



Summer 2020

News

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

Who We Are

THE OPEN BIBLE

God's Word is the foundation of faith and life.

•

THE ASCENDING DOVE

The Holy Spirit ascending is symbolic of the freedom of the congregation and the power and guidance of the Spirit.

•

THE GREEN VINE

The vine is the emblem of the living congregation bearing fruit for the Lord.





THE NEXT GENERATION

A

re you enjoying your season of life? It just dawned on me that the AFLC is about the same age as I am! I was born in 1957 and the AFLC in 1962. That means we are both in late middle age, at least that is how I would classify us.

I am starting to think about future retirement and where we would like to live, if the Lord wills. Would we ever think about the AFLC retiring? I certainly hope not! But if we are going to keep growing stronger, it will have to come through successfully handing responsibility to a new generation. At 62 I am most likely past my prime in many areas, but in some areas, I hope I am still gaining knowledge and understanding. As one of my logging friends says, "Let's not work harder, but smarter." I hope the Lord is continuing to teach me wisdom and understanding that I can use together with the energy of the next generation.

I hope you realize this in your churches, also. The next generation needs the wisdom of the older folks, but you need the energy of the younger to do ministry where the Lord has placed you. That means that both young and old need to allow Christ to live through them according to Ephesians 4:3: "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Perhaps this summer would be a good time for you as a church council to ask yourselves, "Are we actively involving the next generation in ministry by making room for their different ideas on how to do ministry?"

The Lord needs all ages in His kingdom for it to go forward until He returns.

~Pastor Lyndon Korhonen



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Supporting missions through MINISTRY TRIPS



Short Term Assistants

Trost Family: Uganda

Emily Olson: Mexico

Casey McLoughlin: Brazil

Prayer Requests

- Brazil trip: July 16-Aug. 16
- San Antonio trip: Aug. 20-24
- Israel trip: Nov. 8-20
- Planning for 2021 trips
- Increased prayer and financial support for Journey Missions
- Additional STAs

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Participating in short-term trips open eyes to the work God is doing overseas, giving participants a missional outlook.

Often, when people are seeking ministry trip opportunities their focus is on helping the mission field—a welcomed and vital focus. Journey Missions desires to build on this desire and provide opportunities for our AFLC church members to support our mission fields in person through multiple avenues. This can range from preaching and teaching, to building projects and compassion ministries. The needs vary in each country but the desire from team members stays the same, “How can we best bless and support our missionaries?”

When ministry teams join our fields, we want them to be a blessing and encouragement to our missionaries. Prior to the trip we discuss ways we can tangibly be a blessing and, as opportunities arise, we see the ongoing work God creates in those who are faithful to go.

Mission trips give people an opportunity to experience how big God is by traveling and experiencing His Church in another part of the world. Near the end of our trips team members often share in debriefing about their thankfulness for an expanded worldview and a deeper understanding of people. We pray that they would return with rejuvenated hearts to continue serving through their local congregation.

Our Short Term Assistant (STA) program continues to evolve. Often our STAs are people looking to get a taste of longer-term foreign ministry experience. Some come back desiring to pursue missions, some return with a missional outlook as they pursue a domestic calling. No matter the outcome, we praise the Lord for these volunteers and their heart desire to serve.

Journey Missions has now achieved our six-year mark and it is only possible because of the generosity of others. We are fortunate to have had individuals, small groups, and congregations who have supported us. Our family is designated as “missionaries at home” and, as such, we are reliant on the financial support of others.

Our prayer request is for additional people and churches to join our support team, and we are always grateful when people bring our family, our ministry, and our needs before their church leaders and missions committees.

Please continue to be in prayer for Journey Missions as we continue to provide opportunities to congregation members to partner with our international fields. Our desire is to continue to be a viable option for people who have a desire to serve.

If you’d like to discuss further the ministry of Journey Missions please let us know, we’d love to talk with you. Thank you for your considerations and thank you to those who are faithfully giving and praying!

~Jon Nelson

Pursuing GLOBAL Church Planting

In our human strength, the thought of global church planting is daunting. And yet, this is the task of AFLC World Missions—to plant churches around the world. Here is what I am learning:

Most importantly, we are not alone. Along with the command, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” in Matthew 28:19, Jesus continues in verse 20, “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” It is good to be reminded that this work is not our own and that no one cares more about planting churches than our Savior, Jesus.

Additionally, we are not alone in our desire to plant churches following the biblical model set forth by the Apostle Paul. I’m encouraged by the renewed interest in church planting by not only our AFLC but many other church bodies. This reminds me that our ten missionary families on the field are all an important part of God’s plan to reach the world in their unique corner of the globe. We have much to learn from mission authors, other mission organizations’ best practices, and individual missionaries on the field.

Here’s what is happening on our AFLC mission fields:

- Brazil: Even with 17 congregations, there is a desire to plant more churches. AFLC Brazil President Iran Goez is asking for us to send more church planters.
- Mexico: Todd and Barb Schierkolk are faithfully building up the congregation through children’s ministries. They, too, desire to see another congregation planted. Our other Mexico partner ministry, the Central Mexican Lutheran Church, is hoping to plant two congregations in nearby cities where they hold Bible studies.
- India: The 56 AFLC-I congregations in India are completely led by India nationals, but still in need of US support to supplement their pastors’ salaries and for their far-reaching humanitarian efforts. They are actively training their laymen to go to unreached villages to plant more congregations.
- Uganda: Nate Jore is reporting wonderful news about the congregation in the village of Nabukosi that is holding services with an entirely Ugandan leadership. Baptisms are taking place, and the Lord’s Supper is being celebrated. Nate is actively discipling the leadership. Brent and Emily Raan are praying about the possibility of church planting several hours north of their current work with Ambassador Institute in Jinja. Please pray that our Ambassador Institute program remains strong under national leadership as our missionaries focus on church planting.
- Switzerland: The El Shadai congregation in Geneva continues to meet Sunday evenings with the leadership of layman Augusto Fiuri. They are praying for a full-time pastor and the ability to plant another congregation in a nearby town.
- Paraguay: Matthew and Ednay Abel have nearly completed their language studies and are praying about an opportunity to relocate into a rural setting where there is no church or Christian witness. They will be home on a short furlough, Lord willing, this summer.

Finally, yet of first-importance, we want to thank you for praying, caring, and giving financially to our efforts toward church planting. Several of our missionaries are behind in their needed personal support. Please continue to pray for a passion for souls that would drive our desire to establish Free and Living Lutheran congregations globally!

~By Pastor Earl Korhonen



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The two-handed ministry of WORD & DEED



Like most grandmas, I love talking about my kids. That is why most of you know a lot about the Miriam Home—I tell a lot of stories and share a lot of pictures of the precious children who come through our doors. But the ministry in Campo Mourão, Brazil, did not begin with the home, it began with the AFLC Bible School and Seminary (SETELL), and it was our theologians who first began reaching out to children at risk.

The identity of SETELL has always been two handed: one acquiring a profound knowledge of the Word of God and the tools to use that knowledge for the edification of others, and the other reaching out to practically express the love of God in the here and now.

The unwavering commitment to the infallible Word of God has drawn students to SETELL from all over Brazil. It is not uncommon for young people from other protestant denominations to apply to come to SETELL. But it is certainly not because of our size, or our international renown. They want to come because so many of the theological institutions have moved the sacred Scriptures from “infallible” and “our one rule” to “edifying moral principles.” Young men and women with a deep desire to serve God seek out a place where they can grow spiritually and be equipped for ministry. SETELL has provided sound leadership for our churches and blessed other congregations for years.

The loving application of the Word of God has also been a standard held firm by staff and students of SETELL. My first encounter with the Miriam Home was 25 years ago, and the first thing that impressed me was how the students of SETELL were not only big brothers and sisters to the children in the home but were also the counselors in a program that transformed the lives of teens who had begun life by growing up on the street and in gangs. Now, more than two decades later, the same heart for showing God’s love has not paled.

It is always encouraging to receive reports from pastors of their members who spend their summer breaks ministering in their congregations with intense joy. But it blessed my heart even more when a year ago Sanderson and Jean requested permission to stay on campus over summer break. Why? A ministry that had begun in a problematic neighborhood in Campo Mourão had just started taking root, and they didn’t want the young people to feel abandoned.

Lais has been a faithful helper in the Miriam Home since she arrived to SETELL two years ago. Burdened by the lies that blinded the eyes of the older girls in the house, her heart burned to reach out in a wider way to teenage girls of Campo Mourão with the true hope of who they can be in Christ Jesus. Under the covering of the SETELL faculty, Lais used all her free time to seek God and organize a three-day evangelical conference focusing on telling the truth from the lies. More than 60 young ladies attended, each left with a new understanding of God’s grace and plans for their lives.

I am so grateful to be a part of this amazing two-handed ministry, and am delighted to see how both are manifested in the years to come.

*~By Jonni Sliver
Miriam Home*





God invites us to participate WHEN HE PLANTS A CHURCH

Starting new churches: it's an exciting part of the gospel ministry. But it is no easy task. We are learning more every day. The Holy Spirit is teaching us. In our Free Lutheran movement, many young planters, churches and supporters are coming together to join the learning curve. Here are three significant lessons we have learned so far.

➔ **It's not as easy as it looks.** Church planting is not for the meek and mild. Slow starts, long hours, frequent hardships, and financial shortfalls clutter the way. But is hard bad? Church plant specialist Ed Stetzer reports a higher than 32 percent death rate for new churches in the first year. But for the 68 percent of churches that refuse to quit before their first birthday, there is hope. You have to be willing to suffer, though. Our pride sometimes deludes us. We think we know better. "I am ready to go with you even to prison and to death," we say (Luke 22:33). But the rooster will crow for us, as well. Difficult doesn't mean don't—it often means don't quit.

➔ **Only God can plant churches.** New churches are part of God's design for His people. People don't start churches, our Redeemer King does. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16). It's tempting to try to create churches using human methodology. But starting new congregations derives from the Holy Spirit. He uses believers to make disciples, then calls, enlightens, and gathers us into living local churches.

➔ **It's central to disciple-making.** As we grow and gather mission-minded Christians around these common principles, we are affirming the ancient truths and gaining insights. Our message remains the same: Jesus is Lord and He builds His Church. But it's time to plant. As Craig Ott and Gene Wilson explain in their helpful text, *Global Church Planting*, "While not all ministries establish new churches, those that have discipleship as their goal are missing a key ingredient unless the new believers are gathered into spiritual communities."

The call to plant churches is urgent. "The time is fulfilled," Jesus said in Mark 1:15, "and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." That's our focus. We are "not ashamed of the gospel," said the first church planter to the Gentiles, the Apostle Paul, in Romans 1:16. "It is the power of God for salvation to all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles." The places change and the people are different. But Jesus the Savior stands. Will you join us in the mission?

Thank you for all your support for helping us plant churches across the country. If you want to partner with us or want us to partner with you, call 805-807-8336 or email us at homemis@aflc.org.

~Pastor Jim Johnson

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Focusing on AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE

One of the challenges that the aviation industry deals with is that of aging aircraft. According to some studies in the industry, the average age of small aircraft is around 50 years old. This, of course, produces some maintenance challenges. The aircraft maintenance community continues to rise to the challenge to maintain these older aircraft.

Most individuals who ride in such aircraft have no idea that they are flying in such an old airplane. In order to meet air safety standards, it of course costs money. Typically, the older the airplane the more maintenance is required to meet the FAA standards. Such is the case of the FLAPS Cessna 175. Built in 1959 and marketed as a 1960 model, this aircraft has seen many years of service. I know of three aviation ministries that have used this plane in the Lord's service. In 2001, this airplane was used by Mission Aviation Training Academy (MATA) for training missionary pilots. Later that year it was purchased by the Lutheran Mission Society (LMS) for use in ministry in Naknek, Alaska. FLAPS acquired the C175 in 2007 when LMS gifted the hangar and airplane to FLAPS.

It has been used for many years in ministry and has been a valuable tool to further the gospel. While it continues to be a good aircraft, it has begun to show its age. Members of the FLAPS Board decided to replace this aircraft.

Enter the FLAPS Cessna 182. Being a 1976 model, this particular aircraft is quite a bit newer, especially by aviation industry standards. Another factor in maintenance is not only the age of the aircraft, but how many hours of use it has flown. In these terms, the C182 is practically a new aircraft. If you were to put it into car terminology, one could say that it has less than 30,000 miles on it.

FLAPS acquired this airplane by the generous donation by the Reinke family of Nebraska in 2007. It was used by the AFLC administration in Minneapolis up until September 2019. A few months prior, the decision was made to bring it up to Alaska to support the mission work here. In September, FLAPS Director Kevin Lee, Pastor Henry Mohagen, and Ted Chick flew the Cessna 182 north to Alaska. Once in Naknek, the work began to replace the tires to larger-sized ones. One of the challenges of flying in rural Alaska is that the runways are not all paved. During the springtime thaw, the runways can become very soft and muddy, necessitating larger tires as to not get bogged down in the mud. Larger tires also help in dealing with the snow during the winter months.

This like-new aircraft will have many years of service and life in it. We continue to look forward to witnessing how God will use us and the tools that He has provided to further His Kingdom and work.

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~Pastor Jeremy Crowell
Missionary Pilot



We can have VICTORY IN JESUS

"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (1 John 5:4-5).

Our theme in 2020 is a strong one. We are praying for overcomers across the AFLC. We are standing on God's promises together. His Word is our guide as we study the lessons written by Linda Korhonen, "Don't Follow Your Feelings." Copies are still available through Dawn Johnson, our executive secretary. We are also offering a sale on our previous WMF studies: many of our previous studies are still available, now at a reduced cost.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, WI, on Aug. 10 for our WMF Day. This is such a special way to connect with our missionaries. Another way is to join a Journey Missions team. A short-term mission trip altered the course of my life. That was how I decided to go to Bible school. The WMF has a short-term assistant scholarship account for people approved through World Missions and serving as STAs. You can read stories by those whose lives were blessed in our current *Helping Hand* newsletter. It is posted on our website in its entirety at aflc.org/women.

God promises to provide for all our needs. We are committed to being frugal and using His gifts wisely. Contributions to the General Fund of the AFLC are needed. Giving was down around 10 percent last year, yet the blessed work of the AFLC continues. We lovingly and prayerfully support World Missions (General Fund), Home Missions (retreat and General Fund), and Christian Education: Parish Ed (General Fund), Free Lutheran Seminary (seminarian book fund, *Lutheran Ambassador* subscription, and chapel upgrade), Free Lutheran Bible College (dorm refurbishing).

These ministries are at the heart of our AFLC. It is no coincidence that there is a heart in our logo. We love Jesus and we love serving Him. Thank you for your prayers for the WMF. Plan to attend our national WMF Day, take in a rally in your area, and invite a friend. Use the gathering times for ladies at your churches to "encourage one another and all the more as we see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). With a grateful heart

~Lavonne West



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Crisis leads to SIMPLICITY

It is a strange season in our nation and in our world! The uncertainty can nurture many different responses for teenagers, for families, and for congregations. As we in Youth Ministries walk alongside of you, we affirm that although there are many anxious moments, the crisis can bring us to simplicity.

We rejoice in the simplicity of the Savior King going to the cross. We remind one another of the simplicity of the risen Lord Jesus. We hold confidently to the power of God's Word and God's Spirit being at work in God's people. Galatians 2:20 directs our attention. "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." In the crisis, we cling to Christ!

Here are some updates as we seek to maximize our efforts for Christ's Kingdom:

- **FLY Beyond**—July 19-23 at the ARC. Registration best rate for national youth equipping conference has been extended two months to June 30.
- **Apprenticeship Program**—The 2020-2021 season of our 12-month congregational experience with mentorship in youth ministry begins in August.
- **Youth Workers Weekends**—The annual youth leader equipping event will be January 15-17, 2021, at the ARC. A district YWW opportunity is being planned by the Eastern ND/Western MT district for this October.
- **Youth Leader Coaching**—Our collaboration with LEAD222 enables new and veteran youth leaders to enter a nine-session coaching relationship with a certified AFLC coach.
- **FLY Convention**—July 5-10, 2021, at the YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colo. The logo release for next summer's national youth gathering was made in April. The theme is "Restored" from Revelation 21.
- **AFLC Youth App**—We have purchased a branded app through Subsplash with "The Church App" for featuring content and connections with teens and leaders of the AFLC. We expect a June release of the app, which will be a free download to each user.

We step forward into the future together with a goal of reflecting faith in Jesus to one another and to those who follow behind us!

~Pastor Jason Holt

Prayer Requests

- ➔ Pray for COVID-19 to awaken teenagers to the gravity of life and the grace of Jesus
- ➔ Pray for ministry planning teams' discernment for current and future opportunities
- ➔ Pray for financial support of the Youth Ministries' budget subsidy as well as all AFLC ministries

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HOW GOD IS AT WORK

in the lives of our students

When I look back at my time in seminary and what I have learned, the first thing that comes to my mind isn't about preaching, or a particular doctrine, or something else you'd expect. The first thing that comes to my mind is perseverance. Currently, I'm focused on perseverance with doing homework such as writing papers and finishing up assignments before finals week, but it makes me think ahead to perseverance in the ministry. We need perseverance to continue to preach and teach God's Word, for even if we don't see any fruit, God's Word is doing its work.

As I near the end of my third year of seminary, I think back to what has lead me here. I think of my home church and the people who taught me the Word of God. I think of my pastor who taught me through sermons and confirmation, those who were involved in leading youth ministry, and those who taught me in Sunday school classes. I can even remember the lady who taught me songs during vacation Bible school. I wonder how many of them questioned whether or not they were doing any good. Thankfully, we know from Isaiah 55:11 that God's Word does not return empty, but it accomplishes that which He purposes. And that is my biggest takeaway from seminary, the importance of persevering and holding onto the power of God's Word.



Kyle Smith
FLS Senior



Kristina Korhonen
FLBC Senior

Have you ever had moments or days when a song just pops into your head and won't go away? I've had countless moments like these, and for some reason, the songs that come to mind are almost always hymns or Christian songs. Moments like this happen frequently at FLBC, not only during choir or gospel team practice, but in the cafeteria and dorms, too. One of my roommates would start humming or singing a song and soon we would all be singing together.

Yet what stands out to me when this happens is how influential and enduring the Word of God is through fellow believers. Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." The Word of Christ, even through song, has the power to convict us of sin and refocus our attitudes upon Christ. It causes us to dwell on who God is and what He has done for us. God used others' singing in choir, chapel, and even in passing on the sidewalk to teach me to turn with a repentant and thankful heart to His forgiveness and grace.

This year I didn't let God work in my life right away. Within the first couple months I was second guessing my decision of attending the Free Lutheran Bible College. I struggled with being stuck in one place, and it felt like I was just learning and not really getting anything out of it.

After a discussion with my parents I decided to talk to Adam Osier, dean of the college. I told him everything I was thinking, how I felt stuck, not able to leave. I told him I had a heart for the lost and the broken. I felt like I wasn't able to apply that. Adam gave me advice that really woke me up. He said I wasn't letting God work because I was so busy trying to plan my own tasks. He then reminded me that there are people on campus who need me to be a light for Christ.

I struggle with sharing what is going on in my own life, but as soon as I opened up, I felt a huge weight lifted off my shoulders. From that point on I have loved Bible college. Honestly, I still struggle with some of this, but I remind myself this is all part of God's perfect plan for my life. One verse I look to is Proverbs 16:9, "In their hearts humans plan their course but the Lord establishes their steps." I can plan and plan all I want, but my plan is not even close to what God has planned my life. I am learning to live God's will for my life and not my own.



Will Alverson
FLBC Junior

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FROM OUR DEANS



Mentoring men for the ministry

I am so thankful for God's faithfulness to our seminary and to the individual men training to be pastors. This year, the Free Lutheran Seminary (FLS) instructed 22 students. Ten graduated in May; five are currently on internship; three will be seniors in the fall; four will be middlers; and we look forward to God's provision for our incoming junior class. It has been a privilege to be the seminary dean and to invest in the lives of these 22 men. God has been doing a great work here. I am especially pleased that, between this year and the next, we will have 14 men prepared to go into parish ministry in the AFLC. These men will have gone through a rigorous four-year program emphasizing exegetical theology (the study of God's Word), as it relates to the pastoral ministry in the local congregation. This four-year residential program is not easy, it isn't expedient, but it is, in my opinion, the best way to prepare pastors for the rigors of congregational ministry.

I have especially enjoyed times of mentorship and fellowship with our seminary students. This is one of the decided strengths of having a residential program. The students are able to interact one-on-one with their professors, who have had extensive experience in the congregation as a pastor. This interaction includes discussion during class time, informal discussions during coffee breaks, and lunch with the dean. It is during these times that instructors are able to get to know the men, mentor them, and, by God's grace, prepare them. The residential program also allows for relationships to grow between the men and their families. Relationships are being built that will last a lifetime.



Dr. James Molstre
FLS Dean

*"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."
~Proverbs 27:17*

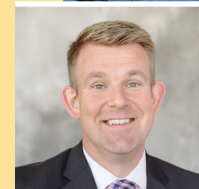
God's Word: Our life and motivation

This year has brought new challenges, as well as new opportunities, to grow in our mission of establishing students the inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of God and in training them for service in God's Kingdom. In discouraging, even difficult times we have seen a body of students come to our campus hungry for God's Word. I've noticed two reasons for this.

The first is that God's Word produces life. Our students are hungry for the gospel. The faithful teaching of the law and Christ-only gospel is central to our program. As Paul says concerning this: "the gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe ..." (Romans 1:16). In a culture filled with disappointments, life found in the gospel brings joy.

The first reason motivates the second: God's Word equips them to serve in His kingdom. They are hungry to bring that gospel to others. Our goal is to send workers into the harvest (Matthew 9:38). We want them to be prepared for that harvest work in their local congregations. Watching our students employ their God-given gifts to serve the body of Christ has truly been a privilege.

While our time together was cut short by the coronavirus pandemic, that very event has shown all the more the value of our on-campus, community-life discipleship and how vital it is to accomplish our mission of training leaders for service in God's kingdom. God has designed His body and kingdom to be in community to grow and serve alongside one another. As we seek to train leaders in God's Word to serve within the local congregation, this is an indispensable element. Praise God for this fall when we can be together again, and thank you for your prayers.



Pastor Adam Osier
FLBC Dean

*"Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."
~Matthew 9:38*



"For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:10).

A solid FOUNDATION

I write this update at the end of the fifth week of instruction modified due to the public health crisis caused by the new coronavirus, which has had an amazing worldwide impact since coming into our consciousness just two or three months ago. I also write at the end of the second week of resumed spring 2020 construction of the Student Life Center. This week crews poured the footings for the structure, and the construction site looks a lot less like a hole in the ground and a lot more like the beginnings of a building.

As I watch them work, my mind turns to foundations. I know what will be built on the foundation that I see, but really, you could build almost anything on the solid foundation they are constructing. Foundations are what we do at the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary. Students in the Bible college "start here," then "go anywhere, grounded in God's Word." Students in the seminary learn to be servant pastors. Both groups of students are established in the eternal and inerrant Word of God for a life of faith in Jesus Christ and faithful service in His kingdom. Nobody knows what will come in our lives, but students at FLBCS receive a foundation for their future—an unshakable foundation that will not easily crumble.

We are preparing for a regular school year in September. We have contingencies in place if other events come to pass, but we plan to resume educating our students as we have always intended: strong academics augmented by extracurricular and life experience, all practiced in the discipleship learning community of our beautiful residential life setting in the middle of the city.

This fall we anticipate that 65-70 first-year students will join 48-50 returning students, comprising one of our larger student bodies in the past 12 years. Over the past five years our seminary has placed about three dozen pastors in our association of 255

congregations. Given that many of our congregations exist in parish partnership with other congregations, this number of newly trained pastors produces a significant impact.

These students study at a vastly reduced expense due to generous gifts from people like you. About one-third of Bible college expenses, and two-thirds of seminary expenses never find their way onto a student's billing statement. Other congregations and individuals make Bible college and seminary more affordable through scholarship gifts. We are committed to quality, affordable education that helps students understand God's world through the lens of God's Word, preparing them for whatever lies ahead.

As I write, FLBCS owes absolutely zero debt to anyone. The design, site work, permitting, foundation, walls, and roof of the Student Life Center are all paid for with cash. Approximately \$5 million remains, but we won't pay a penny of interest until later this summer. We are thankful for those who have given.

Next year, as the Lord wills, you will enjoy an Annual Conference or school-event at the Student Life Center. When you walk in, thank God for His work in and through FLBCS. Thank Him for the people who worked skillfully on and gave joyfully to this project. But take a minute to think about the foundation—to think about your foundation. Our foundation is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. It is a solid foundation, one that is worth building on for life.

~Dr. Wade Mobley
President, FLBCS

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It's all about **RELATIONSHIPS**



BOARD MEMBERS

- Kevin Hoops, chairman
- Micah Johnson, secretary
- Michael Lynnes
- Pastor Matthew Quanbeck
- Pastor Jim Ritter

One of the lessons we have learned coming through the last few months has been the importance of relationships. While we have been safely sequestered in our homes, practicing social distancing, we have come to realize how valuable social interaction is. And this shouldn't surprise us since we were made for relationship, and not just with each other, but with God.

From our beginnings in Genesis 3:8 when man walked with God "in the garden in the cool of the day," to God becoming flesh and "dwelling among us" in John 1:14, it is clear that God made us for relationship with one another and with Him. And as we look to Jesus' life and ministry, He was all about building relationships with everyone He met, sharing with them the love of God for all the world, and modeling what that love in action looks like, setting an example for all who would follow Him.

Which is why, when I am asked, "What is evangelism and discipleship?" my answer is, "It's about relationships."

Evangelism is about sharing the good news that God is not mad at us for our sin, although it needs to be dealt with. This good news is that God loves us, and that He sent His Son to pay the price for our sin with His perfect and sinless life. And by faith in Him and what He has done by going to the cross in our place, we can receive the forgiveness of our sins as well as a restored relationship with Him. This is God's good news, that by faith in Jesus, we can know God's gracious gift of adoption and the promise of eternal life with Him.

Discipleship is about growing in our relationship with God as His children. When we think about Jesus' disciples, how did Jesus train them? The answer is simple, He lived with them. Through daily interactions He modeled what faith in God looks like, taught them how to pray to "our Father," corrected them when they went astray, and set for them the ultimate example of faith as He trusted His life to the Father when He went to the cross for our sins. And that discipleship, shared by the apostles and completed by the Holy Spirit, is how God birthed His church that still lives today.

And His church is still all about building relationships: our faith relationship with God, growing as His disciples through our relationships with other believers, and walking together in fellowship and service to Him.

This is why AFLC Evangelism and Discipleship is also all about building relationships with individuals and congregations. We want to grow in our relationship with you. God has called us to support and encourage you and your church in these relationships, and we would love to do just that. Feel free to contact us to set up a visit or check out our programs and resources at www.aflc.org/evangelism.

~Pastor Randy Nelson

CONTACT

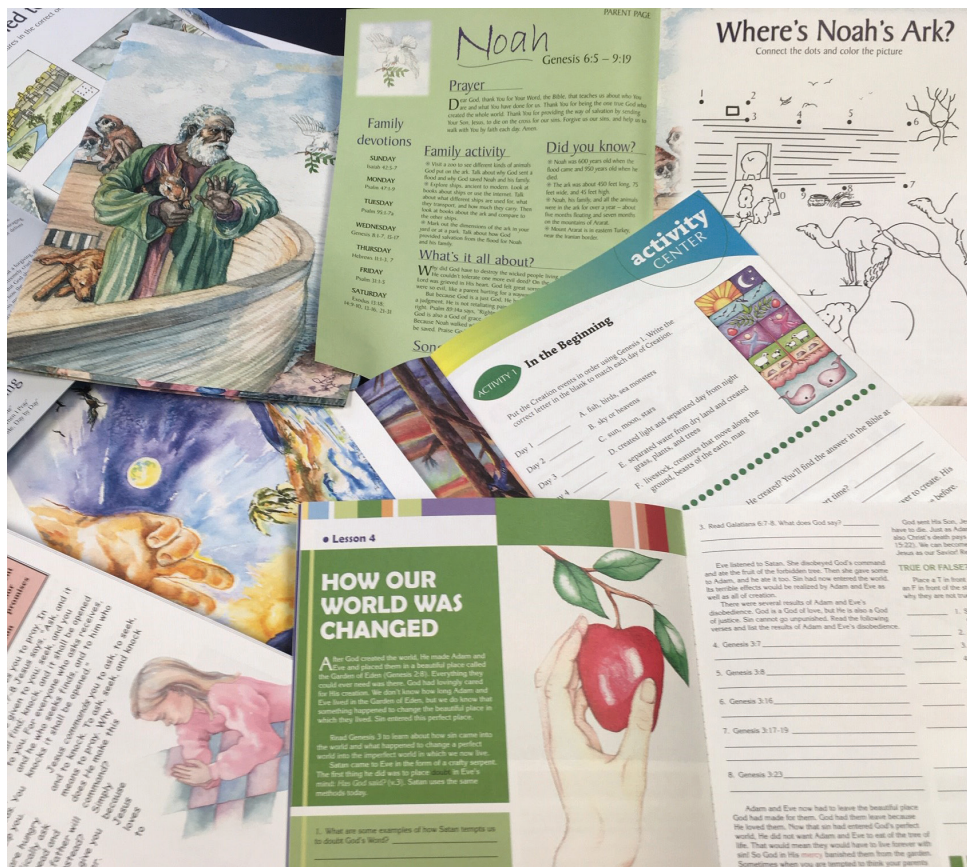
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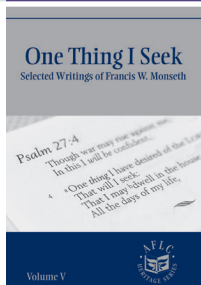
Providing resources for our LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

As many congregations during the spring months scrambled to figure out how to continue providing some form of Sunday school and Bible study for various ages during the COVID-19 crisis, we shifted our primary focus to finding creative ways in these unique circumstances to encourage and support our congregations. We produced and compiled a large variety of teaching resources for all ages such as Bible lessons, activities, devotionals, and children's videos, making them available through our website and facebook page.

We also created many educational and devotional resources for family worship, especially for Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter, to help families walk through the events of Holy Week together. In addition, we offered to send digital copies of any Sunday school lessons requested by individual congregations to supply for students and teachers in their particular needs. All of these resources were provided online as a free service to our congregations in their educational ministries. We praise the Lord that our materials have been able to help our congregations during this challenging time!



Heritage Series features writings of Dr. Francis Monseth



We're excited to offer a glimpse of the preliminary cover design for the next book in the AFLC Heritage Series—a collection of writings by the late Dr. Francis W. Monseth, who served as dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary. Lord-willing, it will be published sometime in 2020.

Prayer Needs

- ➔ Pray for board members, staff, and volunteers for wisdom and perseverance as we seek to serve congregations well in providing quality educational and devotional resources.
- ➔ Pray for God's financial provision. In recent months, congregational giving has decreased, and we are experiencing a cumulative shortfall of \$40,000. We lack the funds to meet our basic obligations. In addition, as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, while providing free resources, we lost out on several months of curriculum sales.

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A publication FOR THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

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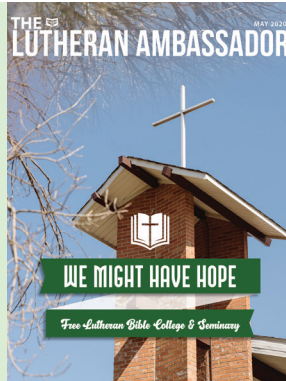
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The Lutheran Ambassador is a monthly magazine published by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Each month features a specific theme, carrying articles both practical and devotional. Our writers, all volunteer lay people and pastors from our local congregations, are a key feature in our publications. Our magazine features monthly columns geared toward building a strong devotional life, tackling the basics of our beliefs, and sharing life experiences in order to build up the Body of Christ. All of our articles and columns center around biblical, Lutheran doctrines and heritage.

Our magazine also features news and information from our local congregations, schools and AFLC departments.

DEVELOPMENT

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Our nation has been facing an enemy that has caused fear among millions; it is known as the coronavirus. Not only did it cause fear in this country, but also around the world. This virus has claimed the lives of thousands and may claim the lives of many more. Whenever we are faced with such an enemy, we must always remember that the Lord our God is still on the throne and in control of the world in which we live. It was an opportunity for all of us who know the Lord as our Savior to go to Him in prayer, asking Him to bring an end to this virus quickly. Yet at the same time we want to learn from what the Lord is doing. Let us all continue to pray.

Much of our nation saw their investments and retirement funds diminished because of the effect that the virus had on our economy. We must remember that God's Word tells us to seek Him and His Kingdom first and He will meet all of our needs (Matthew 6:33). Our trust must not be in our treasures but in our Lord and Savior. God has never had an economic problem and never will. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). May we all continue to walk down the path the Lord has set before us, including giving to

support the expansion of His Kingdom through the ministry of the AFLC.

I want to thank all of you for your prayer support of all the ministries of the AFLC. It is prayer that gives power to every aspect of the work that your ministries are doing to expand God's Kingdom. I also want to thank all of you for your faithful financial support of these ministries. Your faithful obedience to the Lord is amazing and is what keeps all of the ministries moving forward.

If any of you have any questions about annual giving or estate planning, please do not hesitate to contact the Development Department and we will try to answer those questions. We are here to serve you in any way that we can. Again, thank you for all that you do to keep the ministries of the AFLC moving forward in serving the Lord.

~Pastor Tonnes Pollestad

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PACCT

We are pursuing healthy **PASTORS & CONGREGATIONS**



Ministry can be difficult, but you are not alone. While you serve Christ, our team is standing with you.

The AFLC Pastoral and Congregational Care Team (PACCT) exists to nurture healthy pastors, their families, and all AFLC congregations; coming alongside each to provide a listening ear, a caring heart, and a supporting hand as you serve Christ together.

This new effort was recently launched after direction from the 2017 Annual Conference, much thought, many prayers, and a thorough investigation into what could benefit our AFLC Congregations and ministry families. If you are a congregational leader, a pastor, or part of a ministry family, the PACCT team is available for you. Our phone and email conversations are confidential, and are a great way to receive personalized support, prayer, and coaching.

The PACCT currently includes Pastor Jerry and Kristi Nelson, Pastor Lee and Carol Hoops, Pastor Eric and Andrea Christenson, Pastor Randy and Brenda Nelson, Pastor Marlin and Joyce Harris, and Tom and Linda Mathre.

For more information on the resources we provide, please visit www.aflc.org/pacct. To contact PACCT call (877) 604-1544, or email pacct@aflc.org.

We Offer

Prevention Care: Pursuing relationships with pastors and their families, as well as congregations, and encouraging mutual support and care.

Intervention Care: Supporting pastors and their families, as well as congregations, who are experiencing an immediate crisis.

Recovery Care: Coming alongside pastors and their families, as well as congregations, and encouraging health, healing, and stability.

CONTACT

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