November 2026

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

- ✞ Faith Lutheran Church of Monticello, MN
- ✞ Grace Lutheran Church of Willow Lake, SD
- ✞ Grace Lutheran Church of Hayward, WI
- ✞ Immanuel Lutheran Church of Absarokee, MT
- ✞ Looney Valley Lutheran Church of Houston, MN
- ✞ Peace Lutheran Church of Watertown, MN
- ✞ Romsdal Lutheran Church of Hudson, SD
- ✞ St. John's Lutheran Church of Howard Lake, MN

Monthly Unified Prayer Points for the AD Board of World Missions:

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

- ✞ Those hearing a call towards ministry and sorting out what it might look like in their life and context
- ✞ Support systems to uphold them



Pastor Chuck Huckaby, from Lawrenceburg, TN

Congregations Going Into the Call Process

If your congregation finds itself entering the call process, we are here for you! Reach out to Pastor Aaron Deutsch, Augustana District Coordinator, before you begin. He will be happy to meet with your leadership team, discuss your options, and suggest best ways to proceed before you even get started.

Pastor Deutsch can be reached via e-mail at adc@augustanadistrict.org or by phone 605-742-4469.

Upcoming FREE Theological Classes

CONFESSING CHRIST TOGETHER
Augustana's Theological Distinctives

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 (9.17.26)
- The Law-Gospel Distinction (10.15.26)
- The Power of Proclamation: Handing Over the Goods (11.19.26)
- Justification and Vocation (12.17.26)
- Sanctification as Purely Passive (01.21.26)
- On Being Theologians of the Cross (02.18.26)
- The Office of Pastor and the Royal Priesthood of Believers (03.18.26)

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), through 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**

View the class recordings online by visiting
https://augustanadistrict.org/resources/educational-resources/



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.

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

- Interim Pastor | Christus Lutheran Church | Clintonville, WI
- Pastor | New Creation Lutheran Church | Perham, MN
- 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 | 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
- 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 - November 10 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 – 1:00 PM. 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.