



Winter 2020-2021

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.





TESTING THE BRIDGE

When the Union Pacific Railroad was under construction in the late 1800s, an elaborate trestle bridge was built over a certain large canyon in the West as part of the plan to connect St. Louis, Mo., to Sacramento, Calif. Before it was open for commercial use, the construction engineer wanted to test its strength. He loaded a train with extra cars and equipment to double its normal payload. The train was driven out to the middle of the bridge, where it was to remain for an entire day.

One worker complained, “Are you trying to break this bridge?”
“No,” said the engineer. “I’m trying to prove that the bridge is unbreakable.”*



God has allowed this pandemic in which we find ourselves. He is with His Church, strengthening you as you continue to hold to His promises.

I have been amazed to hear the stories of our churches’ finances continuing to come in and, in some cases, increasing. Could our Lord be allowing this pandemic to demonstrate to the world that His promises will uphold His people and give them all the strength they need? You may feel like you are carrying quite an extra load right now, but His grace will take you through.

Thank you, individuals and congregations, for the way in which you continue to support the Lord’s work here through the AFLC.

As we see our world breaking in many ways, it is kind of exciting to know that we are getting closer to our home going.

~Pastor Lyndon Korhonen

AFLC President

(*Source: “Today in the Word,” March 14, 1991, Bible.org)



CONTACT

Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, President
763.545.5631 • www.aflc.org
president@aflc.org



A renewed sense **OF URGENCY**



"... when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).



CONTACT

Pastor Randy Nelson, Director
763.545.5631 • randy.nelson@afcl.org
www.afcl.org/evangelism

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hat an amazing spectacle we have witnessed in the changing of the leaves over these last few weeks. Perhaps you, too, have found moments where you were overwhelmed as you were traveling down the road, even needing to stop and take in the scene that was before you. For me, these majestic displays have been a powerful reminder that first, our God still reigns. These displays also tell us that, just as winter is right around the corner, Jesus' return is closer now than it's ever been. These truths have both filled me with an encouraging peace during these difficult days, as well as a renewed sense of urgency to share the hope that we have in Jesus.

It is with this sense of urgency that we are working to fulfill our commitment to "serve, support, encourage, and assist our AFLC pastors and congregations in doing evangelism and discipleship in any way we can." Some of those include:

- The launching of a database of 50+ men and women who will be available to assist congregations, men's or women's ministries, Bible camp leaders, or any other group that is wanting to hold evangelistic or disciple-equipping meetings, conferences, retreats, summer camps, or other types of gatherings for concentrated spiritual growth. There is an urgent need to equip the Church today to be Bible-competent disciples of Jesus Christ who are actively living out their faith and

sharing it with those around them, and this database is designed to encourage and support these types of meetings in our congregations.

- A reworking of our website to become a resource of helpful information. We help AFLC pastors and congregational leaders make better use of the wealth of quality programs available today as they seek to develop evangelism and disciple-making programs in their congregations. Our plan is to provide brief overviews of these programs, provide pros and cons from a Free Lutheran perspective, and encourage reviews from AFLC pastors and leaders who have used these programs. This will be an ongoing project, but we hope to launch this part of our website in early 2021.

These are only a couple of ways that we are working to support evangelism and discipleship in our AFLC. We are also actively reaching out to churches and pastors through a variety of means including personal calls and visits, pulpit supply, conferences, as well as partnering with sister AFLC ministries to create regional events in the coming year. We want to help you equip your congregation to be living disciples for Christ who are reaching your community with the hope that we have in Jesus. Please contact our Pastor Randy Nelson, director, at randy.nelson@afcl.org or visit our website at www.afcl.org/evangelism to find out how we can assist you, or how you can partner with us in carrying out this important ministry.

~Pastor Randy Nelson, director

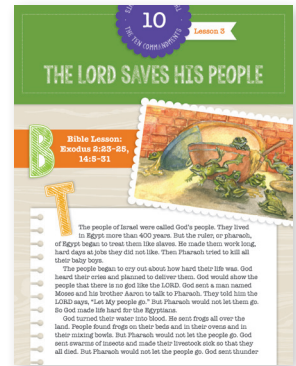
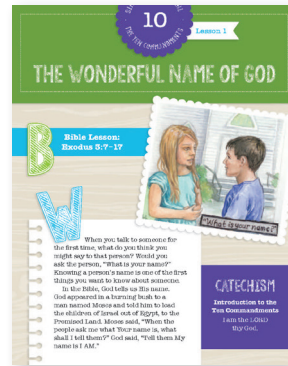


Introducing curriculum on the TEN COMMANDMENTS

Several congregations are exploring in their fall classes new elementary curriculum on the Ten Commandments produced by Ambassador Publications. The Level 2 curriculum was the first of the Ambassador Sunday School Series to be produced in color in the late 1980s, and we are excited to finally release this long-awaited, new curriculum. The new Bible lessons help children understand how the Ten Commandments show us our sin and reveal our inability to keep God's commandments perfectly, but the lessons are Gospel-centered, pointing to Jesus our Savior and Deliverer who perfectly kept all the commandments. Students learn that the commandments are also God's gift to us, showing us how to live as God's people by loving and serving our neighbor.

Quarter 1 includes six introductory lessons, giving students a foundation for learning the Ten Commandments. These lessons are based on God's statement, "I am the LORD thy God." The 36-lesson series spends approximately three lessons on each commandment. Written exercises and a variety of optional interactive classroom activities help students apply God's truth. Memorization of the commandments and related Scripture is encouraged throughout the curriculum. Each Bible lesson, attractively designed in a four-page leaflet format, is intended to be sent home with students weekly to reinforce their learning at home.

The Ambassador Sunday School Series for Preschool through Level 6 has been carefully and intentionally designed to help students build a foundation for Christian faith and life as they move progressively through the Scriptures and Luther's Small Catechism. We pray that this curriculum will be used by God as a tool for our congregations to promote true and living faith in Jesus that grows and thrives in the hearts of those who hear and study His Word.



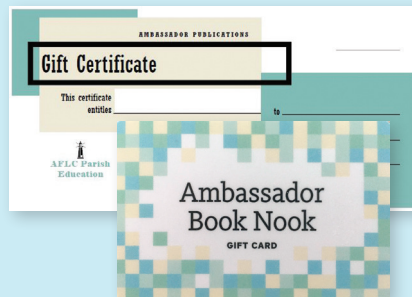
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MINISTRY TRAINING EVENT

Looking for the perfect gift?

Gift cards or gift certificates can be purchased in the Ambassador Book Nook in Heritage Hall or through our online bookstore and make practical gifts any time of year for students, ministry leaders, and anyone who enjoys reading.



The Eastern Montana/Western North Dakota AFLC District hosted a children and youth ministry training workshop at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Beulah, North Dakota, Friday and Saturday, October 9-10. Marian Christopherson, AFLC Parish Education Director, and Pastor Jason Holt, AFLC Youth Ministries Director, opened the conference Friday evening with complementary presentations on "Why Children's Ministry Matters" and "Why Youth Ministry Matters," followed by an open Question and Answer session. Saturday workshops provided education on various ministry-related topics.

Marian Christopherson, Director
763.545.5631 • parished@afcl.org
www.ambassadorpublications.org

CONTACT

Reason TO REJOICE!



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Prayer Requests

- ➔ For teenagers in our congregations to know Jesus and to grow in Him.
- ➔ For non-churched teenagers in the communities we live in to receive Christ.
- ➔ For the attendees of Youth Workers Weekends in January and FLY next July.

The end of a complex year brings us to a moment of rejoicing. We celebrate that our Savior King has come for us! Jesus is our Immanuel! We are grateful to be given opportunities to serve our free and living, Lutheran congregations at the local and national levels. Our vision is for each teen to know Jesus, for each teen to be growing in God's Word and God's love, and for each teen to be given opportunities to serve in the local church. Here are some of our reasons to rejoice:

CELEBRATIONS

- **FLY Beyond**—Praising the Lord for the 155 youths and adults that attended our national youth equipping conference in July! We were pleased by the response of nine additional congregations involved through Digital Camp.
- **Apprenticeship Program**—Grateful to God for the past and present growing youth leaders that have been mentored in their skills. An alumni night in September enabled past participants to encourage this year's apprentice.
- **Youth Leader Coaching**—Thankful for the 38 AFLC participants as coaches and coaches-in-training through our collaboration with LEAD222. We want healthy leaders serving effectively in healthy youth ministry efforts within their congregations.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Youth Worker Weekends**—The annual youth leader equipping event will be January 15-17, 2021, at the Association Retreat Center. Online registration opens in November.
- **FLY Convention®**—The AFLC national youth gathering will be July 5-10, 2021, at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo. Promotional packets were mailed to every congregation in September.
- **AFLC Youth App**—This branded app features content and connections for teens and leaders of the AFLC. We released it this summer, so this FREE download is available now!

~Pastor Jason Holt

CONTACT

Pastor Jason Holt, Director
763.545.5631 jasonholt@aflc.org
www.aflc.org/youth



The scenic **ROUTE DOWN**

Alaska Cherokee Six is flown south to North Dakota for maintenance

This fall, FLAPS chief pilot Pastor Jeremy Crowell and MATA (Mission Aviation Training Academy) student Chad DeVlieger flew the FLAPS Cherokee Six airplane from Alaska down to North Dakota. Chad was helping with pilot duties on the trip to gain valuable hours and experience toward the pilot ratings he will need to become a missionary pilot. The Cherokee Six has been the workhorse of the three FLAPS airplanes in Alaska for the past nine years. With a large six-seat cabin, it can haul lots of supplies or six people into any of the remote Southwest Alaska villages where FLAPS ministers. Ninety percent of the runways used are gravel, and this has caused much wear and tear on the paint and tail surfaces of the Cherokee Six. It is definitely in need of some maintenance and a new paint job

Due to COVID-19 this year, the Canada border with the United States has remained closed to all but essential travel for both airplanes and highway transportation. It took much planning for Jeremy to have the proper documents in place to show that this flight was essential rather than just a pleasure trip.

Over the years, it has proven wise to allow for up to a week to make the long trip due to unpredictable weather. During this trip to North Dakota, Jeremy and Chad were blessed with better than average weather and continuous tailwinds. Jeremy picked up Chad in Anchorage the afternoon of September 6 and they touched down in Beulah, N.D., just after midnight the following day. God truly blessed them with good conditions and youthful stamina.

The required maintenance and paint job will take place over the winter months and the newly painted Cherokee Six should be ready for the flight back to Alaska by next April, getting it back to Naknek in time for the busy summer season of flying vacation Bible school teams, pastors, and youths to the many remote villages.

We are so thankful that God continues to bless the work in Alaska with open doors for ministry and safety.

~Kevin Lee, executive director



Kevin Lee, Executive Director
763.412.2018 • flaps@afmc.org
www.flapsministry.org

CONTACT



Building our CHURCH-PLANTING MOMENTUM



Our AFLC family is at an important crossroads. It's time to engage our young generation. It's time to plant new churches.

For 58 years, the AFLC has served as a light to spread the gospel. We grew from 50 congregations to 100 in the first 20 years. Strong believers in established congregations partnered with fresh believers to plant new churches. Faithful Christians from other Lutheran groups found a refuge of faith and love in the AFLC. They began joining us after 1987 in record numbers to build our family of Bible-based churches. By the year 2000 we expanded our church fellowship to more than 200 congregations. By 2015, we grew to 283.

But for the past five years, we have begun to lose momentum. Though our seminary is strong and our Bible college flourishes, we still lack pastors to meet the need of the vacancies caused by older, faithful shepherds retiring. Though our youth conventions are still the largest gatherings we host, we have not yet enjoyed watching the new starts and plants sprout.

When I think of our opportunity to start new congregations, I get inspired by the words God gave to Moses for Israel. It's not a time for discouragement, but encouragement, God said in Deuteronomy 30:14-16. The task looks hard, the new land seems intimidating. "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it," Moses said to the next generation.

"Live and multiply," God said, "and the LORD your God will bless you in the land where you are entering."

That sums it well. We are God's holy nation, too. He has laid before us a new land. The people in it need the good news of Jesus. It's time to step up. In a time of global limitations, God is not limited. Neither are we. We are called to start new churches to gather people in. The movement is just starting.

Dan and Bethany are planting a church in a small town with three other couples. Tom and Beth work in a new church with 30 children. Brady and several Bible college friends started an AFLC church in Honolulu. Luke and Katie feel called to help his church start a plant on the edge of the Twin Cities metro.

They need our help. Jesus is our Lord. God is with us. Churches are planting new churches. The Holy Spirit is causing a new dependence on the Lord. We are preaching the gospel. We are focused on making more disciples. We study the Book of Acts and we ask the Lord to "add to our numbers daily those who are being saved." We pray to Jesus: "Build your church, Lord."

So we ask you to help. It is the goal of the Home Missions ministry to help AFLC churches plant three new churches every year. The younger generation is responding. We are going back to the methods and purposes of Christians from the late 1800s who helped ignite our Free Lutheran movement. Preach the cross. Call sinners to repent. Invite them to receive Christ as Savior. And plant new local congregations. Would you join us in this important work?

~Pastor Jim Johnson, director

CONTACT

Pastor Jim Johnson, Director
763.545.5631 • homemis@afcl.org
www.afclhomemissions.org



Fundamentals of MISSION WORK

Sent to plant churches in Paraguay, I have dedicated my life and family to the call. We are documented, acculturated, and ready to move away from the established ministry in which we have invested the past year and a half. A new mission field awaits us! Excited by the prospect of the unknown yet terrified at the same time, we advance; we “press on toward the goal, for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).

Church planting can have countless faces—mission work, compassion ministry, evangelism, and discipleship each are multifaceted. All Christians are in a sense commissioned to the same singular task, yet each individual Christian is given unique vocational specifics related to personality, context, and gifting. What each believer accomplishes in the name of a heavenly kingdom—and for our consideration church planting—depends on three fundamental God-given components—hard work, opportunity, and the Holy Spirit. These are the fundamental aspects that direct our mission, as well.

Anything worthwhile requires hard work, and the mission field is no exception. Learning a new culture and language, forging new friendships, integrating a society, building a reputation, responding to the needs around you, raising godly kids ... all take a significant amount of intentionality and hard work. Proverbs 18:9 points out that not working hard is likened to destruction rather than building up. If a mission is to be accomplished, hard work must be employed.

Opportunity is an aspect of life which brings about the unforeseen and unprecedented situations in life that can change the direction of your efforts. Some opportunities *provide* invaluable development and training; other opportunities *arise* from ones personality, gifting, and training; while still other opportunities have to do more with what God is preparing for His church than specifically with you. Jesus in Revelation 3 declares to the small but faithful church in Philadelphia that He had placed an open door before them and urges that “he who has an ear let him hear” (vs. 13). In Scripture the missionary apostle Paul models to us that God often leads through opportunity and circumstance. God places open doors of opportunity before us that we might consider how we might serve in new capacities.

Although the Holy Spirit is not the emphasis of our preaching, for we preach Christ and Him crucified, His presence and activity are essential in building God’s kingdom. We recognize that the true Church is a creation of the Holy Spirit as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies through the preaching of the Word. We expect to eventually see what Paul saw with the Corinthian church in II Corinthians 3:3: The Holy Spirit establishing the Church and making it living and effective, testifying of His work and writing on human hearts. And so, the church is planted.

As you consider your calling, work hard, prayerfully engage in the unique opportunities that present themselves to you, and trust that the Holy Spirit will bring forth the fruit as God’s Word is advanced through you.

~Pastor Matthew Abel, missionary to Paraguay



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Pastor Kent Sperry
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CONTACT

Pastor Earl Korhonen, Director
763.545.5631 • earl.korhonen@afic.org
www.aficworldmissions.org



The call to be **FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS**



"... on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."
~Matthew 16:18



In Uganda, God is at work. That could easily be said of anywhere in the world, but so often we get distracted by the work of the enemy and it becomes discouraging. But remember, God is in the business of bringing about salvation and seeking out the lost. He is on His throne and always has been.

God tells us that it is His work to build His Church and that the gates of hell will not overcome it (Matthew 16:18). As we look at church planting in Uganda, one thing is certain: we must rely on Christ to build it. Does that mean that we are called to sit down and just watch? Maybe, if by sitting we mean intentionally praying over the lost souls who are around us. Too often we downplay the work of prayer and often feel like we are wasting time if we are in a prayer meeting. I was encouraged when I placed a challenge in front of one group here in the United States and asked if they would possibly consider coming over to Uganda for the purpose of prayer. One individual approached me and said how much that invitation impacted him. As we are faithful in calling out to God, He then calls us to action to make disciples.

This is not solely the work of church planters, missionaries, or pastors, but that of all believers. We are called to be faithful in leading people to Christ and continual growth in the knowledge of the Scriptures.

In what ways have we seen God at work in Uganda? Not only do we have about 40 classes of biblical training going throughout Uganda, but we praise the Lord that we currently have one church plant in a village called Nabukosi. Here, Pastor Nate Jore is teaching young men and training them in the work of leading their families and friends in worship.

When we are able to return to Uganda, my family will be moving to a city in the north called Gulu. There we will be seeking to find reliable men who will be able to go and lead others (II Timothy 2:2) and themselves in worship to God. This is what it means to be a church, where we as missionaries are able to take a backseat, pray, and watch God gather the sheep. And what a privilege it is to have a front seat view of His work! Sometimes we tend to make church and the things of God more complicated than what it truly is. May we take God at His Word, go, and make disciples, and remain in fellowship where iron truly sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17).

~Pastor Brent Raan, missionary to Uganda

CONTACT

Pastor Earl Korhonen, Director
763.545.5631 • earl.korhonen@afic.org
www.ambassadorinstitute.org

A different kind of TRAVEL YEAR

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long with many of our other friends in ministry, Journey Missions has had an interesting 2020. But we continue to give glory to God and thank Him for new opportunities.

In May we will begin our seventh year of service, and we continue to rejoice in the Lord for the opportunities we've had. It's been truly a pleasure to be involved with AFLC World Missions, the Ambassador Institute, our local congregations, missionaries, and of course our team members and short-term assistants (STA).

Journey Missions continues in the desire to give people opportunities to visit our AFLC World Missions ministries through short-term missions. This is an avenue to see and experience an AFLC foreign field that has been prayed for and supported over the years, while personally participating in the work in a hands-on and tangible way. Whether on a short-term mission trip or serving as an STA, the vision for this ministry is for people to serve our Lord Jesus cross-culturally.

This last year we were able to lead a work trip in early 2020 to Brazil, working with missionaries Jonathan Abel and John Lee. We had a great group from three different congregations. Though we worked on various projects, our main focus was remodeling and roofing a bathroom. The team proved incredibly capable and were an all-around wonderful group. Their main focus was consistently on the ministry and how they could be of the best service to the building project.

As we look into this coming year we have a full trip calendar scheduled. We plan to travel with a group from the Free Lutheran Bible College (FLBC) to Israel in January depending on travel restrictions. Later in January we have a group scheduled to travel to San Antonio, Texas, to work with Pastor Matthew Ballmann at a church plant. Later in the spring we will coordinate and lead a trip with the 2021 FLBC Cross Cultural Missions class to Brazil and then have a return trip this summer that is open to individuals within our congregations. Wrapping up 2021, we are planning a return trip to Israel in the fall. We are excited about the different travel opportunities as we seek to serve the Lord through these teams.

As I think about the desire many people have to travel to our mission fields, I praise the Lord for those who are looking to go with a heart to fulfill the call the Lord has placed on their lives at this time. I also rejoice as the Lord calls and sends out others through your finances and prayers. This year has looked different in many ways, but your ongoing financial support has been vital as we have navigated the last eight months. I want to thank you for your past and future provisions as we seek to serve our congregations domestically and internationally. We're excited to bring our fellow believers an opportunity to serve the Lord in a new and powerful way in the near future. We give glory to God and praise Him for you goers and senders; you are having a great impact on the world for Jesus!

~Jon Nelson, department head

CONTACT

Jon Nelson, Department Head
763.412.2042 • jon.nelson@afcl.org
www.afcljourneymissions.org



Short-Term Trip Opportunities

- Israel: January (FLBC)
- San Antonio, Texas: Jan. 14–18
- Brazil: March 21–April 5 (FLBC)
- Brazil: Summer 2021
- Israel: Fall 2021

Prayer Requests

- Planning for upcoming ministry trips.
- The current Short Term Assistants home from the field and those preparing to go.
- Journey Missions financial needs.



A monthly publication for the LOCAL CONGREGATION

The Lutheran Ambassador exists to educate its readers about the AFLC, to encourage the local congregation, to equip Christians for service and to evangelize our neighbors and the world.

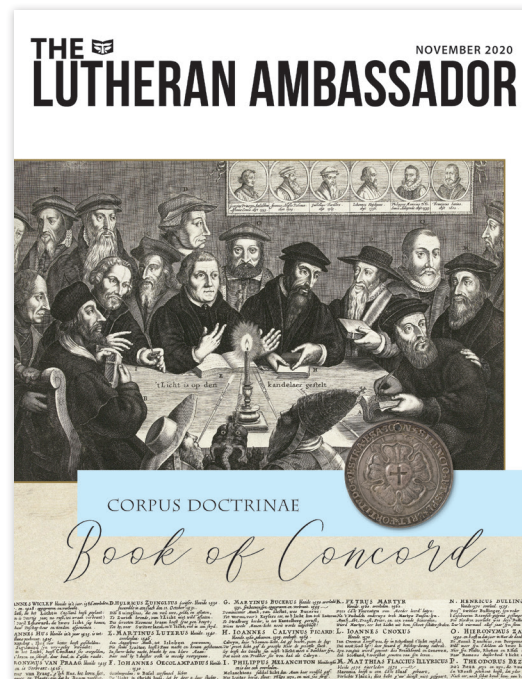
CONTACT

Ruth Gunderson, Managing Editor
763.545.5631 • ruthg@afcl.org
www.afcl.org

Liz McCarlson, Subscriptions
lasubscriptions@afcl.org

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DEVELOPMENT



STEADFAST IN THE LORD

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

~I Corinthians 15:58

CONTACT

Tonnes Pollestad, Director
763.545.5631 • www.afcl.org
tonnes@afcl.org

We are fast approaching the end of another year, which seems impossible. Because of everything that has happened and continues to happen in our world, maybe many of you are anxious for this year to end. I am praying for the upcoming year as I travel, Lord willing, to 22 states with a donor base of 580 people. Let us not be overtaken by fear of the past because God is in control and He knows the future.

I spent 14 weeks working from home calling donors, sharing with them how each of the ministries were doing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many donors were glad to receive the phone calls and continued to pray for the ministries of the AFLC. Donors were also led to give very generously and sacrificially to various ministries, including the General Fund of the AFLC. We praise God for each and every gift given to the 10 ministries of the AFLC.

I have also had the privilege of working with donors by answering questions about estate planning. Many of you have already set up your plans and some have included various ministries of the AFLC in those plans. Thank you for doing so and may God bless you for being a blessing to those ministries. If you have as of yet not set up a will or an estate plan, we encourage you to do so. This is an important thing for each of us. If you decide to add a ministry of the AFLC to your plans, we thank you. I encourage even young couples to start setting up their wills and estates. I have had the privilege of helping donors both young and old with wills and estate planning by supplying information to them and, if needed, helping them connect with lawyers in their area. Thank you for your prayers and financial support for the Development department.

~Pastor Tonnes Pollestad



A living LETTER

"Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith" (I Timothy 6:20-21).

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, "And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (II Corinthians 3:3, ESV). Let's be letters in 2021!

Our theme for 2021 will be, "Guard What Has Been Entrusted To You," taken from I Timothy 6:20-21. We will delve into First Timothy for our 2021 Bible study. Thank you, Jeanette Berntson, for writing this rich study for us. We had a sale at the annual conference and are always thrilled to share our WMF Bible studies. Copies of past years' Bible studies are still available and can be found on our website. They can be ordered through Executive Secretary Dawn Johnson.

We also continue to put cradle roll packets to good use throughout the AFLC. Do you have a little one in your church or a family member or friend who needs this hug from Jesus? Please let us know.

Twice a year we mail out the *Helping Hand* newsletter; sign up if you would like to receive this mailing. And you can like and follow us on our Facebook page. Or, check out the devotions and information on our website (aflc.org/women). We would also like to have at least one email address for each WMF group so that we can contact you with news that may be of importance between the *Helping Hand* issues.

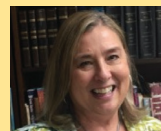
Thank you for giving! This is how we can deliver that living letter!

~Lavonne West, president

NATIONAL WMF OFFICERS



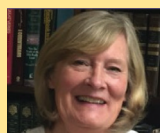
Lavonne West
President



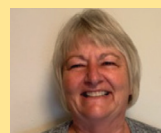
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2nd V. President



Karen Floan
Recording Sec.



Margie Lee
Treasurer



Deanna Larson
Comm. Sec.

WMF PROJECTS FOR 2021

Ambassador Publications: We will direct our funding to go toward the updating of Sunday school material or as the members of the Board of Publications and Parish Education deem necessary.

World Missions: Funds are distributed to the missionaries as members of the World Missions Board deem necessary.

Home Missions: Funds will be designated at \$4,000 toward the Home Missions Retreat. Any funds given beyond that will be directed as members of the Home Missions Board deem necessary.

Free Lutheran Bible College: The FLBC funds will continue to cover furnishings in the dorms. So far, 169 units have been purchased with 74 more to go to finish all of the rooms.

Free Lutheran Seminary: Each seminarian will be given a \$100 book fund per semester and a subscription to *The Lutheran Ambassador*. The remaining funds that come in will go toward the chapel nursery project.

WMF General Fund: Will be used to cover necessary expenses, including preparing, printing, and mailing newsletters and other materials, salary for the executive secretary, and stipends.

Lavonne West, President
low2667@gmail.com
www.aflc.org/women

CONTACT



Timeless truth FOR LIFE IN CHRIST



STUDENT LIFE CENTER DATES

- ➔ December 2020: Completion Date
- ➔ January 15-16, 2021: First home game
- ➔ April 16-17, 2021: Grand opening
 - Dr. Sean McDowell, keynote speaker, April 16
 - SLC Tours, unique cuisine
 - Alumni Basketball Tournament: April 17
- ➔ May 8, 2021: Graduation
- ➔ June 16-19, 2021: Annual Conference

This list of expected events would not be a consideration without the strong prayer and financial support from many of you. We are grateful to God for His provisions and continue to pray for additional gifts to fully fund the project. If you would like to schedule an informational visit from our team in your area, please contact Sherry Mork at sherry.mork@flbc.edu or call 763-412-2004. For information, updates, project pictures, or to give to the project, visit flbc.edu/capital-campaign.

CONTACT

Free Lutheran Bible College & Seminary
3134 East Medicine Lake Blvd.
Plymouth, MN 55441 • 763.544.9501
flbc@flbc.edu • fls@flbc.edu
www.flbc.edu

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world," said Jesus in John 16:33.

We are living in unprecedented times. Except we are not. Since the fall of mankind into sin we have experienced the effects of sin, death, and suffering. Some of that suffering is direct and man-made; other suffering comes indirectly as a matter of course. We expect sin, death, and suffering in a fallen world.



But when that sin, death, and suffering knocks on our door our gaze turns from the abstract to the concrete: It's not suffering that concerns me, but my suffering.

God told us there would be times like these, and that he overcame them in Christ. But God didn't just overcome suffering; he overcame the very root of all suffering, sin itself. In Christ, God became man. He lived a perfect life in our place, then he went to the cross willingly to take our place. No one took Christ's life from him. He laid it down for you, and for me.

This is the story of reality in sum: God created, with man as the pinnacle of that creation. Man sinned against his Creator, rejecting him while embracing sin. God reconciled mankind to himself in Christ. He then calls us through his powerful word, which creates and sustains faith in the human heart. And Christ is no distant savior, but one who abides with us always, and will one day return.

The whole world, all of life and everything in it, communicates this drama. Sometimes the plot whispers, at other times it screams. In all times, places, and circumstances, the greatest need of man is the finished work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, our Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace.

At the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary we establish students in the eternal and inerrant word of God for a life of faith in Jesus Christ and faithful service in his kingdom. Thank you for your support of that mission. We couldn't do what we do without you.

~Dr. Wade Mobley
FLBCS President

SHEPHERDS *in training*

“Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

~1 Peter 5:2-3

I have recently spoken to a number of pastors who are faithfully serving their congregations in this COVID-19 environment. It has been a challenge for them on many fronts. The inability to personally minister to people has been hindered. The ability to meet for regular worship has also been a challenge. Many mentioned the challenge of disparate views on how the epidemic should be

handled; some have made the wearing of masks a litmus test for political affiliation.



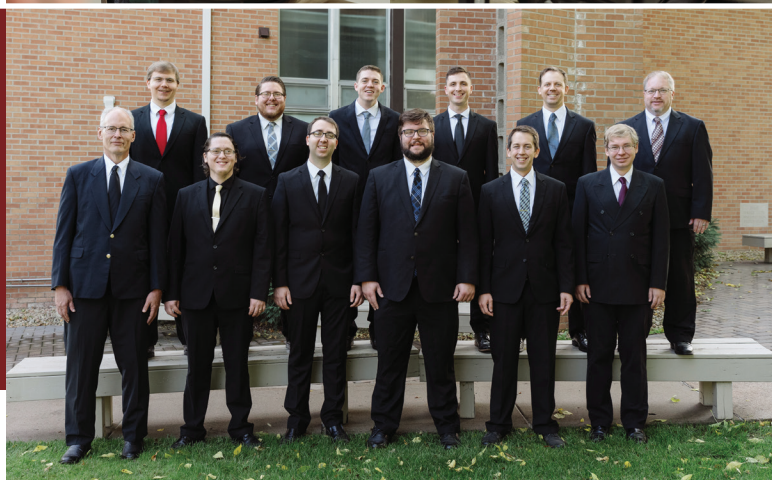
While the cultural climate is a challenge, there are also opportunities. Our Free Lutheran Seminary students are instructed to shepherd the flock of God. Shepherding the flock means resolute leadership. It means working with the leadership of the church to consider with love those who are afraid for real health reasons, while considering with love those who believe COVID-19 is a

political issue. Shepherding the flock also means looking for ways to reach the sheep in this new environment.

Our seminarians are being taught to handle the Word of God with care and reverence. They are being instructed to interpret God’s Word according to proper doctrinal and hermeneutical standards. They are being taught to understand the context into which it was written and then to apply it to our contemporary context. In humility they are instructed to lead as examples to the flock.

This kind of training is no respecter of illness or health, rural or inner city, baby boomer or millennial. Above all, shepherding the flock is a great honor granted by God.

~**Dr. James Molstre**
Dean, Free Lutheran Seminary



The Good Shepherd knows what is best for all of us. He especially cares for His sheep. John wrote, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). We know that His desire is for all to come into the fold.



In deciding to study at the seminary, I found that it hasn’t been easy to leave what one might consider a good life. My wife Tina and I were surrounded by a great community, loving church, and a loving family. It wasn’t easy to leave, but the Lord has confirmed in our lives that this is where He wants us.

This call to ministry is about the Father’s desire to restore those who are lost to Him. In my first year our seminary chorus sang “Rise Up, Shepherd.” This was one of many reminders that God has called me to be faithful in proclaiming His Word to His sheep. These years in seminary have been vital in shaping me into the shepherd He wants me to be.

~**Scott Erickson**
FLS senior

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CONTACT



Going where GOD LEADS

Start here. Go anywhere.
Grounded in God's Word.

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he motto of the Free Lutheran Bible College aptly describes our goal. FLBC is a training ground in which students soak in the unchanging truth of the Word of God. Through that active, powerful Word, students are called to faith, called to service, and equipped to live those callings. This explains the first and third phrases of our motto, but what about the second phrase, "Go anywhere"?



Those who have been called by God to faith through His Word recognize that He also determines the "anywhere" that our students go. He leads, guides, and sustains us in the paths He determines. In a telling verse, Paul reminds the Corinthians to "lead the life the Lord has assigned to them, and to which the Lord has called them" (I Corinthians 7:17). This is a two-sided reality. On one hand, it's somewhat uncomfortable. God's assigning and calling us sometimes leads us down paths we would have never chosen for ourselves. On the other hand, it's comforting as believers recognize that their path is God's path for them, and they will never walk that path alone.

If we've learned anything in 2020, it's that our hands possess no control over our future. Our students have experienced this reality throughout this past year. But by God's grace, nearly 100 students followed God's leading to study His Word with us at FLBC in this virus-altered school year. When asked why she would want to attend FLBC on a year like this, one student responded, "I guess I've looked at it as though God wanted me here, now, in this season." She understood that while her hands could control very little, the hands of her Savior would lead her to the "anywhere" of His choosing. And that's exactly the place to be.

~Pastor Adam Osier

Dean, Free Lutheran Bible College

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ow has FLBC impacted my life? It is a question I have had a lot of time to think about over the past six months. I think I speak for most people when I say that the past six months have been some of the most challenging months. I believe that God was using that time to draw me closer to him and ingrain the things I learned at FLBC into my daily life. FLBC has given me knowledge, which has given me confidence in who I am, who God is, and what I believe. My professors, classes, and classmates have challenged me to not just believe in different doctrines or even in God simply because they do or my parents do, but to dig deeper and confirm for myself what I believe. Even more, I have found a joy and a hope in God's Word that can be found nowhere else.



~Rose Zeltinger

FLBC, second-year student
From Valley City, N.D.

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441
763.545.5631 • www.aflc.org

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ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

PRESSING ONWARD

As this season at the Association Retreat Center ends, we spent time reflecting on the 2020 year and focus on the who, what, when, why, and how of the ministry. Even with the world issues and the pandemic, the ARC was able to continue operations, develop new avenues of ministry, and focus on future development. When our staff discussed the challenges of this year and the reality of running the ARC this winter with a very lean staff, we ran down a divinely appointed rabbit hole and started talking about the 2021 theme. Through prayer and conversation, it was apparent that we needed to press onward through whatever comes. Philippians 3:14 says, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Thus, the 2021 ARC theme was decided.

This fall we hosted our first young adults retreat. Plans are in the development stage for a reboot of both the classics retreat and men's retreat. Plans to continue to include more AFLC ministries into family camp are coming together. Many more ministry plans are in the infantile stages of development.

We also continued to develop our facilities through designated donations. Projects include renovation of rooms in Covenant, painting, a new door on the gym, windows in the gate house, restructuring the bleachers, a swing set in the Gurple Park, and smaller projects.

There have been many facilities like ours that have had to close for the season, and some of them permanently. This has created an opportunity for the ARC to broaden its customer base significantly. We have booked many new retreats from groups looking for a new home. Many of them have already signed on for the 2021 season.

Through God's provision and grace, tough operational decisions, countless audibles and sacrifices, our beloved donors, and volunteers putting in hundreds of hours, the ARC has come out leaner, tougher, and positioned to thrive in 2021. Even though it has been a blessed season, the ARC, like many other ministries, faces a gap in finances to survive the winter amounting to \$100,000. In facing this we hold tight to God and His promises. With Him at the lead we will continue to push onward with hope and praise in our hearts. Thank you for your prayers and support of the ARC and its mission, it is appreciated greatly.

~Kirk Rautio, executive director



CONTACT

ARC • 715.294.2877
info@arc-aflc.org
www.arc-aflc.org