

THE 

AUGUST 2015

LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

A
WATCHMAN

the annual conference





THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

AUGUST 2015
VOL. 53 NO. 8

EDITOR

Pastor Robert L. Lee
rlee@aflc.org

MANAGING EDITOR

Ruth Gunderson
ruthg@aflc.org

CIRCULATION

Charlotte Fruehauf
charlotte@aflc.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

Oryen Benrud
Pastor Jerry Moan
Pastor James L. Johnson

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.

SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES AND INFORMATION

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

POSTMASTER

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

ENCOURAGING WORD

THE BENEDICTION

BY DORIS STENSLAND

Back in the horse and buggy days my grandmother and her friend attended the same country church. In those days church services were lengthy. The pastor in his black robe with the ruffled white collar had long sermons. With the choir singing and congregational hymn singing, the services were late in closing.

Some Sundays the family of Grandmother's friend wanted to leave right after the sermon. It was less stressful to head home before the confusion that resulted when all the teams of horses and buggies were leaving at once. But this woman was firm. She always insisted that they wait for the regular dismissal because, "We can't miss the benediction. I must have it." She couldn't face the coming week without this blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

"The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make His face shine on you and be
gracious to you;
the LORD turn His face toward you and give
you peace."

This was the blessing that God instructed Moses to have the priests speak over the Israelites when they worshiped in the tabernacle. This blessing was described as God's face shining on His people. The priests were to call for God to dwell among His people and meet all their needs.

Grandmother's friend, living back in the early 1900s, had an attitude of expectancy when she attended her church. She waited for the benediction and the blessing that it gave. She

wasn't the only one who longed for a blessing. In the Old Testament, we read about Jacob at the occasion in his life when he wrestled with a man. "Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me'" (Genesis 32:26). Jacob's persistence was rewarded. God heard him and blessed him. He changed Jacob's name from Jacob to Israel, and it was then that Jacob formally acknowledged the God of his fathers as his God.

This benediction is usually heard every Sunday in most churches. If we have this longing to be blessed, the benediction can have deep meaning for us. However for many, the benediction is only empty words. They do not let the benediction sink into their hearts and lives and bless them. They don't have the hunger Jesus talks about in Matthew 5:6, where Jesus says we will be blessed if we "hunger and thirst for righteousness." If we have that attitude, Jesus says we will be filled; we will be satisfied. God wants to bless us. He will put His everlasting arms around us and walk with us.

To be warmed by the radiance of His smile;
To be crowned with His special peace that
passes understanding.
To have His loving face turned toward you.

Who would want to miss that? It's what you
and I need every day.

*Stensland is a charter member of Redeemer Free
Lutheran, Canton, S.D.*

I believe that we must realize that the AFLC is not for all Lutherans. We want to welcome those who have a heart and passion for our niche within Lutheranism.

— Pastor Lyndon Korhonen
AFLC president

Our conference theme, “A Watchman,” and the verses from Ezekiel 33 lay out for us the responsibility we have to warn our fellow men of the consequences of wickedness and sin and that God’s desire is for all people to turn from their sin and live; to live eternally through the saving grace provided to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

—Dr. Daniel Mundfrom
Chair, AFLC Coordinating Committee

The mission of the Free Lutheran Schools is to establish students in the eternal and inerrant Word of God for a life of faith in Jesus Christ and faithful service in His Kingdom. This mission transcends the cultural influences of each generation and calls us to the timeless work of ministering God’s Word to precious, eternal human souls throughout the world. We need not fear the shifting sands of time.

—Pastor Wade Mobley
Dean of AFLTS, president of AFLC Schools

When we consider how many people God is calling into missions it’s scary. We have little more infrastructure than we had a decade ago. How is the AFLC going to support more missionaries? But fearful thoughts like these focus on us and not on God. The Lord will carry out His work.

—Pastor Del Palmer
Director, AFLC World Missions





A WATCHMAN

EZEKIEL 33:7

BY PASTOR ROBERT LEE

A

Watchman” (Ezekiel 33:7) was the theme of the 53rd Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC), assembled June 16-19 at the Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center near Stanwood, Wash. The host congregation was Atonement Lutheran Church, Arlington, Wash., served by Pastor Richard Long, together with the other congregations of the Pacific Northwest District. Approximately 350 people were registered.



TOP: Glenn and Sherry Mork, Buffalo, Minn., confirm their faith by reading the Apostle's Creed during the opening service of the conference.

ABOVE: Nathan Dalager, Argyle, Minn., presented the report from the Budget Analysis Committee.

The first day of the conference featured the WMF Day, sponsored by the Women's Missionary Federation, and centered on the theme, "Redeeming the Time" (Ephesians 5:15-16). A Bible study was led by Kathy Horneman, Marysville, Wash., author of the 2015 Bible study, and three workshops were offered, followed by the annual business meeting. Conference committees were also at work during the day, studying the reports from directors, boards and committees representing our common endeavors, and preparing resolutions.

The opening service was led by Pastor Craig Johnson, Astoria, Ore., and a full auditorium of attendees was welcomed by both the camp director and our host pastor. A large conference choir, directed by Lyle Forde, sang two numbers, and Pastor Terry Olson (assistant to the president of the AFLC) conducted a remembrance of departed pastors and wives. The message on the conference text was delivered by Pastor Ken Moland, Kirkland, Wash., with a clear call to repentance and faith in the finished work of Christ; the service closed with Holy Communion. Following the benediction, AFLC President Lyndon Korhonen officially opened the conference with the appointment of special committees.

The agenda began on Wednesday with a presentation on conference procedures and the report of the president, followed by highlights from the various ministry reports, limited to eight minutes each. The Nominating Committee presented names to be submitted for election to the Missions, Schools and ARC corporations, plus names for board positions. A very full day concluded with the Mission Festival Service, led by Home Missions Director Pastor Paul Nash. A young ladies' choir from the Atonement congregation, directed by Summer Long, provided special music, and Dary Finck from Mission Aviation Training Academy (MATA) narrated video clips on the scope and fruit of missionary aviation. Two couples were commissioned for service with AFLC World Missions: Matthew and Ednay Abel, to Brazil; and Brent and Emily Raan, to India.

The Schools Corporation met on Wednesday during the dinner hour, and the Missions Corporation met on Thursday morning for breakfast. Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, Moorhead, Minn., was re-elected to the Schools Board of Trustees for a five-year term; Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, Okla., was elected to



TOP: John Keranen, Menahga, Minn., and Harold Erickson, Wadena, Minn., catch up during the preconference activities. ABOVE: Richard Luebke, Parkston, S.D., and Wayne Gerlach, Mitchell, S.D., members of Committee No. 5, help work on resolutions for Evangelism and Benefits. RIGHT: Kids participated in a VBS program during business sessions.



TOP: Members of the Conference Choir, led by Lyle Forde, sing "Beautiful Savior," during the opening service of the conference.
 ABOVE: Josiah Quanbeck, Luke Quanbeck, and Pastor Jason Holt chat following the opening service.
 RIGHT: Pastor Ken Moland, Our Redeemer Free Lutheran, Kirkland, Wash., gave the message on the conference theme.

the Home Missions Committee for a five-year term; and Glenn Mork, Buffalo, Minn., was re-elected to the World Missions Committee for a five-year term.

Conference elections were mainly confined to Thursday this year, and both Vice President Pastor Peter Franz, Maple Grove, Minn., and Secretary Pastor Brian Davidson, Dickinson, N.D., received the necessary 75 percent or more of the votes cast to be re-elected to one-year terms. Two other re-elections were approved by the conference: Lowell Watt, Park River, N.D., for a five-year term on the Coordinating Committee; and Pastor Lee Hoops, St. Michael, Minn., for a five-year term on the Evangelism Commission. Solveig Hjermstad, Bagley, Minn., was elected to the Board of Parish Education and Publications; Pastor Seth Forness, Pipestone, Minn., to the Youth Board; and Pastor Ken Moland to the Benefits Board.

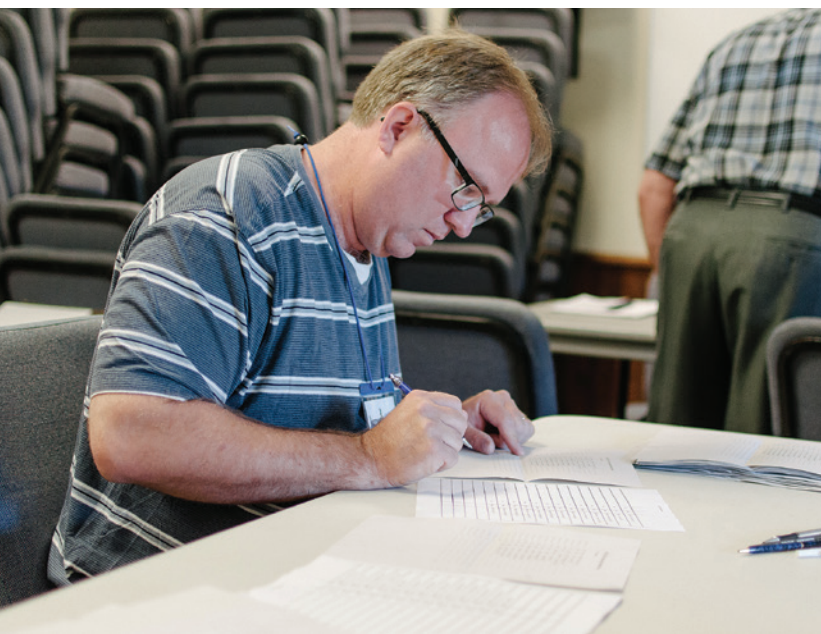
Conference attendees went in two directions on Thursday evening, with the pastors and wives at their annual banquet, and the lay people at a service in the auditorium. The speaker for the pastors' banquet was Pastor Dale Finstrom, Fertile, Minn., and Tracy Snipstead accompanied herself on the piano and sang two numbers. The lay service was led by Bill Fish, Everett, Wash., Tim Erhardt, Lake Stevens, Wash., brought the message, and the Overman family provided special music.

The final business items left to conduct on Friday were the report of the Colloquy Committee, the election of a new committee for next year, and an election to the Budget Analysis Committee (Cory Buck, Sioux Falls, S.D., for a three-year term). General Resolutions were approved, including sincere thanks to the host committee for their labors, plus an additional resolution from a committee appointed by the president reaffirming the 2000 conference resolutions on marriage and family, and encouraging member congregations to consider "official action" to affirm the same.

Invitations were accepted for future annual conferences from AFLC Schools (2017), Dickinson, N.D., and the Western North Dakota/Eastern Montana District (2018); and the Eastern District congregations, to be held in Pennsylvania (2019). We were reminded of a resolution from last year, committing the conference to be held every four years at the Association Retreat Center (ARC), near Osceola, Wis., which means that it



TOP: Pastor Adam Osier and Pastor Ron Brubakken work on Committee No. 2 resolutions. MIDDLE: Members of the AFLBS Cornerstone summer team led VBS during the morning hours. ABOVE: Pastor Al Monson speaks to a resolution.



will be the site of the 2016 and 2020 conferences.

President Korhonen also presented for consideration a resolution that was given to him last year, calling for the creation of a new “two kingdoms” committee, assigned to prepare and present resolutions to the conference on current issues approved by the president. There was little discussion, and a motion was approved to table consideration of the resolution.

One of the highlights of the annual conference is the ordination service, which was held again this year in Atonement church. The leader was Pastor Kevin Olson, Crystal, Minn., and the message was preached by Pastor D. Mark Antal, Park River, N.D., father of one of the ordinands. AFLC President Lyndon Korhonen officiated, and the following four men were ordained: Daniel Antal, Jarrod Hylden, Brent Raan, and Ryan Tonneson.

A brief commissioning and installation service followed for Pastor Tonneson who will be serving as a Home Missions church planter in Mesa, Ariz.

The 2015 Annual Conference was a quiet and peaceful gathering, significantly marked by a spirit of prayer. President Korhonen consistently called for someone to lead in prayer whenever a resolution suggested it. The WMF Day closed in a season of prayer. The daily prayer times were led by Pastor Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont., who appropriately selected the Lord's Prayer as the topic for his brief meditations, and those who attended were encouraged to carry the prayer requests home to their congregations.

Lee, editor of The Lutheran Ambassador, is a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn., and part-time faculty member at the AFLC Schools.



TOP LEFT: Mark Antal (right) and Pastor Craig Benson present the report on Military Chaplaincy. TOP: Pastor Lyndon Korhonen (right) and Pastor Brian Davidson count a standing vote. ABOVE: Gloria Flaa and Barb Brubakken catch up during a break. LEFT: Pastor Steve Snipstead, who led the prayer hour, meets in a small group to pray. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT: Pastor Rich Carr counts ballots. TOP RIGHT: Prayer was an integral part of conference business meetings. BOTTOM LEFT: Kids participate in the VBS program.

A WATCHMAN

EZEKIEL 33:7



2016 COMMITTEES

One-year terms

Committee No. 1

Pastor Ray Ballmann, Kopperl, Texas
Pastor Jason Gudim, Golden Valley, Minn.
Clara Gunderson, Brookings, Ore.
Jordan Langness, Beulah, N.D.
Nancy Staudinger, Tamarack, Minn.

Committee No. 2

Scott Carmichael, Saint Francis, Kan.
Pastor Shane McLoughlin, Minot, N.D.
Pastor Barry Nelson, Tripp, S.D.
Heather Olson, Kenyon, Minn.
Roger Quanbeck, Hallock, Minn.

Committee No. 3

Don Burmeister, Mount Vernon, S.D.
Pastor David Franz, Radcliffe, Iowa
Pastor Micah Hjermstad, Fargo, N.D.
Rich Luebke, Parkston, S.D.
Debra Olson, Winsted, Minn.

Committee No. 4

Joel Erickson, Oslo, Minn.
Bill Fish, Everett, Wash.
Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.
Pastor Ken Hart, Fairbury, Neb.
Ernie Hilbert, Wheatland, Iowa

Committee No. 5

Pastor Brett Boe, Shakopee, Minn.
Nathan Dalager, Argyle, Minn.
Pastor Luke Emerson, Newark, Ill.
Wayne Gerlach, Mitchell, S.D.
Guy Murray, Ishpeming, Mich.

OFFICERS

Vice President

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

Secretary

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

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Central Tri State

Wayne Walker, Kenyon, Minn.

Eastern

Mark Riley, Bethel Park, Pa.

Eastern North Dakota

JoAnne Miller, Grand Forks, N.D.

Illinois

Steve Schroeder, Janesville, Wis.

Lake Superior

Phil Johnson, Esko, Minn.

Minneapolis

Bob Halverson, St. Michael, Minn.

Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado

Dr. Lee Dahl, Laurel, Neb.

North Central Minnesota

Pastor Karl Anderson, McIntosh, Minn.

COLLOQUY

One-year terms

Pastor Frank Cherney, Jamestown, N.D.
Pastor David Franz, Radcliffe, Iowa
Pastor David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.
Pastor Steve Mundfrom, Valley City, N.D.
Pastor Dennis Norby, Enderlin, N.D.
Pastor Cal Willard, Everett, Wash.

One-year terms

Northern Michigan

Pastor Brad Putnam, Ontonagon, Mich.

Northwestern Minnesota

Farrell Erickson, Badger, Minn.

Pacific Northwest

Pastor Cal Willard, Everett, Wash.

South Central

Gary Pflughaupt, El Campo, Texas

South Dakota

Iver Heier, Prairie City, S.D.

Southwest Central Minnesota

Pastor Curt Emerson, Wadena, Minn.

Southwestern

Pastor Ryan Tonneson, Mesa, Ariz.

Western ND/Eastern Montana

Debbie Iverson, Tioga, N.D.



LEFT: Pastor Shane McLoughlin, Minot, N.D., casts a ballot for the Missions Corporation.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Coordinating Committee

- Layman, five-year term
Lowell Watt, Park River, N.D.

Board of Trustees

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, Moorhead, Minn.

Home Missions Committee

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Gerry Peterson, Oklahoma City

Bay Broadcasting

- Layman, three-year term
Paul Christenson, Fergus Falls, Minn.

FLAPS Board of Managers

- Layman, five-year term
Dr. Kevin Lee, Beulah, N.D.

World Missions

- Layman, five-year term
Glenn Mork, Buffalo, Minn.

Commission on Evangelism

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Lee Hoops, St. Michael, Minn.

Board of Publications & Parish Ed.

- Layman, five-year term
Solveig Hjermstad, Bagley, Minn.

Youth Board

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Seth Forness, Pipestone, Minn.

Benefits Board

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Ken Moland, Kirkland, Wash.

Budget Analysis Committee

- Layman, three-year term
Cory Buck, Sioux Falls, S.D.

ARC Board

- Layman, five-year term
No quorum

CORPORATIONS

Five-year terms

Mission Corporation

Darrell Askvig, Kalispell, Mont.
Vonnie Coyle, Nicollet, Minn.
Dr. Peter Dyrud, Plymouth, Minn.
Gene Finstrom, Buxton, N.D.
Pastor Michael Flechsig, Blackduck, Minn.
Pastor Micah Hjermstad, Fargo, N.D.
Ronald Jorgenson, Lidgerwod, N.D.
Glen Larson, Fosston, Minn.
Vince Larson, Buffalo, N.D.
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn.
Pastor Ken Moland, Kirkland, Wash.
Pastor David Nelson, Greenbush, Minn.
Phyllis Nikunen, Cloquet, Minn.
Pastor Kris Nyman, Hagerstown, Md.
Pastor Joe Ocker, Frost, Minn.
Kevin Olson, Fargo, N.D.
Mark Olson, Winsted, Minn.
Ralph Peterson, Portland, N.D.
Wanita Sletten, Duluth, Minn.
Bonnie Upton, Kalispell, Mont.

Schools Corporation

Pastor Allen Arneson, Fosston, Minn.
Pastor Brett Boe, Shakopee, Minn.
Cory Buck, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Gary Erickson, Dalton, Minn.
Pastor Kirk Flaa, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor Jim Johnson, Fergus Falls, Minn.
Licenced Pastor Mike McCarlson,
Webster, S.D.
Pastor James Molstre, Newark, Ill.
Brent Peterson, Valley City, N.D.

ARC Corporation

No quorum



TOP: WMF Day participants prayed in small groups at the end of the day. ABOVE: Roses were placed on a cross during the memorial service. NEAR RIGHT: Debbie Giles, former AFLC missionary to Mexico, started the day with devotions. FAR RIGHT, TOP: Marian Christopherson (center) and Ruth Kneeland (right) met in a small group for prayer. FAR RIGHT, BOTTOM: Esther Hylden, first vice president of the WMF, showed up late in a skit during the WMF breakfast.



Redeeming the Time

BY JOYANN DAHL



One hundred and twenty women met June 16 to “Redeem the Time” at the annual Women’s Missionary Federation day at Warm Beach Christian Camp and Conference Center in Warm Beach, Wash. Peggy Odegard, president of the Pacific Northwest District and member of Calvary Lutheran Church, Everett, Wash., welcomed everyone, and

Debbie Giles, former AFLC missionary to Mexico, and member of Calvary Free Lutheran, Mesa, Ariz., shared in devotions. Giles’ message stressed that God has divine appointments for us throughout our life, which can include crossing paths with others and sharing our faith at opportune times.

Barb Gustafson, Calvary Free Lutheran, Mesa, led the group in praise and worship, including one of my personal favorites, “Grace Alone.” She was followed by Kathy Horneman, author of the 2015 WMF Bible study and member of Atonement Free Lutheran, Arlington, Wash., who shared about the faithfulness of God and our obedience to Him. Horneman gave several examples to encourage attendees in their walk with the Lord, including the life of the prophet Elijah.

Other sessions during the day included a presentation from Bonnie Upton, from Stillwater Lutheran, Kalispell, Mont., on “Being Prepared” for the death of a spouse, and a workshop on “Redeeming the Time: Living in the Light” from Wendy Westlake, Our Saviour’s Lutheran, Zumbrota, Minn. Using a technique called negative painting, Westlake, a watercolor artist, began by painting a colorful picture of purple iris flowers, which she then dramatically covered in darkness, and then rediscovered again in light (after removing the dark color). Her presentation emphasized that Christians were once in darkness, but now walk in light. She reminded the women present to expose the truth and speak up for what they know is wrong, instead of being quiet, as well as using their time wisely.

Following these sessions, a memorial service was held to remember the women who have passed on during the past year. Barb Moland, Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkland, Wash., led the service by playing large hand bells while first tolling the bells three times (slow, repeated tones), and then pealing the bells three times (short, quick repeated tones). As each name was read, a rose and other flowers were placed on a wooden cross as a reminder of what Christ has done for mankind. At the close of the memorial service, more praise and worship songs were led by Gustafson, including “Bless the Lord, O my Soul” and “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

At the noon hour, a soup and sandwich lunch was hosted by the Warm Beach staff, and everyone took home a colorful time stamped bookmark created by Barb Strand, WMF communications secretary.

Following lunch, Pastor Jim Johnson of Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif., shared a workshop titled, “Confessions of a JV Pastor in our Home Mission Church.” He shared that there are at least three ways to redeem the time. First, start over. Second,

simplify. And third, be sensitive to the Spirit who speaks to you. He said that God chose us to be confident because He is faithful. And from I Timothy 3:2 Johnson taught that we are called to be respectable, hospitable, and able to teach and train others (“be ready in season and out of season to give an answer” from II Timothy 4:1-5).

Time was quickly passing, so members of the WMF National Board presided over the business meeting. President Lynn Wellumson, Emmanuel Free Lutheran, Williston, N.D., announced the morning offering amount of \$2,330.95. All reports were approved, and members of the Nominating Committee presented names for election to the positions of president and communications secretary. By ballot election, Wellumson was reelected as president, and Strand was reelected as communications secretary. A yearly budget of \$ 62,525 was approved for 2016, as presented by Deb Benson, WMF treasurer and member of St. Peter Lutheran, Armour, S.D. Second Vice President Lori Willard, Calvary Free Lutheran, Everett, Wash., read the 2015 resolutions, which included several name additions through marriage or positions. The board wishes to thank the members of Resolutions and Nominating Committees for all their many hours of dedication. Strand closed the meeting in prayer, followed by small group prayer time.

Bright and early the next morning, Esther Hylden, Bethel Free Lutheran, Grafton, N.D., humorously arrived late to the WMF breakfast. Dressed in her bathrobe, pajamas, and curlers, she was scolded by Strand to make better use of her time and to come to breakfast in a timely manner. Laughter was followed by various suggestions for time-honored quotations, such as “A stitch in time saves nine.” AFLC Missionaries Nate and Rhoda Jore gave a presentation and slideshow from on their work in Jinja, Uganda. Many changes have been a part of this past year for the Jore family, and they will begin to transition into a new area with a plan for church growth and building a more permanent home. They, along with all of us, are not sure of the future, but will take one day at a time by following God’s path.

The Missions Festival Service began with a puppet skit by members of the AFLBS Cornerstone Team followed by the girls’ choir, “4 This Time,” directed by Summer Long of Atonement Free Lutheran, Arlington. Dary Finck, chief of program development for Missionary Aviation Training Academy (MATA), was the featured speaker for the service. He shared various dramatic videos to emphasize the mission of MATA, which featured amazing demonstrations of various people groups receiving aid through life-sustaining supplies while sharing the gospel message by the use of aircraft and pilots. At the close of the evening, AFLC World Missions Director Del Palmer and members of the World Missions Board held a commissioning service for Matthew and Ednay Abel, who plan to serve in Brazil, and Brent and Emily Raan, who plan to serve in India.

The next WMF Day will be held June 14 at the Association Retreat Center, located near Osceola, Wis.

Dahl, the recording secretary for the WMF, is a member of Our Saviour’s Lutheran, Thief River Falls, Minn.

A PRAYER WARRIOR

BY PASTOR NICK DYRUD

I've been acquainted with people who, by all accounts, were considered "prayer warriors." You know the type, right? The faithful church elder who reminds you every once in a while he is praying for you. And you know he is serious; he is on his knees in prayer every day, faithfully lifting up to God your life, the church, the community, the country, and our world.

It is the prayer warriors who get stuff going and see to it that we get through rough times and accomplish goals. Our most radical and influential church members often go unnoticed and unappreciated. And that's just the way they want it.

Being a prayer warrior is a humble job, not because what they are doing is humble, but because it is done in humility. Prayer warriors must be filled with courage and stamina. Their skills must be sharp and focus must be dead on. Why? Just as their name suggests, warring is what they do best. Falling into the mindset that prayer is mundane only occurs when we misunderstand or fail to get our relationship with God off the ground and into the air.

You see, prayer is radical. The word *radical* comes from the Latin *radix*, which means "root." When we pray, we get to the root of what is most important in this world. The theologian Karl Barth once said, "To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world." Prayer is radical because it's the key to opening the heart of God into our lives. With Christ as "The Door" (Revelation 3:20), we come into relationship with God through prayer, and we begin a walk of faith that involves our submission to the leading of God.

Prayer is radical because we open our lives up to God, bringing them to the throne room of our Lord for Him to work, shape and mold. When we pray, "We become the voice of the voiceless, pleading their cause ... we demand to be heard. We insist that changes be made," wrote Richard

J. Foster, writer and theologian. A real warrior's prayer is shameless, persistent. The warrior intercedes by faith, as Martin Luther wrote, "The might of prayer is so great that it has overcome both heaven and earth."

Remember Moses leading the Israelites in the wilderness? Hungry and thirsty, he cried out to the Lord for his people. His prayer was honest and forthright. He brought the troubles of earth to the Lord, and what he asked for was radical. Numbers 11:11-15 records his prayer:

Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? ... Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms ... to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors? ... the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin.

Ever feel this way yourself? God answered His servant Moses in verse 23, "Is my arm to short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you."

God's answer to Moses was introspective: He didn't solve the problem immediately. Instead, He moved Moses from his sorry understanding into the light of the Father's understanding. By faith in God, Moses could overcome these depths, but it couldn't take place without going to the Father in prayer.

When we live in communion with God, we don't stand on the fringe. We stand for life's great issues. We intercede in life's greatest events, and we call for the Almighty to do His work in a place where He may be unwelcome. In our darkest hours on earth, the prayer warrior is in the midst of the battle, crying out for God's mercy and strength to overcome. When a massive earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, prayer warriors all over the earth were in the midst of the battle, bringing the helpless to the Lord. When a member of my church received word from the doctors that she had cancer, our prayer warriors were there, lifting her and the family to the throne room of the King of kings.

Are you standing in the gap? Are you the voice of the voiceless? Are you a prayer warrior?

Dyrud is the associate pastor of Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn.





Members of the AFLC Commission on Evangelism (COE) launched a new ministry last February called the Round Table Ministry Retreat (RTMR). This ministry reaches out to pastors and their wives who have been in the ministry for as few as one to five years. The RTMRs are geared toward discussing ministry topics that are challenging young pastors and their families in various ways. The hope is to preclude issues that would diminish the ministry and even cause a pastor to leave his ministry and, instead, bolster the effectiveness and joy of ministry. This is done through partnering young pastors with seasoned pastors in a mentoring setting.

The ministry climate has changed drastically over the years and pastors have very practical ministry questions and concerns that need to be discussed with caring, respected, seasoned pastors and

AROUND THE TABLE

BY PASTOR TIM JOHNSON

their wives. RTMR gives them the opportunity to do this. The pastors and wives (five couples) choose the topics of discussion and meet with two seasoned pastors and their wives around a table in a very open, casual setting. The pastors and wives divide into separate groups at times to discuss issues as men and women in ministry and marriage. The schedule allows for a date night to rekindle the husband-wife relationship.

Those who participated last February gave such feedback as:

- “This was encouraging and gave me practical tools.”
- “It is good to know we are not alone in our struggles.”
- “This time was an answer to prayer.”
- “It was refreshing.”

One of the wives responded, “One of the most encouraging things was hearing from other moms of young children about not comparing myself to others and not feeling guilty about where I am in my life right now.”

Every one of the couples indicated that they would recommend this ministry retreat to others

and some even suggested expanding it.

Another RTMR is being planned for September of this year and future retreats are also being considered. The cost to host this ministry is about \$5,000 per retreat (free to the ministry couples). This includes lodging, food, transportation (when congregations do not cover this cost), facilitators, etc. The COE encourages congregations to give their pastor couples time off without it counting as vacation. A grant from the AFLC Foundation helped launch this ministry, and the COE is looking for partners who share the value of a fostering healthy ministry leaders.

As one participating pastor said, “Thank you for investing in our hearts and the hearts of our wives.”

For more information about this ministry, to financially participate in funding it, or to know how to better pray for it, please contact AFLC Director of Evangelism, Pastor Jim Rasmussen.

Johnson, Pipestone, Minn., is the chairman of the Commission on Evangelism.



BIG MOMENTS & OPEN DOORS

BY PASTOR DAN GILES

military. Others have spent years working in law enforcement, which brings its own kind of combat experience.

Law enforcement is sometimes described as 50 percent mind-numbing boredom, 40 percent paperwork, and 10 percent adrenalin. And it can escalate from one to the other in the blink of an eye. Cops are real heroes who voluntarily face issues of life and death every day. That doesn't make them perfect, and in fact their job opens them up to some special temptations. The stress of the job is amazing, and of course that shows in their personal lives, in their family lives, and in the kind of jokes they tell. The language is usually pretty salty—but not the kind of salt the Bible talks about in Colossians 4:6.

When my wife, Debbie, and I returned to the US after spending pretty much our entire adult lives on the mission field, I signed up as a volunteer with the Arizona Rangers, which is a law enforcement auxiliary organization. I'm a sergeant in the Rangers, and was appointed chaplain of the company because I am a pastor. I love it, and decided to go ahead and get more training and certification as a law enforcement chaplain. As a sergeant, I get to stand duty with these guys, which is a wonderful thing because it means that for a few hours at a time we have to watch the other guy's back and trust that the

other guy is watching ours. In a short time, you build a level of mutual trust that can't be built in any other way.

If I can manage to keep a clear Christian testimony during those endless hours of mind-numbing boredom and occasional few moments of adrenalin, I end up with a wide open door in the big moments of life, those big moments that come to everyone sooner or later. Life falls apart. A family member ends up in the hospital, or a child is found with drugs, or the marriage is coming to a screaming end, or they suddenly don't know how they are going to face the next day.

When we know the Lord Jesus, we get to meet those big moments with the assurance of God's presence, His grace, forgiveness, and comfort. If we have earned a position of trust through the little moments of life, the door is open so that when the big moments come we may be able to bring Him into someone else's life. That's what being a chaplain is about.

Giles, an AFLC chaplain in Mesa, Ariz., is a former AFLC missionary to Mexico. He is a member of Calvary Free Lutheran, Mesa.

I serve a congregation where everyone wears body armor to work

and carries at least one deadly weapon wherever they go. They try to sit with their backs to the wall, even when they're out for pizza with the kids. Even when they're off duty, their heads are on a swivel, watching for danger that they know might jump out at them at any moment. They aren't paranoid; they're just being realistic.

Most of my members would say they are Christians, but many haven't attended church in years. Most would frankly feel more comfortable in a bar on Main Street than in church. Some have an other-than-Christian religious background. Many are former



HAVE YOU READ THIS?

BY PASTOR TODD SCHIERKOLK

After living together for a number of years and having several children, Leobardo and Aracely were married in April 2011 at our church in Jerez, Mexico. We gave them a white Bible as a wedding gift, which has played a key role in their married life. In fact, one of their first arguments after being married had to do with that Bible. Leobardo was reading it in bed with the light on at night while his wife was trying to go to sleep. This was a new book for Leobardo, and he was coming across some surprising things written in it. When he did, he would get his wife's attention (she was trying to sleep) asking, "Look at this! Did you know this was in here?" His nudges kept her from sleeping. Unfortunately, we had to return to the United States in

May of that year, and we would be gone for more than a year and a half. As we talked with the two of them about what to do while we were gone, I encouraged them to keep reading the Bible together. Well, it appears they did.

We returned to Mexico at the beginning of 2013 and picked up the ministry to which God had called us. We began a Bible study in Leobardo and Aracelys' house. I knew that the couple had continued reading the Bible together, but it didn't occur to me to ask about it in detail until just a couple of months ago.

"By the way," I asked Leobardo after a Wednesday evening study, "how far did you ever get in your reading?"

"We finished," he said.

"You finished the book of Genesis?"

"No, all of it," he replied.

"You mean you finished the whole Old Testament?" I was feeling a little surprised at this possibility.

"No," he said, "we finished all of it, the whole Bible."

"You finished the whole Bible?" Now, I was not only surprised, I was shocked. "You mean to tell me you, the two of you actually finished reading the whole Bible, both the Old Testament and

the New Testament?"

"Well," he said, "Aracely finished all of it, but I stopped reading in the last part of Revelation because there were some really scary chapters that I didn't like."

I told him that the very end was very good and encouraged him to continue on and finish those last couple of chapters.

I left their house that evening shaking my head in disbelief. Anyone who has read the Bible through completely knows that it takes some persistence. That actually would be surprising enough. Most university students haven't even read through the whole Bible. But what made it so wonderfully shocking were two things. First, the version of the Bible they read would be sort of like reading the King James Version for English speakers. And second, Leobardo isn't a very skilled reader; he only finished second grade in school. His wife just finally completed junior high in a program for adults. Beyond shocking—that is inspiring! And it is a wonderful testimony to a love for the Word of God that changes lives. And believe me, you can see the difference in theirs.

Schierkolk is an AFLC missionary serving in Jerez, Mexico.

WATERS IN THE WILDERNESS

AUGUST 11



"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."
(Romans 7:22)

In the days that we live here on earth we experience many joys and sorrows. Our joys are often brought about by some act of kindness by friends or members of one's family. It could also be something we read, saw or heard. The Scripture speaks of "delight;" to me this means something that gives great pleasure or joy.

In the Bible we see many reasons for becoming delighted. We have the promise of salvation when Christ comes into our hearts. The assurance of salvation comes to all who believe that the death and resurrection of Christ is for them personally. We are saved from the penalty of sin, and are being saved from the dominion of sin. We may bring our sins to God in confession and we know for a certainty that He forgives them. All this brings great joy and delight to the heart of the Christian. We are preserved through a sinful world, and can look forward to a life in heaven with Christ. It is almost too good to be true; but the Word declares that this is the hope of those who belong to Christ, and then we accept this truth and thank Him for it. Eye has not seen what God has prepared for his own. And our imagination cannot picture it adequately.

It is the Word of God which is our chief delight as we journey along through life; it alone sheds light upon our path and guides us home.

Hulda Hermunsle, now deceased, was a member of Bethany Lutheran, rural Abercrombie, N.D. She was married to Clarence Hermunsle.

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

Pastor Frank Cherney has resigned from New Hope Free Lutheran, Jamestown, N.D., effective the end of September. They have no plans at the time but are seeking God's will for their future.

Pastor Tony Stockman has resigned from Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D. He currently has no call.

Pastor Mark Molstre has accepted a call to serve Ebenezer Lutheran, Northwood, N.D. Molstre has served Elim Lutheran, Lake Stevens, Wash., for sixteen years. He will begin his new position in September.

Pastor Ken Thoreson has accepted a call to serve as interim associate pastor of Peace Free Lutheran, Canal Winchester, Ohio.

Pastor Ryan Tonneson was installed as a Home Missions pastor at his ordination during the closing service of the annual conference June 19 at Atonement Free Lutheran, Arlington, Wash. Tonneson serves the Gateway Gathering in Mesa, Ariz.

Pastor Andy and Monica Coyle and their family arrived in the United States on June 30 after leaving their ministry as missionaries with East European Missions Network in Ukraine. After a few months of rest, the Coyles will begin serving the Shiloh, the Black Hills Gathering, a Home Missions church plant in Rapid City, S.D.

Pastor Michael Flechsig has accepted a call to serve Faith Lutheran, Blackduck, Minn. He will begin ministry there this month, leaving Good Shepherd Lutheran, Pleasanton, Texas.



If you weren't able to attend the Annual Conference this year at the Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center in Stanwood, Wash., you can find videos of the various evening services and WMF workshops at vimeo.com/aflc.

Four men ordained at conference service



LEFT: Pastor Lyndon Korhonen reads the rite of ordination to (from left) Dan Antal, Jarrod Hylden, Brent Raan, and Ryan Tonneson.
TOP: Pastors present at the service surrounded the four men in prayer.
ABOVE: Pastor Mark Antal brought the ordination message.



Four commissioned for World Missions

Matthew and Ednay Abel (far left) and Pastor Brent and Emily Raan (center) were commissioned by the AFLC World Missions department on June 17 during the Missions Festival Service at the Annual Conference held at the Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center in Stanwood, Wash. Pastor Del Palmer (left), director of AFLC World Missions, led the commissioning.

The Abels will serve in Brazil, where Matthew grew up as the son of AFLC missionaries Pastor Paul and Becky Abel. The Raans will serve in India, the first AFLC missionaries to serve there. Both couples are in the process of raising funds.

Mobley attends apologetics academy

Program was part of continuing education for the AFLC Schools

Pastor Wade Mobley, dean of the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary (AFLTS) and president of the Free Lutheran Schools, attended the International Academy of Apologetics,



Pastor Wade Mobley

Evangelism, and Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, in July. The Academy (apologetic-sacademy.eu) is a two-week study program now in its 20th year, and is chaired by John Warwick Montgomery, a prominent Lutheran philosopher and theologian, who has

been writing and teaching philosophy from a biblically Lutheran perspective for nearly 60 years. The 20 students of the academy enjoyed 90 hours of classroom teaching from four noteworthy professors and concluded with a comprehensive written final exam covering classroom material and reading assigned in advance.

Mobley's attendance at the Academy was part of continuing education for the benefit of the AFLC Schools, and as such was provided through the Dr. Francis W. Monseth Faculty Development fund.

Grothe: A servant pastor

BY PASTOR CRAIG JOHNSON

In some church bodies their policy is that when a pastor retires he is supposed to no longer attend the church he had served before retiring. I'm very thankful that is not the policy in our church body: the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Because if it was I wouldn't be in the same congregation as the man who has been my pastor for 40 years and who turned 90 years old [on July 15]: Pastor Alvin Grothe.

I can understand a little bit the reasoning behind saying retired pastors need to go to a different church than the one where they used to serve as pastor. Some guys have a hard time making the transition from being the leader up front to being a church member in the pew. Some retired pastors have been a real pain in the neck to the pastors who have followed them.

Instead of being a pain, it is possible for a retired pastor to be a great source of encouragement and support. Pastor Grothe has demonstrated that. It requires, though, humility and the grace of God.

Soon after stepping down after serving [Bethany Lutheran] for 15 years as pastor, Pastor Grothe and his wife, Loretta, started serving as the janitors of the congregation. I'm afraid some retired pastors wouldn't consider doing that. He may not have been teaching from the pulpit regularly, but as he vacuumed floors and cleaned toilets, he taught a lot about being a humble servant: not needing to be recognized, not needing to be in control, not needing to have things go your way, just willing to serve God's church in whatever way you can.

I was uniquely blessed to have him as my pastor from the time I was 13 years old until after I became a pastor. I am uniquely blessed today to have such an encouraging and supportive retired pastor in the congregation I serve. He is doing pretty well for being 90, but he can't do all the things he used to do. But he can still do what is most important. He still prays for me daily and is a constant source of encouragement. I am thankful for the 90 years God has given him and the special gift God has given me and so many others in him. Happy birthday!

Johnson, former editor of The Lutheran Ambassador, serves Bethany Lutheran, Astoria, Ore. Reprinted with permission from Johnson's blog, cjhasgoodnews.com.

JUNE MEMORIALS

Home Missions	Parish Education
James Klesalek	Miriam Wellumson
Theoline Gunderson	Arthur Solheim
Bob Hansen	Larry Olson
Esther Larson	Esther Larson
Evangelism	World Missions
Adeline McCarlson	Harriett Erickson
Lutheran Ambassador	Richard Schauland
Carly Patricia	Theoline Gunderson
Dietsche	Esther Larson

AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-June 30, 2015			
FUND	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$26,446	\$172,296	\$166,679
Evangelism	10,377	72,760	79,736
Youth Ministries	5,311	54,700	66,053
Parish Education	8,924	62,486	61,539
Seminary	29,218	138,850	158,234
Bible School	42,856	251,038	241,671
Home Missions	32,075	215,038	220,069
World Missions	44,468	194,424	260,564
Personal Support	46,823	249,568	211,214
TOTALS	\$246,498	\$1,411,628	\$1,465,760
Contact the individual departments for further information about specific financial needs.			

CONFERENCE COMMENTS

The 2015 Annual Conference is already history, of course, and since your editor is both a history teacher as well as a long-time participant in our conferences, perhaps a few comments from this perspective might be in order.

The Conference Schedule

2015 was certainly the most streamlined conference in the history of the AFLC, with no exceptions, and we could probably have completed it in two days instead of two and a half. For several years the directors and board representatives have been



Pastor Robert Lee

directed to summarize their reports, and they were strictly limited to eight minutes each this year ... with a former wrestler appointed as the time-keeper. It was all in fun, of course, including the comment of a guest

that we sounded like quite a violent bunch, and yet the goal was achieved.

So what about the extra time? It would be possible to simply schedule a shorter conference. This creates new problems, however, such as finding time for the long list of special interest luncheons that have multiplied over the years, as well as necessary board meetings and corporation meetings ... not to mention the evening services, which were already shortened from five to four since the youth night was eliminated.

Some have mentioned the possibility of offering workshops on special topics, either clustered on Friday afternoon, for example, or scattered throughout the conference. This might be a good way to increase understanding of AFLC distinctives, or to emphasize a theme such as the 2017 Reformation anniversary. It's something to think about.

The Nominating Committee

The members are faced with a difficult task, without a doubt, complicated at times by members who were elected without their permission and chose not to function. (I was told of one who was even re-elected the next year!) Another problem

may be the election of someone who is new to the district and not acquainted. But it's hard to understand, for example, that this large committee representing all districts could not find five names to nominate for Committee No. 1 to serve at next year's conference.

Another hurdle facing the committee may be the membership of the two main corporations, from which the schools' board members, as well as home and world missions' committee members, must be elected. The ideal would be that every corporation member would be willing and eligible to serve on a board, but this is not the case. Currently women are not eligible to serve on these three boards, yet several are members of the corporation. A majority of board members must be laymen, yet a majority of new members elected to the schools' corporation this year were pastors, creating possible problems for future nominations.

Is there a way to be sure that those who are elected to the Nominating Committee are willing and able to serve? Could the attendees from each district meet prior to or during the conference (during the first coffee break?) and agree on a name or two to be submitted?

Attendance

We expect a smaller attendance when the conference is held at a long distance from the large majority of our congregations. Yet one observer noted that perhaps one third of the attendees were pastors, and another third were wives of pastors, which should raise some real concerns about lay representation. The polity of another denomination is critically described as "clergy-driven congregationalism," which may not be too far from the mark as a description of the AFLC.

We do not have a delegate system, yet each congregation should place a high priority on providing funds if necessary to help

lay representatives as well as the pastor(s) to attend. If indeed the annual conference is the "spiritual powerhouse" that it was once envisioned to be, it is vital that our lay people need to be present and participating. With vacation Bible school classes and youth activities offered, conference can be a family vacation. We can do better!

... it is vital that our lay people need to be present and participating.

Lists

For the past two conferences a list of congregations without a full-time pastor has been submitted by the Coordinating Committee. A cursory survey of this year's list, as well as statements by others of the extent of the need, requires an explanation. Errors abound, updating was needed, yet the list was not amended. Perhaps a more accurate list would be those congregations actually *seeking to call* a full-time pastor, for as many as 20 on the list are either served by a non-AFLC pastor, unable to financially support a pastor, or currently served together with another AFLC congregation. In other words, the need may not be as dramatic as suggested.

The list of institutional chaplains also contains many errors and should be amended by the department, hopefully before the annual reports are printed.

Conclusion

Several described this annual conference as perhaps our most peaceful, and all would agree that a quiet spirit of unity marked the services and the sessions. The accommodations were adequate, the hospitality was excellent, and the fellowship was warm, for all of which we do thank the Lord of the Church.

building the base

THE ASTONISHING SCRIPTURES

BY PASTOR WES LANGAAS

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes (Matthew 7:28-29, ESV).

In other Bible versions of this Scripture passage, the crowds were “amazed” at Jesus’ teaching. I think either word is appropriate. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, astonish means “to strike with sudden and great wonder and surprise” and amaze means “to surprise and to fill with wonder.” The words of Jesus astonished the people because He was teaching the truth (true doctrine), which they hadn’t heard for a long time.

Truth can pierce the deadness of our souls, something that should happen whenever God’s Word is

rightly preached. Hebrews 4:12 gives an apt description of the Scriptures, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” That is astonishing.

It has become unfashionable today, even in some evangelical churches, to avoid doctrinal preaching in favor of feelings, myths, political correctness, inclusivism, etc. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy about this very problem when he said, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn

aside to myths ...” (II Timothy 4:3-4). We must be careful and faithful to preach sound doctrine as Jesus did. This is possible when we teach with the authority of God’s inspired and inerrant Word.

It is easy at times to want something lighter, something that doesn’t require too much thinking. We become lazy, especially now in the dog days of summer, and that can also creep into our walk with the Lord. We’re tired and expectant at the same time. School has been out for about two months and now both parents and children are getting edgy. Summer vacations have been taken and have maybe left us more tired than before. The annual conference of the AFLC has met and the work of the church has been evaluated and planned for another year. In these last lazy, hazy (and crazy) days of summer, it is soon time

to gear up and start all over again. People are getting ready to take on school work, sports, meetings, Sunday school, and—dare we say it—Christmas programs.

In all of this life activity we must remember what keeps us grounded and focused. It is imperative that we hear and receive “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27, KJV), for, “Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son” (I John 1:9). In having the Father and the Son we are most likely to continue steadfastly in the walk of faith as we are led by the Holy Spirit.

Langaas, a member of the Board of Publications and Parish Education, is a retired pastor who lives in Karlstad, Minn.