

THE LUTHERAN 

AUGUST 2009

# AMBASSADOR



"IS NOT MY WORD LIKE FIRE & LIKE A HAMMER?" JEREMIAH 23:29

# Your



# Holland

BY SUSAN WHITEHEAD

*"Welcome to Holland," says the flight attendant.*

*"Holland? What do you mean, Holland? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."*

*But there's been a change in the flight plan. You've landed in Holland to stay. It's not a horrible, disgusting, filthy place. It's just a different place.*

*So you must buy new guidebooks and learn a new language. You will meet a group of people you would never have met in Italy.*

Years ago I came across "Welcome to Holland" by Emily Perl Kingsley, a story that focuses on raising a child with a disability, which I've paraphrased above. But not everyone who ends up in "Holland" has a disabled child. Some of us have difficult marriages, have gone through a divorce, illness or other situations that we never thought would happen. Everyone else, it seems, is busy coming and going from Italy, enthusiastic about the wonderful time they had there. And we say to ourselves, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go."

"Holland" refers to our hopes and goals that will never be realized. A dashed dream might shake our core, but spending our lives mourning the fact that we didn't get to Italy prevents us from enjoying the very special, lovely things about Holland. We see treasures as pain because we are unaware of their true value.

Oswald Chambers writes in his devotional book *My Utmost for His Highest*, "Without the sovereign hand of God Himself, nothing touches our lives." Circumstances that touch our lives, then, come from God's hand, including those that crush hearts

and splinter dreams.

My mother died of brain cancer. My father died an alcoholic. One of our grandchildren has been diagnosed with autism. My husband had cancer. None of these circumstances were missing when God created the universe.

One night I broke my leg stepping on a pile of shiny magazines I unthinkingly left on the stairs. Breaking my leg was a consequence of poor judgment, but God knew before I was conceived that those exact ingredients would come together at that particular time. He could have stopped it—He saves and protects us from ourselves more than we can begin to imagine. But He has a use for that experience in my life. Yes, I do stupid things, but beating myself up does not further God's plan nor give Him glory. It happened, and the constant awareness of the plate and screws in my leg alerts me to plenty of opportunities to open doors for those in wheelchairs and on crutches, to ask a few questions, maybe just smile across the room. Opportunities were always there, but my awareness wasn't.

My grandson is delightful, loving, extremely bright, overflowing with gifts, and has autism. His life and those of his parents and family will reflect that forever. With every birth, a dream is born. When a dream collides with life, it doesn't need a bitter burial. Allowing God to refocus our dreams gives birth to amazing adventures, not *in spite* of our situation but *because* of it.

Holland is quite a place, remarkable and unique. When others arrive bewildered and wondering what happened, we are now able to say, "Welcome to Holland! Let me show you around."

*Susan Whitehead is a member of Vision of Glory Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Minn.*

August 2009 >>

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR vol. 47, no. 8

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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; fax 763-545-0079.

For subscription changes and information: The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. 763-545-5631 or e-mail at luthamb@afllc.org.

Subscription rates:  
\$17 a year, Group Rate, U.S.  
\$18 a year, Individual, U.S.  
\$20 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.

From the 2009 AFLC Annual Conference

Our mission in AFLC Youth Ministries continues to be encouraging the local congregation to win teenagers to Christ, to build them in God's truth and love, to equip teen believers to share their faith, and to multiply maturing disciples in Jesus.

—Pastor Jason Holt  
AFLC Youth Ministries Director

[ There is only one way, and Jesus is that Way. We must maintain the course which the AFLC has followed since its inception. Some may think it is old fashioned, archaic and out of date, but the Word and Spirit of God assure us that there isn't another or better way. ]

—Pastor Elden Nelson  
AFLC President

It is a great joy to see the power of God's Word at work in hearts and lives on the campus of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. ... It is a great joy to see the hunger for God's Word and fellowship among the students, and the love they have for one another.

—Pastor Joel Rolf  
AFLBS Dean

There is a desperate need to seek God, who He is, and the application of His teaching to our daily walk. ... We who believe in the inerrant, infallible Word of God must be strong and courageous torch bearers for Jesus.

—Pastor Jim Rasmussen  
AFLC Director of Evangelism

# MY WORD A





THE 2009 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

# FIRE AND A HAMMER

JEREMIAH 23:29

BY PASTOR CRAIG JOHNSON

**T**he 47th Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations was held June 16-19 in Fergus Falls, Minn. Throughout the conference plans were discussed and made for the various areas of the work of the AFLC. Some of the events of the conference, however, were interrupted by storms. Tornados were spotted nearby. Thunder and lightning and hailstorms rolled through. Sirens sounded and the call went out to retreat to the hallway of the conference center. The interruptions to the planning sessions were a reminder: "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps" (Proverbs 16:9, NIV).

## WORSHIP AND PRAYER

An AFLC Annual Conference is meant to be more than just a business meeting and a planning session. It is a time of spiritual renewal. For that reason worship services are held each evening. Prayer times are held before sessions break at noon for lunch. At various times throughout the day discussion of business is stopped and time is spent in prayer.

On one day of the conference, in the midst of a discussion on budgets and other issues, while the conference was lagging behind on its agenda, it was still deemed necessary and appropriate to stop and pray.

During the opening night worship service of the conference Pastor Al Monson of Mesa, Ariz., reminded those in attendance, "We've

come not just to see each other but to see the Lord; to receive a word from the Lord." The theme of the conference was about God's Word; how it is "a fire and a hammer," taken from Jeremiah 23:29.

## REPORTS

In his report to the conference AFLC President Elden Nelson spoke of work that has gone on in the AFLC in the past year and opportunities ahead. He shared in particular about his trip to the mission fields of India and Uganda. He told of seeing throngs of people needing to hear the gospel of Christ. He said the trip was "a memorable, life-changing experience."

Pastor Gary Jorgenson, chairman of the Coordinating Committee, reported on changes to the AFLC Congregational Roster since the last annual conference. Trinity Bethany Lutheran Church, Harvey, N.D.; Trinity Lutheran Church, Mott, N.D.; and Salem Lutheran Church, Elizabethville, Pa., have joined the roster. Congregations in McLeod, N.D.; Evergreen Park, Ill.; Redding, Calif.; and Newark, Ill., are no longer on the roster.

Information was shared about seminars being offered on the topic of the church and the law. The members of the Coordinating Committee hope these seminars will be conducted in each district of the AFLC. John Talley, a lawyer and member of an AFLC congregation, will be leading the seminars.

In the military chaplains report, Pastor Mark Antal shared about the need for military chaplains. Air Force Reserve Chaplain Craig Benson was at the conference and shared about areas in which he has served and needs that exist.

## RESOLUTIONS

Business sessions of an AFLC Annual Conference include discussion and voting on resolutions. These resolutions are presented by committees that meet the day before the conference or they are brought from the conference floor.

Resolutions were presented dealing with conference attendance and format. Some expressed concern that the current format of meeting from Tuesday to Friday makes it difficult for many who work full-time to attend. Others stated that the previous schedule of beginning on Wednesday and meeting over a weekend often resulted in low attendance on the weekend.

Much discussion occurred over resolutions on the topic of homosexuality. The conference "resolved as in accordance with the Holy Scriptures that the AFLC affirms marriage between one man and one woman and that sexual behavior is only for that institution." The conference also dealt with resolutions on possible ways congregations can protect themselves in the case of legal challenges. It was "resolved that we encourage AFLC congregations to adopt clear statements in their by-laws or other governing documents that clearly articulate the congregation's religious and moral opposition to homosexual conduct and other forms of sexual immorality."













## GOALS

The Parish Education department is working toward the goal of having an online bookstore. Customers would be able to place orders and make purchases online. It is hoped this would increase the scope of ministry and sales of educational resources.

Goals in the area of world missions were shared. The World Missions department continues to study unreached people groups with the goal of bringing the good news of Jesus to a group that has never heard. Because the AFLC already has a presence in India it has been decided to reach out to people groups there. The department continues to pursue the goal of training national pastors and church leaders in their own country through the developing ministry of the Ambassador Institute.

training of church leaders in newer congregations, particularly those in the eastern United States.

## BUDGETS

The closing service of the conference included the ordination of Seth Forness and Patrick Lohse, both 2009 graduates of AFLTS.

The conference was hosted by Calvary Free Lutheran of Fergus Falls, with assistance from district congregations. Registration totals for the conference were not available by the time of printing. The 2010 Annual Conference will be held on the campus of the AFLC Schools in Plymouth, Minn.



## *Nominating Committee*

• ONE-YEAR TERMS

**Central Tri-State**  
Pastor Andy Coyle

**Eastern**  
Gary Thayer

**Eastern North Dakota**  
Pastor Kirk Thorson

**Illinois**  
David Oslund

**Lake Superior**  
Phil Johnson

**Minneapolis**  
Pastor Nick Dyrud

**Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado**  
Pastor Rick Larson

**North Central Minnesota**  
Pastor Alan Arneson

**Northern Michigan**  
David Blake

**Northwestern Minnesota**  
Dr. Lyle Mattson

**Pacific Northwest**  
Tim Erhardt

**South Central**  
Pastor Jerry Peterson

**South Dakota**  
Mike McCarlson

**Southwest Central Minnesota**  
Dr. Steve Johnson

**Southwestern**  
Pastor Paul Kneeland

**Western ND/Eastern Montana**  
Pastor Rodney Johnson

### **Vice President**

Pastor Mike Brandt,  
Sioux Falls, S.D. (one year)

### **Secretary**

Pastor Brian Davidson,  
Naknek, Alaska (one year)

### **Coordinating Committee**

Pastor Lyle Aadahl, Hayfield, Minn.  
Lowell Watt, Park River, N.D. (one year)

### **AFLC Schools Board of Trustees**

Mike McCarlson, Webster, S.D.

### **Board of Pensions**

Mitch Johnson, New Hope, Minn.

### **World Missions Committee**

Pastor James Fugleberg,  
Moorhead, Minn.  
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn.

### **Home Missions Committee**

Pastor Joe Ocker, Frost, Minn.  
Willis Kettelhut, Deshler, Neb.

### **ARC Board**

Steve Lehman, Milford, Ill.

### **Stewardship Board**

Cory Buck, New Hope, Minn.  
Ruth Antal, Park River, N.D. (three years)

### **Commission on Evangelism**

John DeYoung, Dassel, Minn.



# ELECTION RESULTS

• ALL TERMS FIVE YEARS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

## Board of Publications & Parish Education

Andrea Christenson, Amery, Wis.

## Youth Board

Jordan Langness, Beulah, N.D.

Pastor Wade Mobley,

Sioux Falls, S.D. (one year)

## FLAPS Board of Managers

Pastor Tom Olson, Newark, Ohio

## Budget Analysis Committee

Robert Dietsche, Osceola, Wis. (three years)

## 2010 Colloquy Committee

Pastor Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, Minn.

Pastor Herb Hoff, Salinas, Calif.

Pastor Tom Brock, Brooklyn Center, Minn.

Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.

## Schools Corporation

Pastor Lyle Aadahl, Hayfield, Minn.

Pastor Richard Carr, Hagerstown, Md.

Joel Erickson, Oslo, Minn.

Wayne Floan, Plymouth, Minn.

Tim Johnson, Mentor, Minn.

Ralph Peterson, Portland, N.D.

Paul Strand, Kenyon, Minn.

Pastor Peter Ward, Ottawa, Ill.

Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, N.D.

Kermit Nash, Rogers, Minn.

## ARC Corporation

Allen Anderson, Clear Lake, Wis.

Thomas Asfeldt, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Dan Ballmann, Hico, Texas

Pastor Leroy Flickinger,

Thief River Falls, Minn.

Pastor Rodney Johnson, Stanley, N.D.

Pastor Walter Johnson,

Shakopee, Minn.

Greg Koch, Wilson, Wis.

Penny Nash, Lidgerwood, N.D.

Curtis Tweet, Oxbow, N.D.

Randy Walz, Ellsworth, Wis.

## Missions Corporation

Pastor Ray Ballmann, Glen Rose, Texas

Licensed Pastor Bill Buck, S.D.

Tom Caouette, Maple Grove, Minn.

Linda Fugleberg, Moorhead, Minn.

Geri Graham, Camarillo, Calif.

Paul Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa

Karen Knudsvig, Buxton, N.D.

Pastor Greg Lenz, Chanhassen, Minn.

Pastor Richard Long, Arlington, Wash.

Pastor Mark Olson, Farmington, Minn.

Ken Pederson, Fertile, Minn.

Daniel Rugroden, Hickson, N.D.

Marvin Schoper, Beulah, N.D.

Pastor Greg Schram,

Thief River Falls, Minn.

Paul Slaamot, Tioga, N.D.

Ken Sletten, Duluth, Minn.

James Taylor, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Roger Tollefson, Crookston, Minn.

Pastor Craig Wentzel, Edmore, N.D.

Lyle Westrom, Crookston, Minn.

Glenn Mork, Bloomington,

Minn. (two years)

## 2010 Committees

### Committee No. 1

(Administration)

Greg Olson, Dent, Minn.

Pastor LeRoy Petersen, Greenbush, Minn.

Myron Compton, Spearfish, S.D.

Ralph Peterson, Portland, N.D.

Pastor Mike Burke, Ishpeming, Mich.

### Committee No. 2

(Schools)

Gary Erickson, Dalton, Minn.

Mary Seeba, Camarillo, Calif.

Pastor David Nelson, Ontonagon, Mich.

Pastor Tony Stockman, Madison, S.D.

Scott Bellefy, Wallace, S.D.

### Committee No. 3

(Evangelism & Missions)

Pastor Ray Ballmann, Glen Rose, Texas

Geri Graham, Camarillo, Calif.

Greg Seeba, Camarillo, Calif.

Ken Pederson, Fertile, Minn.

Pastor Walter Johnson, Shakopee, Minn.

### Committee No. 4

(Parish Education & Youth)

Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.

Gary Stegman, Crookston, Minn.

Pastor David Johnson, Cloquet, Minn.

Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D.

### Committee No. 5

(Stewardship & Pensions)

Glenn Espe, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Pastor Jon Benson, Upsala, Minn.

David Borg, Minneapolis, Minn.

Pastor Karl Anderson, Bagley, Minn.

\*Mitch Johnson, New Hope, Minn.

\*Elected to Pension Board, so cannot serve

*Committee members will meet on June 14, 2010, preceding the conference scheduled June 15-18 at the AFLC Schools Campus in Plymouth, Minn.*







A review of the 2009  
Women's Missionary  
Federation Convention  
in Fergus Falls, Minn.



# *Using our gifts*

By Phyllis Peterson

**T**he 47th annual convention of the AFLC's Women's Missionary Federation was held June 16 in Fergus Falls, Minn., hosted by Calvary Free Lutheran. Our theme was *Using Our Gifts*, taken from Romans 12:6a, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given us, let us use them." The event was held at Life Church.

We were welcomed by national WMF President Lorilee Mundfrom and Calvary Free Lutheran WMF President Vicki Schrock. A praise team from Grafton, N.D., consisting of Janet Fedje, Carol Hensrud, Anne Presteng and Mia Presteng, accompanist, led us in singing our theme song, "Freely, Freely." Kristi Swenson, wife of recent AFLTS graduate Eric Swenson, shared devotions, reminding us that God's call to us is not necessarily to be busy, but to be obedient to Him. Kristi also led us in a memorial service and a time of prayer.

Faylin Myhre, the women's outreach coordinator from Abercrombie, N.D., led our Bible study with many Scripture references to spiritual gifts, and described what they are and how we can use them to glorify Christ, build up the Body of Christ, and reach the lost.

In our business session the following were elected to office: Lorilee Mundfrom, re-elected president; Arlys Jorenby, third vice president; and Mary Ann Ward, com-

munication secretary. The focus of the WMF was emphasized through the passing of ten resolutions. An amendment to the WMF constitution was proposed, eliminating the office of third vice president, provided an approval is reached by two-thirds of those present and voting at the 2010 convention.

As part of our noon luncheon, Sandy Weaver, Zoar Lutheran, Hampden, N.D.; and Phyllis Peterson, Valley Free Lutheran, Portland, N.D., presented a skit about spiritual gifts. Robin Jameson and her daughter, Rebecca, from Freedom Lutheran, Ottawa, Ill., favored us with a duet. Our speaker, Ruth Antal, Park River, N.D., challenged us to "Use it or lose it" in regards to our gifts.

Four workshops were offered throughout the afternoon. Retired missionary to Brazil Ruby Abel spoke on "The Power of Prayer," Pastor Jim Rasmussen, director of the AFLC's Evangelism Department, spoke on "Let Your Light Shine," Jeanne Jorgenson, wife of Pastor Gary Jorgenson, spoke on "Balancing Priorities," and Rose Carlson, wife of Pastor Tim Carlson, spoke on "Ministering Through Your Home."

During the banquet program, AFLC President Elden Nelson installed our new officers. Robin Jameson, Sandy Weaver and Faylin Myhre were honored for their years of service to the WMF. Missionary to Mexico Barb Schierkolk, together with her daughters, Rachel, Megan and Kirstie, fa-

vored us with two musical selections. Barb spoke about the ministry she has found, as well as her struggles and her joys, and then presented a video of the mission field in Jerez, Mexico.

At Wednesday morning's leadership breakfast, President Lorilee Mundfrom led in a study titled, "Essentials of Leadership." Many examples of mission opportunities were shared among the women there.

Our Mission Festival on the evening of June 17 began with music and devotions led by the praise team from Grafton. In his message, Pastor Todd Schierkolk, missionary to Mexico, brought to mind the blood, sweat and tears of Christ that went into these spiritual gifts that we had been studying. He exhorted us to use our gifts out of a love for souls and to meet their needs. Many examples were drawn from their work in Mexico. Pastor Timothy Hinrichs, who, along with his wife, Renata, have been serving as missionaries in Poland with East European Missions Network, also brought a greeting and an update of their mission work.

The offerings received by the WMF were divided equally between World Missions, Home Missions and the WMF General Fund.

*Peterson is a member of Valley Free Lutheran, Portland, N.D.*

# Feeding the hungry

*Conference youths  
use time for ministry*

By Linda Lein

**A**t the 2009 AFLC Annual Conference, the youths lived out the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:35 (NIV) when they collected and packaged food for hungry people, “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.”

On Thursday morning, the youths collected nonperishable food items from those in attendance at the conference, and they walked door-to-door in Fergus Falls asking for food items from members of the community. The youths collected 598 items that weighed 542 pounds. Wow! Not only were they amazed at the work they did in one hour, but their parents and conference guests erupted into applause when the numbers were announced.

Josiah Nelson, son of Pastor David and Sarah Nelson, Ontonagon, Mich., said, “The canned food drive was something I have learned a lot from. Almost everybody we visited willingly donated goods. I hope we were able to leave a positive impact on this community.”

On Friday morning, the youths packaged food for third-world countries through the Kids Against Hunger program. They filled 18 boxes with 648 bags. Each bag will feed six people one meal—a total of 3,888 people will be fed by the effort of these youths. Amazing! Again, their parents and conference guests applauded their impact on the world.

Caleb Benson, son of Pastor Jon and Jeannette Benson, Upsala, Minn., said, “We packed chicken powder, soy protein, dried vegetables, and rice into bags. While we were working, some of us talked about how packing food for Kids Against Hunger was much better than sitting at home and watching TV or playing video games.”

Rachel Schierkolk, daughter of Pastor Todd and Barb Schierkolk, AFLC missionaries in Jerez, Mexico, said, “It was wonderful for me to be able to pack the meals



knowing that 40 percent of them would be sent to Tanzania, a country which I have visited. It enabled me to better visualize the significance of what we were doing, and I thank God for the opportunity to meet people's needs in such a practical way.”

“I was really impressed with the heart of each of the youths that participated in the canned food drive and the Kids Against Hunger ministry,” said Benjamin Kumpala, a member of the Ambassadors, an AFLBS summer ministry team. He accompanied the youths on both events along with several adult volunteers from Calvary Free Lutheran Church. “They were able to put themselves aside and to work together for a common goal—to help those in need.”

Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

*Lein, a member of Calvary Free Lutheran Church in Fergus Falls, Minn., was the coordinator of the youth events at the conference.*



A group of youths attending the AFLC Annual Conference in Fergus Falls, Minn., collected donations for local food shelves and donated their time at Kids Against Hunger by filling 648 bags with food for hungry families.

# Prayer chain

## *Lifting up our members of the military*

BY PASTOR PETER & MARY ANN WARD

**M**ost of us live unaffected in our daily lives by the reality that America is at war, but a few live in the struggles of being under war-time pressures. The AFLC is blessed with women and men committed to man's God-given freedom who have enlisted in the military services of the United States of America. Presently we are aware of at least 13 AFLC members serving in all four branches of the military. At the 47th Annual Conference in Fergus Falls, Minn., the following resolution was adopted. We want to make all congregations aware of this resolution and act upon it as so led of the Lord.

Whereas, we as a nation are involved in military actions around the world and have loved ones and congregational members who, in answering the Lord's call to join the Armed Services of the United States of America, are constantly in harm's way whether on the battlefield abroad or on home soils in training:

We humbly ask that this conference and our member congregations recognize the need for and resolve to pray diligently and continuously for our service members both here and abroad who are in harm's way.

We also ask this conference and member congregations of military service members to establish ministries tending to their spiritual and emotional care during their times of service, whether during overseas deployment or homeland training.

Be it further resolved that prayer intercession be made for the family members left behind as their loved one serves, and within their capabilities, congregations would see to the emotional and spiritual needs as well as the temporal provisions for these family members before, during, and after these times of uncertainty to their families.

Several months ago, the AFLC Military Prayer Chain was formed to unite and support individuals and families of AFLC members in the military. You are invited and encouraged to join this group if you or someone in your family is currently a member of the United States armed forces. You may join by sending an e-mail to [2wards@live.com](mailto:2wards@live.com), providing the name, rank, and status (deployed or in training) of your serviceman or woman, and the specifics of your request. Requests will be published as worded across the e-mail prayer group.

Anyone may be a part of this ministry, whether or not you have a family member serving in the military. If you would like to enlist in the AFLC Military Prayer Chain as a prayer warrior, simply send your name and e-mail address to [2wards@live.com](mailto:2wards@live.com) to sign up.

*The Wards live in Ottawa, Ill., where Pastor Ward serves Faith Lutheran.*



# 150 Years

## Hauge Lutheran celebrates a landmark

By Larry Walker

**H**auge Lutheran Church of Kenyon, Minn., celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. The fellowship is believed to have begun with house meetings in the 1850s. Almost certainly these early settlers had been awakened through the ministry of Elling Eielsen, the tireless Norwegian frontier preacher.

In 1859 three families formally organized a congregation and called lay preacher Østen Hanson as their pastor. Hanson (formally ordained in 1861) served multiple congregations, so that member-led meetings continued on the Sundays of his absence. Hanson never served another parish.

In 1871 the congregation voted to build a church on a tract of land southwest of Kenyon. This simple building, constructed of local stone around 1875, still stands and was listed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1976.

Hauge was originally part of the Eielsen Synod. Over the years, however, Hanson grew dissatisfied with several clauses in the synod's constitution. Against Eielsen's opposition, Hanson led in the formation of the Hauge's Synod in 1876. He served as president of the synod from 1875 to '76, and from 1887 to '93.

Pastor Hanson's call included, along with Hauge, Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Aspelund and Stordahl Lutheran Church in Roscoe. Pastor Hanson lived in Aspelund, 15 miles northeast of Hauge church. Confirmation classes always met at his home, which meant a long walk for most of the students in the early years. Sunday school classes began at Hauge in 1887, and the Ladies Aid was organized in 1889. Pastor Hanson died in 1898.

Pastor C. C. Holter was called that

same year. He lived in a parsonage in Kenyon (it was a point of pride that this house incorporated a door which had come from the old state capitol). In 1902, the congregation voted to build a church in town, which remains the worship site today. Members of Hauge were prominent in the Eastern Minnesota Innermission Society, organized in 1906.

Pastor Holter resigned in 1909, and was succeeded by Rev. M. G. Hanson, president of the Red Wing seminary and a son of Østen Hanson. Pastor Hanson died suddenly in 1915 and was succeeded by Nicholas Okerlund. Pastor Okerlund's pastorate was graced by a powerful revival in 1922, when many experienced personal conversion. He was succeeded in 1924 by M. A. Hall, who had a long and memorable tenure.

An era came to an end in 1939 when the congregation began conducting all Sunday morning services in English. Pastor A. E. Windahl succeeded Pastor Hall in 1947, and Pastor Everett N. Nelson followed in 1952. That same year Stordahl Lutheran withdrew from the call, making it possible for the pastor to lead worship at both Hauge and Emmanuel every week. The old parsonage was sold, and a new one constructed next door to the church.

Pastor Nelson was succeeded in 1956 by O. K. Stenberg, and Pastor Knut A. Knutson became pastor in 1958. In connection with the congregation's centennial in 1959, restoration work was done on the Old Stone Church, and a tradition of annual Norwegian-language services in that building began (the custom continues today, but in English). A major project was the addition of an enclosed entry in 1964, replacing a tall and sometimes dangerous flight of exterior steps.

In 1965 Pastor Knutson left, to be succeeded by Raymond L. Larson in 1966. During this period, dissatisfaction with tendencies in the American Lutheran Church increased, with the result that, after Pastor Larson's resignation in 1970 to join the faculty of the Lutherans Alert seminary, Kenneth Moland, an AFLC seminarian, was called as interim pastor. In 1972, Hauge voted to join the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, and Pastor Moland was called as full-time pastor.

Pastor Moland resigned to become dean of AFLBS in 1975. Pastor Al Monson served the parish from 1976 to 1978.

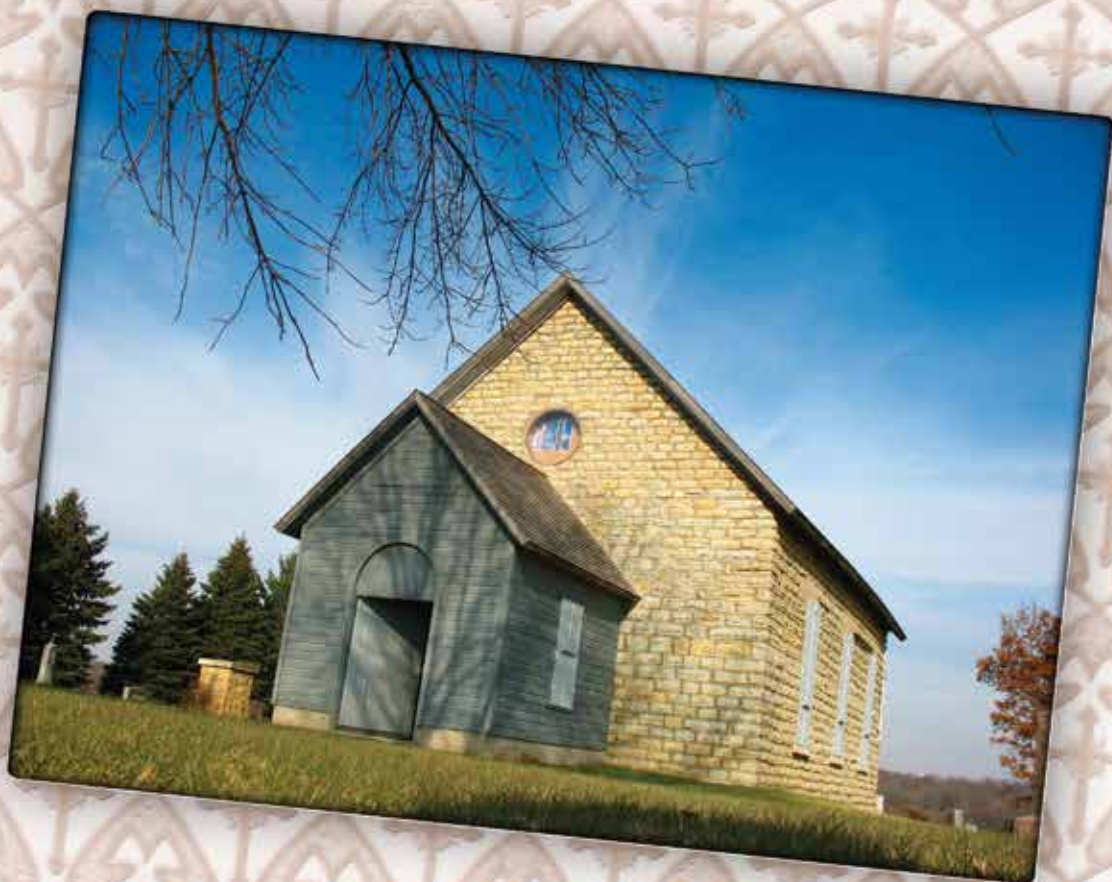
In 1979 Pastor Kenneth Anderson accepted the call. Pastor Anderson's sudden death in 1982 was a severe shock, as he had been greatly beloved.

Pastor Donald Greven served as pastor from 1983 to 1984. He was followed by Pastor Steve Kneeland, who served until 1988. Pastor Rodney Stueland took the call in 1989, serving until 1995. Pastor Edward Strom served from 1997 to 2002. Hauge and Emmanuel's current pastor, Martin Horn, came in 2003. An elevator was added to the entrance in 2004, and in 2006 the parsonage received an addition. Extensive restoration work on the Old Stone Church was completed in 2008.

As a son of the congregation, I can testify that Hauge has been faithful through storm and sunshine. There have been failings and conflicts. But through it all there has been no question of one thing—Hauge Lutheran Church has always kept its eyes on the Word of God, and has stood for the preaching of law and gospel, without compromise or fear of man.

*Walker is the librarian on the AFLC campus in Plymouth, Minn.*





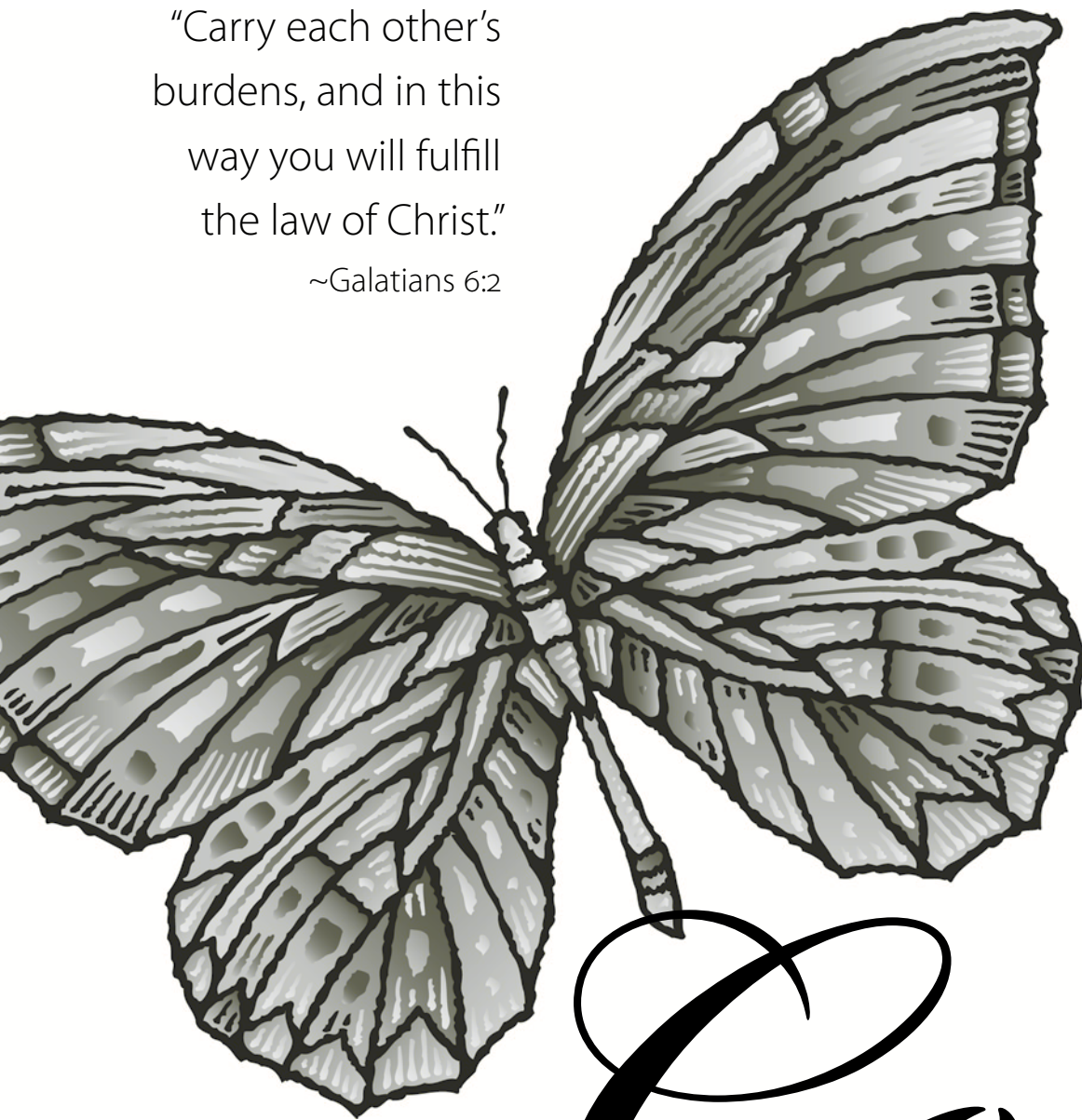
June 1, 2009

Dear members of the Associate & Free Lutheran Congregations,

As members of Haugen Lutheran Kenyon, Minnesota, we would like  
to invite you to help us celebrate our congregation's 150th anniversary  
during a special service at the Old Jones Church at 9:30 a.m. on  
Sunday, June 28.

"Carry each other's  
burdens, and in this  
way you will fulfill  
the law of Christ."

~Galatians 6:2



# God in Skin

By Glorianne Swenson

**N**o one can truly see the hurt inside when outward appearances wear masks. I did not know how this story would end, but I feared it would be framed in tragedy.

January 2009 wasn't the first time my husband, Wayne, and I had received crises calls from our daughter, Jenni, in California. She had met her husband on a Christian Internet dating site four and a half years before; it was an instant attraction that led to marriage. A baby girl was born to join our then-9-year-old granddaughter from Jenni's first marriage.

Her calls for help came any time of the day or night; some of her words were barely audible or understandable through sobbing and fear. We knew she was being controlled by her husband, who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The air was always thick with difficulty.

"If we could just be there when the storms came," we thought. We encouraged her to leave and offered our help. We fervently prayed for her and our granddaughters' safety.

Why did she stay? Was it because of her commitment before God in their marriage vows? Was it because she found security in the familiar, even though she knew she was in danger?

My prayers continued. I begged God to dance with her so she could feel the sun on her face and the wind in her hair. I prayed that He would free her from being a prisoner in her own marriage—that she could pick the mountain wildflowers and breathe the pure air that cleanses body and soul.

We learned that as parents we must simply trust God when we don't understand.

"Where is God?" she would cry out—over and over again.

I tried to explain to her that just when she wonders where God is, He is making the perfect plan for her life.

On New Year's weekend she had finally gathered the courage to pack a few things, take her two daughters and leave the house. She drove aimlessly around the city, not knowing where to turn or where to go. She had not slept the whole night before, and her mind and body were exhausted. We asked her if she could drive the 50 miles to the city where Wayne's cousin, John, and

his wife, Barb, lived, but she said she didn't have the strength. We instructed her to find a hotel and check in, and we would try and send help.

We took the chance that John and Barb would be home. They are retired and often travel. How relieved we were when they answered the call and agreed to make the drive to bring Jenni and the girls back with them. God in skin!

The next morning Jenni received a phone call that her husband had overdosed on medications and had been taken to a hospital emergency room. The doctor told her that he was getting an intermittent pulse, but didn't think he would make it.

Barb immediately took Jenni to the hospital. John got our oldest granddaughter on the plane back to Minnesota where she had been living with her daddy for the past two years. Then John and our 3-year-old princess left for the hospital.

We immediately started looking for flights to California. What were our chances of finding tickets for the next day at an affordable price? We needed to get there as soon as humanly possible.

God took over. We got our tickets. Our neighbor took complete charge of watching over our home—not knowing when we would be able to return. We arranged for a friend to take our van from the airport to his home.

I didn't sleep at all that night, and at 3:30 a.m., after loading the mini-van with our hastily packed suitcases, we made an attempt to leave our rural housing development. The wind howled and snow drifted across our Minnesota roads. It was only January 4, but our hometown boasted nearly four feet of snow. Winds not only made my wind chimes sing, but the wind chill was dangerous and bone chilling.

We made several attempts to get through the deep, drifting snow. Then through the blinding snow we saw lights—lights of a snowplow! The driver saw our dilemma and came immediately to clear a path for us to get through. God in skin!

United with our daughter in California, we began the long road of healing together. At the hospital I saw our son-in-law's body swollen with drugs—only a breathing tube keeping him alive. After 72 hours with no response, the breathing tube was removed and he died peacefully on January 6—leav-

ing his painful past behind him.

Over and over we found that family and friends were the sweet aroma of God, and that they were His hands and feet out in the community. Co-workers and friends from their small church surrounded us with love—bringing meals, flowers, and helping hands. God in skin!

Our church back home in Minnesota sprang into action. We were covered with prayer. A benefit fund was set up for our daughter and other gifts and offers of help poured in. My own life was laden with disabling health conditions, but God gave me strength to do what needed to be done at the time.

We decided to have a garage sale before leaving California. The first evening a man dressed in a business suit and tie stopped by to purchase some tools. Don't miss out on a blessing because it isn't packaged the way you expect! He visited with Wayne. He came back the next day to buy more. After hearing about our daughter's situation, he told Wayne that he was an estate attorney and would gladly do what he could to help her. Hired! God in skin!

Our daughter-in-law, Faye, flew out to California to help Wayne drive Jenni's car back to Minnesota. God in skin!

On January 29 Jenni, her daughter and I flew back to the airport in Fargo, N.D. We hastened to get our six pieces of luggage from the baggage claim, also juggling smaller carry-ons. We were the last ones to pick up our baggage, and we seemed all alone in the small airport. Our suitcases were wheeled over to empty chairs and opened in an attempt to find the warm winter coats and boots purchased for the Minnesota weather. Almost in tears, I sat down in a chair. Then I saw a man walking toward us.

"I thought that was you, Glori!" he said. It was our friend Pastor Kelm from our hometown. He took charge of getting our van and loading the luggage. God in skin!

The road continues to wind as we work to put our lives back together. On this journey through life we will continue to look for God with skin on. And we remember the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Let us be silent that we may hear the whisper of God."

*Swenson is a member of Calvary Free Lutheran, Fergus Falls, Minn.*





## Prayer retreat

BY PASTOR TODD SCHIERKOLK

The first of May was a holiday in Mexico. Pastor Milton Flores in Celaya, Mexico, took advantage of the day to plan a prayer retreat. We met in the city of Aguascalientes and had a good day of fellowship, prayer, and sharing testimonies of God's work both in us and in our ministries. Pastor Milton brought his assistant, Giovanni, and one of the helpers in Pastor Samuel Flores' church, Jose Juan, came as well. Also in attendance was one of the former leaders of the church in Aguascalientes that Dan Giles had started.

It was somewhat eerie to drive into the city of Aguascalientes because it seemed like it was empty. We were right in the middle of the swine flu scare, before there was much information out about what it was and how severe it was. Most businesses were shut down, and all the schools were closed.

We look forward to making this prayer time a regular meeting together. Dan had organized the first meeting we had a couple of years ago, but this was the first time we had been able to get together since then. One of our main petitions to the Lord of the Church was that He would raise up a pastor for the mission church in the city of Irapuato. They have been without a pastor now for more than a year. We were also asking God's blessing on the church in Leon where Pastor Samuel Flores serves, as well as the families that Pastor Milton Flores is visiting in the city of Querétaro. In addition we have been praying that God would raise up

a church again in the city of Aguascalientes, where we were meeting, under the ministry of Pastor Ricardo Varela who could not be with us for the day.

At about the same time we were glad to have a visit from Dan and Debbie, who came down to Mexico to see their kids, Danny and Marcela Giles and girls, and Ingrid Giles, who are short-term assistants. We were all praying for Marcela who was very great with child, hoping that her baby would wait until Dan and Danny got back from a trip they had to make together. God was gracious and little Robert delayed his entrance into the world until his daddy returned. We thank you for your prayers for Danny and Marcela and for Ingrid in their capacity as short-term assistants. They have been a great blessing to all of us as they have worked with the youth group and on the translation of the Ambassador Sunday School material. We look forward to plugging back into ministry in Mexico after a few months on deputation in the United States. And we are grateful to God for Danny's willingness to fill in for me while we are gone. We continue to thank the Lord for all of our fellow-workers here in the United States who help us with their encouragement, prayers and financial support. May God be glorified as we work together to build His kingdom.

*Schierkolk and his family are AFLC missionaries to Mexico serving in Jerez.*



# Free Lutheran Seminary hosts Summer Institute of Theology August 3-7

The Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary will host the Summer Institute of Theology (SIT) Aug. 3-7 on the Plymouth, Minn., campus.

Courses offered this year include:

“Studies in the Book of Hebrews”

(2 credits), taught by Pastor Jerry Moan, AFLTS faculty.

“Doctrine of the Church” (2 credits), taught by Dr. Francis Monseth, AFLTS dean.

“The Ten Commandments for Today” (2 credits), taught by Dr. John Eidsmoe, guest instructor.

“Church Leadership and Administration” (2 credits), taught by Pastor Robert Lee, AFLTS faculty.

“History and Aims of the AFLC” (2 credits), taught by Pastor Robert Lee, AFLTS faculty.

For more information on SIT and to download a brochure, visit the AFLTS Web site at [www.aflts.org](http://www.aflts.org).



Pastor Joe Faldet was ordained June 28 at Trinity Free Lutheran, McIntosh, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, officiating. Pictured are (from left) Pastor Dale Mellgren, who serves Trinity Free Lutheran; Tim Rolf, deacon; Pastor Joe Faldet, Pastor Joel Rolf, dean of AFLBS; Kenneth Rolf, deacon; Pastor Elden Nelson; and Pastor Jerry Moan, AFLBS faculty member. Not pictured is Earl Rolf, deacon.

## People and Places

**Good Shepherd Free Lutheran** in Brainerd, Minn., passed a resolution to affiliate with the AFLC. Members of the Coordinating Committee accepted their resolution when they met in June. **Pastor Gary Jorgenson**, chairman of the Coordinating Committee, accepted a call to serve Good Shepherd. He will leave his ministry at Christ the King Free Lutheran, East Grand Forks, Minn.

**Eric Swenson**, a 2009 graduate of AFLTS, has accepted a call to Christian Free Lutheran, Wheatland, Iowa. He will begin his ministry there on September 1, after completing an interim call to Bethel Free Lutheran, Minot, where he served during his internship year.

Members of the Coordinating Committee have approved **Brian Ricke**, Minneapolis, Minn., for the licensed pastor roster. Ricke, who recently completed his second year at AFLTS, has accepted a call to serve Calvary Free Lutheran, Arlington, S.D.

**Pastor Seth Forness** and **Pastor Patrick Lohse**, both 2009 graduates of AFLTS, were ordained June 19 at Calvary Free Lutheran, Fergus Falls, Minn., at

the closing service of the AFLC Annual Conference. Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, officiated. Forness begins his ministry as pastor of youth and young adult ministries at Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon, Minn. Lohse begins his ministry at Bethlehem Lutheran, Morris, Ill.

Members of the Coordinating Committee have removed **Pastor James Vineyard**, Pleasanton, Texas, from the clergy roster at his request.

**Pastor Craig Jennings**, Minot, N.D., has been approved for the clergy roster by members of the Coordinating Committee. Jennings is a former faculty member of the AFLC Schools.

**Pastor Tony Stockman** has accepted a call to serve Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D. Stockman, who is a member of the AFLC Home Missions Committee, will leave his ministry at Chippewa Lutheran, Brandon, Minn.

**Pastor Mark Richardson** has accepted a call to serve Bethany Free Lutheran, Abercrombie, N.D. He leaves his ministry at Calvary Lutheran, Wallace, S.D.

**Pastor Jerry Holmaas** has resigned as a faculty member at the AFLC Schools in Plymouth, Minn. Holmaas taught Old Testament and Hebrew classes at both the Bible school and seminary for the last 14 years. His resignation is effective at the end of August. According to Dr. Dan Mundfrom, chairman of the AFLC Schools Board of Trustees, the schools will look to fill Holmaas' position temporarily with part-time faculty while they search for a replacement.

**Pastor Steve Carlson** has accepted a call to serve at Ruthfred Evangelical Lutheran, Bethel Park, Pa., beginning at the end of August. Carlson will leave his ministry at the three-point parish of Kvam Free Lutheran and Zion-Sarpsborg Lutheran, Dalton, Minn., and Tordenskjold Lutheran, Underwood, Minn., where he served for nine years.

**Ruthfred Evangelical Lutheran**, Bethel Park, Pa., is looking for a full-time youth director. For more information contact Pastor James Molstre: e-mail: [jmolstre@ruthfred.org](mailto:jmolstre@ruthfred.org), phone: 412-835-7140 or mail: 3401 S. Park Rd., Bethel Park, Pa. 15102.

## AFLC memorials: June

### AFLBS

Victor Myhre  
Andrew Larson  
David Bacon  
Grant Christopherson (2)

### AFLTS

Teagan Berry  
Inez Wee  
Grant Christopherson

### Evangelism

Harold Kiefert  
Glen Doe

### Parish Education

Barbara Anderson  
Grant Christopherson

### Vision

Levern Mellstrom  
Stanley Mellstrom  
Earling Mellstrom  
Grant Christopherson

### World Missions

Arthur Amundson  
Levern Mellstrom

### Youth Ministries

Harold Kiefert

... in honor of

### AFLBS

Ingrid Wasser  
Percy and Judith Strand

### World Missions

Roberto Giles

### Home Missions

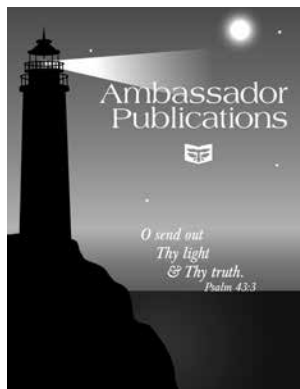
Willis and Marilyn Kettelhut

### Parish Education

Margaret Mundfrom  
Grace Syverson  
Mabel Host  
Ruth Horn

## New catalog now available from AFLC's Parish Education department

A new catalog is now available from the AFLC's Parish Education Department. The free catalog, containing materials available through Ambassador Publications, is available in either printed or CD format. Call (763) 545-5631 or e-mail parish-ed@afcl.org for more information.



## Retreats at the ARC

### Classics Retreat

Sept. 18-20

Led by Pastor Elden and Faith Nelson and Pastor John and Barb Skeie.

Several events are currently in the planning stages, including the Chosen Child Conference which offers a time of renewal for families of adopted children, scheduled for Nov. 6-8. Also, a silent prayer retreat is being planned for Dec. 4-6. Further information will be printed as it becomes available.

Ask your church for our brochures/bulletin inserts or for more information on these events, visit the ARC's Web site at [www.arc-afcl.org](http://www.arc-afcl.org), or call (800) 294-2877. Scholarships are available.

## Faith Free Lutheran celebrates centennial

Members of Faith Free Lutheran, Minneapolis, will celebrate the congregation's centennial anniversary with a service of thanksgiving at 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 25, with Pastor Robert Lee, former president of the AFLC, as a special speaker. A meal will be shared following the service. All are invited to join in the celebration. A special invitation is extended to those with personal ties to send remembrances to be included in a book for the occasion. Letters may be sent to 140 W. 44th St., Minneapolis, MN 55409. E-mail may be sent to Pastor Greg Lenz at [gregoryplenz@msn.com](mailto:gregoryplenz@msn.com).

## Hauge Lutheran celebrates 150th anniversary

Members of Hauge Lutheran, Kenyon, Minn., will celebrate the congregation's 150th anniversary on Sept. 20 with a special service at 10:30 a.m. Pastor Ken Moland, who served the congregation from 1970 to '75 is the guest speaker with the theme, "From Generation to Generation, We Will Recount Thy Praise." All are welcome to attend this event.

## Remembering Inez Wee, wife of Pastor Reuben Wee

A funeral service for Inez Wee, 97, was held June 5 at the Ellsborough Lutheran Church, rural Balaton, Minn. She served with her husband, Pastor Reuben Wee, who was ordained in 1968, as he pastored AFLC congregations at Tioga, N.D., and Granite Falls, Minn., before his sudden death in 1974. Prior to his seminary studies, Reuben and Inez operated the Current Lake Store, rural Balaton, while he served ten years in the Minnesota State Legislature. Her survivors include seven sons and one daughter, 22 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild.

## AFLBS hosts annual Golf Scramble Aug. 10

The Association Free Lutheran Bible School will host its annual Golf Scramble Aug. 10 at Cedar Creek Golf Course, Albertville, Minn. This fund-raising event benefits students who have financial needs as they study the Word of God at AFLBS. Last year's event raised \$8,000 toward that goal. For more information on the event, visit the AFLBS Web site at [www.aflbs.org](http://www.aflbs.org), or e-mail Lyle Guhl at [lyleg@afcl.org](mailto:lyleg@afcl.org).

### AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1- June 30, 2009

FUND	TOTAL (subsidy)	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$434,087	\$24,850	\$159,216	37
Evangelism	112,642	6,667	42,605	38
Youth Ministries	78,909	15,893	42,569	54
Parish Education	135,207	4,638	54,424	40
Seminary	244,110	15,154	92,501	38
Bible School	398,910	54,572	190,500	48
Home Missions	375,908	37,004	157,059	42
World Missions	327,017	19,034	120,110	37
Personal Support	435,500	31,445	196,050	45
TOTALS	\$2,542,290	\$209,257	\$1,055,034	41
TOTALS 2008	\$2,307,821	\$152,006	\$1,088,652	47

#### Goal 50%

These are the Annual Conference-approved budgets but do not reflect all the financial needs of the departments. Contact the individual departments for further information.

# How we spend our time

**H**ow can we get more people to come to annual conference? The number of congregations that are a part of our association has grown over the years, but attendance at annual conferences has not seen much of an increase. The conferences are a time for spiritual renewal and crucial to the health of our association, and yet we are having trouble getting people to come.



Pastor Craig Johnson

We discussed changes to the format and changes to the days of the week when we meet. It was pointed out that in the past when we met over

a weekend, it didn't lead to increased numbers but instead attendance went down dramatically on Saturday afternoons.

The ones we need to talk with are the ones who are not attending conferences. We need to pray for wisdom as to how we can get more of them to come, while keeping the current ones attending. The hope is that more AFLC people will see conference as of such value that it is worth sacrificing some of that precious commodity of time.

We spent time at conference discussing the issue of homosexuality and immoral sexual behavior. Our discussion was different than those that go on at some other church conferences. We were in agreement that the Bible is clear and authoritative in its declaration that homosexual behavior is wrong and sex outside of the institution of marriage is wrong.

The discussion we had was over how

to live when the world around us does as spoken of in Isaiah 5:20: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil ...." We live in a world that increasingly sees those who hold to biblical values as being wrong and a problem in society.

We discussed legal measures congregations may want to take to protect themselves from possible future attacks and demands to compromise their beliefs. Those types of measures may be helpful and necessary, but it would be naïve to think having certain language in your church by-laws will protect you from future persecution. Our hope for the future is not found in legal wording or political influence. Our hope is in Christ who has promised, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18).

Attacks on His Church and His truth will most likely intensify in the days ahead, but we need not fear. It is not wise to make decisions or take actions on the basis of fear. Our congregations are not to have a bunker mentality, hiding behind our walls, worried about what the world might do and wondering how we can protect ourselves. We are to be on the offensive, going forward with the good news of Jesus. By faith in Christ, even if we are persecuted, we will overcome.

I hope in the future, instead of spending so much time discussing how to protect ourselves from homosexual activists, we will spend more time considering how we can most effectively reach out to homo-

sexuals and share with them the love and truth of Christ that sets people free.

One issue we did not spend much time discussing was the large increase in the size of the Home Missions department budget. It was one of the last items on the conference agenda and passed without discussion. The Budget Analysis Committee described it as "an extremely significant increase over their previous subsidies. ... an increase of 70 percent over a two-year period." They asked the confer-

**I hope in the future ... we will spend more time considering how we can most effectively reach out to homosexuals and share with them the love and truth of Christ that sets people free.**

ence "to soberly and diligently consider the subsidy request from Home Missions." Home Missions said their budget is "a clear picture ... of what is needed to move into the future." We trust in God who has promised to supply our needs and we hope this increase does not result in future complications.

As we do each year, much time at conference was spent in worship and prayer. As usual that was the time that was most well spent. We hope next year the numbers who spend time doing that will increase.

*building the base*

# Surprising faith

BY PASTOR ALAN ARNESON

I remember as a toddler playing with a jack-in-the-box toy. Every time I wound the crank, the clown popped out and I was surprised. What appeared to be so predictable and simple to an adult seemed to surprise me every time.

When the women came to the tomb to anoint the Christ's body, the mood was solemn and their plans were predictable. Then things changed. Matthew 28:6 states that the women were met by angel of the Lord who said, "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.

Come, see the place where He was lying." Can you imagine the surprise? Their Lord, the Messiah, had risen just as He had predicted. The mood quickly changed to joy.

And still many don't believe and are skeptical despite the fulfillment of prophecy and the physical evidence of Jesus. They don't know that joy.

The teaching of the resurrection of all men, as well as the resurrection of Christ, is taught in the Old Testament. This teaching appears as early as the time of Job and is expressed in his statement of faith in Job 19:25-27. Here Job affirms not only his own personal resurrection, but the truth that his Redeemer already lives and would later stand upon the earth. There are also numerous Bible verses where Christ predicts both His own death and His resurrection.

The New Testament, as well, is full of overwhelming proof of

the resurrection of Christ. At least 17 appearances of Christ occurred after His resurrection. And the tomb was empty after His resurrection. It is evident that the witnesses to the resurrection of Christ were not gullible, easily deceived people (John 20:9). Once convinced of the reality of His resurrection, they were willing to die for their faith in Christ. It is also evident that there was a great change in the disciples after the resurrection. Their sorrow was replaced with joy and faith as they were filled with the presence of Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel message.

Because of its historical character, Christ's resurrection constitutes the most important proof for the deity of Jesus Christ. Because of His victory over sin and death, Christ is the present and only standard of divine power in which all Christians continue to find hope. The resurrection is therefore the cornerstone of the Christian faith, and as the Apostle Paul expressed in

I Corinthians 15:17, "And if Christ had not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

Because Christ is raised, our faith is sure, our sins are forgiven, the ultimate victory of Christ is certain, and our faith is completely justified! Unlike a jack-in-the-box, our faith does not come as a surprise, but as a source of strength and confidence.

**Because of His victory over sin  
and death, Christ is the present  
and only standard of divine  
power in which all Christians  
continue to find hope.**

*Arneson serves Calvary Free Lutheran, Fosston, Minn.*