



# SERVANT PASTOR

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Pastors for the Congregation



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*Founded in 1964, AFLTS is owned and operated by the AFLC Schools Corporation, whose 50 members are nominated by the Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. AFLTS is a graduate school of theology and grew out of the need for a seminary to equip biblically trained pastors and Christian workers in the tradition of orthodox Lutheran Pietism.*

# Dear Friend of AFLTS

**L**ast year when I wrote in this place I did so with a heavy heart. I missed pastoring- and I still do, most every day. But there is one tangible expression of God’s call that takes the edge off of that loss: Multiplication. Someone once accused me of over-using the term “multiplicative.” Agree to disagree. Okay, they were probably right. But multiplication is what keeps me going at the Seminary.



**Pastor Wade Mobley**

The first time I felt multiplication in this role came in January. I had a scheduled lunch with our three returning interns, all of whom were interviewing with various boards and committees and awaiting their first calls. There were three of them, and one of me. Multiplication.

As of this writing, all three interns have taken calls to congregations without pastors, providing shepherds to flocks who lacked the same, but- this is important- without taking a shepherd from another congregation. We were spared the domino chain reaction that sets off every time a pastor leaves a congregation.

Currently, the AFLC does not have enough pastors for her 270 congregations. Some congregations need a full time pastor and only have a part time pastor. Some have pastors who would like to retire, but fear that their congregation would be harmed if they did. Others have pastors who are willing servants, but lack the training needed to excel in their calls. Yet others have given up having a full time shepherd again, or have settled for pulpit supply when a shepherd is needed. God is starting to change that, though. This year three young men graduated from our seminary. Next year it will be seven. At least eight more will begin their studies this fall. A handful of others are preparing to begin their studies the year after.

In the past year our big emphasis has been improving the student experience in our seminary. We want to prepare students for servant leadership in free and living Lutheran congregations. We are trying to do this better, focusing on our program, the systems and structures of the School, and shoring up the financial means necessary to accomplish these goals.

In the past year we added or modified three positions. First, the School called Pastor Steve Mundfrom to begin in the fall of 2016 as Professor of Systematics. He is currently earning a doctor of ministry degree through Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis. Second, Business Manager Larry Myhrer received a promotion to Vice President of Operations. This change moves operations (building, finances, personnel) away from Pastor Rolf and me, which in turn allows us to focus more on students and programs. Finally, Chad Friestad will begin in

June in the new role of Director of Recruiting and Communications. He will supervise, for instance, this publication in future times, and work with a staff of recruiters to invite students to participate in both our Seminary and Bible School programs.

In the coming year we will continue to sharpen our focus on preparing servant leaders for free and living Lutheran congregations. Because of Christ, we focus on our students for the sake of the local congregation. This year we will pursue a full review of our seminary program, seeking ways to make the program more effective and efficient. We will probably call an additional faculty member about this time next year. Further, the Board of Trustees is taking steps to address what will soon be a capacity issue in both the seminary and Bible School programs. As of this writing no additional seminary housing units are available, and we have over 60 students registered to begin AFLBS next year (our campus only holds 160 without additional buildings).

The 2015-2016 school year has been incredible. I thank God for faculty and staff willing to follow aggressive direction from a Board of Trustees that is both bold and prayerful. The Corporation, too, works hard to advance the seminary for the purpose of serving the local congregation. And my Assistant, Marilee Johnson, deserves special thanks (you probably wouldn't be holding this magazine in your hands without her).

Finally, I praise God for His work on our campus as we exist for the benefit of the congregation, which is the right form of His kingdom on earth. Enjoy this magazine. It reflects God's work in and through you.

In Christ (the best place to be),



Pastor Wade



Members of the AFLTS faculty include (from left) Pastor Wade Mobley, AFLTS Dean; Pastor Brent Olson, Old Testament; Pastor Robert L. Lee, Historical Theology; Pastor Joel Rolf, AFLBS Dean; Pastor Jerry Moan, New Testament; Dr. Mark Olson, Institutional Effectiveness Director; Dr. Tim Skramstad, Practical Theology; Dr. Oliver Blosser, Hebrew; Dr. Phil Haugen, New Testament.

# Georg Sverdrup's Plan for Pastoral Education



**Pastor Robert L. Lee**

*This article first appeared in the Georg Sverdrup Journal, and is written by Pastor Robert L. Lee, long time history professor at the Free Lutheran Schools, and former president of the AFLC. This article has been edited for length, including removal of scholarly footnotes. For more information on the Georg Sverdrup Society, go to <http://www.georgsverdrupsociety.org/#home>.*

A product of Georg Sverdrup's New Testament and church history studies, shaped in the fires of frustration over the failure of the church reform movement, was a philosophy of history that would be foundational to his vision for pastoral training. First, the New Testament apostolic community consisted of free and living congregations, led and bound by the Spirit of God, with the gifts of grace used for edification and upbuilding. Second, the New Testament congregation had been buried by the papacy and the state-church, resulting in either clergy domination or state domination. Third, during the Reformation era Luther saw the problem, but the time was not right in Luther's day for restoration.

The fourth and final point of Sverdrup's philosophy is crucial: America offers an opportunity like never before in the history of Norwegian church life to make a new beginning. Never before and nowhere else has the congregation enjoyed such favorable external conditions. The circumstances are ideal for the full development and restoration of the New Testament congregation; today is the "age of the congregation," and the time has come to restore that which has been lost.

The words "free" and "living" were often used by Sverdrup to describe the New Testament congregation, and his concept of a free congregation in a free church was foundational to his thinking. He defined "free" as independent of the state, but, more importantly, free in Christ, "living," not a passive laity, but an organism, in which the Spirit has given gifts of grace to every member, who use them for mutual edification. A congregation that was "free" only in the sense of independence could be dead.

In a 1902 article Professor Sverdrup declared that there were three types

of pastors: the state-church, the high-church, and the free-church. It is the latter who see the congregation as the body of Christ with a mission in the world, and who do not come with a sense of superiority over the “uneducated” laity. It is the latter whom we seek to form and equip through our theological training, pastors who are committed not merely to keep the machinery running, or dominating members with an undue emphasis on correct doctrine, but to proclaim the full counsel of God so that all of the members might call forth and use the gifts God has given for mutual edification and the spread of His kingdom.

The heart of Sverdrup’s concerns for the education of pastors is expressed in a Norwegian phrase, *menighedsmaessig presteutdannelse*, which may be translated and paraphrased as a theological education “in harmony with the Christian congregation, that corresponds to its nature and spirit, and that answers to its needs.” Living congregations need living pastors, not dead ones, with a living proclamation, “from the congregation, through the seminary, and back to the congregation.” In an 1879 essay Sverdrup wrote that the pastoral office has its proper place “so that the servant of the Word is in spirit and truth a servant of the congregation to its upbuilding in faith ... in order that the congregation itself becomes a witnessing congregation, a royal priesthood and a holy people.”

A second Norwegian term is a necessary component of Sverdrup’s training program for pastors: *barnelærdom*. This word may be translated “childhood teaching,” and refers to simple basic doctrinal teachings from Luther’s Small Catechism and Pontoppidan’s Explanation. Sverdrup was convinced that this was far superior to the highly technical and abstruse theological theses and propositional statements of the Norwegian Synod theologians, whom he called “Missourians” due to the fact that they had studied at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO. This type of training produced pastors who controlled the life of their congregations in a straitjacket of doctrinal propositions.

The goal of Sverdrup’s program for theological education, Hamre explains, was not to clutter the minds of students with citations, glosses, interpretations, or hairsplitting distinctions. Rather, it was to lead them into a greater understanding of Jesus Christ, the heart and center of God’s Word. Thus, all the courses in the theological department were arranged in a series of three cycles, each having a distinctive goal and together forming an organic whole “A focus on Scripture, rather than on an orthodox dogmatic system, was to be the heart of the program. This meant in practice that the curriculum would emphasize the study of Biblical languages, exegesis, and church history. Dogmatics should be Biblical theology, and one of his students noted that Sverdrup’s lectures were “built on the Scriptures and did not stand in the service of the seventeenth century Theology or of the Concordia formula.”

The antithesis of the Augsburg program, which Sverdrup termed a “Greek school,” was the “Latin school” with its humanistic emphasis. He saw this as a special sort of education with a stress on ancient Greek and Latin authors with their pagan background and philosophy as well as morals. This undermines the moral and spiritual foundation that youth receive from Christian homes. “Humanism is a deification of human nature, human wisdom and knowledge, and human power of reasoning. To humanism that which is spiritual is a hindrance rather than a help for man to reach the highest level of right living.”

When a pastor is a product of humanistic training, Sverdrup warned, he will be distanced from the people of his congregation, as he had witnessed in Norway. Humanism produces an aristocracy of spirit, which can sometimes lead to rationalism, distancing the pastor from Christianity itself which he now regards as only good enough for simple people. Theology simply becomes another subject in a Latin school, and this is not proper preparation for a pastor, who are more adequately trained for ministry in a unified program like the one offered at Augsburg.

How does the heritage of Georg Sverdrup and his plan for pastoral education translate for 21st century Lutheran Christians? From the perspective of historical hindsight, some have maintained that the plan was not exceptionally unique, and that it never was fully implemented. This author suggests that what is primary and worthy of preservation is not the

Augsburg Plan itself but instead the philosophy of history and education that inspired it. The plan itself was situational, tailored for a unique set of circumstances involving immigrants usually lacking the education that had been the norm for theological training in the Norwegian state-church, and preparing them for pastoral service in pioneer conditions in the context of a republic with church-state separation.

Thus, an important question for us is this: what shape should a ministerial education in conformity with the congregation take for our day? First, it should be Biblical in its orientation, with the primary emphasis given to New Testament exegetical studies (using the original languages), and with other courses such as dogmatics and pastoral theology flowing from the study of Holy Scripture. “If we are to get a true seminary from which there will go out the type of workers who both will and can work so that the congregation once again receives its form among us, the ‘one thing needful’ is that the aim of all the work of the school must be living knowledge of God’s Word.”

Sverdrup seems especially concerned about the dangers of systematic theology, when it is taught in such a fashion that students get lost in a disconnected knowledge or a “dry, rationalistic formalism,” changing life to correct doctrine. Retain the subject, he urged, but teach it in a new way, as “a knowledge of life which has its point of departure in the highest truth: the Word became flesh.”

The other most important subject matter that Sverdrup advocates (much to the satisfaction of this writer) is history: “These, then, are the things that are to be the subject matter for study in a seminary: God’s Word and the history of mankind ... God’s revelation and the self-revelation of mankind, together with the absolutely necessary languages.” He also wrote that “the one who is to enter confidently into the conflicts and battles of the present age out to be thoroughly instructed in the history of the church in order that he might not be led astray in the way in which the church so often has in ages past.”

Second, pastoral training should be congregational in focus. This certainly involves our instruction in polity, but more than that, this focus should shape our scriptural, historical, dogmatic, and practical courses. This is the age of the congregation, and the goal of a seminary must be to prepare pastors to serve congregations, which are the body of Christ, a royal priesthood, a holy people ... not like the state-church pastors, who very often understood neither the people nor Christianity and almost never had any respect for the congregation ... “who were puffed up by their wretched learning in Latin and Greek, who continued to look down upon the ‘peasants’ and who regarded the congregation as a type of mission field which they were to Christianize.”

A seminary must strive, therefore, to be in accord with the being, origin, and goal of the congregation if it is really to serve its purpose, organizing everything with the goal of preserving the students in a living relationship with the congregation. Sverdrup suggests that one way to do this, following the pattern set by Jesus when He took His disciples with him in private and then sent them out again to preach from town to town, is to have the students go out to teach and preach in the congregations during their vacations ... noting that vacations should be long enough to permit this to take place.

The issue of pre-seminary preparation, which Sverdrup saw as a vital connecting link to the congregation, may be the most problematic as we seek to appropriate his concerns today. A strong majority of Lutheran pastors in the past were products of a pre-seminary program at a church-related college; currently only a small minority of pastors are graduates of these institutions, and even these with diverse majors instead of the tradition pre-seminary preparation. Also, it is clear that the relationship of most of these colleges to the church has grown weak and in most cases a humanistic perspective prevails.

This writer suggests, in light of the current circumstances, that Professor Sverdrup would strongly endorse a Bible school program as preparation for college and seminary studies, as well as an important link to the congregation. The Lutheran Bible Schools in the past, with their concentrated two years of Biblical studies, were a significant source of church workers ... pastors, missionaries, parish workers, youth workers ... and this continues to be true for the AFLC. One retired pastor

stated that his Bible school training was as important to his parish ministry as his seminary education, and perhaps more so.

Finally, it must be noted that the spiritual state of the seminary student is a vital element in any program of preparation for pastoral service. Sverdrup wrote that we do not want any theological student is not already a living Christian, a true believer. "Here the assumption is that the Gospel with its life-giving and life-preserving power must have the predominant influence through both the preparation for the study of theology and this study itself. The real fitness of the preacher and spiritual guide does not depend on a purely human intellectual development and the acumen that comes as a result of that, but on the personal experience of the saving power of the Gospel and the thorough knowledge of God's revelation and the need of the human heart."

In addition to this, Sverdrup wrote, an inner call to the work is also required. He noted that this call may not be as clear as Paul's call on the road to Damascus, so "most young people need a longer time and often the help of older believers in order to become clear about their call. A seminary would not be true to its duty if it did not try to help ... It shall guide the young people in a self-examination to determine if such a call is present. It shall strengthen the inner call where it is found. It shall contribute to the awakening of that call where it is not yet conscious." He seems to see this guidance as a special function of the preparatory program.

Faced with the enormity of the task to provide the proper training for Lutheran pastors in the 21st century, some encouragement may be found in the fact that Professor Sverdrup did not claim to a degree of complete success. He readily acknowledged that not everything at Augsburg Seminary was governed by the principles that he promoted. "The reason for that," he wrote, "is partly that we must always give some consideration to certain prejudices and partly that experience has taught us more than we could see through at once. Likewise, it is to be admitted with shame that there may be lacking both teachers and students with earnestness and power, spirit and fire. We are able to see a little of that which is lacking; it is likely that others see much more."

Yet our failures do not alter the vision for providing theological education that is from the congregation – through the seminary- to the congregation, which should always be a journey, not a destination. This is our task, too. God grant that we may be found faithful to our Lord for our generation!

*Edited from "Georg Sverdrup's Plan for Pastoral Training for the Congregation" by Robert L. Lee, Georg Sverdrup Journal, volume 6 (2009): 7-15. Edited and reprinted with permission.*

## Summer Institute of Theology 2016

The Summer Institute of Theology will be held August 1-5, 2016, under the theme Content-Driven Corporate Worship. Topics offered during the Institute relating to corporate worship include Healthy Tensions, Forms & Content, and Corporate Worship in Free & Living Congregations. Dr. Phil Haugen will also lead a class on the person and work of Christ, based on the book of Colossians. An Introduction to Choral Conducting and a class on Equipping the Saints will also be offered. Additionally, students will also be given the opportunity to participate in workshops designed to provide practical, hands-on experience in various worship settings. Focuses will be on various instruments, audio and

video, Choirs that Grow, Luther's Hymns, and Working with Creatives.

SIT classes are structured with the intention of providing furthering education opportunities for pastors and laymen and laywomen. Housing and meals are available on campus for those who pre-register. The cost to attend all sessions is \$250 if registrations are post-marked by June 30. The price rises to \$300 following that date. There are various other packages offered, including morning-only sessions, afternoon-only sessions, as well as housing and meal plans.

*For more information or to register, call (763) 412-2026 or visit [www.afllts.org/summer-institute-theology/](http://www.afllts.org/summer-institute-theology/).*



**Israel Milton Vazquez Flores**

## **Tell us about how you got to the seminary.**

I came to know about the seminary because my home church is part of AFLC fellowship. We are an independent church in Mexico, but we have been working with AFLC World Missions for a long time. My uncle, Pastor Milton Flores, came here 25 years ago. He has a good perspective and testimony of his life from here, so when I came here I was just looking to find what he was talking about. Then I realized that all the experiences that he had were actually happening in the same way for me. So I came to Minneapolis for the first time in my entire life, I discovered that there are people caring for me in prayers, in attitudes, in actions, so I came to the seminary of the AFLC because I also agree and am convinced of many of that facts that are taught here, especially the power of Scriptures.

## **What do you hope to do when you're done with seminary?**

I'm planning on going back to my home church to serve there, since at this moment we don't have a pastor. That will be my first goal, at least for the near future.

## **How has the adjustment of moving to a new place to study been?**

It has been really interesting. I'm really close to my family, so being by myself has been a really huge change. A good part of it is that I've studied culture, especially American culture, so I'm not that surprised by many things.

**What would you say to international students reading this and saying, 'I can go to seminary, but I can't imagine traveling to Minneapolis to study for three years.'**

I would say that it is not impossible because the Lord is with us and because He has prepared in this seminary many people that is available to always care for us. As an international student, even if I had a hard time as I came here for the first time, I immediately felt as if I was in my family, because of the fellowship in faith of Christians living together in this community, I think it covers missing the place we've come from.

*Flores is a junior at the Free Lutheran Seminary.*



**David Niemala**

## **What brought you to the place in your life where you would consider going to seminary?**

I've considered coming to seminary for a while, thinking about the places I've served and the gifts God has given me. I have a desire to serve in congregational ministry, and also other people have asked me about it before, seeing if I was going to go to seminary to be a pastor some day.

## **What's your favorite class been so far?**

I really appreciated the Gospel of John, learning straight from the Greek with Pr. Haugen and also I've appreciated the assignments, especially the exegetical paper. That was the first one I'd written, and it helped me since I had to really

wrestle with the text I chose. It's important as a pastor to dig into and wrestle with the text because God's Word is inspired and it's our source of life and it's our source of ministry.

## **What has been something you've really enjoyed on campus this year?**

There have been many things that I've enjoyed. I've enjoyed the fellowship with the students and learning alongside of them, as a bunch of brothers in Christ. I've enjoyed the teachers; they really care for the students and they really hold up the Word of God high and they respect the Word of God. And I've enjoyed the homework, even though it's been difficult at times.

## **What are you excited about, just a few short years from now, being in parish ministry?**

I will be excited to serve the congregation to teach the Word of God, get to know people, and point them to Christ and spend time with them in the congregation being a part of that family. I'm looking forward to internship and if the Lord wills a call after that.

## **What are some of the challenges you've faced this year?**

Some challenges I've had this year at seminary has been juggling homework, work, and time with family and friends. I am a youth director at Good Shepherd Free Lutheran in Cokato, MN.

## **How is that going?**

It's going well, being a youth director at Cokato while also going to seminary, using what I've learned at seminary, sometimes it will directly relate to what I'm doing with the youth ministry. Even the youth ministry class I had during J-term was really helpful. It's been a good balance; a good job to have alongside seminary.

## **What has it been like, going home to do significant-time ministry?**

Going back to Cokato to do ministry has been a joy knowing that I grew up in that church as part of the family. I came to know Christ in that church and grew a lot in the 3 or 4 years before I came to Bible School in the Twin Cities. It's been a joy to go back and reconnect with the people and minister there just as I was served as I was a youth.

**What is it that you're hoping to learn in the next two years?**

In the next two years I am hoping to learn how to properly handle the Word of God and then I'm also hoping to learn the practical side of ministry, working with and loving a congregation and the people there.

*Niemala is a junior at the Free Lutheran Seminary.*



**Alex and Julia Amiot**

**Have you found what you've expected here?**

Alex: I didn't know what to expect here, but I have been impressed and I have been so blessed with my experiences here with my classmates. A real sense of unity and camaraderie, I've been really blessed by the instruction of these professors who love us and who love the congregation and who love the Word of God.

**What's it like raising a family while at seminary?**

Alex: Raising a family at seminary, there's something to be said about trusting the Lord. We had a baby boy when we moved to seminary, and when we crunched the numbers before we moved to seminary we knew that within a year all our funds would be depleted and we would be eating table scraps, not in any kind of housing,

because all of our funds would be gone. And yet the Lord has provided for all our needs, our family of three and now our family of four and He continues to provide for us.

**What are you looking forward to on internship?**

Alex: We're looking forward to working in a congregation. I've loved learning in a classroom with my classmates, but to daily invest in the lives of those who are a part of a local congregation in a different way than we've been able to in seminary, during internship I'm looking forward to working in the Body of Christ in that local congregation.

**Lord willing, a year from now, you'll probably be waiting for a call letter or two. How does that feel?**

Julia: Waiting for a call letter is exciting to think about. Settling down, not necessarily being done moving, but putting down roots, for me it's exciting to think about getting to know people in the congregation for years and years. Making friends.

Alex: When Jesus called his disciples He called them to be with Him and to be sent out. I just love being with the men here, and the families, but I'm not in seminary just to be with, I'm also here to be sent out. The prospect of serving a congregation during internship and after that is very much a part of why I'm here. I look forward to all of that, trusting in the Lord.

**How has it been living off campus?**

Julia: A lot of the families live on campus, but we have had to make a little more effort to have fellowship with the families on campus and the other families, too that live off campus, Alex gets to come to class every day and see his classmates and connect with them, but I've had to put forth the effort to make friendships, to get together with other wives that have kids to have my kids have friends, just to fellowship.

**What would you tell those who feel that uprooting your life and moving to seminary is an insurmountable obstacle?**

Julia: I think uprooting a family is a very hard idea to overcome. Your kids are in school, and you don't want them to miss out on practice or their friends. It's a hard thing to say, 'well, just do it. Of course you can do it.' But you can't, but God can help you overcome those and He can grow you in those things.

Alex: For some time in my life before seminary I relied a lot on the confidence I had in myself in what I considered possible to do. Through some challenging experiences in college to my faith I came to a point where I had to acute awareness of the small size of my faith... I realized after thinking about it for a few hours that I was operating that way, my confidence was in my confidence, and I knew my faith was small so I couldn't act on anything. But realizing that error, the Lord brought to me confidence in Himself, and later that day or the next day I said, "What about seminary?" Shortly thereafter we applied and moved, and there's always a temptation to stand on my own confidence, but it is always a rich blessing to rest on my Savior and not myself.

**How do you think some of those struggles in college are going to make you a better pastor?**

Alex: Struggling in my faith in college gives me a lot of sympathy and understanding for people who struggle with their faith with doubts or unbelief. I don't always know what to say to that, I don't know what I would tell myself back then that would have necessarily helped, but it was a trial that I went through, the Lord uses trials in your life to strengthen you. He can do that, and He's done that so that I have seen how if I rest on my own confidence I'm incapacitated. If it rest in the Lord, I'm able.

*Amiot is a senior at the Free Lutheran Seminary.*

To view more of these interviews, go to: <https://vimeopro.com/aflbs/servantpastor/>

## Juniors/Middlers

**Kevin Czymbor, 39**, was born and raised in Michigan. He is a graduate of Delta Community College and also attended Saginaw Valley State University. After marrying Jaclyn Reinarz, an AFLC girl from Northome, MN, they settled in Park River, North Dakota. Kevin served as a substitute teacher and provided transportation for students in the local school district. They welcomed baby Noah into their family in December.



**Justin Nelson, 40**, from Kalispell, MT, is a member of Faith Free Lutheran Church and a graduate of the University of Great Falls. His career was in social work and he married his high school sweetheart, Betsy. The persistent call of God brought them to the AFLTS campus in 2015, along with their three children, Julia (15), Isaiah (6), and David (2).



**David Niemela, 23**, is a graduate of AFLBS and Faith Evangelical College and Seminary. He grew up in Cokato, MN, and is a member of Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church. He continues to serve Good Shepherd as Youth Director and has been blessed while growing and ministering in his home congregation.



**Israel Vázquez Flores, 23**, from Leon, Mexico, is the grandson of the late Samuel Flores who was a leader in the AFLC work in central Mexico for many years. Before coming to seminary, Israel was a teacher of several languages. His desire is to prepare to return to his home congregation to serve as their pastor.



**André Vogel, 29**, came from Santa Catarina, Brazil, to study at AFLTS at the recommendation of a friend and supporter of our schools. André had completed seminary in Brazil but wanted further study, especially in the field of missions. He is married to Sharon and they have a one-year-old daughter, Lisa. Their desire is to return as missionaries to their homeland.



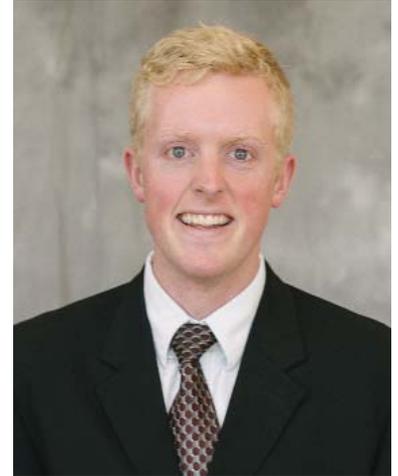
**Chris Kum-pula, 27**, a first-semester middler, set his political aspirations aside to come to seminary. A graduate of the University of St. Thomas, he is married to Becca (Hjermstad). They are new parents, as of December, to Theodore. Residents of Elk River, Chris & his family are members of Living Hope Church in Rogers.



**Ryan Patenaude, 33**, is originally from Crookston, MN, and Resurrection Free Lutheran Church in Beltrami, MN. He served in various roles at Peace Lutheran Church in Canal Winchester, OH, for twelve years before becoming convinced that God wanted him in seminary. Ryan is married to Stephanie, and they are raising four children, Thorvald (7), Solomon (6), Iris (3), and Louisa (1), and expect a fifth child in October.



**Matthew Pillman, 22**, is a missionary/pastor's kid from Wisconsin. His home church is Christ the King in Wilson. During his two years at AFLBS, Matt spent much time on gospel teams, choirs, and a summer VBS team. He also spent a semester in Ecuador as a short-term missionary. Matthew is also a graduate of Thomas Edison State College.



**Ken Flaten, 32**, grew up on a dairy farm near Newfolden, MN, a member of Westaker Free Lutheran Church. A graduate of AFLBS, he went on to community and technical schools and began to work in radio broadcasting. During this time, Ken had opportunity to serve in youth ministry and taught Sunday School at Maranatha Free Lutheran in Ulen, MN. He is currently a member at Faith Free Lutheran in Minneapolis.



**Matthew Nelson, 33**, spent his teen years at Emmaus Lutheran in Bloomington. He is a graduate of Faith Evangelical College in Tacoma and AFLBS. Over the years he has served several congregations as youth director and/or worship leader. Married to Lori (Onnen), the couple has three daughters, Sophia (6), Corinne (4) and newborn Naomi. The Nelsons are members of Faith Free Lutheran in Minneapolis.



**Matthew Quanbeck, 26**, grew up in Minot, ND, when his father, Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck was serving Bethel Free Lutheran Church. A graduate of AFLBS and Minnesota State University-Moorhead, Matt is married to Cortney (Detwiler) and they have been blessed with a daughter, Aleithia (1).



**Nick Schultz, 30**, a native of Madison, SD, grew up in the Methodist Church, and was saved at a summer camp at the age of twelve. A graduate of Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, he is married to Miriam (Warner). They are parents of three, Evangelyn (4), Esther (3) and Nathan (born in September). The Schultz family holds membership at Living Word Free Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD.



## Middlers/Seniors

**Steve Jensen, 37**, was born and raised in Colorado. He attended AFLBS, MTI, Aviation Institute of Maintenance, and North Hennepin Community College. Married to Brandi (Weiker), an AFLBS graduate, they have 9 children, Quincy (15), Kiah (13), Weston (10), Breckin (9), Isaiah (6), Levi (3), James (2), John (2), and Alana, born in November. They are members of Hope Lutheran in Minneapolis. Steve is assigned to Rose and Spruce Free Lutheran Churches, Roseau, MN; Pastor Todd Erickson, supervisor.



**Chad Friestad, 32**, is from Newark, IL, a member of West Lisbon Lutheran, Newark, IL, and a graduate of AFLBS and Moody Bible Institute. Married to Christie (Ballmann), they are parents of 3 – Eben (3), Isaac (2) and Gracia (1). Chad is assigned to a half-time internship at King of Glory Lutheran Church, Shakopee, MN; Pastor Brett Boe, supervisor. He will also fill a new role at the AFLC Schools as Director of Recruiting and Communications.



**John Lee, 25**, was born in Bangladesh to missionary parents. He is a graduate of AFLBS and University of Northwestern – St. Paul. His wife, Hannah (Swanson) also graduated from AFLBS. Their first child, Bethany, was born in April. John & Hannah are members of Faith Lutheran in Minneapolis. He is assigned to Atonement Free Lutheran Church in Arlington, WA; Pastor Richard Long, supervisor.



**Gideon Johnson, 27**, was born in Willmar, MN while his father served in Spicer, MN, and was raised in Stanley, ND. A history major, Gideon is a graduate of AFLBS and Northwestern College. Married to Erin (Olson) who is also an AFLBS graduate, they are parents to Charlie (1) and expect another child in July. Gideon is assigned to Helmar Lutheran Church, Newark, IL; Pastor James Molstre, supervisor.



**Paul Kinney, 54**, served with Lutheran Bible Translators in Guatemala for eleven years. After the death of his first wife, he returned to the states with his four children, Josiah, Ethan, Luke, and Erin. He met and married Kedra (Larsen), an ethnomusicologist, while working at LBT headquarters in Illinois. They have a daughter, Anastasia (5). Paul is assigned to Our Savior's and First English Lutheran, Stanley, ND with Pastor Rodney Johnson, supervisor.



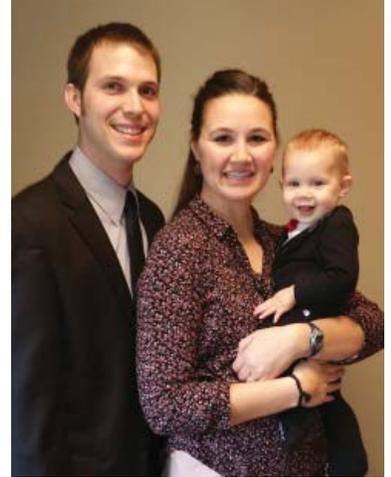
**Alex Amiot, 28**, originally from Crookston, MN, grew up a member of Resurrection Free Lutheran Church in Beltrami, MN. He is a graduate of AFLBS, and North Dakota State University. Married to Julia (Olsen) who is also an AFLBS graduate, together they are parents of Hudson (3) and Phaedra (1). Alex will serve his internship at Ruthfred Lutheran Church, Bethel Park, PA; Pastor Steve Carlson, supervisor.



**Andrew Olson, 24**, is originally from Shakopee, MN and Faith Lutheran Church. He is a graduate of AFLBS and Northwestern College. Andrew is married to Alexis (Wise) and they are expecting their first child in August. Andrew will serve an internship in Sioux Falls, SD at Abiding Savior and Living Word Free Lutheran Churches, Pastor Kirk Flaa, supervisor.



**Jon Langness, 27**, from Ishpeming, MI grew up a member of Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran Church. A graduate of AFLBS and Northwestern College, Jon married his Bible School classmate, Hannah (Dyrud). They are parents to Evan, age 1. Having served his internship at Helmar Lutheran Church in Newark, IL (Dr. James Molstre, supervisor), he has accepted the call to serve as pastor at Abiding Word Lutheran Church in Deschler, NE.



**Brandon Marschner, 30**, is from South Heart, ND. His home church is Our Savior's Free Lutheran in Dickinson. Brandon graduated from AFLBS and Northwestern College. Married to Ashley (Mundfrom), they are parents to one-year-old Henry. Brandon served his internship at Our Savior's and First English Lutheran of Lostwood in Stanley, ND (Rev. Rodney Johnson, supervisor). He has accepted the call to serve as pastor at Bethel Community Church in Culbertson MT, and Faith Free Lutheran Church in Brockton, MT.



**Aaron Olson, 35**, a member of Hope Lutheran in Minneapolis, is a Twin City native. He is a graduate of Barclay College and spent some years driving truck prior to and during seminary. Married to Michelle (Satren), their family includes, Edell (5), Jerome (3) and another child expected to arrive in August. Internship for Aaron was at Ruthfred Lutheran Church, Bethel Park, PA (Rev. Steve Carlson, supervisor). He has accepted the call to serve as pastor at Calvary Free Lutheran Church in Arlington, SD.



### AFLTS Student Body

Back Row: Ken Flaten, Gideon Johnson, Justin Nelson, Matthew Nelson, Nick Schultz, Ryan Patenaude, Paul Kinney, John Lee, Israel Vázquez Flores;  
Front Row: André Vogel, Alex Amiot, Andrew Olson, Chad Friestad, Kevin Czymbor, David Niemela, Matthew Quanbeck, Matthew Pillman, Chris Kumpula, Steve Jensen.

*Not pictured: interns Jon Langness, Brandon Marschner, and Aaron Olson.*

# A Team Effort

*“It was He who gave some to be ... pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service; so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).*

By Pastor Tom Carlson

**W**hat are the roles of pastors and lay people, according to these verses? As a first-time pastor in a mission church, I had much to learn about this topic. I soon found myself becoming overly involved in every aspect of the ministry of the church because it was more convenient to do something myself than take the

time to equip and train members of the church to use their God given gifts.

However, as usual, God gave grace to that church and to its pastor. As that congregation grew and matured, we learned much together about the purposes mentioned in Ephesians 4, “to prepare God’s people for works of service ... until we all .... become mature.” The Lord worked through His powerful Word so that over the years many lay leaders were trained to perform acts of ministry in the congregation, such as praying for and visiting the sick and serving communion alongside me. It was especially rewarding to see many men of the church become willing to be trained to preach and thus sustain one of the traditions of the AFLC, having lay preachers bring the Word of God to thirsty souls.

What a contrast when I took my next call to a long-established congregation, where it immediately became evident that ministries were taking place that had been the vision of not only the pastor but of the laity, who had taken full ownership of those ministries. I was impressed to see their commitment to the vibrant music ministry, Sunday school and vacation Bible school outreaches, strong youth program, and even the ministry of caring for the building and grounds, just to name a few. Only when I saw the example of this congregation’s

members working together did I begin to more fully understand how God intends a mature congregation to build each other up, to be unified in purpose, and to work for spiritual maturity and knowledge among all the members of the church.

Yet, as this pioneering congregation began to experience growth, the challenge of absorbing and training new members also became evident. Sometimes a church has trouble allowing new members to take on leadership roles. People have a natural distrust of new people, wondering, “Will they be faithful to the doctrines of the church? Will they do a good job in this ministry? Will they do some things differently from our traditional ways?” A common problem with church growth is that the long-term members who have invested so much are being challenged to trust the Lord to teach and lead new members, just as He led the older ones as they took on ministry roles. Without trust, eventually the strong ministries in a church will wind down and pass away if others are not trained to join the leaders.

A congregation and a pastor are being short-sighted if they do not realize the eternal impact of allowing lay persons to discover their spiritual gifts as they take on ministry responsibilities in the Body of Christ. As I have watched the years of ministry pile up and the numbers of funerals I have officiated increase, God has impressed upon my heart the importance of involving all members in the daily life of the congregation in light of each one’s eternal destination. I now realize that getting new people involved in the life of the congregation is more than just a good policy—it is part of the broader mission of a congregation not only to evangelize but also to strengthen and preserve its members.

Church leaders can become so busy thinking about the nuts and bolts of running a busy church that they lose sight of its broader mission: the purpose of a congregation is to glorify God, not just to build a great church. Keeping this mission foremost in our thoughts is

a key to transferring ownership of our ministry from us to the Lord. Strong involvement and discipleship in the lives of members of a congregation can help to safeguard them from the many dangers that can separate believers from their Lord: sickness, temptation, loss of a loved one, infighting within a church, and—worst of all—false teaching regarding Christ.

Often people see ministry as the role and duty of only the pastor, but then the outreach and spiritual work of the congregation is limited to only what one man can do. The pastor’s job, as it says in Ephesians 4, is to “prepare God’s people for works of service.” He begins this task by instructing new members about the doctrines of the church as well as the opportunities for service. He leads by example, and he relinquishes control of many ministry details to his congregation and ultimately to the Lord. These instructions in Ephesians 4 are a call to action that can best be completed when each believer within a congregation is willing, equipped, and enabled to serve.

The daily life of the congregation is not separate from the work of evangelism and discipleship; rather, it is an integral part of teaching and strengthening the individual members. It is not insignificant, therefore, when a lay person practices hospitality, begins an intercessory prayer ministry, or brings a meal to a person fighting a serious illness. These are just a few examples of a thousand ways laity can use their gifts and “give themselves fully to the work of the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:58). Truly, the goal of a congregation is that all may grow toward “attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” As we look to eternity, may we be given the wisdom and the grace to allow the Lord’s wise purposes to unfold in the life of every believer.

*Carlson, a graduate of AFLBS and AFLTS, serves Bethel Free Lutheran Church in Grafton, ND.*

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# Why Give to the Seminary? Century Fund Update

By Mr. Steve Jankord

**T**here are plenty of places to which we can give our hard earned money. Why make the AFLC Seminary a focus of your giving or my giving? I cannot think of anything more critical or significant both now and for eternity than what our seminary is doing. If not for our seminary,



where we would get our trained Pastors? If not for the seminary, where we would get our trained AFLC missionaries? I have been on the board of many good ministries doing significantly important work – but at this stage of my life I am focused on things that will last. It has been said there are only two things that last forever: God’s Word and the souls of people. Training pastors to serve in our congregations has both an

immediate return and an eternal return. The joy of meeting all of those people impacted for eternity by the proper teaching and preaching of God’s Word that is the result of training received in our seminary – well my friend that is the kind of investment return that gives me the greatest joy.

Every gift, whether checks written directly to the AFLC Seminary, as part of a five year Century Fund commitment, student scholarships, or in planned giving with the help of our Development Director; helps make the seminary possible. I can assure you each and every dollar received is invested in the two things that will last forever.

*Jankord serves as the chairman for the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees.*

**D**id you know that this year we spent \$31,000 per student per year to train future pastors? That amount will go down as our enrollment goes up, as we have a lot of room to grow. But we currently charge less than \$11,000 for tuition and fees. All of this to say, “Thank you!” Without donors like you, and your congregation, we could not afford the instruction we need to offer without saddling our students with onerous amounts of debt.

In the past year the Board of Trustees has focused on faculty care, faculty credentials, and obtaining sufficient faculty numbers in order to allow time with students and off campus interaction with the Association. The Board established the Century Fund to accomplish these goals.

With praise to God, it is our joy to announce that the Century Fund is ahead of schedule. Seven people, congregations, or groups, have offered pledges for the next five years totaling nearly \$650,000. The original target was 12 donors at \$20,000 per year for 5 years, though various other approaches have been used. Most visibly, the Century Fund has allowed the School to call Pastor Steve Mundfrom, who will begin teaching systematic theology in the seminary this fall.

The Century Fund is a vital part of our five-year plan, providing necessary funds until such a time that proceeds from endowments will cover expenses related to the systematics professor and the President of the AFLC Schools.

The Board of Trustees is praying for five more Century Fund units to be pledged in the next two years. If you or your congregation is interested in more information on the Century Fund, go to [www.aflts.org/give](http://www.aflts.org/give), or call 763 544 9501.

## Gifts to AFLTS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Add my name to the *Servant Pastor* mailing list.

I would like more information on the Adopt-A-Student program.

I would like more information on the Century Fund.

I enclose a half-tuition scholarship of \$5,400; full-tuition scholarship of \$10,800; or other \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to be a friend of the Seminary by sending a monthly gift of \_\_\_\_\_.

Gifts or inquiries may be sent to AFLTS, 3120 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. For more information on any of the programs listed, you may also e-mail [aflts@aflc.org](mailto:aflts@aflc.org) or call (763) 412-2026 or visit our web site at [www.aflts.org/give](http://www.aflts.org/give).

The Association Free Lutheran Seminary  
3120 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
Phone: 763-544-9501 Fax: 763-412-2047

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## Mission Statement

The mission of the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary and Bible School is to establish students in the eternal and inerrant Word of God for a life of faith in Jesus Christ and faithful service in His Kingdom.

## Institutional Objectives

Our objectives are that graduates of the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary and Bible School will:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of Scripture, subscribing to its inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy without reservation, confessing its authority and demonstrating the ability to accurately interpret it.
- Grow in spiritual maturity informed by the Law and motivated and empowered by the Gospel.
- Understand the function of the local congregation and the place of the individual believer in its fellowship and ministry as guided by the AFLC Fundamental Principles.
- Participate in making disciples of all nations, especially through involvement in the local congregation.

## We Uphold

### **Biblical inerrancy**

The Bible is God's Word in its entirety, completely without error (II Timothy 3:16).

### **Salvation in Christ**

Salvation is by grace alone and is received through faith alone in Christ alone (Acts 4:12; John 1:12).

### **Free and Living congregations**

Free and living congregations are built through the ministry of the Word and sacraments (Mark 16:15-16).

### **Servant leadership**

Pastors are servants of Christ who lead and equip believers through the Word and by example (Ephesians 4:11-13).