

THE 

AUGUST 2021

LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR



PREPARE
THE WAY
OF THE
LORD

2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



ENCOURAGING WORD



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

AUGUST 2021
VOL. 59 NO. 8

EDITOR

Pastor Robert L. Lee
rlee@aflc.org

MANAGING EDITOR

Ruth Gunderson
ruthg@aflc.org

CIRCULATION

Liz McCarlson
lasubscriptions@aflc.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

Monica Coyle
Pastor Jerry Moan
Pastor J. Christian Andrews

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

(ISSN 0746-3413) (USPS 588-620)
is published monthly by the
Association of Free Lutheran
Congregations,
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441
Phone (763) 545-5631
Periodicals postage paid at
St. Paul, MN and additional
mailing offices.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to
The Lutheran Ambassador,
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441.

SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES AND INFORMATION

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441.
763-545-5631
lasubscriptions@aflc.org

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$24 a year, Group, U.S.
\$25 a year, Individual, U.S.
\$27 a year, International

IN THE MIDST OF WAITING

BY RACHEL MATTSON

Have you ever had to wait for something longer than you wanted? An extra 20 seconds at a stop light, a package from Amazon, supper in the oven, a dream for the timeline of your life? We've all waited and hoped for things. We've all had plans for what we would like to happen in our lives. When life doesn't go our way we can find ourselves frustrated, disheartened, and angry. Yet Scripture says again and again, "Wait for the Lord," as if He's trying to tell us that life will be full of waiting.

It's something that I forget quite easily and have to be reminded of a lot. Even the way I read my Bible sometimes reveals my inability to wait. I read the story of Noah waiting aboard the ark, but I just have to turn the page and—poof!—a year of time takes a few seconds to read. Or the story of Abraham and Sarah waiting for their promised child—poof! Just like that I can read 25 years of waiting in a few chapters. And let's not forget God's promise to the Israelites as they left Egypt and headed for the promised land, which took 40 years longer than they had hoped.

If our God is truly a God of compassion and love, why is the Bible filled with stories of waiting and crying out to Him for circumstances and situations to change? Because He knows that spending time in the unknown is where our faith in Him can grow more deeply. Sitting in the place where there is no other option except Christ.

Waiting on Him and what He reveals of Himself during each time of longing. Waiting to see how He will work out each plan or frustration for His glory instead of our own. It's when we get to that place of desperation that we see there is nothing in our control and there is nothing we can do.

Except trust Him. Except pray for more faith. Except praise Him in the storm. Except run to Him and welcome His comforting presence. Except glorify His powerful name.

There is growth in the unknown of waiting because there is more going on than we are aware. Psalm 33 speaks to us of the mighty deeds of the Lord. Verse four says that the LORD is "faithful in all He does." Verse 11 states, "But the plans for the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations." He continues to watch all that He has made, considering everything we do. The chapter ends with the greatest hope for times of waiting and uncertainty. "We wait in hope for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name" (vs. 20). Our help and our shield. The caretaker of our lives. Whatever we find ourselves waiting for today we don't have to fear, for God is gracious, near, and in control because His plans can never be thwarted!

*Mattson is a member of Our Saviour's Lutheran,
Thief River Falls, Minn.*

Our core values and mission do not sway with the trends or fads of the day, nor do they shift and change to the political correctness of the time.

—Pastor Todd Erickson

The difficulty of the rough road is no match for Savior King's steady hand.

—Pastor Jason Holt

Do we really believe that the gospel is good, and not just in general, but also for us, and for our society and the countless souls around us?

—Pastor Wade Mobley

And now, we who trust in Christ the Savior continue to “prepare the way of the Lord” as we await the final exodus from our own exile—the final deliverance—Jesus’ final victory over sin, death and the devil.

—Marian Christopherson

We are convinced that, in every part of the world, the best way to spread the gospel and build people up in the Lord is through local congregations.

—Pastor Craig Johnson



PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
PLYMOUTH, MN

2021







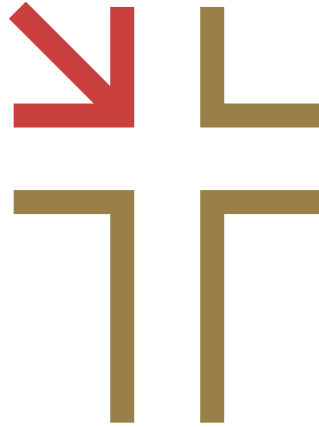
TOP: Pastor Peter Ford Jr., Marksville, La., spent time in prayer with Pastor Ken Moland, Graham, N.C.

MIDDLE: Beverly Enderlein, Plymouth, Minn., discussed topics for potential conference resolutions with other members of Committee 3.

ABOVE: Larry Brook, Superior, Wis., and Pastor Ron Brubakken, Osceola, Wis., catch up in the lobby area of the Student Life Center during a break from conference business.

RIGHT: Pastor Brian and Allie Westerbur, Grafton, N.D., follow along in Scripture during the Thursday evening Mission Festival Service.





PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

THE 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BY PASTOR ROBERT LEE

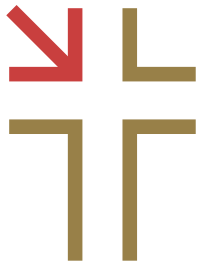
The 2021 AFLC Annual Conference met June 16-19 on the campus of the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary, Plymouth, Minn. All regular sessions were held in the gymnasium, and meals were served in the nearby Heritage Hall cafeteria. An informal survey indicated that the highlight of the gathering may have been the privilege of meeting in the newly constructed and recently dedicated spacious Student Life Center. Marian Christopherson, Parish Education director, was organist for the conference services, and the 2021 FLBC Ambassadors supplied most of the special music.

The Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) Day preceded the regular conference sessions on Wednesday, June 16, and the opening service was held at 7 p.m. with Dr. Wade Mobley, president of AFLC Schools, as the speaker on the conference theme. President Lyndon Korhonen officiated during the service at the ordination of two seminary graduates: Lance Morrison and Patrick VandenBos.

The opening service also included a memorial led by Pastor Gary Jorgenson for those pastors who have been promoted to glory since the last conference: Ken Thoreson, Richard Gilmore, Henry Johansen, Ray Klug, Howard Kjos, Irv Schmitke, Everett Hind, Don Norr, Don Thorson, and Kelly Henning.

The president's report on Thursday highlighted the creative responses of our congregations during the pandemic, noting the generous support of AFLC ministries during these challenging times. Our most crucial need is for pastors, and 37 congregations are currently seeking pastors (either full- or part-time). New congregations are considering joining our fellowship, but the lack of clergy is a hindrance. Korhonen issued a call to prayer again for men to respond to God's call, and to ask the Lord to prepare the one whom He wants to be the new president. He has stated his intention to step down after his term ends next year..

The conference prayer times were led by Pastor Jorgenson, Ramsey, Minn., the assistant to the president. Conference devotional leaders included 2021 seminary graduates Lance Morrison (Thursday a.m.), Michael Onstad (Thursday p.m.), Kyle Smith (Friday a.m.), and Patrick VandenBos (Friday p.m.). Saturday devotions were led by Pastor Will Cole, Millerstown, Pa., and Pastor Kendal Flaten, Ortley, S.D.



PREPARE THE WAY
OF THE LORD



The Mission Festival Service, led by Pastor Earl Korhonen, World Missions director, opened on Thursday evening with video greetings from world missionaries in Brazil, Mexico, Tanzania and Uganda. Home missionaries in Naknek, Alaska, were also mentioned for prayer, and it was announced that Josh Fish, Everett, Wash., had accepted a call to serve as director of maintenance at Naknek. Alaska missionaries Bob and Margaret Lee were present to greet the conference, and committee members prayed for them. A highlight of the service was the graduation of Immanuel Lutheran, Springfield, Mo., a former Home Mission congregation, and Pastor J. Christian Andrews was called forward for prayer by committee members. The message for the evening was preached by Pastor Jonathan Abel, missionary to Brazil.

Following the service a reception was hosted by the schools in recognition of the retirement of Pastor Robert L. Lee from the faculty.

The conference schedule this year included elective sessions on Friday afternoon, presented by World and Home Missions, AFLC Evangelism and Discipleship, Parish Education, Youth, and the ARC. Seven lectures were offered on Thursday and Saturday mornings prior to the prayer time:

Thursday:

- "Systematic Theology," by Dr. Nathan Olson
- "Baal Xiphon," by Dr. Brent Olson
- "What Can I do to Encourage FLBC Attendance?" by Pastor Adam Osier
- "Music to Benefit the Congregation," by Andrew Hanson

Friday:

- "You Cannot, You Must," by Dr. Phil Haugen
- "How Our Past Informs Our Future," by Pastor Robert Lee
- "Sverdrup: Living Out Orthodox Piety in America," by Pastor Phill Hooper





THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Lisa Arneson (center) talks with Pastor Lloyd and Jean Quanbeck. Bruce, Rebecca, and Lorene Anderson react to a speaker. Lay Pastor Darwin Jackson looks up a Scripture passage while listening to Dr. Phil Haugen. Teens attending conference played a game of rock, paper, scissors at the start of the day. Pastor Micah Hjermstad, secretary, read a proposed resolution during a conference business session. Dr. Brent Olson and his mother, Helene Olson, sang during the communion service. Dr. Lyle Mattson (left) and Pastor Tom Schierkolk (center) waited their turn at the microphone while Pastor J. Christian Andrews (right) spoke to a resolution.

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Pastor Wayne Hjermstad talks with a visitor at the Orality Institute display. Kids attended VBS. Pastor Jonathan Abel spoke at the Mission Festival Service.



Childcare was provided, and a full schedule of children and youth classes and activities, including vacation Bible school, were also available during conference sessions.

Friday business sessions were followed by the pastors' and wives' banquet, and a Holy Communion service led by Pastor Joel Rolf, with Pastor Mark Johnson preaching. Special music was provided by Dr. Brent Olson and his mother, Helene Olson.

The service also included a recognition of the completion by Parish Education of the fifth book in the AFLC Heritage Series, *One Thing I Seek: Selected Writings of Francis W. Monseth*, and members of the Monseth family (including Francis' wife Ellen) gathered at the front of the auditorium to receive certificates for gift copies.

After final reports and elections took place, the conference concluded on Saturday afternoon with a brief testimony service.

Highlights from Ministry Reports:

The Coordinating Committee reported that the Fundamental Principles Bible study project is in the final stages of editing and preparation, and will soon be available. Also, a large estate gift has been received with a request that a substantial portion be used to endow the Development office so that the various ministries do not have to subsidize the position from congregational and individual gifts. As well, the gift will fund *The Lutheran Ambassador* subsidies for one year.

The on-hand supply of the *Ambassador Hymnal* is running low and a committee was appointed (Pastor Tom Olson, Andrew Hanson, Rachel Mattson, with Marian Christopherson as consultant) to identify errors in the current edition and to suggest additions, etc.

The following Institutional Chaplains recently retired: Jerry Nelson, Ron Staudinger, Alan Bedard, and Marlin Harris. Colonel

John Eidsmoe was also recognized for his retirement after 43 years of service to the military. At the present time our only military chaplain is Pastor Brad Novacek, a master sergeant with the Minnesota National Guard.

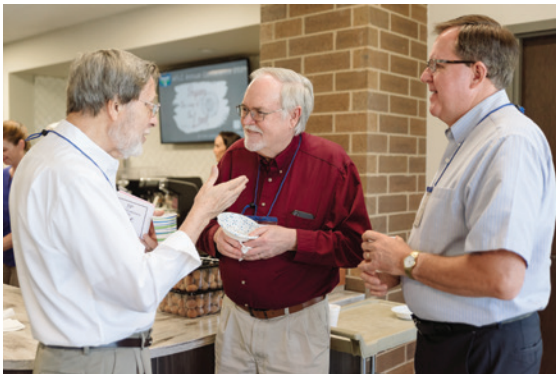
Members of the AFLC Evangelism and Discipleship Committee are planning to assist more congregations through regional "Reawakening the Mission" conferences during this coming fall in Arlington, S.D., Roseau, Minn., and Arlington, Wash.

Parish Education plans to publish in the near future adult Bible studies on I and II Peter by Pastor Gary Jorgenson; a study on the Means of Grace by Dr. Francis Monseth; and a study on the Unity of the Testaments by Dr. Phil Haugen. Ambassador Publications also is working on *Luther for the Busy Man*, a new edition of a daily devotional as a cooperative project with AFLC Schools.

Two issues with special future implications were (1) the concern that some information should be available on the candidates for office, and (2) the possible division of the Missions Corporation into two corporations, world and home. A resolution on the first was approved, requesting information in the future especially for board and committee positions. The second, stemming from the fact that originally home and "foreign" missions were united in one corporation with one board/committee but have grown to need separate directors and committees, will be addressed at next year's conference.

The 2022 Annual Conference will return to the Association Retreat Center (ARC) near Osceola, Wis., June 15-18. Two other possible invitations were considered, but neither could secure a reservation for a meeting site.

Lee, a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn., is the editor.



OPPOSITE PAGE
AFLC pastors prayed over two seminary graduates who were ordained at the opening service.

THIS PAGE, FROM TOP LEFT
Teens listened to a Bible study workshop led by Dr. Brent Olson. Pastor Robert L. Lee, Pastor Bob Lee, and Pastor Joel Rolf chat during a break. Christine Stout, a member of the Budget Analysis Committee, speaks to a resolution. Leeanna Lunn and Pastor Ryan Patenaude, members of the Board of Publications and Parish Education, worked at the publisher's table during a conference break. Conference attendees walked to various locations where lecture series were hosted. Children participated in a daily VBS, including games, songs, and Bible studies led by FLBC summer teams. The FLBC Ambassadors sang during the opening service.





PREPARE THE WAY
OF THE LORD

BY PASTOR GARY JORGENSEN

During the week of June 16-19, 2021, the AFLC held its 59th Annual Conference under the theme, “Prepare the Way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3). The verse in its entirety reads, “A voice cries: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”

It is no accident or coincidence that the Lord makes reference to an unspecified voice crying out in the wilderness, preparing the hearts of people to receive the LORD. God’s Word is eternal, and this prophecy applies to any and all who recognize the need to do this prophetic work in their own generation.

In his day, Isaiah’s voice was the one which cried out in the wilderness, seeking to prepare a way for the Lord to come to His people. The wilderness he encountered wasn’t so much physical as it was spiritual. That has been true of every generation since.

In his day, John the Baptist cried out to his contemporaries to prepare them for a personal meeting with the Messiah, Jesus, who had come to bring salvation to the world. All three authors of the synoptic Gospels quote Isaiah 40:3, pointing to John as an important and even singular voice calling people to a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. He was called to be the forerunner of the Savior, the last prophet in Israel, the man singularly blessed to draw attention to Jesus and introduce Him as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

In our day, the call of Isaiah 40:3 is as urgent as it ever has been, for we are called as believers to raise our voices in the wilderness of our generation, to call people to repentance and faith so that they might prepare to receive the Lord when He comes again. As in generations before us it is a formidable task to speak for God and to speak against the sin which is so prevalent in our generation.

The spiritual wilderness is vast and varied. We are called to raise our voices in the wilderness of self-righteousness, in the wilderness of open rejection of God’s Word, in the wilderness of open

hatred of God and of the Savior He has provided for us, and in the wilderness of hopelessness and despair.

The wilderness may appear impenetrable to us at times. We may even wonder if we are wasting our time and effort since results so often seem negligible at best. But remember, God says of His Word, “... it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). Please note, we are not the ones putting God on the hook when we share the truth of His Word. He does that Himself! We are simply called to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). He will bring about His desired results.

That doesn’t mean that we won’t ever pay a price as we stand and speak God’s Word to our generation. Jesus Himself warned, “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). Isaiah faced hardship and persecution as he prophesied. John the Baptist was beheaded for his faithfulness to the truth. Some of us may also pay a price—even the highest price—for fidelity to the God Who has called us. Yet, in that same conversation where Jesus warns of persecution for those who faithfully follow Him, He also promises the personal presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit to motivate us to speak God’s Word to our generation. And Jesus promises the Holy Spirit’s protection and encouragement to us as we carry out the task He has entrusted to us.

As the Psalmist declares, so may his words be ours: “For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. I give thanks to you, O LORD my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever” (Psalm 86:10-12).

May our prayer consistently be that God be glorified as we do the work of preparing souls for our Savior’s return.

Jorgenson, a member of Solid Rock Free Lutheran, Anoka, Minn., is the assistant to the president of the AFLC.

ELECTION RESULTS

20
21

20
21

2022 COMMITTEES

One-year terms, serving at the Annual Conference, June 15-18, 2022, at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis.

Committee No. 1

Amy Dalager, Argyle, Minn.
Pastor David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.
Pastor Brian Lunn, Upsala, Minn.
Nathan Moen, Colfax, N.D.
Brent Peterson, Valley City, N.D.

Committee No. 2

Pastor John Amundson, New Leipzig, N.D.
Bill Fish, Everett, Wash.
Leeanna Lunn, Upsala, Minn.
Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, N.D.
Paul Welsch, Amery, Wis.

Committee No. 3

Pastor James Fugleberg, Moorhead, Minn.
Pastor Brandon Marschner, Culbertson, Mont.
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn.
Joan Thompson, Edgerton, Wis.
Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, N.D.

Committee No. 4

Pastor Rich Carr, Tioga, N.D.
Pastor Terry Culler, Hagerstown, Md.
Madison Greven, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
Bonnie Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa
Michele Mobley, Plymouth, Minn.

Committee No. 5

Jim Berge, Maple Grove, Minn.
Pastor Steve Berntson, Jamestown, N.D.
Pastor Steve Jensen, Milford, Ill.
Jeremy Nelson, Shakopee, Minn.
Jeanie Sheldon, Ray, N.D.



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

One-year terms

Central Tri State

Andy Strand, Kenyon, Minn.

Eastern

Pastor Bryce McMinn, Bethel Park, Pa.

Eastern North Dakota

Jeremy Zeltinger, Valley City, N.D.

Illinois

Jim Thompson, Edgerton, Wis.

Lake Superior

Pastor David Handsaker, Cloquet, Minn.

Minneapolis

Beverly Enderlein, Plymouth, Minn.

Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado

Pastor Ken Hart, Fairbury, Neb.

North Central Minnesota

Angie Berg, Bemidji, Minn.

Northern Michigan

Jordan Langness, Ishpeming, Mich.

Northwestern Minnesota

Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn.

Pacific Northwest

Pastor Cal Willard, Everett, Wash.

South Central

Pastor J. Christian Andrews, Springfield, Mo.

South Dakota

Linda Buck, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Southwestern

Lay Pastor Darwin Jackson, Nogales, Ariz.

West Central Minnesota

Pastor Brian Lunn, Upsala, Minn.

Western ND/Eastern Montana

Karen Pederson, Tioga, N.D.



COLLOQUY

One-year terms

Pastor Martin Horn, Crystal, Minn.
 Pastor Andrew Kneeland, St. Louis, Mo.
 Pastor Brandon Marschner, Culbertson, Mont.
 Pastor Elden Nelson, Prinsburg, Minn.
 Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, N.D.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

AFLC Evangelism & Discipleship

- Pastor, five-year term
 Jim Ritter, Shakopee, Minn.

Bay Broadcasting

- Layman, three-year term
 Greg Schmitke, Moorhead, Minn.

Budget Analysis Committee

- Layman, three-year term
 Joel Erickson, Plymouth, Minn.

Coordinating Committee

- Pastor, five-year term
 Jon Benson, Newark, Ill.
- Layman, five-year term
 David J. Olson, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Home Missions Committee

- Pastor, five-year term
 Jon Langness, Deshler, Neb.

Youth Board

- Pastor, four-year term
 Ryan Tonneson, Moorhead, Minn.
- Layman, five-year term
 Wendy Greven, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

OFFICERS

Vice President

One-year term
 Pastor Terry Olson, Grafton, N.D.

Secretary

One-year term
 Pastor Micah Hjermstad, Fargo, N.D.

ARC Board

- Layman, five-year term
 Dr. Steven Johnson, Upsala, Minn.

Benefits Board

- Pastor, five-year term
 Ron Smith, Brookings, S.D.

Board of Publications & Parish Education

- Pastor, five-year term
 Dennis Norby, Valley City, N.D.

FLAPS Board of Managers

- Layman, five-year term
 John Greven, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
- Pastor, five-year term
 Tom Tuura, Stover, Mo.

Schools Board of Trustees

- Pastor, five-year term
 Alan Arneson, Amery, Wis.
- Layman, five-year term
 Gary Erickson, Dalton, Minn.

World Missions Committee

- Layman, five-year term
 Bill Sheldon, Ray, N.D.

CORPORATIONS

ARC Corporation

Shawn Adrian, Binford, N.D.
 Ivar Berge, Fargo, N.D.
 Nathan Crellin, Plymouth, Minn.
 Lois Grothe, Astoria, Ore.
 Pastor Steve Jensen, Millford, Ill.
 Hannah Langness, Deshler, Neb.
 John Reischl, Maple Grove, Minn.
 Bruce Rokala, Kimball, Minn.
 Stewart Vachal, Williston, N.D.
 *Fred Raasch, Zumbrota, Minn. (3-year term)

Mission Corporation

Lisa Arneson, Amery, Wis.
 Mike Berntson, Valley City, N.D.
 Pastor Andy Coyle, Summerset, S.D.
 Ben Dahl, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
 Steve Deysher, Fleetwood, Pa.
 Pastor David Franz, Baxter, Minn.
 Matthew Green, Greenbush, Minn.
 John Greven, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
 Matthew Greven, Newark, Ill.
 Pastor Scott Guhl, Gifford, Ill.
 Pastor Gary Haug, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
 Vicky Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.
 Brian Lee, Ray, N.D.
 Glen Mork, Buffalo, Minn.
 Pastor David Niemela, Greenbush, Minn.
 Shelly Raan, Tioga, N.D.
 Jeanie Sheldon, Ray, N.D.
 Pastor Ron Smith, Brookings, S.D.
 Shane Voxland, McIntosh, Minn.
 Ethan Zeltinger, Fargo, N.D.

Schools Corporation

John Amdahl, Sioux Falls, S.D.
 Rose Carlson, Cumberland, Wis.
 Nathan Dalager, Argyle, Minn.
 Lyle Forde, Arlington, Wash.
 Pastor Chad Friestad, Camarillo, Calif.
 David Fugleberg, Lakeville, Minn.
 Pastor Rodney Johnson, Stanley, N.D.
 Karen Pederson, Tioga, N.D.
 Pastor Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont.
 Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, Minn.
 *Caleb Peterson, Fargo, N.D. (Two-year term)



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP
 Nicole Cole and Judith Jore spend time in prayer. Discussion groups (middle and above) were formed during a workshop led by Mary Ann Ward (top left). Members of the WMF Board led the business meeting. Marian Christopherson (middle left) led a workshop.

Jeanette Berntson (top). Bria Larson (cello) and Caley Pederson led special music. Allyanna Rautio and Hannah Mobley recite Scripture from memory.

GUARD WHAT HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED

• BY KAREN FLOAN •



One hundred-eighty seven women registered for the Women's Missionary Federation Day on June 16 at the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary, in Plymouth, Minn. Lavonne West, president of the WMF, opened the day with a welcome and prayer. Ruth Rautio, Farmington, Wis., president of the Minneapolis district of the WMF, gave a welcome to the women and Tamba Abel, missionary to Brazil, gave a greeting from the church and women in Brazil.

Jeanette Berntson, Northome, Minn., the WMF Bible study writer for 2021, shared devotions based on the study's theme, "Guard the Deposit" from I Timothy 6:20-21. Berntson shared how the deposit of God's Word, which we have been given, has not changed, and that we need to keep its message until Jesus comes again, much like a soldier does. We are not to add to the deposit or to remove anything from it.

After devotions, a praise and worship time was led by the 2021 Ambassadors. Several workshops were presented in the morning and afternoon sessions.

Workshop 1, "Entrusted for Entrusting," was presented by Marian Christopherson, director of AFLC Parish Education along with Leeanna Lunn, Upsala, Minn., and Susan Tietjen, Torrington, Wyo., members of the Board of Publications and Parish Education. Lunn presented a lesson from a handout based on the new Ten Commandments Sunday school curriculum. Christopherson shared the what, why, and then for being "Entrusted for Entrusting" in regards to the gospel. The workshop leaders also presented specials on books and materials available from their department.

Workshop 2, "We, Too, Must Guard What Has Been Entrusted to Us," was presented by Mary Ann Ward, Pelican Rapids, Minn., who reminded those present about the responsibilities involved in guarding and protecting what has been given to us. We are to guard God's Word, she said, and make sure we "keep its teachings pure," and be aware of any false teachings. During her presentation, the ladies met in small groups to identify false messages that they are dealing with in the world. We need to protect our families and churches.

During the offering, a video was played with greetings from all AFLC missionaries. Then Jan Strand, Kenyon, Minn., led a memorial service based on I Thessalonians

4: 13-18, reminding us that we do not grieve as those who have no hope. Strand shared promises of hope through various hymns, and asked those present to sing the choruses after each promise. The service remembered 38 ladies whose names were submitted by various districts.

After lunch, workshop 3, "Guard the Treasure," was presented by Rebecca Moan, Corcoran, Minn., who began with her testimony and some nostalgic pictures from her youth growing up on a farm. Moan reminded the group that we can only guard the treasure with the Holy Spirit's help. Two young ladies from her church (Solid Rock Free Lutheran, Anoka, Minn.), Allyanna Rautio and Hannah Mobley, shared Scripture verses they memorized. Moan also had one of the FLBC summer teams share a vacation Bible school song, "It's True."

The women then broke up into groups and prayed for AFLC leaders, WMF officers, Home and World Missions, missionaries, Parish Education, and the Free Lutheran Schools. Total offering for the day was \$3,685, which were designated to be split between Parish Education/Free Lutheran Schools and the general fund of the WMF.

During the business meeting, a motion to consolidate the three zones of WMF districts used for distributing gifts to the four projects the WMF supports (World Missions, Home Missions, Christian Education, WMF General Fund) into one zone was made. After discussing how gifts are currently distributed based on the zones, the motion to simplify the process was approved. Gifts from all districts will now be distributed monthly on a rotating basis to the four projects. Elections for the positions of president and communications secretary were held. Lavonne West was reelected as president to a three-year term and Linda Hensrud, Grafton, N.D., was elected as communications secretary for a three-year term. After the business session Pastor Robert Lee, Crystal, Minn., who presided as parliamentarian, gave the benediction and closing.

Thank you to the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary for hosting so graciously and providing for our needs during the conference. The next WMF Day will be held June 15, 2022, at the Association Retreat Center in near Osceola, Wis.

Floan, Andover, Minn., is the recording secretary for the WMF.



More conference photos

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT

Pastor Jim Fugleberg takes a photo of the FLBC Ambassador summer team during the opening service. Michele Smith, Brookings, S.D., speaks to a resolution during conference business. Kids attending conference participated in a daily VBS program. Members of the Monseth family were given certificates for a copy of the newly published Heritage Series volume featuring the writings of the late Dr. Francis Monseth. Pastor Raynard Huglen and Mary-Ann Rolf talk prior to the communion service.





A

t 0055 hours, Feb. 3, 1943, a German submarine torpedoed the USAT Dorchester

with approximately 904 military personnel aboard. In the darkness and confusion, four U.S. Army chaplains stepped forward. They moved among the men, giving encouragement and restoring order. As the ship sank into the icy North Atlantic, they helped men into lifeboats, gave their own life jackets to others, then linked their arms and went down with the ship, their voices raised in song.

Grady Clark, a survivor, reported, "As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high, and she slid under. The last thing I saw, the four chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets."

John Ladd, another survivor, wrote, "It was the finest thing I have ever seen or hope to see this side of heaven." Others reported they could hear the chaplains praying in different languages, Catholic

THE MILITARY CHAPLAIN

BY DR. JOHN EIDSMOE

prayers in Latin and Jewish prayers in Hebrew.

Methodist Pastor George Lansing Fox had been wounded and decorated during World War I, but right after Pearl Harbor he volunteered for active duty. Rabbi Alex Goode was a new father, an athlete, and an intellectual, but he, too, wanted to serve. Reformed Chaplain Clark Poling, the son of radio evangelist Daniel Poling, left for war asking his father for prayer, hoping that he would never be a coward. Father John Washington was a scrappy Irish street fighter who dedicated his life to the church after a childhood brush with death.

Together they gave their lives for their fellow soldiers, their country, and their Lord. Congress has created the Four Chaplains Medal and has designated February 3 as Four Chaplains Day.

Few chaplains have been called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice, but every chaplain has a special calling from God. Soldiers and sailors face problems unique to the military. Marine lieutenant and Vietnam War veteran Karl Marlantes, in his book *What It Is Like to Go to War*, makes a thought-provoking observation: "Warriors deal with death. They take life away

from others. This is normally the role of God. Asking young warriors to take on that role without adequate psychological and spiritual preparation can lead to damaging consequences."

When soldiers agonize over the morality of killing in war, the trauma of constantly facing instant death on the battlefield, the shell shock that remains after the guns fall silent, survivor guilt, and so much more, they call upon the military chaplain.

Providing chaplains for our military has been a proud tradition of the AFLC. But how many AFLC military chaplains do we have today? Now that Chaplain Lt. Colonel Benson and I have retired, the AFLC has no military chaplains. That's right, zero.

Pastors and seminarians, whether serving full-time active duty or part-time reserve or guard, this is a calling you should consider. Please contact Chaplain Benson or me for further information.

Eidsmoe is a retired colonel in the Mississippi State Guard and has served as chaplain.

ARC to host pastor's conference

The annual AFLC Pastor's Conference will be held Oct. 5-7 at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis. The theme of this year's conference is "Ministry From a Position of Weakness," with II Corinthians 12:9-10 as its theme verses.

Speaking at the conference will be Dr. Nathan Olson, Dr. Craig Johnson, and Dr. Jason Holt, who will present sessions related to the theme.

Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, will speak at the evening service, Pastor Jim Ritter will speak during the pastors' and wives' banquet, and Barb Brubakken will speak at the women's luncheon.

For more information on the conference and to register, visit the AFLC website at aflc.org.

Boards to meet in October

Members serving on AFLC boards and committees will meet Oct. 4-5 on the AFLC and Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary campus in Plymouth, Minn. After boards and committees meet on Oct. 4 to conduct business meetings, all members will convene together to present ministry updates on Oct. 5. For more information, visit the AFLC website at aflc.org.



Conference ordinations

Patrick VandenBos (left) and Lance Morrison (right, kneeling), both 2021 graduates of the Free Lutheran Seminary, were ordained during the opening service of the Annual Conference with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, president of the AFLC, officiating.



Congregation hosts Acts 16 Connection

Members of Our Saviour's Lutheran, Thief River Falls, Minn., hosted an Acts 16 Connection event on June 11. The half-day conference, presented by various AFLC ministries, is designed to identify and connect with laymen in AFLC congregations who may be considering a call into ministry as well as encourage lay people as they serve within AFLC congregations.

Leaders from various AFLC ministries led workshops throughout the morning, including a session on the call to serve, a history of the lay movement, teaching on pastoral visitation, and a personal story of a call into lay ministry. Participants also spent time in prayer groups.



Don Balmer (top) led devotions and Pastor Terry Olson (above), vice president of the AFLC, presented a session on visitation ministry. A group of men (left) spent time in prayer. (Submitted photos)



BY JON NELSON

Each of our AFLC ministries and churches have had to deal with blow after blow over the past year and a half, and Journey Missions is no different. Since our ministry is focused on international mission trips, Covid-19 has been an incredible disruptor of our mission. But we've seen a substantial amount of blessing as we've navigated these frustrating waters.

The last trip Journey Missions hosted was to Brazil in January 2020, and plans were being made to return there with a team last summer. But that trip, along with nine subsequent trips, was canceled due to travel restrictions and a rising rate of infection. It's been discouraging, but as I look back I see how the Lord has continued His work.

One aspect I've personally been blessed in during this slower season has been the pursuit of further educational opportunities to bolster the ministry of Journey Missions. This was the mutual desire of myself and members of the World Missions Committee. Fortunately, we are headquartered on a campus with a seminary committed to excellence and to the Word of God. I've been able to attend classes part-time as I continue to learn and grow as a believer and a ministry partner.

Another silver lining to the

SILVER LININGS IN MINISTRY

adjusted schedules was the opportunity to partner with the Free Lutheran Bible College (FLBC) to teach the cross-cultural ministries course. The class' spring trip to Brazil was canceled due to Covid-19, but our class time was focused on learning about differences in culture both domestic and abroad. Coaching students to learn more about why God has created them the way He has and hearing from both international and domestic ministry leaders has been a wonderful opportunity.

Looking forward we're seeing light at the end of the tunnel. Two of our missionary assistants (Casey McLoughlin and Leah Hetzel) finished their time serving at the Miriam Home in Brazil and returned home at the end of May. Abigail McMillian finished her term in Brazil with Pastor John and Hannah Lee at the end of June. Two young men (Caleb Korhonen and Zack Ritland) plan to serve with Pastor Paul and Becky Abel during their college Christmas break (December 2021-January 2022). Jared and Erica Trost, along with their four kids, plan to serve with Pastor Brent and Emily Raan in Gulu, Uganda, next spring, and two college-age students (Jenna Schwartz and Kate Wholey) plan to serve with Pastor Mafú and Ednay Abel in Paraguay next summer. We're thankful for travel opening up and for people who desire to serve the Lord internationally.



Members of the 2021 cross-cultural missions class at the Free Lutheran Bible College.

Our next planned trip is to Israel in November. We're optimistic and hopeful this opportunity will come to fruition. We are currently finalizing our plans for 2022 trips, but hope to travel next spring with the FLBC cross-cultural missions class followed by a summer Brazil trip and a fall Israel trip.

Will you pray for us as we continue navigating missions and international travel? We're thankful for the Lord's leading during this time and are looking forward to getting our congregation members back to our international mission fields.

Nelson, a member of Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis, is the department head of Journey Missions.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Pastor Craig Benson has resigned from serving Grace Evangelical Lutheran, Morris, Ill. He is currently living in Kenyon, Minn.

Joe Dombrowski, a 2021 graduate of the Free Lutheran Seminary, was ordained July 25 at Peace Lutheran, Canal Winchester, Ohio, with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiating. Dombrowski has accepted a call to serve United Lutheran, Manteca, Calif., and will be installed Aug. 8.

Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran, Killdeer, N.D., was accepted onto the AFLC congregational roster by members of the Coordinating Committee. The congregation is an AFLC Home Missions church plant served by Pastor Gideon Johnson.

Pastor Terry Culler, Hagerstown, Md., has announced his retirement. He will continue to serve St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran, Hagerstown, as vision pastor.



Digital Ambassador

Did you know that *The Lutheran Ambassador* is available online? Download the free Issuu app in the iTunes app store or Google Play and then search for and follow our magazine. It's free!

JUNE MEMORIALS

AED

Allyn Axvig

All Departments

Deb Benson

Bible College

Ruth Claus

Jerome Rice

Deb Benson

Owen Aasness

General Fund

Greg Zander

Deb Benson

Home Missions

Don Savage

Deb Benson

Allyn Axvig

Journey Missions

Jerome Rice

Parish Education

Nellie Sealy

Seminary

Deb Benson

WMF

Mildred Strand

Phyllis Nikunen

Merna Picsek

Joyce Larson

Deb Benson

World Missions

Pastor Willmore

Gundersen

Deb Benson

Beverley Heggen

Judith Fugleberg



Pictured are some of the facilitators and pastors of AFLC churches who sponsor a GriefShare program: Lavon and Fern Bohling, Pastor Jon Langness (Abiding Word, Deshler, Neb.); Pastor Jim and Linda Fugleberg (St. Paul's Lutheran, Fargo, N.D.); Pastor Erin and Jen Tormanen and Pastor Rodney and Candice Johnson (Our Savior's Lutheran, Stanley, N.D.).

Members encourage use of GriefShare program

A display table was available at the Annual Conference to encourage more congregations to offer grief care. GriefShare is a Bible-based, non-denominational, international program, which offers a comprehensive and structured 13 weekly sessions of videos, discussion time, and participant workbooks as well as leader's guides. The same structure is used for an additional session called "Loss of Spouse." Prior to Thanksgiving and Christmas, a session called "Surviving the Holidays" is available. GriefShare has proven to be a tremendous outreach to local communities. To learn more, visit griefshare.org. (Submitted by Fern Bohling)

AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-June 30, 2021

FUND	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$36,899	\$211,025	\$206,667
Evangelism	10,690	69,309	49,496
Youth Ministries	7,613	93,101	56,594
Parish Education	23,633	94,362	68,714
Seminary	11,877	145,785	145,188
Bible College	17,482	219,715	182,731
Home Missions	29,706	235,849	166,548
World Missions	27,591	220,223	187,771
Personal Support	56,554	433,993	385,665
TOTALS	\$222,045	\$1,723,363	\$1,449,374

For additional financial information for each department, go to www.aflc.org/giving

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

One of the blessings of belonging to a smaller denomination is the opportunity of getting to know one another. Conferences, camps, and district gatherings bring us into contact with brothers and sisters from other communities and states, and friendships are established and strengthened. “They’re like family reunions!” some have suggested.



Pastor Robert Lee

A concern that generated discussion during the recent annual conference, however, was the difficulty of voting for individuals with whom one is not acquainted.

A few ballots were left blank, and some voted for one or two names instead of a possible five or ten. During the early years it was likely that one could recognize most of the names on the ballots. But the AFLC has been a growing fellowship for many years, and it’s certainly important for the future that qualified new members have an opportunity to serve on our many committees, corporations, and boards.

What can be done to get to know one another better before we vote?

A couple of people asked me if *The Lutheran Ambassador* could provide a few lines of introduction for each one who is nominated. This might be possible, but the ballot submitted for inclusion in the May issue was very incomplete, and this has been true for several years.

The key, of course, is the work of the Nominating Committee. Please do not read this as a criticism of their service. I have served on that committee, and worked with them many times as well, so my appreciation of their faithful labors despite obstacles is very sincere. This committee is a very important one to the ongoing work of our fellowship.

Here are a few thoughts for consideration:

- The Nominating Committee is not mentioned in our Rules for Work, so adjustments can be made. In past years the

upcoming election of this committee was announced during the opening service, and people from each district were encouraged to be ready to submit names; this year the committee was elected on the third day of the conference, so there should have been even more time to think and pray about it. Instead, there were often long silences. Should the Nominating Committee each year submit nominees to be elected the new committee, rather than asking for nominations from the floor? Also, couldn’t we simply vote once to close nominations rather than do it for every district?

- If possible, only willing candidates should be nominated, yet sadly it is not infrequent that the person elected does not serve. Whose responsibility should it be to select a replacement so that the district would be represented? The Rules for Work suggest (9.g.) that this should be done by the Coordinating Committee.

- Members of the Nominating Committee should be encouraged to contact the pastor of each congregation in the district for suggestions of qualified potential committee and corporation members. I recall a pastor many years ago who was deeply troubled by someone nominated for a board position who was not in good repute within the local congregation.

- It could also be helpful if they received some input from the boards and committees concerning possible unique qualifications and interests of those who might serve with them.

- The new Nominating Committee will be discussing the possibility of providing a brief introduction to the candidates for next year. What should be included other than city, state, and congregation? Occupation? Education? Family? Should this be included in *The Lutheran Ambassador*, available online, read at the conference prior to

voting, or what?

- Who is the member of the Nominating Committee from your district? He or she surely is not acquainted with everyone from every congregation, so suggestions would be appropriate ... but don’t be offended if your suggestions are not accepted. Prayer support is appropriate, too, and needed.

Another blessing of a smaller fellowship is that there are lots of opportunities for many people to serve with our national endeavors. The first step may be election to our corporations for missions, schools, and the Association Retreat Center (ARC), which include the largest number of people. Membership in one of them usually involves only one meeting a year, but you are kept informed of the plans and progress of that area of ministry. Board members are chosen from the corporations, which may be the next step of service for some. There

Another blessing of a smaller fellowship is that there are lots of opportunities for many people to serve with our national endeavors.

are also committees elected for parish education, evangelism and discipleship, youth, and benefits. These positions may involve travel and a time commitment for regular meetings, but each offers a unique opportunity for Kingdom service. What a privilege!

It’s quite amazing that the Lord still guides and directs through all the tangles and tribulations of our flawed procedures. It is His work after all, and yet all of us may share in what He is doing through our prayers. That’s even more amazing, isn’t it?

building the base

FORGIVING YOURSELF

BY PASTOR DAVID JORE

In my last column (May 2021) I mentioned how much I had appreciated the book, *Total Forgiveness* by Dr. RT Kendall. This book underscores the importance of fully or totally forgiving those who have wronged us, or in Kendall's words, "letting them off the hook." He wrote a second book on the topic of forgiveness entitled, *How to Forgive Ourselves—Totally*, which I have also read and appreciated. The reason Kendall wrote this book was because many people who read his first book wanted more understanding on how to forgive themselves. I was eager to read this second book because I think that sometimes the hardest person to forgive is ourselves.

One of the Bible passages that has helped me in learning to forgive myself is the foot washing scene in John 13, specifically the conversation between Peter and Jesus. As you may recall, Peter did not

want Jesus to wash his feet. Jesus responded by saying to him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." After this word of exhortation from Jesus, Peter changed his tone completely and said, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Then Jesus said to him, "The one who is bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet" (John 13:6-10).

This passage became very real and personal to me at a heightened time when I was struggling with feelings of guilt and condemnation and was often confessing the same sin over and over again. I shared my struggle with a pastor friend and asked him if he would pray for me. When he agreed to do so and began praying for me, the first thing he said was, "This man needs only to have his feet washed."

What I believe the Holy Spirit was saying to me through him was that because I had put my trust in the finished work of

Jesus on the cross and in His shed blood for me, in place of trusting in my own self-righteousness, I had been given Christ's righteousness. Or in the words of Jesus to Peter, "You have bathed." Because of that reality, I did not have to constantly focus on my sin and guilt. Or to put it another way, I did not have to keep scrubbing my robe of righteousness. All I had to do is to get my feet washed, that is, to confess my sins, receive God's forgiveness, and then forgive myself totally.

This experience has made the truth of I John 1:9 even more meaningful to me, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Jore serves Maple Bay Free Lutheran, Mentor, Minn.