

THE 

APRIL 2016

LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR



aflbs

1966



2016

& beyond



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

APRIL 2016
VOL. 54 NO. 4

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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

(USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413)
is published monthly by
the Association of Free
Lutheran Congregations.
AFLC headquarters and
publications office is at
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,
Plymouth, MN 55441.
Phone (763) 545-5631;
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SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES AND INFORMATION

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Plymouth, MN 55441.
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$19 a year, Group, U.S.
\$20 a year, Individual, U.S.
\$22 a year, International
Periodicals postage paid
at Minneapolis, MN, and
additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER

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

I AM RICH

BY PASTOR STEVE SNIPSTEAD

The first time I felt really rich was the summer of 1964. I was riding my trike outside our house in Greenbush, Minn., looked down and saw a piece of paper on the sidewalk. It was green and it looked like a dollar bill. But it wasn't just a one dollar bill. It was a five dollar bill! I couldn't believe it. How could this happen? I took it back to my house in wonder.

I had no idea what to do with that kind of money. After I found out I could keep it, my first thought was to share it with my sisters. It was probably their idea, but my mom talked me out of it. I don't remember what I did with it, but it probably involved toys and candy. I still remember the feeling of being rich, the wonder of having more money than you knew what to do with.

Today I have far more wealth than my 5-year-old brain ever imagined, but believing I'm rich doesn't come any easier to me. It took a trip to India in 2006 to convince me that I was rich. I went to India to teach a church history class to national pastors. Knowing I was going to preach, I took the outlines of several messages that I thought were good ones.

I thought a sermon on Philippians 4 was a good one. There Paul writes about giving and being content. "For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11). In my first message, I shared on how contentment really comes by getting connected to God and finding your place in the world. Chapter four also mentions the generosity of the Philippians, "not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you only" (4:15). I talked about the principle of sowing and reaping; when we are generous God blesses us.

While I was speaking it started to dawn on me that this message was coming across all wrong. Here I was telling a group of women (their husbands wouldn't come to church) from the poorest part of society that they should be content with what they have, that God blesses those who give. But it came across all wrong because I was a rich American who just spent more money getting to their village than most of them would see in their lifetimes. I had no business telling them any of these things. It was all true, but it couldn't come from me. Not only was I rich, I was super rich, mind-blowingly rich.

I still have trouble believing I am rich, but the truth is that in every way that matters I am wealthy. I am rich in Christ "who became poor so that by his poverty you might become rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). I am also rich in this world's goods. I know I'm not alone. If you are reading this you're rich, too. The problem is that we are not very good at being rich, and we won't get any better at it until we believe we are.

Then verses like this take on a whole new meaning: "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life" (I Timothy 6:17-19).

Snipstead serves Faith Free Lutheran, Kalispell, Mont.

Six years ago, the Thief River Falls conference concurred with the Board's decision to open the Bible school that fall. Little did anyone dream that six years later 122 students will be studying at our school, and that the graduating class would number 35 students. Surely God has honored the step of faith that began the school.

—Pastor Richard Snipstead, 1972

As we now acknowledge the many blessings that God in His mercy has showered upon AFLBS during its ten years of operation, we do well to review the reason and purpose for its establishment and operation. ... "the Bible School was opened to meet the need for a conservative Lutheran Bible school where our youth, irrespective of race and color, could be given a firm foundation."

—Pastor Amos Dyrud, 1976

When we hear testimonies of what God is doing in the lives of our students, our hearts rejoice! Just to know that souls are being saved, and young Christians are making commitments to Christ in major areas of their lives causes us to marvel at the grace of God and the power of His precious Word to mold young lives.

—Pastor Don Greven, 1986

When our Bible school began in 1966, we enrolled thirteen students—the smallest Bible school in the world. Today across the world there are approximately 150 Lutheran Bible schools and institutes still in existence. ... praise God, AFLBS is now the largest!

—Pastor James L. Johnson, 1998

Bible School stands firmly on the inerrant, inspired, all-sufficient, authoritative Word of God. ... Our goal at AFLBS is to continue standing on the authority of the written Scriptures to provide a strong foundation for the lives of our students.

—Pastor Joel Rolf, 2007



AFLBS

100

FIFTY YEARS

BY PASTOR KEN MOLAND

The decision to establish the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in 1966 was to influence the identity of the AFLC in its formative years. This was to become “our school,” a place where AFLC youth could come to become grounded in their Christian faith and become equipped to serve in our local congregations and beyond. Our congregational polity saw the development of AFLBS as an institution to serve the local church, and it has done so now for 50 years.

I graduated from high school in 1965, the year before AFLBS opened its doors. I began my four-year college program that fall. It was during that first year of college that God’s call to full-time ministry became clear to me and I began to prepare to attend the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary. In the fall of 1969 I enrolled at AFLTS and arrived on campus as a junior seminarian. I was introduced to a school environment where the Bible was treasured and taught faithfully by a godly faculty. Personal faith and spiritual growth were emphasized in both the Bible school and seminary.

My home congregation, Maple Bay Free Lutheran Church in northwestern Minnesota, serves as an example of the importance of the Bible school movement within Lutheranism. Sunday school superintendents were graduates of the Lutheran Bible Institute. Two members of my youth group, just a year older, had chosen to attend a Lutheran Bible school in Fergus Falls, Minn. Then in 1966 as AFLBS opened its doors, two others from my youth group became a part of that first class of 13 students. AFLBS was now to become a growing influence in the AFLC and beyond in



the Lutheran church family and in the greater Christian Church as well.

AFLBS opened under the leadership of AFLC President John Strand, a man firmly committed to God’s Word and to the local congregation. He was also committed to the important role of music in the church and was instrumental in bringing in the first full-time choir director in the person of Don Rodvold.

Mr. Rodvold shaped the choral music of AFLBS over his long tenure and made AFLBS choirs and gospel teams a powerful teaching tool and a very effective outreach and promotional tool, as well. Mr. Rodvold understood the role and function of Church music and influenced much of the AFLC as choir director of AFLBS. His legacy lives on in exceptional vocal and instrumental music at our Bible school today.

The first full-time dean at AFLBS was Pastor Richard Snipstead, who was called from parish ministry to guide a newly developing school to maturity. These were the years of greatest numerical growth in the history of AFLBS as enrollment swelled from 13 to 130 during Pastor Snipstead’s tenure. The development of the campus moved forward also as the dean’s residence and two dormitory/classroom buildings were added to the beautiful grounds at Medicine Lake. And, during these years, AFLBS became the place to go for AFLC youth and others, as well. Students from beyond the AFLC and beyond the U.S. borders began to discover this Bible school. While the majority of students still came from AFLC congregations, more and more AFLBS saw its role in influencing the mission of the Church worldwide.

Pastor Snipstead was called back to parish ministry in 1975, leaving the dean’s position open. Pastor Amos Dyrud, dean of the seminary, provided interim leadership for AFLBS. I was called as a full-time faculty member to teach at AFLBS beginning in the fall of 1975. The pattern of calling faculty and staff out of the local congregation has continued, again emphasizing the close relation-

ship between our school and the local church. Academic credentials, while important, have never been more important than that vital connection to the grass roots of the AFLC. After my first year on faculty, I was called to the position of dean of AFLBS. Following another year as interim dean, I was installed in the position at an annual conference of the AFLC, again confirming the relationship between our school and our church body. I continued in the dean’s office through 1984 when I returned to parish ministry.

The following were years of solidifying faculty and curriculum at AFLBS. The student body continued to become more diverse as AFLBS grew in its outreach to the greater Lutheran family. As other Lutheran Bible schools tended to wane during these years, AFLBS maintained its commitment to an essential biblical curriculum. The ongoing development of the music department continued to bring rich blessings to the church at large. The concept of AFLBS being a tool for preparing for Christian vocation in missions and youth ministry also was developing, leading eventually to the establishment of the Missions Training Institute, a third-year program at for AFLBS students interested in full time ministry.

In addition to providing training in preparation for lay ministry, it became increasingly clear that time at AFLBS provided fertile ground for call into ordained ministry. Many men who began at AFLBS sensed God’s call to continue their preparation for Christian ministry at our partner school, AFLTS.

Throughout its history, AFLBS has continued to be a school closely connected to the grass roots of the AFLC. Each has shaped the identity of the other as a church family committed to God’s Word and the building up of the Kingdom of God on earth. God’s Word is our great heritage!

Moland, former dean of AFLBS and member of the Schools Board of Trustees, serves Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkland, Wash.

1966



1991

GENERATIONS

BY BEKAH PETERSON

I have been hearing stories about AFLBS for my entire life, whether from my parents, brother, uncles, aunts, cousins, or grandparents. My family and I loved to sit at the kitchen table and pull out the '92 and '93 AFLBS year books. We would snicker at the funny hair styles, and the different types of clothing my parents and their friends wore. It was exciting to look back in the past and see all the familiar faces. My parents had made many lifelong friends at AFLBS, and through their friendships my siblings and I have some pretty great friends, as well.

I've always planned on going to AFLBS. I remember being a freshman in high school when some seniors on my track team were talking about colleges and how they weren't sure where they wanted to go.

So I piped in and said, "I know exactly where I'm going!"

One of the seniors kindly told me, "You probably think you know where you're going now, but trust me, things change from freshman to senior year."

I looked at her and said, "No, you don't understand. I've been planning on going to Bible school my whole life. My parents went to AFLBS. My grandparents went to AFLBS. My brother is going to AFLBS. There is pretty much no way that I'm not going to AFLBS."

Most of what I had heard about AFLBS was good. My dad and mom had a wonderful experience there, not just because they met each other at AFLBS, but because of the classes and fellowship with other believers. A foundation based on the Word of God was built under

them. The Bible was taught in a way that was understandable and easy to apply to their lives. My dad told me recently that he had been frustrated and confused coming out of high school, but hearing the Word of God in his AFLBS classes from teachers like Pastor Phil Haugen and others helped to clear up his foggy understanding of the Bible and build that solid foundation in Christ.

When I was younger I definitely thought that AFLBS had to be the closest thing to perfect that you would ever find of this earth. Once people who are closer in age to me—my cousins and brother—started going to Bible school, I started to hear some of the more realistic things about campus life. It was not perfect after all. I learned that there are still struggles with sin, not everyone loves every class, not everyone agrees with what is said in every class, and everyone isn't best friends with everyone. My ideas of the Bible school were a little off, but this didn't surprise me that much. And it certainly didn't sway me from wanting to go to AFLBS.

For the longest time I wanted to go to AFLBS to make lifelong friends like my parents and my grandparents before me did. It wasn't until recently that my reasons for going to Bible school changed.

Last summer I worked at Crystal Springs Baptist Camp in Medina, N.D. While I was at camp I realized how little I actually knew about what I believed. I was a Lutheran at a Baptist camp, and I didn't really know why I was a Lutheran and what that actually meant.

During an evening service one weekend, the speaker offered campers a chance to ask questions. The first question asked was, "Does God love Christians more than non-Christians?" In my mind I thought, "What a silly question. Of course He doesn't. He made us all, and we are all sinners. No one is better than anyone else."

But that was not the answer the pastor gave. In fact, he hesitated and then answered, "No, I don't think that God does love everyone the same. I think that He loves Christians more than anyone else ..."

I had never been so uncomfortable in my

whole life. I wanted to say, "What are you talking about? Of course God loves Christians, but He also loves those who are lost! What about John 3:16?"

I didn't muster up the courage to say anything until the very end of the session, and when I did the speaker seemed to shoot down everything that I said. I was embarrassed and I felt very alone because there was absolutely no one who agreed with me. I started to doubt the love of God, and was scared that I had misunderstood what I had been taught. I had never been in a situation like that before.

Later I texted my brother, who had just graduated from Bible school a few months before. I asked him what he thought about the situation, "Does God love Christians more than non-Christians?" He told me no, that was not the case. God loves everyone and longs for all to come to the knowledge and understanding of Him. I don't remember exactly what else my brother said, but it helped a lot, and I felt very silly for not knowing what to say earlier. God's love is higher than our love and we can't fathom the depth of it. From that point on I realized that I didn't just want to go to AFLBS for the friends and fellowship, but I needed to go to AFLBS for knowledge and understanding.

So far AFLBS has been better than I expected. The classes are really great. I enjoy learning what is in the Bible and also learning how to study my Bible on my own. I loved the Principles of Congregational Life class because we learned a lot about the importance of the local congregation. Right now I think Romans and Galatians is my favorite class. It's really cool going verse by verse and seeing exactly what Paul was trying to get across when he wrote his letters. I have also been blessed with amazing new friends and a stronger relationship with old friends. I am so thankful for AFLBS, and the work that God is doing in my life here.

Peterson, a junior at AFLBS, is a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Valley City, N.D.

2016



1994



Following where God leads

BY GEORGE WATTS

Our family is currently living in the rural hills

of Burundi, a French-speaking, East African nation which has been declared the poorest and hungriest country in the world. You may wonder how we ended up here.

I grew up on the Canadian prairies, attended AFLBS, got a degree in history and political science, got married, moved to Kazakhstan, earned an MBA in Canada, moved to France for university, stayed there for work, had a son, moved back to Canada, had a few different jobs, had two more kids, moved back to France for my PhD, had another girl, then moved to Bujumbura, Burundi, to teach at a Christian university. And as of a few months ago, due to the ongoing violence in the capital, we have now moved to rural Burundi to help run a mission hospital.

On the surface, the story of my life since AFLBS seems quite random, full of chaotic twists and turns, and certainly not even close to anything that the 19-year-old me would have dared to imagine. In all of it, however, I've never had any kind of "burning bush" experience (Exodus 3).

While training with our mission organization, my wife, Susan, and I met couples who said, "We've both known since we were kids that we would be missionaries to ..." There, in the middle of training, we both felt that were *still* not sure that this is what we're supposed to do. However, looking back on our lives, it becomes obvious how we've been led by God.

I did my doctoral training in France where our family learned the language, which equipped us to come to Burundi without having to spend more

time in language studies. My dissertation was on "innovation under extremely-constrained resources," a topic that I chose because I found it academically stimulating and personally interesting—yet now I am working in one of the most resource-constrained places on the planet. I could recite countless examples such as these which can be seen in hindsight as God's guidance and preparation. But how did God lead us here to Burundi, or anywhere over the past few decades?

He has led us in the same way that He leads, speaks to, cares for, and grows all of us—through His Word, by prayer, in community with His people, and through acts of faith.

During my first year at AFLBS, there was an optional class offered that was so large (essentially everyone), that we couldn't fit in either of the two classrooms that were around at that time. So the class was moved to the chapel. What topic could draw young people trying to better understand what it meant to follow Jesus? The course topic was something like "Discovering God's Will For Your Life." I can honestly say that I don't really remember much of the content, other than the disappointment of the first class or two. You see, I was shocked to learn that there would be no secret formula given for life. The professor wasn't going to help us turn the Old Testament into some kind of *Da Vinci Code* text where we would discover a passage in the midst of the Levitical rules that suddenly unveiled the hidden key that showed us if we really should marry the person we were currently dating, what we should major in college next year, and what our career simply must be. Nope.

The way I remember it, our professor said something along the lines of, "Well, what did you think I would be telling you? God has already shown you the basics; let's look at them again." Talk about a bait and switch! We didn't show up in droves to find out that the things God had already told us to do are the things that He wants us to actually do. Where do we uncover the parts that specifically answer questions that we find hard to answer for ourselves?

Over the past 25 years, this is how I have found that God has led our family. He says, "Proclaim good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). "Look after orphans and widows" (James 1:27). "Love those who are foreigners" (Deuteronomy 10:19). God has told me to "act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly" with Him (Micah

6:8). The Gospels give us an incredibly vivid, clear, and accurate record of what Jesus said and did, how He treated, loved, and forgave people; and then He says, "follow me" (John 21:22).

There have been seasons in my life when I allegorized His call—"Yes, I'm following you in my heart."

However, I have found that the times when I clearly see God leading us is when we pray for courage, seek godly council, breathe His Word deeply,

and then actually do what He says. Actually follow Him when He says "follow me." We pray for courage, then step through the door that seems to be opening, saying, "Okay God, we can do this one small part. If you want us to do the next thing, you'll have to open that door." But we had to step through each of those doors, take each of those small steps.

This past year our family has been exposed to quite a bit of raw violence. We've evacuated twice, experienced a coup, and one day in December we sheltered in our house while the sounds of grenades, mortars, and gun-battles between government forces and rebel groups echoed through our city for 14 hours. At one point clusters of bullets from machine guns whistled past our house with our four young children inside. However, I can't think of any time in my life that I have known such a sense of calm, a sense of peace, of belonging—and a distinct sense of being led. There is no safer, better, more joyful place than when we are in the center of God's will.

I have found that God leads us; He doesn't shove us from behind unwillingly. I have found that He is always leading—it may be subtle, it may take patience, it may not be comfortable or what we want—but He is always leading. Those times when it seems like He is not, I need to be sure that I am listening, watching, and actually following.

Watts is a 1994 graduate of AFLBS. His wife, Susan (Dombrosky), graduated in 1995. They serve with Serge in Burundi.



1

Steve, I am excited about the new door of ministry the Lord has in store for you, teaching Systematic Theology at our AFLC Schools. After high school we ended up at Bible school, college (Moorhead State University), and seminary together. When did you first sense God calling you into pastoral ministry? And did you have any idea in those early years that the Lord might lead you to teach at our AFLC Schools?

I remember thinking about being a pastor in my early teens. By the time I graduated from high school I knew that I couldn't do anything else. My conviction was that Jesus was Lord of my future, and this is what He wanted me to do. The old saying about becoming a pastor was true for me, "Only become a pastor if you have no peace doing anything else." I guess I saw it that way very early in life. Our AFLC Schools are a wonderful place—I fell in love with the schools while I was a student. The teaching of God's Word was exceptionally clear, helpful, and life-sustaining. I left there in 1990 dreaming about coming back someday, but it wasn't anything like the unavoidable call to be a pastor.

2

It has been a lot of years since those school days. Where did God's calling take you and your family since seminary?

It has been my joy to serve as the pastor of AFLC congregations in Sebeka, Minn. (Bethany), Arlington, S.D. (Calvary), and Valley City, N.D. (Zion and Grace). I believe very firmly in AFLC Fundamental Principle no. 1, "The congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth." The greatest joys and highest honors are found in the congregation. Serving in the local congregation is the pinnacle of Christian ministry, bar none. Lay leaders and active members in congregational life share fully in this joyous and honorable calling.

3

Your extended family has deep roots in the AFLC. What would you say that you have learned from your dad, brother, and two brothers-in-law, all of whom served in pastoral ministry ahead of you?

Especially my dad, Gerald Mundfrom, and my late brother, John, helped me to see more clearly how grace works. Sometimes there are difficulties or challenges in life that simply do not get better or go away—you just live with them in daily dependence on Christ. Freedom from adversity doesn't require much grace. Life with sinfulness, weakness, and suffering requires constant grace. Christians enjoy this constant grace through Jesus Christ. This is called a cruciform or cross-shaped life, and it is the opposite of many popular corruptions of Christianity which are common today.

4

You are currently pursuing studies at Concordia Seminary (LCMS) in St. Louis, with the goal of a D. Min. degree. What are you learning in your studies there, and how do you think that will help you in your teaching at AFLC Schools?

The Doctor of Ministry is a practical degree. It doesn't focus primarily on abstract understanding of doctrine, but intentionally focuses on the application of doctrine to the life and ministry of the church. Oftentimes the more academic PhD studies become a discussion among theologians, while the DMin is an interaction with the living church. It will be valuable for me to experience the unique expression of Lutheranism which the Missouri Synod practices. We have our strengths and weakness, as do they. I hope to learn from them and also to be a witness to our valuable Free Lutheran heritage.

5

As you consider the larger spectrum of Lutheranism in America, how would you describe the unique place of the AFLC in Lutheranism today, and why are you glad to be a part of that?

I love our congregational focus built on the inerrant Scripture. In these information-rich times every congregation can compare itself to every other congregation. We foolishly compare small, rural congregations on the northern prairie to mega-churches with thousands of members in our nation's biggest cities. That foolishness will paralyze a church, and it is so wrong! Even the smallest congregation in a rural setting is the beautiful Bride of Christ and is blessed through the gospel with every gift necessary for faithful ministry. "According to the Word of God, the congregation IS the right form of the Kingdom of God." It is not a potential, but a reality.



Mundfrom, back row, center, attended the Association Free Lutheran Bible School 1980-82.

1980

6

A significant part of your calling at AFLC Schools will be training future AFLC pastors. What have you learned in your 26 years as a pastor that you wish to pass on to seminarians?

Pastoral ministry really comes down to the faithful proclamation of law and gospel, not just in theory or history, but applied specifically to each individual life and situation. Just because people come to salvation by faith in Jesus alone doesn't mean that law and gospel are faithfully working in every area of their lives (or even in the life of the pastor). Continual application of law and gospel in Word and sacrament is always needed. Living in the gospel and being free from the law in a relationship to Christ affects every other part of life—spiritual, emotional, physical, social, financial, recreational, and eternal.

7

Most of the courses you will be teaching are in the category of systematic theology or doctrine. Why is doctrine important?

Doctrine has gotten a bad reputation in the church of the 20th century. Some say it is impractical; however, correct practice is impossible without it. Others say it is divisive, and it is because it shows us the only true God and the only way of salvation. Some are afraid that a man-made “system” such as Catholicism, Calvinism or even Lutheranism will be imposed upon the simple truth of Scripture. The fact is that Scripture has its own system of doctrine; that is to say, Scripture is consistent with itself. When we discover the system of biblical doctrine—which I believe Confessional Lutheranism most clearly expresses—we will in fact be safeguarded from imposing our own views on Scripture. Another way to say it is: I'm glad to be a Lutheran because Lutheranism is much closer to Scripture than “Mundfromism,” or worse, “Steveism.”

8

Steve, I remember during those years living together with a bunch of guys in the house a block away from MSUM campus, that a certain gal started coming over to the house a lot. Since then God has blessed you and Joanne with family of your own, several of whom are now in their Bible school and college years. Tell us about your family and also the time frame for your planned move to the Twin Cities area.

Joanne and I have two children out of high school—Rebecca (at the University of North Dakota) and Philip (graduating from AFLBS this spring), and two at home—Heidi (a senior) and Alison (a sophomore). I am grateful to the Schools' Board of Trustees for allowing me to pursue doctoral studies during the first half of 2016 so we can move to the Minneapolis area after Heidi graduates in May. I plan to have earned half of the credits for the DMin before I begin teaching this fall.

STUDENT, PASTOR, TEACHER

Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck interviews longtime friend, Pastor Steve Mundfrom, on new role as professor of systematic theology at AFLC Schools

9

What are you especially looking forward to as you step into this new role? And what would you like us in the AFLC to pray for as you prepare and begin this new chapter of your life?

Every generation must wrestle with how the inerrant and authoritative Scripture speaks to its needs and duties. My goal is to teach students to wrestle with Scripture and their own faith so that nothing gets past the intense scrutiny of God's Holy Spirit applying His Word in every area of life. My own set of beliefs also needs constant testing by Scripture without fear or favoritism. Pray that God will help us all to be faithful to the Word.

Quanbeck serves Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon, Minn. Mundfrom, Valley City, N.D., will begin work on campus this fall.



2016

Mundfrom teaches a class at the 2015 Summer Institute of Theology.

W

hat vision
do members
of the AFLC

Schools Board of Trustees have for the future of our schools? That is a good question. But I think a better question to ask is what would the future of the AFLC look like if we did not have the schools?

Operating quality schools like our Bible school and seminary is expensive. And the costs continue to rise as we meet the demands to offer accredited programs. Maintaining a staff of full-time faculty who are equipped and paid well keeps getting more costly. And then there is the additional cost of building maintenance, employee salaries, etc. Everything keeps going up. Tuition must increase to help meet these demands. Is it worth it? Would we be better off just sending our Bible school students and future pastors to be trained at other institutions of higher education? Should members of an AFLC congregation call a graduate from any seminary to be *their* pastor?

The AFLC schools are absolutely critical to the very existence and mission of the AFLC. I say unequivocally that without vibrant, healthy schools that are committed to our founding principles, our AFLC and its congregations will lose some of their identity, their vitality, and purpose for existence.

If the members of our con-

BY STEVE JANKORD

gregations, too, see strong AFLC schools as being vital to the AFLC and continue to support the schools, then they, too, have a stake in the future of our schools.

*For the first time we have a president overseeing our entire school organization who is also the spiritual leader of our schools.

*We now have a vice president of academic affairs who oversees our schools to help with faculty needs and enable and empower faculty to do what they have been called to do.

*This fall we will have a full-time systematics professor who won't be burdened with administrative duties.

*We have recently implemented Institutional Objectives that we regularly examine to see if we are doing what we *say* we do.

These added resources put us in a position to make effective evaluations and adjustments to our programs to better serve our students and, thus, our congregations.

Because of these changes, which we began implementing in 2010 when members of the Schools Corporation directed the Board of Trustees to pursue accreditation, I believe we will see, in the very near future, more graduates of our seminary who are better equipped, better prepared, and more personally committed to teaching, preaching, and serving within free and living congregations. And by staying true to our mission, I believe we will see a Bible school student body that is not only growing numerically but also growing spiritually—realizing the Word is not just meant for head knowledge but applying that same Word to their daily lives in real and practical ways.

The schools now have a process in place to seriously examine all of our programs and see how we can better serve our congregations and all of the AFLC ministries. By the grace of God and through continued progress in this process, I believe we will be able to better serve the growing needs of World Missions, Home Missions, Evangelism, Parish Ed, Youth, lay leaders, etc., in the very near future.

Today the Schools are in the strongest financial situation that they have held for a long time. We see school enrollment on a strong up-swing for next fall. Because of congregational support, our cost to the student is still low compared to other schools. We still have lots of maintenance to do, we still have need for another full-time faculty position, but by the grace of God and through the continued support of congregations, the future indeed is very bright.

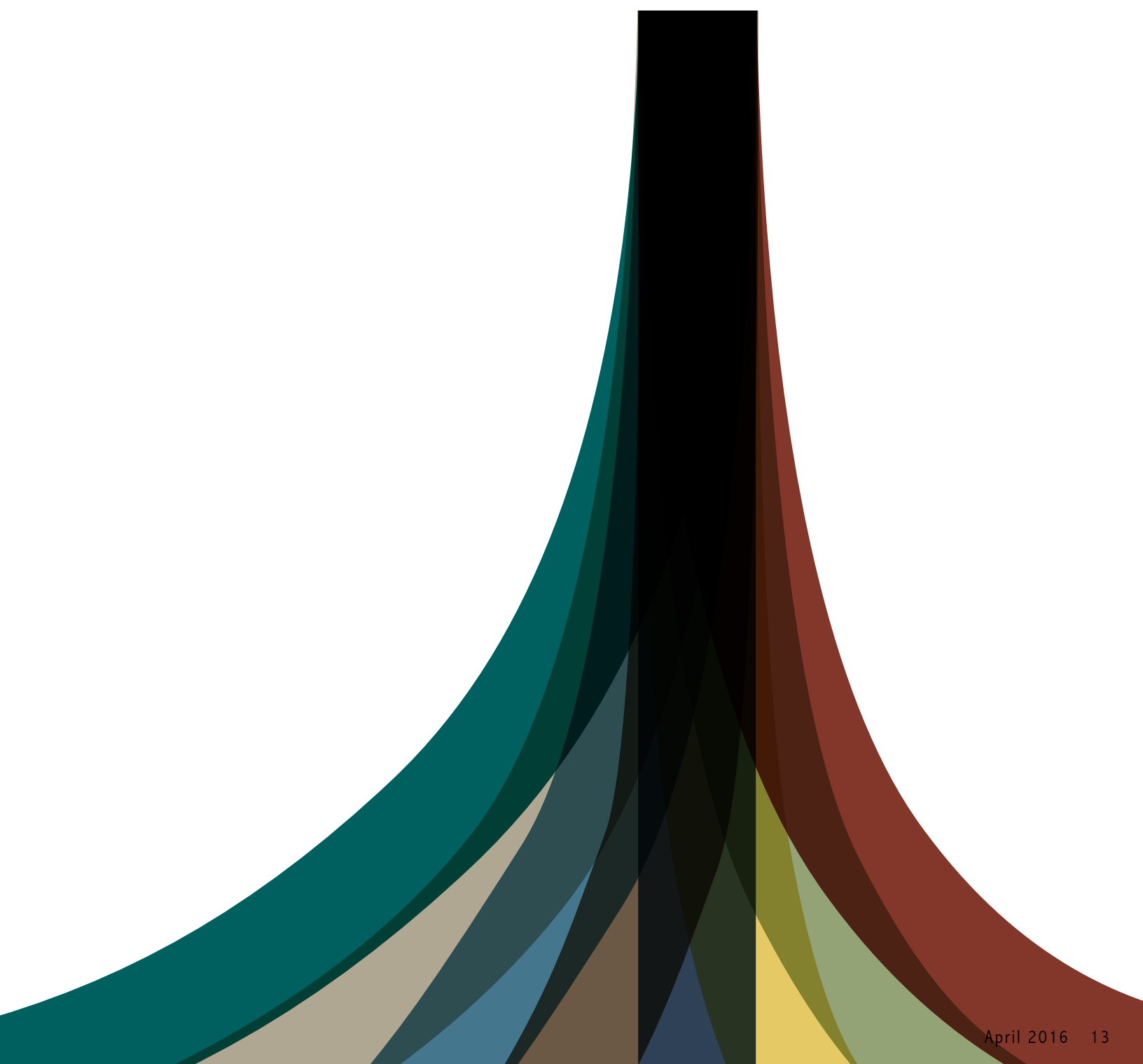
By 2018 we should be able to say that the Schools are fully accredited. The primary focus currently for members of the Board of Trustees is meeting faculty and student needs so that they are prepared to serve our congregations in better and more effective ways in the future.

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

We ask for your continued prayers, support, and input to ensure we are still what you want us to be in the future.

Jankord, chairman of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees, lives in Fort Mill, S.C.

Going For ward



1966

Campus celebration

Fifty years seems like a long time ago, yet as some of us look back, the past years have gone by swiftly. Imagine how our forefathers felt and were blessed when the first class arrived on the campus of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in 1966. It must have been a time of great rejoicing. When the school was founded, its purpose was to establish students in the eternal and inerrant Word of God for a life of faith in Jesus Christ and faithful service in His kingdom. That purpose still stands true.

When was the last time you stepped on the grounds of the AFLBS? When did you last walk around in the buildings that used to house your dorm room or the cafeteria where you ate lunch? Have you seen the changes to the campus since you left AFLBS? Have you kept in touch with some of your classmates? If it has been awhile since you last stepped foot on the Plymouth, Minn., campus or sat down to talk with your classmates, this summer may be the perfect time to return.

It's been 50 years since the first students stepped foot on campus. To mark that occasion, a campus celebration is being planned for July 28-31. The theme chosen for the celebration, "Encouraging One Another For Such A Time As This," is based on Hebrews 10:24, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." The utmost goal of the weekend's events is that those who attend will be challenged in their walk with the Lord, so that when they drive away from the campus they will know that they have



been strengthened by the Lord as both individuals and families.

The all school reunion will include many events throughout the weekend, beginning with a pizza party on Thursday evening, July 28, and concluding with a brunch on Sunday, July 31. Many of you who attended AFLBS remember the core teaching you sat under and the professors who led those classes. The anniversary weekend will also include workshops session centered on Christian living and the weekend theme, all

taught by current and former AFLBS teachers Pastor Robert Lee, Dr. Phil Haugen, Pastor Ken Moland, Pastor Jerry Moan, and Pastor James L Johnson.

Bring your children and grandchildren both Friday and Saturday mornings to a Christ-centered vacation Bible school program for children ages 4 years through those in sixth grade. All youths in seventh grade through their senior year are invited to participate in a youth program on Friday and Saturday mornings, as well. Nursery

BY TONNES & MARY POLLESTAD

Fiftieth Anniversary Committee

Chad Friestad
Paul Hensrud
Robin Johnson

Rachel Jones
Rachel Papillon
Mark Presteng

Pastor Tonnes Pollestad
Mary Pollestad
Pastor Joel Rolf



will be provided each morning for those younger than 4 years old.

On Friday and Saturday afternoons, events will include activities for children, a craft room for women, and a coffee house where you can enjoy visiting and reuniting with old friends. A golf scramble and a sporting clays event have been planned for Friday afternoon. Saturday afternoon has been set aside to offer time for class reunions on campus, which have been planned in five-year increments starting with 1966 to the class of 2016.

You are invited to rehearse for the anniversary choir at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, and sing at the Sunday morning worship service. A 5K run/walk has been planned for early Saturday morning.

Everyone will be able to browse the vast array of hand-crafted items, artwork, home décor, sporting goods, and much more at the silent auction planned to run from Friday through 3 p.m. Saturday. Items are still needed for the auction. Please contact the anniversary committee. All proceeds from the auction will go toward scholarships.

The weekend will include many opportunities to worship the Lord. Enjoy a testimony service on Friday evening, a late-night praise and worship service, and a worship service in the campus chapel on Sunday morning with communion, the anniversary choir singing, and Pastor Josh Skogerboe speaking.

Meals will be provided on campus both Friday noon and evening, Saturday noon, and a Sunday brunch.

Saturday will culminate in the evening with a gala banquet at the DoubleTree hotel. Wayne Pederson, president of Reach Beyond (formerly HCJB Global), and whose first wife

Norma (Ness) was a member of the first graduating class of AFLBS, will challenge listeners with a message. Wayne graduated from our AFLC seminary with a Master of Divinity degree. Many may remember him from his days working for KTIS radio. His passion is for those who have never heard the name of Jesus or had an opportunity to enter into a relationship with Him. After the gala you can enjoy live music at the coffee house on the AFLBS campus

The entire weekend is underwritten, allowing attendees to give generously toward the goal of \$100,000 for AFLBS scholarships. Please pray and ask God what He wants you to give toward scholarships. If you cannot attend the weekend, take time to send in your gift to scholarships (please mark your gift 50th Anniversary Scholarships).

This weekend celebration is for everyone. Put it on your calendar and we will see you there. We hope the anniversary weekend will give you a chance to come back to AFLBS and walk around the campus enjoying old memories and making new ones. And we hope it will be a time for encouragement and a strengthening in your faith.

The Pollestads, Andover, Minn., are members of Maranatha Free Lutheran, Spring Lake Park, Minn.



For more information about the 50th anniversary celebration of AFLBS and to register, visit the Bible school's website:

aflbs.org

2016 SEMINARY GRADUATE

JON LANGNESS

Ishpeming, Mich.

I was born April 11, 1989, to Erling and Nancy Langness in Ishpeming, Mich. My parents brought me to the Lord in baptism and continued to raise me up in the Word as I grew up. As a family we attended Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran in Ishpeming. I am so thankful for all of the Sunday school teachers, pastors, youth leaders, and members of that congregation who taught me and prayed for me still to this day. I am also grateful for my teachers and classmates at AFLBS who encouraged me in the Lord daily through classes and study groups.



After graduating from AFLBS in 2009, I attended Northern Michigan University for one year, and then graduated with a degree in intercultural studies from Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minn. I married Hannah Dyrud ('09) on June 18, 2011, and our son Evan turns one year old this April.

I served on a team to Ukraine for seven weeks and went back again for the summer of 2014. I served as a youth leader for a summer in 2010 and have been involved with youth ministry at Grace Free Lutheran (Maple Grove) and Helmar Lutheran, Newark, Ill. God has used these experiences and others to strengthen my calling into ministry. I was certain it was going to be in a foreign field, but throughout my time in seminary God has given me a desire to pursue parish ministry. While serving my internship at Helmar Lutheran I have found just how much I enjoy serving a congregation. God is still continuing to train and mold me into the man He wants me to be and I look forward to Him molding me as a pastor in the parish.

NEWS

Work crew travels to Uganda to build home



A group of four traveled to Jinja, Uganda, in March to work on building a new home for AFLC missionaries Nate and Rhoda Jore and their family. Carpenters Mark Nelson (Solid Rock Lutheran, Anoka, Minn.), and Greg Johnson (Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn.) were joined by Dean Nelson (Calvary Free Lutheran, Fergus Falls, Minn.) and Kevin Olson, head of the Ambassador Institute. The home is being built in a rural area, where the Jores plan to begin ministry.

The group also attended several graduation ceremonies for Ambassador Institute classes (pictured right), and participated in local worship services and Ambassador Institute classes.



Top: Greg Johnson works a saw at the build site. Above, left: The group of volunteers pauses with Pastor Nate Jore (left), Greg Johnson, Dean Nelson, and Mark Nelson.



M

ost people in our AFLC have heard of Branson, Mo.; many have even visited.

But how many know we have an AFLC congregation in Springfield, Mo., just 35 miles north of Branson? The church is Immanuel Lutheran, a small AFLC Home Missions congregation that sits on a hillside in southeast Springfield within a mile of Highway 65 (the main route to Branson).

In June of 2014, the congregation was gifted a home adjacent to the church property. Knowing this was a great way to continue their ministry to AFLC missionaries, pastors, and ministry leaders, the congregation created the Oasis in the Ozarks ministry.

Simply stated, the Oasis ministry provides a retreat in the beautiful Ozark Mountains, a place to rest and relax without the worry of housing costs. Since the Oasis is a seven-bedroom home, it's a great place to bring the family or to connect with extended family. We've

FINDING AN OASIS

BY KAY RAMSBACHER

hosted individual couples, big family reunions (17 people) and even home-school basketball teams.

If you are looking for a quiet stay, a large backyard, six and one-half acres of church property and a city park across the street are great places to relax or play. The church property also has a sand volleyball court, a horseshoe pit, and plenty of space to play disc golf. If you want to venture out into Springfield or to Branson or the surrounding area, there are many recreational activities, whether you are an outdoors person, a history buff, or an antique/flea market lover. Being in the Bible Belt also means there are many family-friendly and faith-based activities in this area.

Our first guests arrived in August of 2014 and since then, the Oasis has hosted 182 guests. Most stay a weekend or a week, but some have stayed for a month or longer. Because the Oasis is a large home, we can accommodate most any gathering of people. Below are some of the comments from our guest book:

"Thank you so much for blessing our family through this beautiful home. We loved our stay here at the Oasis. We are refreshed and ready to head home."

"Thank you so much for your ministry to families! We had a wonderful week here. The home is peaceful and full of joy. We have been blessed."

"We needed a break in the midst of our crazy schedules and this was that place."

"This house was a huge blessing to us after a month on the road."

"The Oasis, a perfect name for a wonderful place! The caring of Pastor Rich and Kay as well as the kind people of Immanuel Lutheran have been what our souls needed for restoration and refreshment."

We'd love to have you come and visit! And the year is wide open for reservations. For more information, contact Kay Ramsbacher at 417-350-1633 or ramsbacher@gmail.com.

Ramsbacher is a member of Immanuel Lutheran, Springfield, Mo., where her husband, Pastor Rich Ramsbacher, serves as pastor.

WATERS IN THE WILDERNESS

APRIL 27



"I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me" (John 10:14).

In this verse of Scripture Jesus declares Himself to be the Shepherd of mankind. And such he is for all who hear His voice and follow Him. It is a beautiful picture Jesus uses here; it is highly cherished by Christians. This may be the main reason why the twenty-third Psalm is such a favorite one. The Lord is our Shepherd who leads and guides us as a shepherd does his sheep. Jesus Christ wants to be our shepherd; that is why He is constantly calling for people to follow Him.

The verse before us indicates further that the Lord knows those who are His. He knows them personally. He desires that as many as possible might know Him, too. Many know a good deal about Jesus, but Him they do not know personally. This is sad. In fact, it is a misfortune to know much about the Savior without actually knowing Him. The final judgment will be more severe for those who have had great opportunities of learning to know Jesus without actually making use of them than the judgment will be for one who has never heard.

The Lord knows His own, and He wants His own to know Him. You, too, may know Him personally even though to date you have not made His acquaintance. If you have not invited Him into your heart yet, He invites you to do so today. Take Him at His word right now and bid Him welcome; He will surely enter your heart.

Pastor Marvin Undseth, most recently of Keizer, Ore., died in October 2015. He served congregations in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Washington before retiring in 1990.

Waters in the Wilderness is a daily devotional published by the AFLC Board of Parish Education in 1971 with Dr. Iver Olson, editor. All 365 meditations were contributed by AFLC members from many walks of life. "Here, they offer each a glass of cool and refreshing water each day to thirsting souls," wrote Olson in the preface. Reprinted by permission. The volume is out of print.



YOU CAN HELP SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH men and women from 31 different countries this summer. How is that possible?

In 2015, visitors from 31 countries and 36 states from the US came through the doors of The Net, our coffee house ministry, in Naknek, Alaska. There they were greeted and welcomed as our staff shared the love of Jesus with them. Bibles and tracts were generously given to these visitors, as well as cups of coffee and baked goods. Our volunteers made and gave out more than 667.5 dozen cookies, cupcakes, and other treats.

You can share the gospel by helping provide the literature, Bibles, cookie mixes, coffee, and paper goods needed at The Net. These items can be found on our Alaska Gift Registry.

The needs of our missionaries are also identified on the Alaska Gift Registry. Their closest Walmart or grocery store is more than 300 miles away, and they so appreciate the care packages that come from the lower 48. This online registry allows us to keep an up-to-date list of their needs, and avoid unnecessary duplication.



To donate to the needs of The NET or our missionary families, visit the AFLC Home Missions website:

- aflchomemissions.org/alaska/gift-registry

Or go to:

- myregistry.com/visitors/?registryid=337412

It's a long way to travel for a cup of coffee, so after a three-leg, overnight flight from Southern California to Naknek, Alaska, I was ready for the best cup of coffee at The Net.

What is the ministry of The Net? It's a sanctuary in a sea of chaos and unrest in Naknek. It's a place where strangers are treated like family. One young woman walking in breathed deeply, "This place smells like love." The table is laid with fresh coffee, hot cocoa, lemonade, water, iced tea and platters of fresh-baked goods. A few tables with chairs, a well-worn couch and coffee table invite guests to stay awhile. The walls hold bookshelves with Bibles, devotionals, and Scripture tracts to feed the mind and nurture the soul. Board games and puzzles are stacked on an end table, and used clothing is piled on a table.

Everything is free. Sometimes people came to the kitchen asking where the donation basket was located. We told them it's all a free gift to anyone who comes, just like God freely gives salvation to those who come to Him through Christ. We also told them that the food comes from our church family and friends down in the lower 48 who care for them.

Who comes to work in Alaska for the salmon season?

A PLACE FOR THEM

BY JULIE MCLAUGHLIN

The adventurous, the desperate, and the dangerous.

The adventurous were the eager students I met who were saving for their next semester at college and saw this as both a free way to travel, get room and board, and earn a big chunk of change. The week or so waiting for the fish to come in was like summer camp to them, running, exploring, taking in the local sights.

The desperate were in an economic crisis. I met a woman who left her adolescent children at home to fend for themselves because she didn't want to go back on welfare and her current minimum wage job wasn't providing enough hours. I met a young man who thought this would be his first step of independence from his family and was trying to prove himself. He discovered he wasn't ready and flew home frustrated and disappointed in himself. "It's an expensive lesson to learn," he told me.

The dangerous accounted for the thieves, cheats, scoundrels, and drug dealers who showed up. It can be hard to tell who's who. Jesus loved sinners; He went to great lengths to rescue them. I dropped in on three guys in the back room who were piecing a puzzle. One guy asked, "Why

If you are interested in serving at The Net this summer, please contact the Home Missions office for more details.

would you want to hang out with smelly, scruffy fishermen?" I answered, "Those are the kind of guys Jesus called to follow Him." Scary people need love, too. Sometimes love is the key God uses to open a locked heart.

Naknek is not a spiritually neutral place. I met a young woman who had a deer-in-the-head-lights look after two days in Naknek. That's why The Net is there. God cares for the adventurous, the desperate and the dangerous. He is near to the broken. Jesus calls, "Come to me, you who are weary and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Pray for those who are still in darkness and need to know the Savior's transformation. Pray for this summer's ministry at The Net. Ask the Lord, "Will you send me?"

McLaughlin is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif.

Seminary announces internship assignments

The Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary (AFLTS) has announced internship locations for the 2016-2017 school year. AFLTS trains students in pastoral ministry during three classroom years on the campus just east of

Medicine Lake in Plymouth, Minn. Students then complete a one-year congregation-based internship under the supervision of an experienced pastor. Students are available for call upon successful completion of this internship. Each student is assigned a faculty advisor who communicates with, supports, and evaluates each intern.

Interns are listed below with congregation (location), supervisor, and faculty advisor:

Alex Amiot, Ruthfred Lutheran (Bethel Park, Pa.), Pastor Steve Carlson, Pastor Wade Mobley.

Steve Jensen, Rose and Spruce Free Lutheran Churches (Roseau, Minn.), Pastor Todd Erickson, Dr. Phil Haugen.

Gideon Johnson, Helmar Lutheran (Newark, Ill.), Dr. James Molstre, Pastor Bob Lee.

Paul Kinney, Our Savior's Free Lutheran and First English Lutheran of Lostwood, (Stanley, N.D.), Pastor Rodney Johnson, Pastor Jerry Moan.

John Lee, Atonement Free Lutheran (Arlington, Wash.), Pastor Rick Long, Dr. Mark Olson.

Chad Friestad, King of Glory Lutheran (Shakopee, Minn.), Pastor Brett Boe, Pastor Wade Mobley.

Andrew Olson, Abiding Savior Free Lutheran (Sioux Falls, S.D.), Pastor Kirk Flaa. Dr. Mark Olson (no relation).

Founded in 1964 by the AFLC (aflc.org), the Free Lutheran Schools offers a four-year pastoral training program at the Masters of Divinity level (aflts.org).



Alex Amiot



Steve Jensen



Gideon Johnson



Paul Kinney



John Lee



Andrew Olson



AFLC Schools receive gift of vehicles

AFLC Schools recently received a gift from the oil fields of western North Dakota: two 15-passenger Ford Diesel Super Duty Trucks. The donors are Jerome and Ardis Rice, rural Tioga, N.D., together with their son Brian and his wife Nancy (pictured), both AFLBS graduates, from Williston, N.D. Several of the Rice children and grandchildren have attended the Bible school, including a current student, Micah Olson.

Friestad accepts position at Schools

The Free Lutheran Schools, Plymouth, Minn., announces the hiring of Chad Friestad as director of recruiting and communications effective June 1, 2016. Friestad, a current student of the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary (AFLTS),

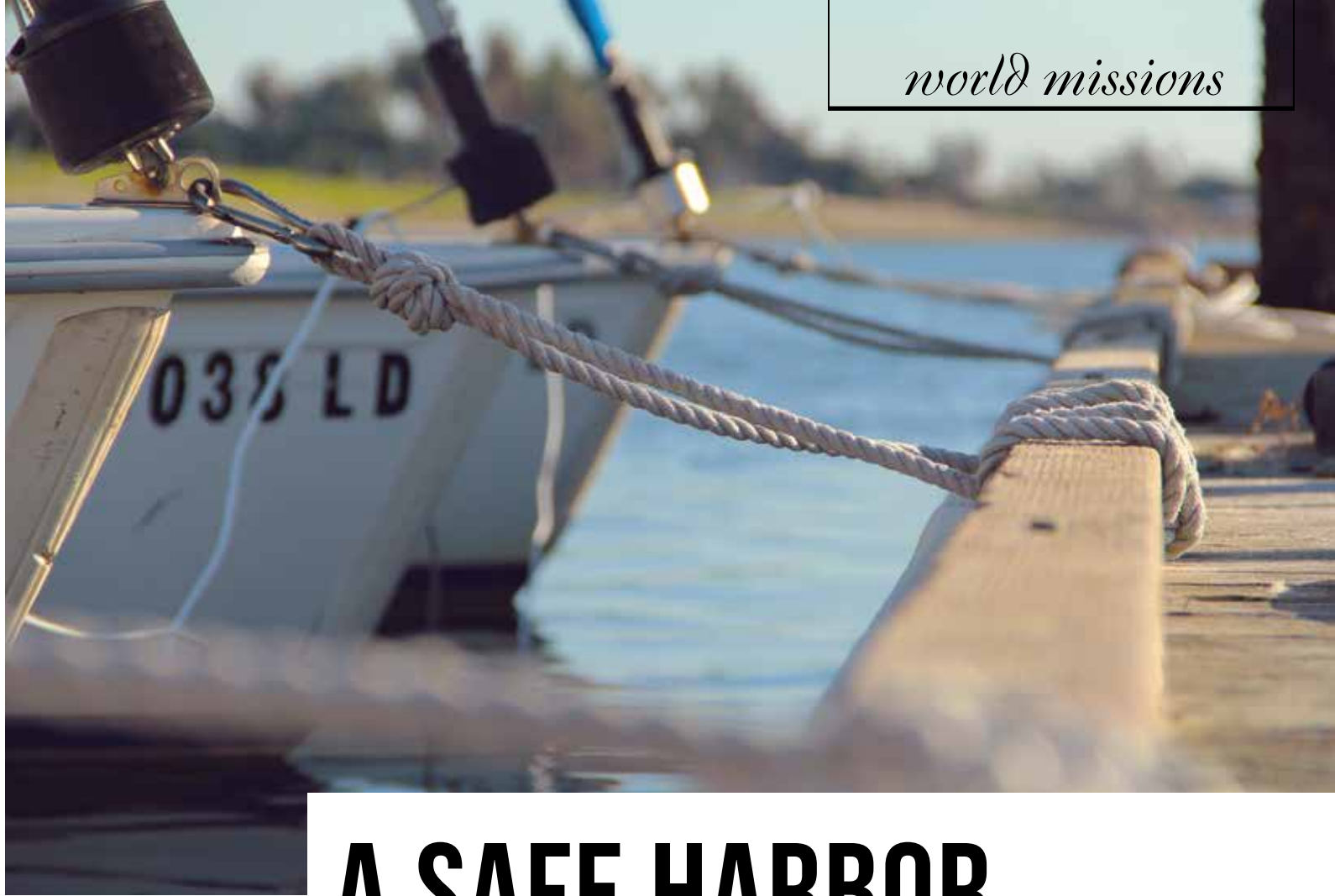
has served as student development director for the past five years. Friestad will work in both the seminary and Bible school programs at the Schools, and will report to President Wade Mobley. In this newly created position, Friestad will oversee both staff and mission in the areas of recruiting, admissions, marketing (print, web, and social media), alumni relations, congregational communications, and audio/video/web production.

Originally from Newark, Ill., Friestad is a 2003 graduate of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School (AFLBS) in Plymouth and a 2007 graduate of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, where he received a BA in youth ministry. He served as a parish builder for three and one-half years at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Camarillo, Calif., before coming back to AFLBS to



Chad Friestad

work in student development. He is currently in his third year of full-time studies at AFLTS, where he is pursuing a master of divinity degree. He plans to graduate in May 2017 upon finishing a congregational-based internship at King of Glory Lutheran, Shakopee, Minn. Chad is married to Christie and they have three children: Eben (3), Isaac (2), and Gracia (10 months). They are members of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn.



A SAFE HARBOR

BY MICAH BERGER

The boat was filling with water, coming in just as fast as I could bail it out.

I was returning from a morning of teaching on Kisima Island in a wooden fishing boat with one of my students, Pastor Oburu, directing us homeward against the wind from his seat in the stern.

It was our usual trip that we took every Saturday to teach Bible stories on the little island. It took about 45 minutes of paddling to get out there and the same coming back. Unless, of course, the wind was against you. That meant more time, more exercise, and more wave-soaked clothes.

The bay had been calm when we embarked from the main land that morning. But the weather had turned. I'd traveled in wind-tossed waters before, but this time our boat

had some serious holes in the prow. They hadn't been a problem on our way out as they sat above the waterline in the calm. But on the return trip, going up and down against the waves, we were in trouble.

In the moment I felt a bit like the disciples from the story of Jesus calming the storm on Lake Galilee. *What if the boat goes under? Will I be able to swim to land against these waves?* In the Gospel story Jesus speaks to the winds and saves them all, commenting on their fear and lack of faith during the storm. I have to confess, their antics did become a bit more relatable to me as I struggled on the lake that day.

Of course the storms that we face in our lives aren't usually literal ones. They certainly weren't for me until that day. And yet they can be equally terrifying. I've seen them appear in the lives of my Ugandan friends and ministry partners here. Things like sickness, family issues, death of loved ones, opposition to the ministry, injustice, and robbery. These are real difficulties here in Uganda. What do you do in such situations? What do you do when the water is pouring into your boat? How do you hold back the fear which prays accus-

ingly, "Do you not care that we are perishing?"

It's here that I thank God for the example of my local friends who, when faced with these trials, are quick to draw strength from the Word of God. Often they'll recite stories from the Ambassador Institute classes, reminding each other of God's faithfulness. Other times they'll find encouragement in praying the Psalms. It's a great blessing to see them standing strong in faith through the Word of God.

I suppose that the disciples weren't quite as firm in their storm. And honestly, I'm not sure that I would have done any better in their shoes. But Jesus saved them all the same. And what He gave them is the same message that I believe He would have for you and me and my friends in Uganda and even the lost today: "Have faith in me. Do not be afraid. I am able to save."

Berger is an AFLC missionary based in Jinja, Uganda. He teaches curriculum through the Ambassador Institute.



Four people were brought into membership February 21 at Stillwater Free Lutheran, Kalispell, Mont. Pictured, from left are Tom and Linda Lund, Lori and Shelby Switzer, and Pastor Craig Scavo.

2016 Annual Conference information

The 2016 Annual Conference will be held June 14-17 at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis., under the theme, "It Is Written," taken from Matthew 4:4, 7, 10. The Women's Missionary Federation Day will be held at the same site on June 14 under the theme, "Knit Together in Love Through Christ," from Colossians 2:2-3.

Separate registration forms for these events can be found online at the AFLC's website (aflc.org/conferences). Both forms can be printed, filled out, and mailed to the appropriate address and are payable with cash or check. The conference form is also available as an interactive online form, payable via either a PayPal account (\$5 fee), or check.



In Memoriam

Opal Undseth, 93, and Pastor Marvin Undseth, 90, passed away within 10 days of each other in Keizer, Ore., after 62 years of marriage. Opal died Oct. 3, 2015, and Marvin on Oct. 12, 2015.

Opal was born on March 23, 1922, to Oscar and Ruth Carlson in Ethan, S.D. She graduated from Mitchell High School in 1940. She later attended Chillicothe Business College and worked as a secretary for General Motors in La Grange, Ill. In 1946, she moved to Minneapolis and worked in the World Mission Prayer League office where she met Marvin. Marvin was born on April 3, 1925, to Sigurd and Marie Undseth in Portland, Ore. A graduate of Woodburn High School, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and became a prisoner of war after being captured in the Battle of the Bulge. Upon his release he was awarded a Purple Heart. After attending the Lutheran Bible Institute in Seattle, he married Opal on Dec. 27, 1952. After graduating from Augsburg College in Minneapolis, he worked as a teacher and farmer before attending Luther Seminary in Minneapolis, graduating in 1960.

They served churches in pastoral ministry in Alamo, N.D.; Sherwood, N.D.; Shevlin, Minn., and Everett, Wash. Eventually they settled in Salem, Ore., where Marvin worked for Salem Public Schools and Opal was employed by the Oregon Dept. of Commerce until their retirement.

They are survived by two sons, Daniel (Isabel) Undseth, Bend, Ore., and Steven (Lois) Undseth, Fergus Falls, Minn.; two daughters, Carol (Mike) Lewin and Miriam Undseth, both of Keizer, Ore.; eight grandchildren and one great-grandson.

FEBRUARY MEMORIALS

AFLBS

Toby Knutson
Ruth Claus
Agnes Rolf (5)
Dale Quanbeck (3)
Vickie Berg

AFLT

Sylvia Molstre
Toby Knutson
Pastor Dale Mellgren
Margery Stone
Bischoff

General Fund

Dale Quanbeck

Evangelism

Sylvia Molstre
Junell Remme

Home Missions

Sylvia Molstre
Pastor Erling Huglen
Agnes Rolf

World Missions

Iva Mae Bjerke
Kenneth Jore

WMF

Donna Maki
Elvia Dreis

PEOPLE & PLACES

Pastor Steve Papillon, Sheridan, Illinois, has accepted a call to serve West Prairie Lutheran Church, rural Kindred, North Dakota.

Pastor Matt Steendahl was installed March 6 at Trinity Lutheran, Brookings, Ore., with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiating.

Pastor Richard Gunderson has accepted a call to serve as interim pastor at St. John's Lutheran of Schwer, Milford, Ill.

Pastor Brent and Emily Raan and their daughter, Amaleah, left for mission work in India on March 1. They will partner with AFLC-India as the first AFLC missionaries to work in Chirala, India.

Members of **Solid Rock Free Lutheran**, Anoka, Minn., will dedicate their new church addition on April 17 during the 10:30 a.m. service. An open house will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. that afternoon. All are invited.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-February 29, 2016

FUND	REC'D IN FEBRUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$28,957	\$60,786	\$59,335
Evangelism	10,353	21,836	20,724
Youth Ministries	7,512	14,447	14,966
Parish Education	9,081	19,174	24,284
Seminary	18,441	42,299	51,805
Bible School	26,305	64,181	61,678
Home Missions	36,964	94,315	83,626
World Missions	54,531	93,730	61,614
Personal Support	57,365	96,057	75,794
TOTALS	\$249,509	\$506,826	\$453,828

Contact the individual departments for further information about specific financial needs.

AFLBS: A VENTURE OF FAITH

“A venture of faith to the nth degree” is a statement included in the schools report to the 1967 Annual Conference by Professor George Soberg, board chairman. “Starting from scratch and with three months to do almost the impossible,” the Bible school began classes in the fall of 1966. What did he mean?

It has been good to take a stroll down memory lane in preparation for this editorial. The first annual conference of our association, meeting in June 1963 at Fargo, N.D., approved a resolution recommending that consideration be given to the establishment of a Bible school “to train lay-workers

and missionaries.” The conference journal does not indicate that there was even any discussion, suggesting strong support from the beginning for such a venture. A “Seminary and Doctrine Committee” was elected, and it is interesting to



Pastor Robert Lee

note that great-grandchildren of two of the members (Pastor Fritjof Monseth and Morris Borstad) are current students.

The big news during the 1964 conference was the purchase of the Medicine Lake campus and the opening of the seminary in the fall. Yet the vision for a Bible school was not forgotten, and tucked among the resolutions was one urging that “the possibility of establishing a Bible School by the fall of 1965” be investigated.

The 1965 Annual Conference met in the chapel of the new campus in suburban Minneapolis, and it was reported that the Seminary Committee, together with the Executive Committee and the Board of Administration (Coordinating Committee) met on April 27 and voted to open a Bible school in the fall. There was also a resolution approved by the conference, however, cautioning that the school should be

opened “only when a qualified Dean can be secured.” Apparently the caution prevailed, and the opening did not take place as planned.

During the next 12 months the plans for a new Bible school began to unfold. President John Strand reported the following to the June 1966 conference in Thief River Falls, Minn.:

“Aware of the desires on the part of a large segment of the Association, the decision was made to open a Bible school this fall. Another Bible school is needed. From the right kind of Bible school should come young men and women needed for workers in the Kingdom. Some great hurdles must be overcome before such a school can open. ... Unless God supplies in a wonderful way, it is impossible.”

Conference approved the board’s decision, and those still living who were there may recall the man who arose to speak in favor of the resolution but was so overcome with emotion that he was speechless. “We know what you want to say,” said President Strand gently.

It is really quite amazing how fast arrangements were made for the opening of the school in the fall. We honor with gratitude to God the memory of Ray and Olive Jacobson, who volunteered to travel among the congregations during the summer months to help recruit a student body. Honor is due also to the memory of Pastor Strand, who added the duties of Acting Dean to his many responsibilities.

One of the hurdles was housing for the 13 students, and it was decided that the women would be housed in a large dormitory-style room in the lower level of the chapel building. A small apartment was prepared for the Jacobsons in the building,

too, as Olive agreed to be dean of women. The men found housing with the Charles family in rooms and an apartment bordering the campus.

Another major hurdle, of course, was the need for part-time teachers, and the following were secured: Esther Farrier (who also directed the choir), Helen Hanson, Olive Jacobson, Dr. Iver Olson, the “Eye-O-Graphic” instructors from the Holy Land Exhibit, and Pastor Arnold Stone. Pastor Strand reported to the 1967 conference that Miss Ramona Vaxvick, a former missionary and parish worker, had been secured for the coming year to teach “commercial subjects,” and there was a great need for a full-time teacher whose basic responsibility would be the Bible school and who could be “looked upon by the students as their pastor while they are away from home.”

Yes, this small beginning was truly “a venture of faith to the nth degree,” and it is encouraging to see how our faithful God has guided and provided during the past 50 years. Elsewhere in the issue you will read

... Unless God supplies in a wonderful way, it is impossible.

of plans to celebrate our golden anniversary this summer, and hopefully hundreds of graduates and friends of the school will gather here on the campus to look back with gratitude and forward with the same faith that empowered those who have gone before us. Faith is a gift, and to God the giver be all the glory!

association retreat center

APPLYING AN UNCOMMON FAITH

BY PASTOR DAVID JOHNSON

I recently read an article titled, “How A Generation Lost Its Common Culture,” by Patrick Deneen, associate professor of Constitutional Studies at Notre Dame. It was a wonderfully articulated composite of the author’s observations gleaned from years of teaching within several of the nation’s elite universities. The article began with:

“My students are know-nothings. They are exceedingly nice, pleasant, trustworthy, mostly honest, well-intentioned, and utterly decent. But their brains are largely empty, devoid of any substantial knowledge that might be the fruits of an education in an inheritance and a gift of a previous generation. They are the culmination of western civilization, a civilization that has forgotten nearly everything about itself, and as a result, has achieved near-perfect indifference to its own culture.”

This issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* has been centered on the value and critical need for biblical, Christ-centered education—a system of training not disconnected from culture, but directed toward it. Both

our Bible school and seminary have as their singular focus the transformation of not only individuals, but entire families, communities, and even whole cultures. This cannot be accomplished if one remains in the comfortable and unchallenged confines of the Christian cloister.

I remember my own Bible school experience, though it took place at a different institution. We were challenged to get out of the incubator, as it were. We had to take our faith and give it a workout, adding our salt to unsavory situations and bringing our light to the darkened corners of our homes and workplaces. If our biblical training couldn’t—or didn’t—reach these everyday places, then it hadn’t achieved its goal.

That’s why I am so glad our schools continue this same emphasis. Faith and biblical instruction must be about more than academic accumulation of information. It must be about transformation: of souls, of homes, and of cultures. That’s why our AFLBS students are sent out on various teams, join choirs, and are encouraged to serve at various places including our own Association Retreat Center. It is in these

experiences, as well as many others, that the principles of faith locked in the mind get to be exercised in the realm of real life situations.

I encourage you to do the same whether you are young, old, able-bodied, or limited. Each of us must find a place to engage our culture and put our faith to work. The problem with the Dead Sea is not an absence of water, it’s the lack of an outlet. The issue with our culture isn’t a deficiency in access to biblical information, though there is a concerning biblical ignorance. Our greater problem is the disconnect between the educated believer and the culture we’ve been sent to reconcile to Jesus Christ. And if you are unsure how to begin, contact your pastor, local community service organizations, or the ARC. I’m sure each will gladly find a place for you to “work out your faith” (Philippians 2:12).

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