

THE 

AUGUST 2022

# LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR



GOD REWARDS  
THE FAITHFUL



The 60th Annual Conference







## THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

AUGUST 2022  
VOL. 60 NO. 8

### EDITOR

Pastor Robert L. Lee  
roblee@usfamily.net

### MANAGING EDITOR

Ruth Gunderson  
ruthg@aflc.org

### INTERN

Kirstie Skogerboe

### CIRCULATION

Liz McCarlson  
lasubscriptions@aflc.org

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Monica Coyle  
Pastor Jerry Moan  
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3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,  
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763-545-5631  
lasubscriptions@aflc.org

## ENCOURAGING WORD

# WHO YOU ARE TO ME

BY KIRSTIE SKOGERBOE

*"For Your mercy's sake, O Lord my God, tell me what You are to me. Say to my soul, 'I am your salvation.'"*

**A** family member gave me a prayer book not long ago, and these words from St. Augustine are some of my favorite ones I have found inside it. Sometimes prayers I have not written open my heart in ways that my own words cannot.

This prayer uncovers the spiritual feebleness I instinctively conceal. *I cannot tell myself what You are to me.* But the daily practice of sinners is to attempt to tell themselves exactly that.

I frequently find myself asking God, with an urgency that surprises me each time, *Who are You?* All my own answers are, at best, incomplete—at worst, blasphemous. On my own, I'm tempted to think that God loves those who are good and hates those who are not, scorning those who irritate Him and abandoning the pitiful. Any unassuaged guilt I have ever felt has been driven by this view of God.

But left to myself, I would also, in surreptitious ways, tell myself that Jesus is not human enough to *really* know what every temptation feels like. That He only cried at Lazarus' tomb because He happened to be on earth; now He sits in glory at the right hand of the Father, tearless and flaming. What is our death to Him? What is our suffering to Him? What are

our wretched battles against sin to Him? Does He still grieve? And when I turn those questions into statements—our death is nothing to Him, our suffering nothing, our battles nothing—I assume that I am more compassionate than God.

Sin moves over me quickly and I cannot hold it back. So I pray again, "Tell me what You are to me," and now the prayer begins to sound like the deep, inward moan of all human beings who have ever realized that they long for God but cannot see clearly enough to reach for Him. It's the sound the Church utters every time she gathers for the sacrament. *We want to find You but we cannot see You.*

Then come the bread and wine.  
Then the words, "Given for you."  
*I am your salvation.*

When God tells us what He is to us, He does not simply speak over us and cover us. He literally regenerates us with that truth, bestowing on us actual sight to see it. He initiates in us a quiet but explosive transformation that, as another saint, John Chrysostom, wrote, "[lets] us return from the [Communion] table like lions breathing fire, having become terrible to the devil; thinking on our Head and on the love that He has shown for us."

*Skogerboe, a 2018 graduate of the Free Lutheran Bible College, Plymouth, Minn., lives in Orange, Calif.*

From the 2022 Annual Conference reports:

... we must first of all be committed students of the Scriptures themselves, for these are the very breathed words of God. God rewards those who are faithful to His Word.

—Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, president

Our founders believed everyone around the world would be blessed if they were part of a congregation where God's Word was proclaimed and the sacraments were rightly administered. That passion for local congregations remains.

—Pastor Craig Johnson, World Missions chairman

Last year, I expressed encouragement from the resilience among our AFLC youth through the pandemic. This year, I observe the eagerness among many teens, youth groups, and leaders to be meeting and building together. God rewards the faithful!

—Pastor Jason Holt, Youth Ministries director

God makes it clear that "pleasing" faith is believing in Him and then seeking to live our lives by drawing nearer to Him with the assurance that "God rewards those who seek Him."

—Pastor Randy Nelson, Evangelism & Discipleship director

All that we have—our faith itself, our soul's reward, even God's desire to be found when sought—are gifts to us from God's gracious hand. Our faith is not in history or good ideas but childlike trust in Jesus Christ.

—Combined report of the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary, and the Board of Trustees



# GOD REWARDS THE FAITHFUL

THE 60TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



By Pastor Robert Lee  
& Ruth Gunderson

**T**he 60th Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) met on June 15-18, with sessions held at the Association Retreat Center (ARC) near Osceola, Wis., which last hosted our conference in 2020. The conference sessions were preceded by the annual Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) Day, which met under the theme "Sing for Joy" (Psalm 90:14).

The opening service on Wednesday evening was led by Pastor Gary Jorgenson, Ramsey, Minn., who is the current assistant to the president, and special music was provided by the Ambassadors, a summer music team from the Free Lutheran Bible College (FLBC). The message on the conference theme, "God Rewards the Faithful" (Hebrews 11:6), was delivered by outgoing President Lyndon Korhonen, who has served in the position since 2013.

The conference was officially opened by the president, and Jorgenson led a service of remembrance for the following departed pastors: Paul Nash, Walter Johnson, Alvin Grothe, and Arlo Feiock. The report of the Colloquy Committee was presented by Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, Minn., and a motion was made, seconded, and carried that it be accepted.

A highlight of the service was the ordination of 2022 seminary graduate Scott Erickson, who has accepted a call to serve Our Saviour's Lutheran, Dickinson, N.D., and a reception was held in his honor following the service.

The newly ordained Erickson led the devotional time on Thursday morning by reading from Isaiah 40:27-31 and leading in prayer. Other devotional leaders included Pastor Peter Franz, Maple Grove, Minn., Pastor Greg Schram, Loveland, Colo., Pastor Jim Rasmussen, Maple Grove, Minn., and Pastor Shane McLoughlin, Minot, N.D.

The prayer hours each day at the close of the morning sessions were led by Pastor David Jore, Mentor, Minn.

The Credentials Committee reported that a total of 458 people (298 laity, 160 pastors) registered for the conference. The conference agenda was adopted, with an amendment that nominees for editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador* would be received at the time of elections for Committee No. 1. The president suggested that speaking on resolutions be limited to five minutes, alternating pro and con viewpoints.





LEFT: Pastor Craig Benson, Kenyon, Minn., joins a group to pray for various aspects of the AFLC during Thursday's prayer time.

TOP: Former, current, and future presidents were on hand following the 60th anniversary service. From left, Pastor Robert Lee, Pastor Elden Nelson, Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, and Pastor Micah Hjermstad.

MIDDLE: Bonnie Handsaker and Michele Mobley discuss the wording of a resolution as members of Committee No. 4.

ABOVE: Pastor Jarrod Hylden, Phillip Peterson, and Kevin O'Neil catch up during a break.





TOP: President-elect Pastor Micah Hjermstad addresses the conference at the start of business on Friday morning.

CENTER: Children taking part in the vacation Bible school program line up and wait for their teacher before moving on to their next activity.

ABOVE: Mark Rustad and Pastor Nathan Olson laugh at comments made by Pastor Peter Franz, who was leading devotions.

OPPOSITE PAGE: AFLC pastors line up to pray behind newly ordained seminary graduate Scott Erickson.

The first voting was for nominees to the Schools, Missions, and the ARC Corporations, followed by nominees for the Schools Board of Trustees (one layman), the World Missions Committee (one pastor, one layman), the Home Missions Committee (two laymen, one pastor), the Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters (FLAPS) Board (one layman, one pastor), Bay Broadcasting Board (one pastor), and the ARC Board (one pastor). See pages 14-15 for these and other election results.

Pastor Korhonen presented his final report as president of the AFLC, in which he marked the 60th year of the AFLC and urged members to diligently pass on our heritage to the third generation, continue to build our ministry on the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word, and preserve the unity of the Spirit in our relationships with each other. He also highlighted the continuing need for pastors to serve AFLC congregations. Vice President Terry Olson pronounced the Aaronic blessing on him at the conclusion of his report.

## + ELECTIONS

One of the highlights of the conference was the election of a new AFLC president. In preparation for the voting, Secretary Micah Hjermstad explained the procedures. The job description from the Rules for Work was read by Pastor Korhonen. The nominating ballot was taken, resulting in 51 pastors nominated. The nominees were given time to remove their names from consideration, which resulted in a first ballot with 20 names: Micah Hjermstad, Gary Jorgenson, Terry Olson, Lloyd Quanbeck, Jason Holt, Michael Brandt, Todd Erickson, Tom Schierkolk, Alan Arneson, James L. Johnson, Jon Benson, Jon Wellumson, Jonathan Abel, Joe Ocker, Kevin Olson, Tim Carlson, David Johnson, Mike Klenner, Del Palmer, and Jerry Peterson.

The second ballot narrowed down the names to the top three nominees who had reached the required 10 percent threshold of votes: Micah Hjermstad, Gary Jorgenson, and Terry Olson. The final ballot was taken at the end of business on Thursday after a motion was made, seconded, and passed to vote immediately instead of postponing the vote to Friday, as proposed. The results were announced at the start of the Mission Festival Service on Thursday evening. Micah Hjermstad, pastor of St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church, Fargo, N.D., was elected as the sixth president of the AFLC, a three-year term. A third-generation PK (pastor's kid), Hjermstad is the first president to be a graduate of both our Bible college and seminary. He is also the youngest at 40.

At the beginning of the business session on Friday, Hjermstad addressed the conference, noting his thanks and praise to God for His direction and asking the AFLC to cover him in prayer as he transitions from parish ministry into the role of president.

The vice presidential election proved to be an eventful process that stretched over Friday and Saturday's business sessions. Incumbent Pastor Terry Olson, who has served four one-year terms, needed to meet a threshold of 75 percent of the vote totals. However, after the nominating ballot and two spare ballots, Olson had not reached the required percentage, which sent the election back to the nominating phase, at which point Olson removed his name from consideration.

After a second nominating ballot, 27 names were listed for consideration as the next vice president. A round of voting reduced the nominees to three: Pastors Gary Jorgenson, Lloyd Quanbeck, and Jason Holt. With a final ballot, Gary Jorgenson was elected as the next vice president of the AFLC, a one-year term.

After a nominating ballot and two rounds of voting, Pastor





Brett Boe, Elk River, Minn., was elected as secretary, a one-year term.

Three nominees from the floor were submitted for the position of editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*: Andrea Christenson, Pastor Andrew Kneeland, and Pastor Marty Horn. After two rounds of voting, Pastor Andrew Kneeland, St. Louis, Mo., was elected as the nominee, which must be affirmed by the Coordinating Committee.

## + HOME AND WORLD MISSIONS

A second highlight of the conference was the proposed changes in the structure of the Mission Corporation, which has included both world and home missions since its formation in 1963. With a nearly unanimous vote, the corporation members, meeting on Friday, passed a motion to separate the corporation, resulting in the creation of a new World Missions Corporation and the transition of the current Mission Corporation to the Home Missions Corporation. The latter includes Bay Broadcasting and FLAPS. (See Pastor David Handsaker's article on page 20 for more information.) One change to both corporations is that the former committees serving the corporations will now become boards of directors.

Both corporations were encouraged by Pastor Ray Ballmann, a member of the Restructuring Committee formed at the 2021 Annual Conference, to hold to their legal documents and to carefully consider their new bylaws.

In the organizational meeting of the new World Missions Corporation, members accepted the articles of incorporation. After a discussion about the membership number (proposed to decrease from 50 to 30 members after five years), the bylaws were amended to keep membership at 50. Officers elected included Pastor Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, S.D., as president; Pastor Craig Johnson, Lake

Stevens, Wash., as vice president (and board chair); Pastor Brian Davidson, Ashby, Minn., as secretary; and Pastor Eugene Enderlein, Plymouth, Minn., as treasurer.

The new Home Missions Corporation also approved their amended and restated bylaws. New terms of service on the Home Missions Board were designated for current members: Tom Caouette and Pastor Andy Coyle will serve one more year on two-year terms, Pastor Jon Langness will serve two years of a remaining two-year term, and Glenn Mork will begin a new two-year term. Elections were then held to fill vacant board seats (see pages 14-15). Executive officers of the corporation elected in the meeting include Pastor Mark Olson, Kasson, Minn., as president; Glenn Mork, Buffalo, Minn., as vice president (and board chair); Pastor Nick Schultz, Chamberlain, S.D., as secretary; and Tom Caouette, Nisswa, Minn., as treasurer.

Anticipating the change in structure to the corporation, a resolution was presented at the 2021 Annual Conference to amend the Rules for Work, Article 10, to include the new corporation and change the name of the old corporation. That resolution was presented at the end of the business session this year and after a motion to adopt, the resolution carried. It changes "Board and Corporation of Missions" to "Board and Corporation of Home Missions, Board and Corporation of World Missions."

Further, two new resolutions to amend the Rules for Work were presented by Handsaker, which will be presented at the 2023 conference for approval. In the first, Article 11 will change "Board of Missions" to "Home Missions Corporation, World Missions Corporation." More significantly, the second changes the term limits for Home and World Missions Board of Directors. Instead of a maximum of two five-year terms, the bylaws for the two





TOP: Conference attendees met in the ARC gym, where business sessions were held each morning and afternoon.

ABOVE LEFT: Vonne and Michael Coyle react to the WMF officers who presented their report in the form of a song.

ABOVE RIGHT: VBS students watched a puppet play.

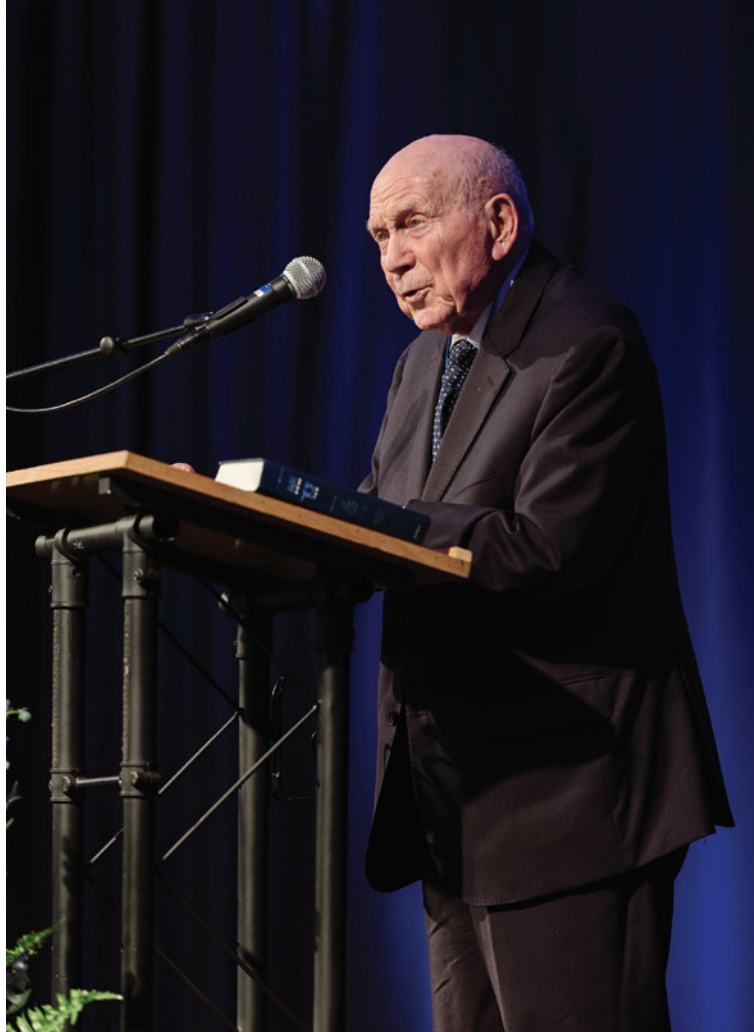
NEAR RIGHT: Pastor John Eidsmoe confers with fellow parliamentarians.

FAR RIGHT: Pastor Lynn Kinneberg fills out a ballot.

OPPOSITE PAGE (clockwise from top left): Pastor Raynard Huglen gave the message at the 60th anniversary service. Pastor Sam Wellumson speaks to a conference resolution under Committee No. 1. Deborah Strand reacts to a conference speaker. Pastor Jason and Jennifer Holt talk with Nathan and Amy Dalager.







corporations have established two-year terms, with a total of five consecutive terms possible. Thus, the proposed wording to change Article 10, section A reads, “Except for the members of the Home Missions Board and World Missions Board who can serve five consecutive terms.”

The Mission Festival Service was held Thursday evening, with Pastor Jon Langness, member of the Home Missions Board, leading the service. Pastor Miao Zhao, who serves Living Stones Fellowship, an AFLC Home Missions church in St. Paul, Minn., reported on his ministry to Chinese people, primarily students at the University of Minnesota. Pastor Andrew Olson, AFLC missionary on loan, brought the message.

## ✦ MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Members of the Coordinating Committee gave an update on a large financial gift of \$5.8 million given in 2021, which has allowed the General Fund to endow the Development department (\$2.9 million); to help pay down debt for the ARC and the Schools, and to cover overhead costs for ministries in 2021 (\$650,993); and to cover overhead costs in the administration building through 2022 (\$265,445). The remaining funds have been invested. The committee members also encouraged members to subscribe to *The Lutheran Ambassador*, now available for free, as well as support the ministry through gifts.

Pastor John Eidsmoe, acting director of Military Chaplaincy following the resignation of Pastor Craig Benson, reported that the AFLC has sought affiliation with the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as an endorsing agency for chaplaincy, a requirement to become a military chaplain. This move could allow the Coordinating Committee to establish its own endorsing agency in

the future, should they pursue the option.

Kirk Rautio, director of the ARC, reported a reduction in debt by \$340,000 in 2021 to \$862,000 through charitable giving. The gifts have also funded upkeep of the camp’s grounds and buildings, programming for youth, and the purchase of new equipment.

Representing the Budget Analysis Committee, Christine Stout reported an overall increase of 10 percent in subsidy receipts in 2021. However, the increase follows a five-year decrease in giving by 23 percent from 2017 to 2020. The BAC has cautioned AFLC ministries to consider the possibility of decreased giving in their 2023 subsidy requests and have suggested an increase of 3 percent. All ministry subsidy requests, save one, have either stayed within the benchmark or have proposed subsidy decreases. The General Fund requests \$424,000 (3.25 percent increase), AFLC Evangelism and Discipleship requests \$132,500 (3 percent decrease), Parish Education requests \$175,265 (3.19 percent increase), Youth Ministries request \$153,000 (5 percent decrease), Schools request \$757,238 (6 percent increase), Home Missions requests \$450,000 (14 percent decrease), and World Missions requests \$471,000 (5 percent decrease). The Schools’ request, according to the BAC, reflects the rising cost related to the Student Life Center and high inflation impacting the cost of food, energy, and operational costs. All ministries housed in the administration building have included overhead costs in their 2023 budgets, as a determination has not yet been made regarding abating the costs through the General Fund. All subsidy requests were approved by the conference.

Marian Christopherson, director of Parish Education, reported on the completion of several publishing projects in the last year. AFLC Heritage Series, Volume V, *One Thing I Seek: Selected Writings of Francis W. Monseth*, was completed and delivered





TOP: Pastor Matthew, Luke, Jean, and Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck have some family time during a break in the business session.

MIDDLE LEFT: Kids took part in a craft during VBS.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Pastor Jeff Swanson gives an update on the work of Home Missions in Alaska.

ABOVE: Pastors Lowell Watt, Joe Ocker, and Mark Antal spent time praying for the ministries of the AFLC during the first conference prayer time.

OPPOSITE PAGE (clockwise from top left): Regan Johnson and Pastor Brady Arneson talk following the Mission Festival Service. Pastor Jim Fugleberg and Joan Thompson work on resolutions for Committee No. 3 on Missions. Pastor Chad Friestad and Pastor Ray Ballmann listen to a comment during a business session. Members of the FLBC Ambassadors (Maria Overman, Brennan Johnson, Luke Dryburgh, and Malena Twedt) sang during the Mission Festival Service.

last summer. The reprinting of *Luther for the Busy Man*, a daily devotional produced in a cooperative effort with the AFLC Schools, was completed in the fall, and due to significant printing delays, was delivered in January. The first quarter of grade two curriculum on the Ten Commandments was also produced in 2021. Quarters two and three are currently in production. A new Bible study, *The Gospel in the Congregation: A Study of the AFLC Fundamental Principles*, was completed this summer and is available for ordering. Finally, Volume VI of the Heritage Series, a personal history of the AFLC being written by Pastor Robert Lee, is nearing completion.

AFLC Youth Ministries highlighted aspects of their ministry to win, build, equip, and multiply teen believers, including the 2023 FLY Convention, FLY Beyond, and other youth and youth worker events. Among them, the Apprenticeship Program engaged with six youth workers who were partnered with an AFLC congregation for a one-year training and mentorship in youth ministry. A modified version of the program is now being offered to students at the Free Lutheran Seminary who are serving a yearlong internship.

The Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary reported on aspects of their vision to keep the Word of God as the substance of the program, offer a unique relational experience of in-person studies, and encourage students to participate in and equip them to serve a local congregation. The new Student Life Center has offered the schools an opportunity to interact with a wider audience outside of the AFLC, which has increased the visibility of the program. A concern to keep the program affordable for students remains a high priority. Staff are working to address a problem in the business model highlighted by severe inflation: raising fees to cover rising costs only increases the revenue covered by student fees (50 percent), which means donor giving (the other 50 percent) must keep pace with inflation—an unreasonable expectation.

## + RESOLUTIONS

Two notable resolutions were proposed and passed under Committee No. 1. The first encourages members of the Coordinating Committee to make use of members of the Colloquy Committee and “others whom the Coordinating Committee sees fit” to be involved in the process of evaluating applicants to the Fellowship and Clergy rosters. Currently, the Coordinating Committee’s process for scrutinizing applicants who have been trained outside of the Free Lutheran Seminary is conducted in-house. The resolution, which passed following comments from several AFLC pastors and laity, encourages the committee to follow the same colloquy process for these applicants as seminary graduates, who are also interviewed by the Colloquy Committee and the Board of Trustees.

The second resolution seeks to address current cultural pressures through the media and “many educational systems” to redefine the roles of gender and identity by reaffirming the AFLC’s historic stance to “uphold biblical principles of identity, gender, and family and affirm God’s clear directive in Scripture regarding the innate value He places on men and women and their unique purpose in His creation.”

A final resolution to amend the Rules for Work, 7a, regarding the role and duties of the AFLC president was read. The proposal would add the following sentence to the description of the president’s role, “The president shall represent the AFLC heritage, theology, and uniqueness before a watching world.” Additionally, the resolution would encourage the president and members of the Coordinating Committee to “review and assess the duties and job





description for the president and bring recommendations to [the] annual conference.” As a resolution that would change the Rules for Work, it was simply read at the 2022 conference and will come before the 2023 conference for consideration.

## ✦ BANQUET & ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

The annual pastors’ and wives’ banquet was held on Friday across the river from the ARC at The Creamery, Scandia, Minn. Outgoing Vice President Terry Olson presided, and several ordination anniversaries were recognized.

The Friday evening service was planned to be an observance of the 60th anniversary of the AFLC organizational conference, which met in October 1962 in Thief River Falls, Minn. The last two of our pastors who were present at the conference, Raynard Huglen and your editor, were both encouraged to share reminiscences of the gathering. Pastor Huglen was the preacher, and Pastor Lee led the service, presiding at a service of Holy Communion at the conclusion.

A few conference attendees were also recognized for their attendance as children at Thief River Falls in 1962, including the Mortrud sisters (Sonja and Marilee), Jean Presteng Olson, and Pastor Bruce Dalager. Two groups that are remembered for providing special music for some services were a girl’s chorus from Maple Bay Church in Mentor, Minn., and a male quartet from New Luther Valley Church, McVie, N.D.

## ✦ ANCILLARY PROGRAMS

A vacation Bible school program from Answers in Genesis called “Zoomerang” was offered mornings and afternoons for children attending the conference. Assisting with the leadership were two four-member FLBC summer teams, Covenant and Zion.

Members of the FLBC Ambassadors also helped when registration numbers reached a maximum. Youth attending the conference were also offered a morning program focused on worship, Bible study, and activities. In the afternoons, the teens were involved in various recreation programs.

Department electives were offered during two sessions on Thursday and Saturday following a lunch break. AFLC ministries including the ARC, Home and World Missions, Evangelism and Discipleship, Development, Youth Ministries, Parish Education, and the Schools used the 45-minute sessions to give conference attendees a broader picture of the work within each department.

Two 45-minute lecture series were offered on Friday afternoon. Col. John Eidsmoe spoke on the concept of Martin Luther’s Two Kingdoms. Andrew Hanson, music director at the schools, presented a practical session on music resources that are available to congregations.

## ✦ FUTURE CONFERENCES

Invitations were given and accepted for the 2023 and 2024 Annual Conferences. Dr. Wade Mobley invited the conference to the campus of the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary, Plymouth, Minn., in 2024. The conference will mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the schools. Pastor Ron Smith, Brookings, S.D., invited the conference to Sioux Falls, S.D., in 2023.

*Lee, editor, is a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn. Gunderson, managing editor, is a member of Living Hope, Rogers, Minn.*









# GOD REWARDS THE FAITHFUL

By Pastor Micah Hjermstad

Our midweek Bible study at church recently encountered the story of Rebekah and Jacob tricking Isaac into thinking that Jacob was Esau. Frankly, the story doesn't make the family look great. Isaac blatantly disregarded God's promise by seeking to give the blessing to Esau after God had clearly explained that it should go to Jacob. Rebekah purposely deceived her husband so that Jacob would get the blessing. In light of Isaac's failure, some might argue that her intentions were noble. After all, she was just ensuring that God's promise came to fruition, right? But no. God doesn't need us to lie and deceive in order to accomplish His will.

Then there are the brothers. Jacob agreed to abet his mother's deceitful scheme. On top of that, when his father questioned him about his identity, he invoked God's name to swear he was telling the truth. The Bible has a word for that: blasphemy. Finally, Esau was so filled with anger and hate that he sought to kill his brother. When Jacob escaped, Esau redirected his anger toward his parents and married his uncle Ishmael's daughter to spite them.

What a mess.

But then Hebrews 11:20 stops us in our tracks. The writer summarizes this episode in Genesis in this way: "By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau." How could the Holy Spirit-inspired author of Hebrews call what happened "faith"? When Isaac realized what happened and Esau begged him to undo it, Isaac refused. He penitently realized that God had intervened in spite of his best efforts. He spoke in faith that there was one blessing, and it belonged to Jacob.

This story is just one of many that illustrates an important point. Hebrews 11 does not depict Christians who received God's favor for their righteous living. Rather, it recounts the lives of witnesses who went before us, struggled like us, and faithfully fixed their eyes on the God of steadfast love and mercy. God didn't excuse the sins of Isaac and his family, but He forgave Isaac and saw his faith that clung to the promise that God had given to him. So in Hebrews, that's what God chose to highlight.

I think of this story when I look back on 60 years of history in the AFLC. I've only lived for 40 of them, but

we all know that these years have been far from perfect. If Isaac and Jacob had been held to a divine measure of success, they would have utterly failed. I know that when it comes to God's standard of perfection, I fall far short, too. And yes—the AFLC is found wanting, as well.

That is why I am so thankful for the Book of Hebrews. Hebrews tells us over and over again that Jesus is "better." He's better than Moses, the angels, and the Old Testament priests, just to name a few. Jesus is better than anything this world has to offer. Jesus is the One who did meet God's perfect standard, and Jesus is the One who made "propitiation for the sins of the people. For because He himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (2:17-18). Jesus is the One our faith looks to for rescue, for assurance. He is where our soul anchors its hope.

He is our great reward. The theme for the 60th Annual Conference this summer was "God rewards the faithful," taken from Hebrews 11:6. The stories of Isaac and Jacob and all the others encourage us in our faith because they show that faith is not a moral achievement. They weren't rewarded for their great success in this life. They were rewarded for looking in faith to the God who makes a promise and keeps it.

That promise found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who came to save and who went to the cross to make atonement for our sins, to appease God's wrath, to give Isaac and Jacob and you and me His righteousness. What a reward!

I praise God for these 60 years that God has given to the AFLC, not because we've been perfect, but because God has been faithful to us. Like our fathers in the faith, we rejoice in past years and look ahead with great expectation because we have Jesus, our great reward. Georg Sverdrup says it well in one of his writings found in *The Heritage of Faith*: "Herein lies the strength of the church, that it boldly casts its anchor within the veil. There is its harbor; there its rest; there its crown."

*Hjermstad, who serves St. Paul's Free Lutheran, Fargo, N.D., is the president-elect of the AFLC. "Isaak en Esau," by Jan Gillisz van Vliet (1633-35).*

# ELECTION RESULTS

20  
22

20  
22

## 2023 COMMITTEES

One-year terms, serving at the Annual Conference, June 14-17, 2023, in Sioux Falls, S.D.

### Committee No. 1

Pastor J. Christian Andrews, Springfield, Mo.  
Pastor Shane McLoughlin, Minot, N.D.  
Nathan Moen, Colfax, N.D.  
Cheryl Skordahl, Rogers, Minn.  
Leslie Winston, Newark, Ohio

### Committee No. 2

Pastor Gary Fulsebakke, Devils Lake, N.D.  
Pastor David Handsaker, Cloquet, Minn.  
Pastor Gideon Johnson, Killdeer, N.D.  
Leeanna Lunn, Upsala, Minn.  
Alison Mundfrom, Plymouth, Minn.

### Committee No. 3

Bill Fish, Everett, Wash.  
Pastor David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.  
Pastor Andrew Kneeland, St. Louis, Mo.  
Jan Mobley, Lake Preston, S.D.  
Luke Pedersen, Cannon Falls, Minn.

### Committee No. 4

Pastor Luke Berntson, Northome, Minn.  
Deb Burmeister, Mount Vernon, S.D.  
Becca Mundfrom, Wayzata, Minn.  
Pastor Patrick VandenBos, Salinas, Calif.  
Bruce Stoudt, Bechtelsville, Pa.

### Committee No. 5

Pastor John Amundson, New Leipzig, N.D.  
Igancio Dávalos, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
Mason Mitchell, Bridgeville, Pa.  
Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Plymouth, Minn.  
Jim Berge, Maple Grove, Minn.



## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

One-year terms

### Central Tri State

Pastor Matthew Nelson, Radcliffe, Iowa

### Eastern

Vicki Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.

### Eastern North Dakota

Brent Peterson, Valley City, N.D.

### Illinois

Lisa Greven, Newark, Ill.

### Lake Superior

Jeffery Vaillancourt, Mason, Wis.

### Minneapolis

Dennis Holmquist, Maple Grove, Minn.

### Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado

Pastor Ken Hart, Fairbury, Neb.

### North Central Minnesota

Pastor Karl Anderson, McIntosh, Minn.

### Northern Michigan

Jordan Langness, Ishpeming, Mich.

### Northwestern Minnesota

Joel Mattson, Newfolden, Minn.

### Pacific Northwest

Pastor Cal Willard, Everett, Wash.

### South Central

Pastor J. Christian Andrews, Springfield, Mo.

### South Dakota

Michelle Olson, Arlington, S.D.

### Southwestern

Pastor Chad Friestad, Camarillo, Calif.

### West Central Minnesota

Pastor Richard Larson, Ortonville, Minn.

### Western ND/Eastern Montana

Mark Gustafson, Dickinson, N.D.





## COLLOQUY

One-year terms

- Pastor Kirk Flaa, Sioux Falls, S.D.
- Pastor Phil Haugen, Crystal, Minn.
- Pastor Peter Ward, Pelican Rapids, Minn.
- Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, Minn.
- Pastor Elden Nelson, Prinsburg, Minn.

## BOARDS, COMMITTEES, ETC.

### Benefits Board

- Layman, five-year term  
Joe Spilde, Arlington, S.D.\*

### Budget Analysis Committee

- Layman, three-year term  
Dan Aichele, Killdeer, N.D.
- Layman, three-year term  
David Johnson, Upsala, Minn.
- Layman, one-year term  
Danielle Joyce, Anoka, Minn.

### Coordinating Committee

- Layman, five-year term  
Mark Presteng, Grafton, N.D.
- Layman, five-year term  
Paul Haugen, Sioux Falls, S.D.

### Evangelism & Discipleship

- Layman, five-year term  
Micah Johnson, Maple Grove, Minn.\*

### Lutheran Ambassador

- Editor  
Pastor Andrew Kneeland, St. Louis, Mo.\*

### Parish Education

- Layman, five-year term  
Gwen Berge, Maple Grove, Minn.\*

### Youth Board

- Pastor, four-year term  
Matthew Nelson, Radcliffe, Iowa\*

## OFFICERS

### President (three-year term)

Pastor Micah Hjermstad, Fargo, N.D.

### Vice President (one-year term)

Pastor Gary Jorgenson, Ramsey, Minn.

### Secretary (one-year term)

Pastor Brett Boe, Elk River, Minn.

### ARC Board

- Pastor, five-year term  
Shane McLoughlin, Minot, N.D.

### Bay Broadcasting

- Pastor, three-year term  
Joe Ocker, Frost, Minn.

### FLAPS Board

- Layman, five-year term  
Bill Gellert, Brainerd, Minn.
- Pastor, five-year term  
Kris Nyman, Williamsport, Md.

### Home Missions Board

- Layman, one-year partial term  
Hans Tanner, Fargo, N.D.
- Layman, two-year term  
Dana Hagen, Sioux Falls, S.D.
- Pastor, two-year term  
Matthew Ballmann, San Antonio, Texas

### Schools Board of Trustees

- Layman, five-year term  
Phil Johnson, Esko, Minn.

### World Missions Board

- Pastor, two-year term  
David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.
- Layman, two-year term  
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn.

\* Nominees requiring CC approval

## CORPORATIONS Five-year terms

### ARC Corporation

Stacy Adrian, Binford, N.D.  
Kermit Berge, Larimore, N.D.  
Pastor Ron Brubakken, Osceola, Wis.  
Bonnie Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa  
Donald Jones, Kandiyohi, Minn.  
Steve Lehmann, Milford, Ill.  
Pastor Aaron Olson, Arlington, S.D.  
Kevin O'Neil, Beresford, S.D.  
Phil Peterson, Beresford, S.D.  
Lowell Watt, Fargo, N.D.

### Home Mission Corporation

Pastor Brady Arneson, Honolulu, Ha.  
Lavon Bohling, Inman, Kan.  
Tom Caouette, Nisswa, Minn.  
Bill Gellert, Brainerd, Minn.  
Dana Hagen, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
\*\*Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Elk River, Minn.  
Pastor Jon Langness, Deshler, Neb.  
Pastor Henry Mohagen, Reva, S.D.  
Greg Schmitke, Moorhead, Minn.  
Loren Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn.  
Jeremy Zeltinger, Valley City, N.D.

### World Mission Corporation

Kaetlyn Dávalos, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
Pastor Jim Fugleberg, Moorhead, Minn.  
Pastor Craig Johnson, Lake Stevens, Wash.  
Pastor Lynn Kinneberg, McVie, N.D.  
\*\*Jim Marcusen, Taylor, N.D.  
Casey McLoughlin, Minot, N.D.  
David Moeller, Mayville, N.D.  
Heidi Mundfrom, Crystal, Minn.  
Karen Palmer, Shakopee, Minn.  
\*\*\*Mark Reilly, Bethel Park, Pa.  
Jim Thompson, Edgerton, Wis.  
Sharon Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn.

### Schools Corporation

Pastor Dan Antal, Grand Forks, N.D.  
Aaron Arneson, Fargo, N.D.  
Pastor Martin Horn, Crystal, Minn.  
Wanda Jacobson, Brooklyn Park, Minn.  
Phil Johnson, Esko, Minn.  
Erling Langness, Ishpeming, Mich.  
Jared Langness, Thousand Oaks, Calif.  
Dr. Dan Mundfrom, Greeley, Colo.  
Sam Nash, Fergus Falls, Minn.  
Dean Nelson, Vergas, Minn.

\*\*Two-year term, \*\*\*Four-year term



# SING FOR JOY

• BY KAREN FLOAN •

One hundred and seventy-five women gathered for the 60th anniversary of the Women's Missionary Federation Day on June 15 at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis. Lavonne West, president of the national WMF, opened the day with a welcome and prayer, followed by a welcome from Ruth Rautio, president of the Minneapolis District WMF. The WMF theme for this year came from Psalm 90:14: "Sing for Joy."

The morning began with Wendy Westlake, Gwen Berge, Anne Presteng, and Karen Floan, co-authors of the Bible study *Behold Our God*, singing a song entitled "Psalm 150." Then, referencing the study (based on Psalms 90-100), Berge shared a devotional from Psalm 99 about the attributes of God. After her devotional, a time of worship was led by Andrew Hanson, Rachel Mattson, and Jan Strand.

Hanson presented the first workshop on proclaiming God's love in the morning and His faithfulness at night. Referring to Psalm 92:1-2 and the WMF theme, he asked the question, "How do we sing for joy?" answering that we are to use our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

In the second workshop, Mattson shared that what we behold is what we will desire to see. She used the illustration of her infant child, Elliot, and the delight it is to watch him grow as he discovers new things. "Are we watching and waiting for God," she asked, "and remembering that God desires us to behold Him?" Then, using each word in Exodus 3:12, "I will be with you," Mattson explained that as we behold God, He promises to be with us, which enables us to sing for joy.

Vicki Johnson led a memorial service for women from the WMF who died in the past year. After playing the song "We Bear Witness," she shared from Proverbs 4:20-27 to remind everyone that legacies can be either good or bad. We need to leave good legacies, but we cannot leave behind good that we do not possess. She then read the names of 49 women who have left legacies of faith in their passing this last year.

Following this service, the Jared and Erica Trost family gave a brief update on their short-term missionary work to Uganda last year with Journey Missions. The women were then welcomed back after lunch to learn the choir song "Behold Our God," led by Presteng.

Strand presented the third workshop, "Sing for Joy—While We Wait!" She shared how music is auditory but can still be effective even without sound, demonstrating by

having the audience sing a kindergarten song with actions and then eliminate certain words. She then encouraged the women to consider what kind of sounds people in Bible times might have heard as they waited on God: Noah and his family as they waited on the boat; Hannah as she waited for a child; the woman with an issue of blood, waiting for 12 years for healing; and Esther as she prepared to see the Persian king. Strand also shared examples of songs people can use in specific situations and suggested that each woman create a list of songs and hymns as resources. She closed with the song "We're Almost Home."

Following her workshop, the women broke into prayer groups and prayed for the 2022 prayer list including AFLC leaders, WMF officers, Home and World Missions, missionaries, and Christian education departments (Parish Education and the AFLC Schools). Liz McCarlson then closed the prayer time by singing "The Lord's Prayer."

The total WMF Day offering reported by treasurer Margie Lee was \$4743, with half going to the WMF and half to Christian education (divided into thirds).

During the business meeting, Presteng and Floan were elected unanimously to serve as first vice president and recording secretary, respectively. Elizabeth Jore, Peggy Weinrech, and Bethany Temte also gave a presentation on spiritual mentoring, using examples from their congregation at Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn. They put together a short booklet on mentoring.

The Mission Festival Service was held on Thursday evening, June 16. Pastor Jon Langness led the service with pianist Laurie Nash, and the Free Lutheran Bible College Ambassadors presented special music. President West gave a welcome and recognized AFLC missionaries present. A short Home Missions presentation was given by Pastor Miao "Holmes" Zhao who serves the Living Stones Chinese Lutheran Fellowship in St. Paul, Minn. Pastor Langness prayed for Pastor Holmes and missionary Andrew Olson. Pastor Olson then preached the evening message based on Deuteronomy 33:27, "Arms that Will Welcome You Home."

The offering was taken during a video of missionary greetings. The total offering received was \$3870 with half to World Missions and half to Home Missions. The service closed with the Lord's Prayer and the benediction.

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





LEFT COLUMN (from top):  
Lavonne West, Pastor Miao Zhao,  
and Pastor Andrew Olson spoke  
at the Mission Festival Service.  
WMF Day attendees.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Karen Floan, Gwen Berge, Karen Westlake, and  
Anne Presteng sang to open WMF Day. Elaine Mundfrom and Katie  
High join a group for prayer. Cris Finstrom joins the group worship.  
Linda Mohagen talks with a friend during break. Brandi Jensen joins in  
group worship. Jan Strand and Rachel Mattson led the group singing.



# More photos from the 60th Annual Conference



## Upcoming Events

- October 3: Installation service for new AFLC President Micah Hjermstad, 7 p.m. on the AFLC campus, Plymouth, Minn.
- October 3-4: AFLC All Boards meetings, AFLC campus
- October 4-6: AFLC Pastors' Conference, Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis.
- June 14-17, 2023: AFLC Annual Conference, Sioux Falls, S.D.



TOP: Pastor Robert Lee (from left), Pastor Dale Finstrom, and Pastor Raynard Huglen talk following the 60th Anniversary Service on June 17. TOP MIDDLE: Pastor Dean Feistner reacts to a conference speaker. TOP RIGHT: Jim Berge and Pastor Steve Jensen listen to Pastor Steve Berntson while working on Committee No. 5. MIDDLE RIGHT: Pastor Lyndon Korhonen ordains Pastor Scott Erickson during the opening service of the conference. BOTTOM RIGHT: An FLBC summer team leads a song during VBS. NEAR RIGHT: Kirk Rautio presents Pastor Korhonen with a thermos in the opening service. MIDDLE: Ephraim Amiot watches a puppet show during VBS.





# WORTHY OF LIFE

BY PASTOR DAVID NELSON

A typical hospice patient is expected to live no longer than six months. Offering comfort, care, and support to these terminally ill patients and their families, hospice programs provide a team that includes a medical director, skilled nurses, hospice aids, a social worker, a chaplain, and volunteers. Clients are initially asked about their religious beliefs and whether or not they would like pastoral visits from the hospice chaplain. Some say yes; some say no. My role as a chaplain is to treat each one with respect, regardless of where that person is on his or her spiritual journey.

Why should I, as a pastor, or you, as a Christian, be concerned about the person on hospice? Because every human being has infinite value. This idea is especially important in the Judeo-Christian worldview. It is what we call “the sanctity of human life.” This extends from conception to natural death. From Scripture we understand that humans were originally created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*; see Genesis 1:27). This was true morally—that is, our first parents were perfectly righteous and good. But that image of God in a moral sense was lost due to our first parents’ fall into original sin (Romans 3:23, 5:12). Metaphysically, however (because we are more than just physical bodies), our value of having been created in the image of God remains. We are different from and higher than the plants and animals around us (Genesis 9:6; James 3:9-10). Christians—those who

trust in Christ alone for their salvation—have the image of God restored in Christ (Colossians 1:15, 28; 3:10). This is our justification before God: Christ’s righteousness counted as our own, our sinfulness imputed to Christ on the cross when He died once for all for our sins.

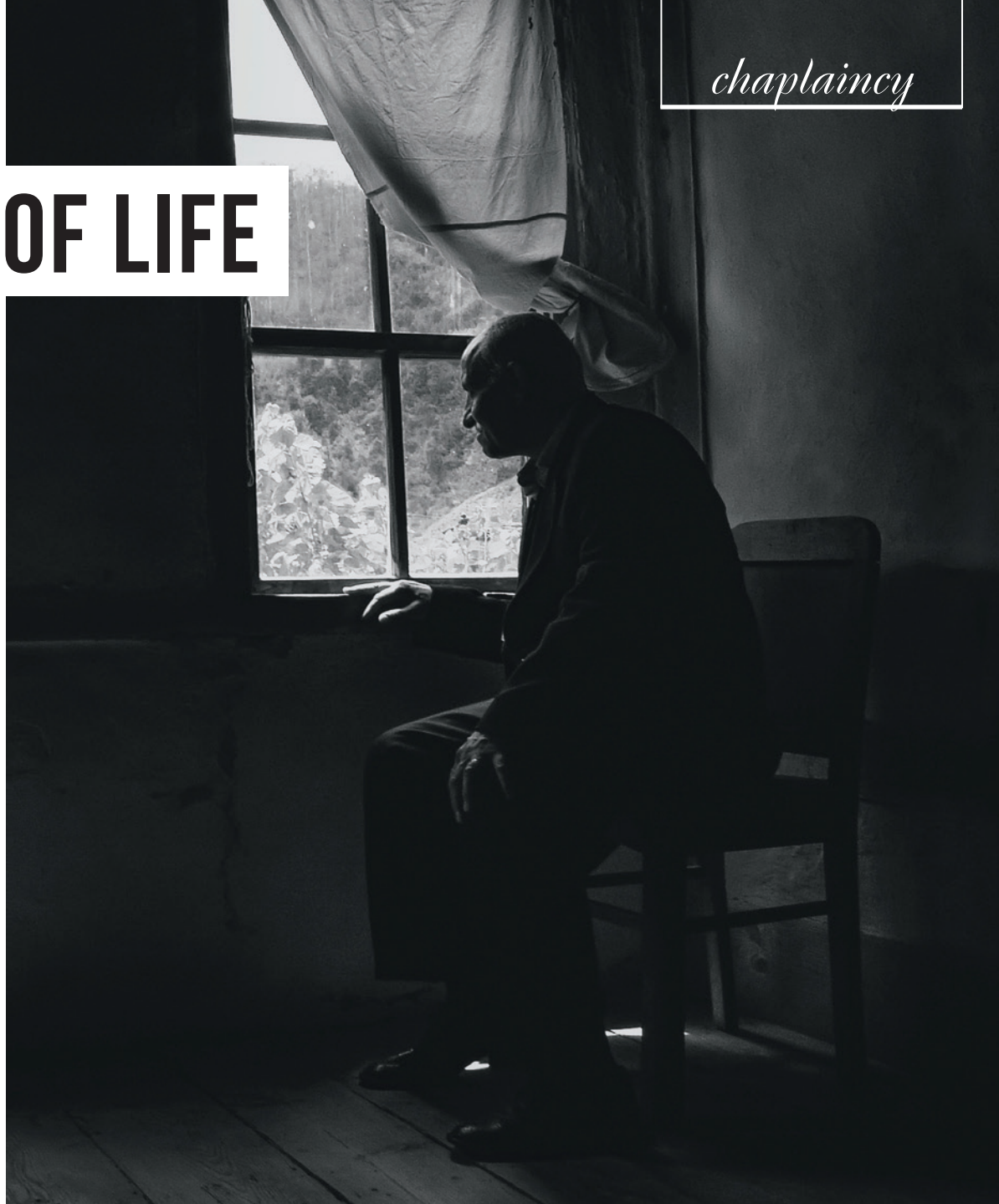
What difference does this make? We are to treat every single human being with honor and respect—as being worthy of life. We are to demonstrate this love of Christ for our neighbors regardless of our neighbor’s age, health, ability, sex, wealth, power, or influence.

The people I visit are alone, afraid, facing the reality of possible suffering and almost certain death. They often have questions and confusion, and struggle with regrets or other concerns. Can I help? Yes. I can be like Job’s friends when they

were the most helpful: present, listening, and empathizing. More than this, I can tell the people I visit (or remind them) of Jesus who loves them so much that He suffered and died for them on the cross to pay the complete penalty for their sins, and rose again for their justification. The believer in Jesus has peace with God and a home in Heaven after death.

I always try to remember the value of that human being in front of me. What we Christians do for our neighbors, we do for Jesus—even if they don’t respond, appreciate, or remember who we are or what we have done (Matthew 25:35-36).

*Nelson is an AFLC Chaplain living in Marshall, Minn.*







## Missions Division: A winning strategy

By Pastor David Handsaker

In I Chronicles 19, King David's general, Joab, makes what might be the simplest successful battle plan ever. With enemies in front of and behind him, he splits his forces in two. If either enemy is too strong, then one group of forces will help the other. The writer tells us that by allowing each group of forces to focus on one enemy, Joab led the army to victory and the advancement of God's kingdom.

Though entirely different in context, this story captures the challenges that members of the AFLC Missions Corporation have faced during the last four or five years, as well as their solution to those challenges. Missions Corporation members have wrestled to determine what the structure of our corporation should look like. We have struggled to communicate and keep one another involved. We needed to improve those two areas and our operating structure. We needed to split forces.

At the 2022 annual meeting of the Missions Corporation, members voted almost unanimously to create a new corporation and move the work of managing the AFLC World Missions' efforts into that new corporation—the World Missions Corporation. This process has now started and should be completed by the end of the year. It has been a significant challenge for members of the corporation to deal with all of our business in the time we have, as well as stay informed on all the different aspects of both Home and World Missions. By splitting the original corporation into two and reducing the size of each (from 100 to 50), we will be able to foster meaningful discussion more easily at our meetings. Reducing the scope of the corporations' responsibility will make it easier to stay up to date with our business, and sharpening our focus will better engage the corporation members.

Often the hardest part of leading the Home, World, or other AFLC missions' efforts is not managing the things that are done, but saying "no" to the good ideas that we can't do or that would distract us from our primary goal(s). "Mission creep," the gradual shift in objectives either away from one's focus or that broadens one's focus, can be hard to stop. Ultimately, however, it detracts from what someone is called to do. Diligence in staying narrowly focused on the goal leads to a better quality of success. For instance, the Home Missions department recently decided to stop training its own summer teams and instead to rely on the Free Lutheran Bible College to train all the summer teams for service in all our congregations, even the Home Missions ones. FLBC, in turn, relies on the Journey Missions department to provide short- and long-term missions opportunities for its students. In each case, mission creep is eliminated and the ability to do things with excellence increases. With the division of the Missions Corporation, each new entity can remain intent on carrying out the Great Commission in its own context.

*Handsaker, the outgoing president of the former Missions Corporation, serves St. Paul's Lutheran, Cloquet, Minn.*

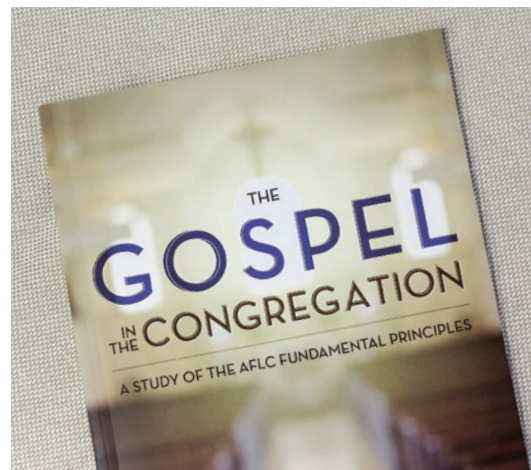
## Home Missions Board seeks director candidate

Members of the Home Missions Corporation Board of Directors have called for a special online meeting at 7 p.m. (CST) on Aug. 29 to vote to call an executive director of AFLC Home Missions. The candidate under consideration, should he be called, would fill the position part time.

According to Glenn Mork, board chairman, the call committee received 18 nominations for the position at the annual conference. Eleven pastors withdrew their names from consideration. The remaining seven candidates filled out a questionnaire and after a review by the committee, the decision was unanimous to pursue one candidate.

"We are using the same process that most churches use," said Mork. "We will consider one potential candidate at a time."

The call committee consists of four members of the board and the president and secretary of the Home Missions Corporation.



## Fundamental Principles study now available

Ambassador Publications, working with the Coordinating Committee, has published *The Gospel in the Congregation: A Study of the AFLC Fundamental Principles*, and it is now in stock. Free copies have been sent to each AFLC congregation for review, and copies are available at \$10/each. To order, visit the Ambassador Publications website ([ambassadorpublications.org](http://ambassadorpublications.org)).

Additionally, a series of videos are in the process of being produced to accompany each of the nine lessons. They can be found at [vimeo.com/aflc](http://vimeo.com/aflc).





# DISCIPLING DISCIPLE MAKERS

BY PASTOR JOHN LEE

*"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).*

**W**hat a privilege it is to disciple new believers. What a privilege to "walk by the way" with someone and to tie the Bible to everything their hands find to do. What a privilege to keep the Word before their eyes and to fill their homes with God's will and the good news of what Jesus has done for us. What power and peace we can have in living godly lives when we are taught by God and filled with His Holy Spirit.

I have been profoundly discipled by our Free Lutheran Seminary in Plymouth, Minn., and by its alumni. I thank God for His mission call to our congregations in the U.S., to which our Brazilian seminary owes a great debt of love—particularly missionaries like me, who were trained in the seminary. And what gratitude for all the tangible gifts that helped establish the many missionary

works in southern Brazil since the 1960s.

More than 50 years later, we carry on the important work of discipleship—only, the disciples have now become the professors. Pastor Silvio is a disciple of Pastor Connely Dyrud, Pastor Iran Goes is a disciple of Pastor John Abel and Pastor David Abel, and then there are Pastor Marcos and Pastor Fernando, disciples of Brazilian disciples. All are spiritual children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of our AFLC congregations in the U.S.

These past two semesters at Seminário Teológico Luterano Livre, I have been privileged to sit together with my students to study God's Word intensively. I am very pleased with my students' desire to study the Word of God more closely for the purpose of serving our congregations. During the afternoons, outside of classes, Pastor Fernando and I lead our seminarians in translating congregational studies, spiritual teaching biographies, and sound Free Lutheran theology. Through these studies, we hope to disciple spiritual servant leaders through our nascent publishing program: the DRELL Project (translated to the Department of Free Lutheran Education and Resources). It is wonderful to see these disciples grow in God's Word in evangelizing, teaching, and preaching.



Most of our young Brazilian congregations are mission works in great need of men full of the Holy Spirit, who are ready to strengthen people in God's Word. Our seminarians are scattered according to their ability to evangelize, preach and teach, lead worship or Bible study, and help with physical tasks in congregations. There is no shortage of work or opportunities to disciple our students. What a blessing it would be in Brazil to have a couple more servant-hearted missionaries. We have some congregations in Brazil which have had difficulty because they have no spiritual shepherd. Would you join me in praying for God to send workers among us, be they Brazilians or Americans, church planters, missionaries, pastors, or gifted lay leaders?

*Lee is an AFLC missionary serving in Campo Mourão, Brazil.*



## PEOPLE &amp; PLACES

**Pastor Chris Kumpula** has accepted a call to serve Zion Free Lutheran, Tioga, N.D. He currently serves Living Word Lutheran, Mankato, Minn., and will begin his new call on Aug. 7.

**Pastor Steve Jensen** has accepted a call to serve Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran, Ishpeming, Mich. He leaves his call at St. John's Lutheran of Schwer, Milford, Ill.

**Pastor Rob Edwards**, Webster, S.D., has accepted a call to serve Emmanuel Lutheran, Kenyon, Minn. He will begin Sept. 11.

**Pastor Jarrod Hylden** has accepted a call to Immanuel Free Lutheran, Centerville, S.D., where he was installed July 10 by Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president. Hylden continues to serve Skrefsrud Lutheran, Beresford, S.D.

**Pastor Sam Willard**, a 2022 graduate of the Free Lutheran Seminary, was ordained and installed on June 19 at King of Glory Lutheran, Shakopee, Minn., with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiating.

Members of the World Missions Board approved **Pastor Andrew and Alexis Olson** as AFLC missionaries on loan to They Need the Bible, a new nonprofit mission agency started by Olson, which is focused on creating Bible resources and translation.

**Pastor Gordon Myrah**, 77, who served Trinity Lutheran, Brookings, Ore., for more than 30 years, passed away on June 30. A memorial service was held July 9 at Trinity.



## Journey Missions group travels to Uganda

Eleven people traveled with Journey Missions June 22 to July 13 to Uganda to serve the AFLC mission work there. Members included Jeff Hornby, Meg Hornby, Pastor Dean Feistner, Faith Hale, Abby Smith, Madi Demo, and Jon and Heidi Nelson and their three children, Jeremiah, Anja, and Judah. The team split their time between Gulu, where Pastor Brent and Emily Raan work, and Jinja, working with Pastor Nate and Rhoda Jore and the Ambassador Institute leadership board. Pastor Raan traveled with the team during their time in Uganda as the team's hosting missionaries.

## Conference service videos available online

Videos from the 60th anniversary Annual Conference evening services are available on the AFLC's Vimeo page. Included are the opening service with the ordination of Scott Erickson, the

Mission Festival Service, and the 60th Anniversary and Communion Service. The AFLC Vimeo page can be found at [vimeo.com/aflc](https://vimeo.com/aflc). Links can also be found on the AFLC website: [aflc.org/resources](https://aflc.org/resources).

## JUNE MEMORIALS

### Bible College

Arlene Carlson  
Ruth Claus  
Owin Sparby  
Juliann Jaeger  
Bethel Erickson  
Claudia Hooper

### Parish Education

Arlene Carlson  
Ronald Thorson  
Katherine Knutson

### Seminary

David Salvhus  
Ron Thorson

### WMF

Arlene Carlson

### World Missions

Peter Hill  
Eunice Will  
Arlene Carlson

... in honor of

### World Missions

Pastor Connely Dyrud

### Parish Education

Loiell Dyrud  
Pastor Lyndon and Linda Korhonen

### Home Missions

John and Carol Markwell

### Lutheran Ambassador

Pastor Lyndon and Linda Korhonen

## AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-June 30, 2022

FUND	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$33,060	\$226,723	\$211,025
Evangelism	15,191	73,430	69,309
Youth Ministries	10,266	84,620	93,101
Parish Education	13,755	79,255	94,362
Seminary	20,737	141,880	145,910
Bible College	52,332	241,265	219,740
Home Missions	22,987	183,015	235,849
World Missions	22,599	234,727	220,223
WM Personal Support	58,632	388,976	433,993
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$249,557</b>	<b>\$1,653,890</b>	<b>\$1,723,513</b>

For additional financial information for each department, go to [www.aflc.org/giving](https://www.aflc.org/giving)



# STAYING THE COURSE

*As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying, "... Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that the LORD may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'" (1 Kings 2:1-4, NASB)*

Because I am a worrier, I was worried that the president of the congregation I serve was in for a miserable week. It was 99 degrees when we arrived at the ARC on Tuesday afternoon for his first AFLC Annual Conference. I had failed to suggest he register for a room with air conditioning and apologized for my neglect. I prayed that we would get through that first uncomfortable night and on to better things in the days to come.

The Nominating Committee meeting, my first obligation for the week, convened first thing Wednesday morning. My



Andrews

traveling companion had no obligations until he rightly decided to say "good morning" to President Lyndon Korhonen, whom he saw across the drive. Quickly he learned that unless one is willing to serve on a conference committee,

one ought not greet the president first thing Wednesday morning. But what an excellent way to get introduced to the inner workings of the Annual Conference. Thus, a miserable night turned to a day of good work and the promise of a blessed rest of the week.

The 60th Annual Conference was filled with much of the normal business of conferences. It also highlighted a changing of the guard, so to speak. Retiring President Korhonen began the transition with words from Scripture reminding us of God's faithfulness and an ordination to pastoral ministry. A large gathering attended the Home Missions elective, anticipating insights into changes for the future. Young pastors Miao "Holmes" Zhao and Andrew Olson encouraged us to stay faithful in the works of church planting and world missions at the Missions Festival Service. One of the few remaining participants of the first conference, Pastor Raynard Huglen, shared his memories with the goal of spurring on the younger generation to continued faithfulness. Pastor Robert Lee, also an attendee at the first conference and retiring editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, led the Holy Communion service. Hoping that we would soon be able to

do away with the individualized host and cup packaging, he reminded us that the Supper is a *communion* in which we partake of the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

Far be it from me to compare our AFLC changing of the guard to David and Solomon. However, there are some good lessons with which David charged Solomon from which we can learn much. We have chosen to entrust leadership in our Association to a younger generation with the ecclesiastical ballot elections of Pastor Micah Hjermstad, president, and

Pastor Brett Boe, secretary. Pastor Andrew Kneeland's election to nominee as editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador* communicates a similar message. Yet electing Pastor Gary Jorgenson to the office of vice president also reminds us that there is wisdom in the words of our elders, just as David spoke wisdom to Solomon. In the broader context of the passage above, we are admonished to be "careful of our way, to walk before the LORD in truth with all our heart and with all our soul." And for us in the AFLC, the call is to remember our foundations, to remember our standing on the Word of God, to remember God's faithfulness. This reminder is for young Pastors Hjermstad, Boe, and Kneeland; but it is also a reminder for all of us. The faces representing us may be younger, but the mission remains and belongs to us all.

The president of the congregation I serve had an exceptional experience. He was amazed at how many people he recognized

who have visited our little congregation in southwest Missouri. He sat through every session, ripped out and filled in every ballot, worshiped, and communed. Through it all, God reminded him of his history with Jesus. He was encouraged not only to stay the course, but to continue to be used by God for whatever purpose God has before him. May the same be true for the entire AFLC.

*Guest editorial by J. Christian Andrews, Springfield, Mo., a member of the Editorial Board.*

*And for us in the  
AFLC, the call  
is to remember  
our foundations,  
to remember our  
standing on the  
Word of God, to  
remember God's  
faithfulness.*



*building the base*

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# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LUTHERAN

BY PASTOR JON LANGNESS

**T**he AFLC is an association of congregations gathered around a common confession and mission. This month we ask the question, “What does it mean to be Lutheran?” A first response might focus on our practice of baptism, specifically the fact that we baptize babies. Another response could be “law and gospel” because we know that’s the acceptable “Lutheran lingo.” For some, Lutheranism may simply be a family heritage (“My parents and grandparents were Lutheran, so I guess I am too”), or it happens to be the current church they attend. But being Lutheran is more than a heritage, more than practice, and more than church affiliation; it’s a confession.

What exactly do we confess? We start by recognizing the authority and the power of the Word of God. Our confession is derived from Scripture, not above or beside Scripture. It is a summary of the scriptural truths.

Scripture speaks of man as being spiritually stillborn. So, Lutherans confess in our catechism, “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord or come to Him.” We recognize

the law in all its sternness and accept it for what it is, harsh as it is. That law serves a purpose, however: to drive us to the end of ourselves and bring us to Christ. Our confession continues: “But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.” This reveals another tenet of our confession—faith is a gift. It isn’t generated by our own choosing. It is a work of God. Cue the sacraments.

Christians across denominations recognize that we are saved by Christ’s life, death, resurrection, and ascension. There are disagreements, however, as to how Christ’s atoning work is delivered to individuals. Our confession as Lutherans reminds us that the delivering is God’s work, through His Spirit and through the Word. Throughout Scripture, God works through means. As Lutherans, we recognize that the means through which God has chosen to deliver His grace to us are His Word, baptism, and communion.

Faith is God’s gracious gift which comes to us through His Word and sacraments. God’s gift of salvation doesn’t depend on our ability to articulate the doctrine of the Trinity flawlessly, our grasp

of Scripture, our age, our ability to reason or to choose God. Faith is a gift of God, and thankfully so. Adults are just as incapable of saving themselves as babies are. Our practice of infant baptism is an outworking of our confession. We baptize infants, recognizing God’s ability and desire to create faith. The same is true with the Lord’s Supper. We receive from Christ Himself a wonderful gift, His body and blood for us for forgiveness of sins. We take Jesus at His Word, trusting Him to do what He says He does. As we practice these sacraments, we confess God as the One acting, creating, delivering, and sustaining faith through His Word and Spirit.

While our “Lutheran-ness” may be commonly defined by our practice or traditions, it’s important to identify what we confess through them. Does our practice match a Lutheran confession that gives proper reverence to Christ and His Word? Or do our practices stem from a comfortable reverence for ourselves?

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*Langness serves Abiding Word Lutheran, Deshler, Neb.*