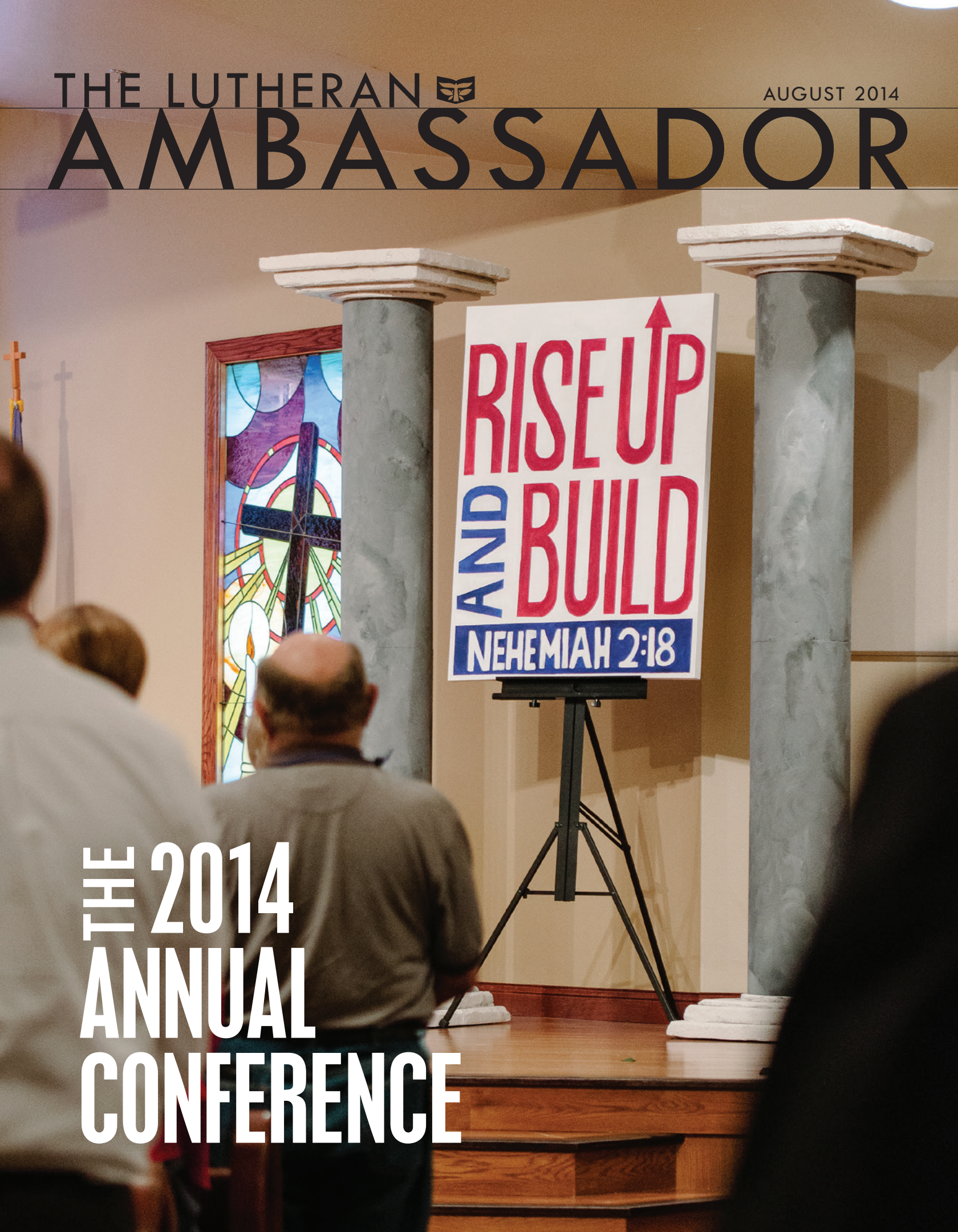


THE LUTHERAN 

AUGUST 2014

# AMBASSADOR



**RISE UP  
AND BUILD**  
NEHEMIAH 2:18

**THE 2014  
ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**



# The spring of living water

BY ANDREW KNEELAND

**L**ounging in a fresh-water spring is a lot more satisfying when it follows a five-hour hike.

About seven years ago my dad and I hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. After getting down there we rested our tired, weary bodies in a refreshing, ice-cold spring. Our tent was pitched and we were preparing to settle in for the night. After half an hour in the water, though, we exchanged knowing, mischievous glances. If ever we were to get back out of this canyon, it might as well be right now.

So we repacked our tent and took off. We left the refreshing spring and filled our precious few water bottles to the brim. There were no drinking faucets on the South Kaibab Trail, however, and we quickly exhausted our supply of water. We were halfway up the trail with the sun setting when dehydration started setting in. If it weren't for some friendly Germans—and language skills I learned from *Hogan's Heroes*—we might not have made it to the top.

We didn't make the wisest decision. We left our supply of fresh water and trusted in something finite and very unreliable.

God accused the Israelites of something similar in Jeremiah 2. In verse 13 He says, "My people have committed two sins: they have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

There's a distinction made in the Bible between "living water" and "cistern water." Cistern water is stale and stagnant; living water is pure, fresh, and brings life.

David longed for this living water throughout his psalms. And



in John 4 Jesus offered to give away this living water. The Samaritan woman to whom He offered this water was confused, but Jesus said: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life" (vs. 13-14).

This Samaritan woman was looking for sustaining water in the wrong place. Just like her, we sometimes look for salvation in all the wrong places.

In Jeremiah 2, God accused the Israelites of abandoning Him and turning instead to the customs, traditions, and religions of the countries and people around them. Just as my dad and I relied too heavily on our quickly-depleted water bottles, the Israelites depended on broken cisterns. They weren't enough to save them.

But we don't have to die of thirst in the desert. God has provided us with His life-giving living water. We are free from our sins and we don't have to face the punishment we deserve because Jesus has already taken care of everything for us. Our thirst has been quenched; we've been saved by the blood of the Lamb.

Let's not abandon this incredible living water. Instead, let's pitch our tent near the source and more deeply appreciate this gift we've been given.

*Kneeland, a 2013 graduate of AFLBS, is a member of Atonement Free Lutheran, Arlington, Wash.*

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Evangelism is a part of discipleship. It is not the other way around. I believe we have been missing the main focus of Matthew 28:18-20. The key is “making disciples.” What is a disciple? A disciple is a believer who is not only concerned about the birth of a lost soul but the total health of a new believer to maturity ...

—Pastor Jim Rasmussen

We need to be precise—the authority of the Word of God, the theology that is consistent with the Word, and the understanding that reflects our Lutheran confessions. We need to be personal—the guidance by the Spirit of God, the salvation that is experienced by God’s grace, and the activity of a free and living congregation, which is God’s people being God’s people to one another and to a lost world. Let us rise up and build!

—Pastor Jason Holt

Building with dimensional lumber takes vigilance to keep the building square and level. But building with crooked red pine and spruce trees takes constant vigilance to try and keep things half-level and square. When it comes to building the kingdom of God, I would liken it more to building with crooked logs rather than dimensional lumber.

—Pastor Lyndon Korhonen

We not only believe in the power of prayer, we depend on the power of prayer!

—Pastor Mike Crowell, quoted by Pastor Paul Nash



# RISE UP AND BUILD

NEHEMIAH 2:18

by Pastor Robert Lee

THE THEME OF THE 2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, June 10-13, was "Rise Up and Build" (Nehemiah 2:18), and 525 AFLC voting members gathered in the new facility of Grace Free Lutheran Church, Valley City, North Dakota, for fellowship and inspiration, to hear reports from AFLC ministries, and to nominate or elect members of the corporations, boards and committees.









#### OPPOSITE PAGE

Clockwise from top left:

Pastor Mark Richardson, Faith, S.D., speaks to a conference resolution.

Graduates of the seminary sang "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" during the opening service of the conference, marking 50 years since the seminary opened.

Dr. Daniel Mundfrom, chairman of the Coordinating Committee, gave a short presentation and was available to answer questions prior to a vote by the conference to change the Rules for Work.

Members of the conference paused for prayer during the morning prayer hour led by Pastor Les Johnson.

Members of Committee No. 4 work on resolutions to present to the conference on behalf of Publications and Parish Education.

Conference attendees listen to a speaker.

PAGE 5:

Pastor Wade Mobley, Sioux Falls, S.D., pauses with other members of the conference to pray after he was elected as the Dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary and President of the AFLC Schools.



Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president elected last year for a three-year term, presided over the business sessions for the first time; Vice-President Pastor Peter Franz and Secretary Pastor Brian Davidson, who serve one-year terms, were both re-elected by more than 75 percent of the votes cast.

A highlight of the conference was the election of the Pastor Wade A. Mobley, Sioux Falls, S.D., to serve as seminary dean and president of the AFLC Schools, a combined position created by the Board of Trustees during the recent accreditation process. A graduate of both the seminary and Bible school, Mobley currently serves as pastor of Living Word Free Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, is married to Michelle (Deubner) and is the father of two children. (See page 18 for news story.)

In other major action, a proposal presented last year by a conference committee to amend the Rules for Work, creating a limitation of two four-year terms for the AFLC president and making the office of vice president a full-time position, failed by a narrow margin to gain the necessary two-thirds vote.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the AFLC seminary, and the opening service on Tuesday, June 10, celebrated this occasion by including an anthem by a large choir of seminary graduates. The service was led by Pastor Robert Rieth, and the message was preached by the Pastor Richard Gunderson, both members of the first seminary class. A third member of the class, Pastor Howard Kjos, opened the service with a greeting. The men received Golden Anniversary Class certificates from the seminary, presented by Interim Dean Robert Lee and Pastor Raynard Huglen, a member of the first Board of Trustees. Copies of an anniversary booklet titled, "Holding Fast the Faithful Word," with brief essays by each member of the theological faculty, were made available during the reception following the service.

The Women's Missionary Federation conducted their sessions on Tuesday prior to the opening of the conference, as well as the Mission Festival Service on Wednesday evening. The speaker this year for the service was Michael Furchert, Duluth, Minn., an inspirational speaker and musician, who was born and raised in communist East Germany. The evening also included the commissioning of Ben and Adela Jore and Micah Berger for missionary service.

The daily prayer hours were led by Pastor Les Johnson, Wilson, Wis., with a focus on Christ's "high priestly prayer" in John 17.

The structure of this year's conference was shaped by the continuing efforts to abbreviate the many reports from our common endeavors. Each department was asked to summarize its report in eight minutes or less, and conference attendees were encouraged to read the complete reports prior to the sessions. One result was an early completion of conference business on Friday afternoon, which allowed time for several personal testimonies of God's leading, provision, and answered prayer.











Resolutions were approved calling for more “streamlining business sessions, greater opportunities for spiritually-uplifting daytime speakers, uplifting worship, faith-strengthening testimonies, support mechanisms to assist parents with young children, ... possible afternoon activities for families,” and a speeding up of the voting process by all means possible, including modern technology. Concerns were also expressed about the difficult work of the Nominating Committee, and a resolution calling for the Conference Committee to “improve and strengthen the candidate selection process” was adopted.

Considerable discussion was devoted to a resolution from Committee No. 1 calling for the leadership of the AFLC to present one-, five-, and ten-year vision statements to the 2015 Annual Conference. The opposition to the resolution centered on the concern that any such vision statements should originate with the congregations, and the resolution was defeated.

The report of the Coordinating Committee welcomed Grace Covenant Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, S.D., to the congregational roster, and removed Hauge Lutheran Church, Goldfield, Iowa, which has disbanded. Six new pastors were added to the regular clergy roster, two to the fellowship roster, and one to the licensed pastor roster.

A resolution was approved to schedule the annual conference every four years at the Association Retreat Center (ARC) near Osceola, Wis. An invitation from the ARC Board for the conferences to be held there every other year was amended to conform to the earlier resolution.

Three conference programs were held on Thursday evening, with a lay people’s service and youth night at Grace, and the pastors and wives annual banquet, which was held in the Epworth Methodist Church. Chris Huepke, a pro-life representative in North and South Dakota, spoke for the lay service; seminarian Alex Amiot was the youth speaker; and Pastor Al Monson spoke at the banquet to the pastors and wives.

The conference concluded on Friday, June 13, with a service of ordination for three men: Matthew R. Ballmann, who has accepted a call from Abiding Savior, Sioux Falls, S.D., to serve as pastor of discipleship; Benjamin M. Jore, who is on loan from AFLC World Missions to Distant Shores Media; and Joshua N. Skogerboe, who has accepted a call to be the pastor of St. Olaf Lutheran Church, Montgomery, Ill. A unique feature of the service was the participation of the fathers of the three men in the reading of their vitae and the laying on of hands.

The 2015 Annual Conference will be held June 16-19 at the Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center, Stanwood, Wash.

*Lee, editor, is the interim dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary.*



#### OPPOSITE PAGE

Clockwise from top left:

Pastor Rick Long, Arlington, Wash., speaks to a resolution from the conference floor.

Conference attendees vote on a conference resolution by a show of hands.

Children of conference attendees attend a vacation Bible school program during the morning business sessions.

Conference attendees pause for prayer at the end of Thursday’s morning session.

Pastor Richard Gunderson, Cambridge, Minn., brought the message during the opening service of the conference. Gunderson was a member of the first graduating class of the AFLC seminary.

Pastor Shane McLoughlin, Minot, N.D., pauses to pray with Tim Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore.

A group of women react to a speaker during the WMF Day of events.







Clockwise from top left:

Debbie Erickson, Roseau, Minn., talks with friends at the WMF luncheon.

Michael Furchert, Duluth, Minn., spoke at the Mission Festival Service.

Vicki Johnson, Boyertown, Pa., gave a dramatic presentation on Psalm 23 during the WMF Day.

The WMF leadership runs the business meeting.

Pastor Del Palmer commissioned Pastor Ben and Adela Jore and family and Micah Berger for mission service.



# COME, FOLLOW ME

BY DAWN JOHNSON AND LYNN WELLUMSON

**T**wo hundred and fifty-two women met June 10 at Grace Free Lutheran Church in Valley City, N.D., for the annual Women's Missionary Federation Day, under the theme "Come, Follow Me" from Matthew 19:21. The group was warmly welcomed by Kathy Laumb of Grace Free Lutheran's WMF. Adela Jore, newly commissioned AFLC missionary on loan to Distant Shores Media, shared with us in devotions.

Vicki Johnson, the 2014 WMF Bible study author from Boyertown, Pa., led the morning Bible study from the story of the rich young ruler in Matthew 19. Like the rich young ruler, Jesus calls each of us to come and follow Him. We are to come to Him with our questions and our answers and lay them at His feet. He is absolute goodness and worthy to be followed.

Attendees were given the choice of attending two out of four workshops that were offered: 1) Katelyn Gudim, a short-term assistant to Uganda, shared about her work with the women in Uganda. 2) Lori Willard shared suggestions and material on prayer and journaling. 3) Marian Christopherson informed and challenged listeners with the work of the Parish Education Board in producing curriculum for the AFLC. 4) Esther Hylden demonstrated a lasagna recipe while challenging the women to be hospitable—without grumbling.

After the workshops, a memorial service was held to remember the dear ladies who had passed on to the church triumphant this past year. Janet Skramstad led the service. As the names were presented, flowers were placed on a wooden cross, a graphic reminder of how God used the awfulness of His death to offer mankind

everlasting life. To close this part of the day, the 2014 Ambassador team from AFLBS gave a musical tribute.

After lunch, which was provided by the Grace Free Lutheran WMF, the afternoon sessions began. A volunteer choir directed by Anne Presteng from Grafton, N.D., sang "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us." The ladies who participated in this choir had the opportunity to practice twice that morning to pull it all together, and they did a beautiful job.

Vicki Johnson presented a dramatic monologue of Psalm 23, dressed as a sheep. Her presentation reminded the audience that even though there are lions, tigers and bears—"Oh my!"—in life, God the Father stands stronger than these.

In the afternoon, members of the national WMF board presided over the business meeting. Following presentations by the president, secretary and treasurer, all reports were approved. Members of the Nominating Committee presented names for election to the positions of second vice president and treasurer. Lori Willard was reelected as second vice president and Deb Benson, Armour, S.D., was elected as treasurer. A budget of \$67,579 was approved for 2015. Members of the 2015 Nominating Committee include Cheryl Aakre, Amy Dalager, and Mary Dyrud. Members of the 2015 Resolutions Committee include Carol Haugen, JoAnn Miller, and Elaine Ensrud. The 2014 adopted resolutions included encouraging local and district WMFs to take advantage of the opportunity provided by a grant to offer a WMF Vision Seminar, which upholds the biblical understanding and teaching of the preservation of the traditional family (one man and one woman) and the sanctity of life.

To commemorate AFLTS's 50th an-

niversary, Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn., compiled excerpts from the last 50 years of reports from AFLTS deans. His document was included in the material given to each lady in attending the WMF Day.

The day of events closed with the theme song, "Step by Step." Many women stayed for small prayer groups.

The Advisory Board met for a brief time with the National Board to review the day.

AFLC missionaries Justo and Patricia Pillman presented their work in Ecuador during the WMF breakfast on June 11. They work under the direction and leadership of the national Lutheran church, Paz de Dios, in Cuenca, Ecuador. Their ministry to the youth includes Bible studies, one-on-one discipleship, assisting with homeschooling, and leading retreats/outings. They had a table on which they displayed clothing and other items from Ecuador.

The WMF hosted the Mission Festival Service that evening. God's Mighty Hand, a puppet team from Dickinson, N.D., opened the service with a skit, delighting children of all ages. Michael Furchert, a member of St. John's Lutheran, Duluth, Minn., shared his family story of holding true to their faith while living under the Nazi regime of Hitler's Germany and the years following behind the Berlin Wall. The service closed with a commissioning service for Micah Berger, lay missionary to Uganda, and Ben and Adela Jore, missionaries on loan to Distant Shores Media.

Plan now to attend WMF Day June 16, 2015, in Warm Beach, Wash.

*Johnson, Wilson, Wis., is the executive secretary, and Wellumson, Williston, N.D., is the president of the WMF.*

# ELECTION RESULTS



## OFFICERS

### Vice President

One-year term  
Pastor Peter Franz, Maple Grove, Minn.

### Secretary

One-year term  
Pastor Brian Davidson, Dickinson, N.D.

## 2015 COMMITTEES

One-year terms

### Committee No. 1

Pastor James Johnson, Fergus Falls, Minn.  
Pastor Steven Mundfrom, Valley City, N.D.  
Tim Erhardt, Lake Stevens, Wash.  
Amy Dalager, Argyle, Minn.  
Victor Wieczorek, Mount Vernon, S.D.

### Committee No. 2

Scott Ducote, Mead, Okla.  
Pastor Ron Brubakken, Argyle, Wis.  
Pastor Adam Osier, Bethel Park, Pa.  
John Keranen, Menahga, Minn.  
Harold Erickson, Wadena, Minn.

### Committee No. 3

Ernest Kronquist, Arlington, Wash.  
Bud Haugen, Snohomish, Wash.  
Pastor Matthew Ballmann, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
Pastor Micah Hjermstad, Ishpeming, Mich.  
Don Burmeister, Mount Vernon, S.D.

### Committee No. 4

Pastor Les Galland, Shakopee, Minn.  
Debra Burmeister, Mount Vernon, S.D.  
Carol Quern, Oslo, Minn.  
Pastor Jason Gudim, Golden Valley, Minn.  
Betty Luebke, Parkston, S.D.

### Committee No. 5

Pastor David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.  
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn.  
Richard Luebke, Parkston, S.D.  
Dean Eichhorst, Shakopee, Minn.  
Ed VanScoten, Durant, Okla.

\* All terms five years unless noted.

## BOARDS & COMMITTEES

### Coordinating Committee

- Pastor, five-year term  
Pastor Craig Benson, Armour, S.D.

### Board of Trustees

- Layman, five-year term  
Donald Balmer, Thief River Falls, Minn.

### Home Missions Committee

- Pastor, five-year term  
Pastor Joe Ocker, Frost, Minn.
- Layman, five-year term  
Kenn Graham, Camarillo, Calif.

### Bay Broadcasting

- Layman, three-year term  
Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, N.D.

### FLAPS Board of Managers

- Pastor, five-year term  
Pastor Tom Olson, Newark, Ohio

### World Missions

- Pastor, five-year term  
Pastor Kent Sperry, Northwood, N.D.
- Layman, five-year term  
Glenn Espe, Thief River Falls, Minn.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

One-year terms

### Central Tri State

Pastor Earl Korhonen, Radcliffe, Iowa

### Eastern

Gary Yerger, Reading, Pa.

### Eastern North Dakota

Don Berge, Fargo, N.D.

### Illinois

Cliff Seldal, Dekalb, Ill.

### Lake Superior

Ken Sletten, Duluth, Minn.

### Minneapolis

Tony Onnen, Cokato, Minn.

### Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado

Dr. Lee Dahl, Laurel, Neb.

### North Central Minnesota

Pastor Karl Anderson, Bagley, Minn.

### Commission on Evangelism

- Layman, five-year term  
Michael Lynnes, Leonard, N.D.

### Board of Publications & Parish Ed.

- Layman, one-year term  
Candice Johnson, Stanley, N.D.
- Pastor, five-year term  
Pastor Wes Langaas, Karlstad, Minn.

### Youth Board

- Layman, five-year term  
Jordan Langness, Beulah, N.D.

### Benefits Board

- Layman, five-year term  
Phil Peterson, Beresford, S.D.
- Pastor, two-year term  
Pastor Karl Anderson, Bagley, Minn.

### Budget Analysis Committee

- Laymen, three-year terms  
David Borg, Maple Grove, Minn.  
Nathan Dalager, Argyle, Minn.
- Layman, two-year term  
Mitchell Johnson, New Hope, Minn.

### Northern Michigan

Robert Davidson, Felch, Mich.

### Northwestern Minnesota

Nathan Dalager, Argyle, Minn.

### Pacific Northwest

Pastor Cal Willard, Everett, Wash.

### South Central

Dan Ballmann, Kopperl, Texas

### South Dakota

Paul Danielson, Arlington, S.D.

### Southwest Central Minnesota

Bill Sonmor, Underwood, Minn.

### Southwestern

Mark Gustafson, Apache Junction, Ariz.

### Western ND/Eastern Montana

Arley Hartsoch, Ray, S.D.





## CORPORATIONS

### Mission Corporation

Pastor Matthew Ballmann, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
 Pastor Ray Ballmann, Glen Rose, Texas  
 William Buck, Sinai, S.D.  
 Gloria Flaa, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
 Linda Fugleberg, Moorhead, Minn.  
 Paul Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa  
 Phil Johnson, Esko, Minn.  
 Rod Kjersten, Roseau, Minn.  
 Karen Knudsvig, Buxton, N.D.  
 Pastor Richard Long, Arlington, Wash.  
 Pastor Jerome Nikunen, Cloquet, Minn.  
 Pastor Mark Olson, Farmington, Minn.  
 Pastor Mark Richardson, Faith, S.D.  
 Pastor Greg Schram, Thief River Falls, Minn.  
 Ken Sletten, Duluth, Minn.  
 Pastor Scott Stroud, Salinas, Calif.  
 Roger Tollefson, Crookston, Minn.  
 Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt, Sparta, Wis.  
 Pastor Craig Wentzel, Edmore, N.D.  
 Dr. Lyle Westrom, Crookston, Minn.  
 Four-year term  
 Duane Burchill, Valley City, N.D.  
 Two-year term  
 Paul Christenson, Fergus Falls, MN  
 One-year term  
 Tim Jordan, Valley City, N.D.  
 Vince Larson, Buffalo, N.D.

### Schools Corporation

Becky Berge, Fargo, N.D.  
 Joel Erickson, Oslo, Minn.  
 Pastor Les Galland, Shakopee, Minn.  
 Bonnie Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa  
 Robin Johnson, Esko, Minn.  
 Ralph Peterson, Portland, N.D.  
 Pastor Craig Scavo, Durant, Okla.  
 Pastor Kirk Thorson, Larimore, N.D.  
 Pastor Peter Ward, Ottawa, Ill.  
 Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, N.D.  
 Two-year term  
 Gary Erickson, Dalton, Minn.

### ARC Corporation

No quorum

## COLLOQUY One-year

Pastor Seth Forness, Hawley, Minn.  
 Pastor Jason Gudim, Golden Valley, Minn.  
 Pastor Lyle Aadahl, Hayfield, Minn.  
 Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.  
 Pastor Karl Anderson, Bagley, Minn.  
 Pastor Kirk Flaa, Sioux Falls, S.D.

TOP: Pastor Tim Carlson, Grafton, N.D., and Pastor Tom Olson, Golden Valley, N.D.  
 ABOVE: AFLTS student Paul Kinney and Pastor Jim Johnson, Camarillo, Calif.





## ➤➤➤➤➤ ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Pastor Barry Nelson sits with kids during a puppet skit at the beginning of the Mission Festival Service. Jarrod Hylden, serving on Committee No. 2, works on resolutions to present to the conference. Pastor Howard Kjos, a graduate of the first AFLTS class, gives a greeting at the opening service. Pastor Steve Mundfrom and Wally Bjornson, both of host congregation Grace Free Lutheran, Valley City, N.D., greet conference attendees at the opening service. Members of host congregation Grace Free Lutheran sing during the opening service.

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Marian Christopherson, director of Parish Education, leads a WMF workshop. Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt and Pastor Josh Skogerboe talk during a business session. Pastor John Abel and Pastor Jason Holt talk while committees met on Tuesday, June 10. Farrell Erickson, Badger, Minn., talks with a group before meeting in prayer. Pastor Mark Olson prays with other conference attendees. Members of AFLBS' Ambassadors summer team sang during the Mission Festival Service. A group of men, including Pastor Scott Stroud and Pastor Don Richman, met in prayer.









# WHEN LIFE MEANS CHANGE

By Mark Vukonich

**T**he computer terminals were full as I walked into the general medical inpatient ward that morning. It was like any other day of my medical residency: I did my rounds, visiting my hospitalized patients prior to starting clinic responsibilities.

Today was like any other day of my medical residency, only it wasn't. Things had changed. The motions, subject matter and daily routines, they had not changed. So what had? I would walk in to my patient's room this morning and tell him that his spontaneous collapsed lung wasn't as spontaneous as it seemed, but was a product of his now recurrent colon cancer that had metastasized (spread) to his lungs.

This was news that I had become accustomed to delivering. Only this morning I did not search for a computer terminal to look up labs or specialists notes. I did not rehearse words of consolation or slow my stride to contemplate my disposition.

Things had changed, because for the first time I would deliver this news and understand truly what it meant.

Two months prior to completing my residency, two days after the birth of our first child, and two working days prior to my board examination, I had received the diagnosis of testicular cancer. Sheathed with emotional uncertainty, I had surgery followed by chemotherapy. Soon after, I was admitted to the hospital with low blood counts (neutropenic fever) from an IV line infection. Through this time my attitude and faith was challenged.

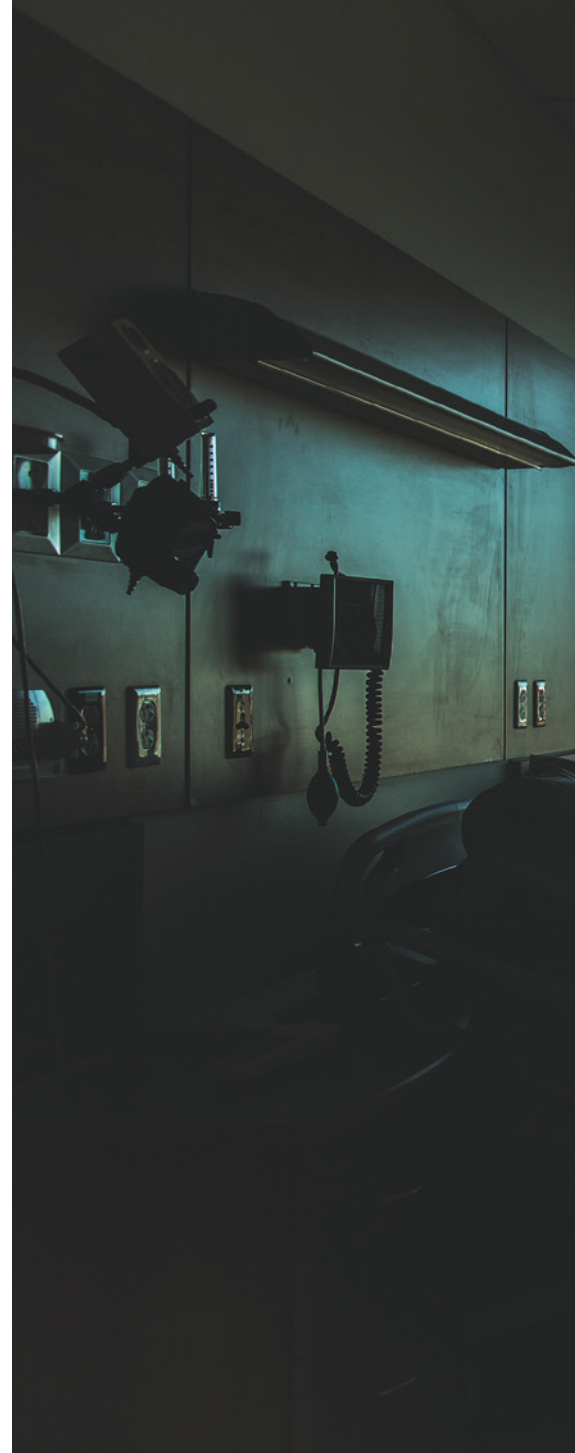
I reflected on the many ways my own patients have dealt with news of cancer. In every case, no matter what the prognosis, the diagnosis of cancer changes a life. And change requires a response.

Jesus reminds us in John 16:33 what that response should look like, "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." No matter what trials or what changes we encounter dur-

ing our lives, we can be certain that God is there with us.

Bill Bright exemplifies that attitude. Bright started Campus Crusade for Christ in 1951 at UCLA, and was instrumental in bringing God's Word to college campuses across the nation. In 1998 he was diagnosed with Pulmonary Fibrosis, an incurable, progressive lung disease that was described to him as being "worse than cancer." The afflicted would essentially suffocate to death slowly over time. Despite this news, Bright looked at his diagnosis as an opportunity to further God's kingdom.

James 1:2 says, "Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy." While be-







ing persecuted and suffering for his faith, Paul instructed his brothers and sisters, “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). So is Paul saying that it is God’s will for us to suffer from terrible diseases, die young, or have bad things happen in our lives? Not at all. His message is that as Christians our joy is not dependent on our circumstances. Our joy comes from what Christ has done for us—and that is constant.

Whether you have 20 years, five years, one year, one month, one day, or just one hour left to live, there is something very important God wants you to do. Bright fol-

lowed Paul’s example. Prior to his death in 2003, he wrote *The Journey Home: Finishing With Joy* and continued to minister to those who cared for him.

There is one thing that each one of us can be certain of in this life, and that is change. Not all of us will be diagnosed with cancer, but we all will face change and challenges. Like receiving a diagnosis of cancer, we can approach these changes with resentment and bitterness, or we can allow God to work through change, to bring us joy, and to minister to those around us.

Life changes are opportunities for us to lay our concerns in the care of our best friend, who has promised all things will be worked together for His glory. As Martin

Luther once articulated, “Though I know not the way He leads me, well do I know my Guide.”

The initial buzz on the medical floor had subsided by the time I left my patient’s room that morning and sat down at the computer terminal to document the morning encounter. “He took the news well; he understands his life has now changed ...”

*Vukonich, MD, recently attended Living Word Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D., while serving his residency in Sioux Falls. He returned to Fergus Falls, Minn., and is a member of Tordenskjold Free Lutheran, Underwood, Minn.*

# Mobley elected AFLC Schools president, AFLTS dean

**P**astor Wade Mobley was elected President of AFLC Schools and Dean of AFLTS at the AFLC Annual Conference held June 10-13 in Valley City, N.D.

Mobley is a 1997 graduate of AFLBS and a 2003 graduate of AFLTS. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of Northwestern—St. Paul, Minn. He and his wife, Michele (Deubner, AFLBS '95), have two children, Hannah (5) and Benjamin (4). Mobley has served Living Word Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D., since June of 2003.

"We're very convinced this is what God wants," said Mobley in a recent podcast of *Taste and See*, a ministry of Living Word Free Lutheran. "There's never ever been a question about that since we received that call."

Mobley plans to wrap up his ministry at Living Word on November 30 and will begin his work at the schools around February 1, 2015. In his role at the schools,

Mobley will serve primarily as a spiritual leader of the schools and an overseer of faculty, students, and the program of the seminary. He will also have responsibilities in the area of public relations connected to both schools.

"... to train leaders and servant leaders to do the work of the ministry that God has called them to do, that's my highest joy," said Mobley. "The dirty, dark secret of discipleship is that it is not a book or a program. Ultimately it is life together, and specifically life in Christ together. ... I think we are going be able to disciple this next generation of leaders and see multiplication from that as a fruit



Mobley (center) reacts after learning the results of the Annual Conference election.

of healthy ministries going forward in the AFLC ... that does excite me."

Please join the AFLC Schools in prayer for the Mobleys as they prepare to move to the Twin Cities and begin their ministry on campus.

## St. Paul's congregation celebrates 50 years



**M**embers of St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church in Fargo, N.D., celebrated the congregation's 50th anniversary on June 8. AFLC President Rev. Lyndon Korhonen gave the message during the Sunday morning service on June 8. During the afternoon service, several former pastors and charter members shared memories, including the congregation's first pastor, John Abel. St. Paul's original church building, located at 1603 North 5th St., was purchased in 1963 by the newly-formed AFLC as a Mission Center. The building also served as the AFLC's headquarters until the AFLC purchased its current property in Plymouth, Minn. The congregation has been meeting at their current location, 2802 12th St. S., since 2006.



Pastor John Abel (above, at left), retired AFLC missionary to Brazil and first pastor of St. Paul's gives a greeting at the celebration service while Pastor Jim Fugleberg listens. St. Paul's first met in the Mission Center (left).



# In Christ is joy and gladness

BY PASTOR TODD SCHIERKOLK

**W**hat's up with a third grade boy who has his beautiful cake brought out to him on his birthday and all he can do

is put his head down on the table and cry? Feeling like he just occupies space in his family might cause it. Feeling unloved might do it. Having his parents fighting all the time might play a part. Knowing his mom just got a satanic pentagram tattooed on her back could have something to do with it.

Whatever the ultimate cause, it resulted in a broken-hearted little boy who couldn't even be perked up by frosting, candles, and presents.

David (names are changed) spent a lot of time at his grandma's house, and she would faithfully bring him and his little sister to Sunday school. During the Advent season this past year he and his sister took part in the practices for the Sunday school Christmas program each week. When the time came for the big presentation, complete with a meal of tamales, they begged their mom to come—and she actually did. She sat there among the guests with a somewhat angry face and watched as her two older kids acted out the story of God's wonderful intervention at Christmas. She listened to her 1-year-old daughter in her lap shriek with delight at the sight of the puppets presenting the message of God's love. And she willingly picked out a quilt to take home at the end of the evening.

Amazingly, David's mom came back to another worship service, still looking angry. Then she came to another. Since our church meeting place was moved out to her neighborhood this last March she has become a regular visitor at our services and, thanks to God's wonderful love and the power of His Spirit and His Word, her angry face has started to melt away. He has called David's mom to come "out of the darkness and into His marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9) and to "Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22).



God's continued work in his mom's heart has made a notable difference in David. He's a happier kid now. When we were in the process of moving the location of our church building, David was a big helper, painting the walls and helping with the installation of some of the art work we have. Troubles at David's home haven't ceased, but God is definitely at work in the middle of the difficulties. So there is great hope! That knowledge has put a smile on more than just David's face. We wait and pray with eager expectation.

*Schierkolk is an AFLC missionary serving in Jerez, Mexico, with his wife, Barb, and daughter, Kirstie.*





## Seminarians ordained

Three graduates of the Free Lutheran Seminary were ordained during the closing service of the Annual Conference June 13 at Grace Free Lutheran, Valley City, N.D. Pictured (above, from left) are Matthew Ballmann, Ben Jore and Joshua Skogerboe. Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiated. Joining in a closing prayer during the service (top) were the fathers of the graduates, and seminary faculty.

Gerald Steele (right, kneeling) was ordained June 1 at St. Petrie Lutheran, rural Leland, Ill., with Pastor Korhonen officiating. Also in attendance were 14 pastors from the Illinois district.





# Police chaplaincy

BY PASTOR KRIS NYMAN

**I**t is 2:30 in the morning. A sheriff's deputy and I are standing at the door of a couple whose son was thrown from a vehicle an hour earlier. He did not survive the incident. A startled man opens the door. He is confused. As the deputy and I enter we ask if his wife is home. She is already coming toward us to find out what is going on. They have a sinking feeling that the news is not good.

We ask them to sit and then tell them about the accident. It is some of the most painful news a parent can hear.

Since September 2007 I have had the honor of working as a volunteer chaplain with the Mercer County Sheriff's Department in Stanton, N.D. Making notifications, like the early-morning incident above, is just one way I can minister to the people of my community through chaplaincy.

That morning we listened as these parents worked through the initial shock and grief. No one reacts the same way, but the devastation is similar. One man reacted by simply saying, "I am undone."

Once the initial shock is over, we give them all the information we have. Sometimes that is a lot, sometimes it is only a little. Because they are in shock, they will remember little after we have left. We leave them with written information about what they need to do next.

We always ask if we can pray with them. Most people are usually open to prayer. Together we ask God to comfort their broken hearts as no other person can bring the healing they need.

One of the most important services we can offer a loved one is establishing a network of care. We will not leave them alone until there are others to help in their shock and grief, whether that means contacting their pastor or connecting them with someone

else. If they are without a pastor or spiritual leader, they often ask us to help with the funeral. It is an honor to serve them in this way. It is also a way to bring the good news of the gospel of Jesus to people who are not churching and may not know Jesus as their Savior.

Another aspect of our chaplaincy ministry includes ride-alongs with the deputies and police officers on patrol. Their positions are a lonely and often misunderstood. The only time people are glad to see law enforcement show up is when they *need* help, otherwise most people do not want the police around. As a chaplain, I have been able to listen as someone who understands that they have a unique position in our culture.

These men and women willingly place themselves in harm's way more often than we will ever know. They need our respect and support. Praying protection over them is one of the great gifts you can give the deputies and officers in your community every day. Another way to help is to sincerely thank them for what they do for your community; it can make all the difference for them.

Chaplains also have access to the people housed in our 23-bed jail. Most are in for a short time; some can be there for up to a year. We provide spiritual care and help for addictions. One man, who was saved in our county jail, is now studying to be a pastor. He now resides in a federal penitentiary, but preaches and leads Bible studies regularly. When he is finished with his sentence, I believe God will call him to serve a congregation where he can continue to spread the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

I am thankful that God has called me to this special aspect of ministry!.

*Nyman serves Prince of Peace Lutheran, Beulah, N.D.*



## AFLC memorials: June

### AFLBS

Pastor John Mundfrom (5)  
Mildred Peterson (2)  
Olga Engevik  
Ruth Claus  
Norma Pederson  
Judy Sorter  
Grant Torgerson

### AFLTS

Pastor John Mundfrom (3)  
Bob Hintz  
Mildred Peterson  
Lillie Sauer

### Evangelism

Eric Ries  
Pauline Grosfield  
Pastor John Mundfrom

### Home Missions

Pastor John Mundfrom  
Elaine Wold

### Parish Education

Ida Marie Benson  
Pastor John Mundfrom

### World Missions

Ken Williams  
Pastor John Mundfrom  
Violet Grove

### Youth Ministry

Aloise Schmiesing

... in honor of

### AFLBS

Tonnes and Mary Pollestad

## Singsaas Free Lutheran to celebrate 140 years

Members of Singsaas Free Lutheran, Hendricks, Minn., will celebrate the congregation's 140th anniversary on August 3. The day of events will begin with a morning worship service at 10:30 am. There will be a meal provided after the service with fun and games for the whole family. An afternoon anniversary service will include people sharing special memories and music. If you are able, please come and join us in celebrating this milestone anniversary.

The congregation was founded in 1874 by Elling Eielsen, a Norwegian immigrant who studied under Hans Nielsen Hauge. He founded more than 40 congregations in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Texas, New York and the Dakota Territories. The congregation left the ELCA in 2010 and choose to associate with the AFLC shortly after. The congregation is served by Lay Pastor Ron Smith of Brookings, S.D.

## ARC raises funds for projects

The ARC was one of more than 40 non-profits in Osceola, Wis., involved in a one day giving campaign in April called GiveBig. The ARC staff set a goal of \$10,000 for the event, and members of the ARC Board and Corporation agreed to match that goal dollar for dollar.

Once the final tally was in place, the ARC garnered \$10,275 in online giving and an additional \$600 through the mail for a total of \$10,875 in one-day donations. Together with the matching gift from the corporation, the funds will be used for various capital improvement projects, including replacing the deck on Bethany House, replacing the roof on Manna Inn, and improvements to the disc golf course.

Gifts can still be given to these projects by visiting the ARC website at [www.arc-aflc.org](http://www.arc-aflc.org).

## SELC pastor awarded Cross of Merit

The award of "First Rank Cross of Merit" of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church was presented to Vsevolod Lytkin, Bishop of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC), on Pentecost Sunday, June 8, in the Cathedral Church, Tallinn, Estonia (see photo). The congregation applauded in appreciation of Bishop Lytkin's service to the church, for the man who had been used by Our Lord to restore the Lutheran faith to Siberia. This award was seen as recognition of what the Holy Spirit of Pentecost has done in Siberia among many, instead of any man's single achievements. [Editor: Some of us were privileged to hear Pastor Lytkin's powerful testimony when he visited the AFLC campus and spoke to seminary students and faculty several years ago.]



## People and places

**Pastor Gary Haug** resigned from his call to serve Solid Rock Free Lutheran, Anoka, Minn. **Lay Pastor Paul Kneeland** is serving the congregation on an interim basis.

**Pastor James Fugleberg**, Moorhead, Minn., has announced he is retiring from full-time parish ministry and completing his service to St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church in Fargo, N.D., as of the end of July. He will continue to serve when available on an as-needed basis while the congregation seeks to call a new pastor. He has served the congregation since October 1990.

**Pastor Tim Bartholomew** has resigned from serving Stillwater Free Lutheran Church, Kalispell, Mont.

**Pastor J. Christian Andrews** has retired from teaching and serving Evergreen Lutheran Church (Independent), Phelan, Calif. He and his wife, Susan, have moved to Little Falls, Minn., where they plan to own and operate a bed-and-breakfast inn.

**Katarina Riemer** is working as a Home Missions Parish Builder at Calvary Free Lutheran, Mesa, Ariz.

### AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1-June 30, 2014

FUND	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$22,635	\$166,679	\$170,171
Evangelism	10,216	79,736	73,175
Youth Ministries	8,369	66,053	55,578
Parish Education	10,428	61,539	54,892
Seminary	54,834	158,234	142,647
Bible School	44,438	241,671	259,263
Home Missions	38,697	220,069	220,382
World Missions	55,733	260,564	207,646
Personal Support	29,009	211,214	214,440
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$274,358</b>	<b>\$1,465,760</b>	<b>\$1,398,194</b>

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



# Conference reflections

**G**race Free Lutheran Church of Valley City, the host congregation for the 2014 Annual Conference, served our AFLC family well. Previous conferences in this eastern North Dakota community were held in the city auditorium or at the college, but the congregation's new church home was quite adequate for the committee meetings and sessions. The local conference committee and a large number of friendly volunteers worked very hard, and one might expect that they were somewhat relieved and much in need of rest when it

was all over. Thank you, Pastor Steve Mundfrom and all the willing workers, for your great hospitality!

Few if any of our Midwestern congregations have facilities large enough to host

future conferences. Next year, the Lord willing, we will meet in a large conference center in the State of Washington, and a resolution was passed recommending that future conferences be held at the Association Retreat Center in Wisconsin every four years. An attempt to change this to every other year was rejected, based on a conviction that it is good for our fellowship to meet in different areas and thus involve new people.

Conferences have met in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North and South Dakota, Michigan, Illinois, Texas, Oklahoma, Montana, and Washington. What about Ohio, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, or other states where we have congregations?

The move to amend the Rules for Work, limiting the AFLC president to two four-year terms and expanding the office of vice-president to a full-time position with the same term length and limitation, failed by only a handful of votes to win the necessary two-thirds approval. This resolution was presented at the 2013 conference,

and, other than an article in the May issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* by Dr. Dan Mundfrom, chairman of the Coordinating Committee, there seemed to be little interest among our laity and pastors, and one might have expected it to be approved with little debate.

The floor discussion at this conference, however, revealed that there was definite opposition to the change. No new concerns seemed to emerge other than the ones so clearly presented by Dr. Mundfrom, but perhaps the comment of one layman to your editor might pinpoint the uneasiness of many: "If it ain't broke, don't mess with it."

Our Rules for Work currently state that a president needs a three-fourths vote after he served three three-year terms. Thus, the decision of whether or not a president remains in office longer requires reaching a high threshold of support, and still rests with the annual conference—and with the individual president—as guided by the Holy Spirit.

A full-time assistant to the president is needed, and one will expect President Lyndon Korhonen and members of the Coordinating Committee to make the choice in the near future.

If, in fact, previous presidents who have served longer than eight years became "burned out, worn-out old horses," as some speakers suggested, we ought to be more hesitant about finding new offices for them, don't you think?

A new seminary dean was elected by the conference for the first time since 1981—Pastor Wade Mobley. The schools' bylaws set forth a procedure to follow, with a nominating committee consisting of the faculty and the Board of Trustees, and a list of candidates suggested last year by congregations and individuals was prayerfully considered. Several interviews were conducted, and it was not until May that

the committee approved a name to be presented to the conference. Your editor was a part of the process of selecting a dean on three other occasions, and without a doubt the bylaws were followed more carefully than in the past.

This conference election marks the beginning of a new office, combining the seminary dean with the president of the AFLC Schools. When the "Free Lutheran Theological Seminary" was incorporated, it became one institution with two departments, a seminary and a Bible school.

If, in fact, previous presidents who have served longer than eight years became "burned out, worn-out old horses," as some speakers suggested, we ought to be more hesitant about finding new offices for them, don't you think?

There was a provision for the office of president to be created, and now the board has paired it with the seminary dean position.

Please remember Pastor Mobley, his family, and his congregation in your prayers during these months of transition and afterward.

The nominating process for conference elections is in need of repair. The goal, of course, is to contact every nominee prior to the conference and obtain his/her permission, but in spite of overwhelming effort at times, the committee came to the conference again with too many empty spaces on the ballots. A resolution was approved calling for the process to be improved and strengthened, and for the conference election procedures to be "streamlined." Perhaps some time during the all-boards meetings could be devoted to this important issue.



Pastor Robert Lee



*building the base*

# Freedom and liberty

BY TIMOTHY LARSON

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.” This portion of II Corinthians 3:17 is the theme verse of the AFLC and our predecessor, the Lutheran Free Church. Americans are fairly used to the concept of freedom and liberty, words used many times in our founding documents.

We are in the midst of celebrating several anniversaries in our AFLC. In 2012 we observed the 50-year mark of our fellowship. This year marks 50 years since our seminary began in 1964. And in 2016 we will mark 50 years since our Bible school first started. We also have several congregations celebrating a variety of anniversaries.

During these times of celebration memories are shared of years gone by, relationships and friendships are re-kindled, and histories are recounted.

It is fitting to look back on the beginnings of our AFLC, going back to the start of the Lutheran Free Church (LFC).

The LFC began in 1897, but let’s step back a bit further. Georg Sverdrup is one of the most well-known names in our church body’s history, along with that of Sven Oftedal. These men were the founders of the LFC and initially came to America to be professors at Augsburg Seminary. Augsburg was the seminary of the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, or simply, “The Conference” (a name used to distinguish itself from a synod). Sverdrup came to Augsburg in 1874 with the vision to create “a free church in a free land.” Sverdrup and Oftedal were both enthusiastic supporters of the principles of the Conference and of Augsburg’s primary goal of developing pastors to serve living congregations.

Through the 1870s and 1880s there were many church con-

troversies; several Norwegian-Lutheran churches split. The United Norwegian-Lutheran Church formed in 1890 when three Norwegian-Lutheran groups merged, the Conference being one of these groups.

Augsburg was intended to be the seminary of this new church body, but a struggle ensued over the control of this institution. Many other controversies raged during the majority of the 1890s. As a result, a group called The Friends of Augsburg was formed by congregations and members who were in support of the seminary. This support meant that Sverdrup and Oftedal were denied delegate status at the 1895 annual conference of the United Church and 12 congregations were expelled from the United Church in 1897 for their support of Augsburg.

Because of these events, Sverdrup and Oftedal, along with a Free Church Committee, created the “Fundamental Principles” and “Rules for Work,” and on June 12, 1897, along with the expelled congregations, declared themselves the Lutheran Free Church.

From this brief account of the events leading to the formation of the AFLC’s predecessor, it is quite evident that these were not easy times. Our forbearers certainly needed to trust the Spirit’s leading during these difficult times. Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” May we find the freedom and liberty that can only come from Him and continually seek His will in all aspects of our lives.

*Larson, a 2009 graduate of AFLBS, lives in Osakis, Minn. Much of the information in this column came from The Quest for Freedom by Loiell Dyrud.*