

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

JUNE 2018



A look back at the AFLBS Concert Choir and Companion Tour tour of Europe





## THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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# A WITNESS, A DELIGHT

BY JENAYA CRESTIK

**W**hat does it look like for me to be a witness of Jesus? This question has been running through my mind and written repeatedly in my prayer journal this past year. I have struggled to know how it should practically play out in my life. Oftentimes, when I consider my life as a witness of Jesus, I am tempted to despair because I am crushed by the reality of my own weakness.

However, I am reminded of the power of God through the examples of other Christians in the past. Take, for instance, the disciple Peter. He denied Christ three times at Jesus' death yet he became a bold witness of the gospel, even to the point of imprisonment and eventual death (Luke 22:57-60; Acts 4). Gideon, a man God used to save Israel, was from the weakest clan of Israel and described himself as the least in his father's house (Judges 6:15). Similarly, Moses, a man who was "slow of speech and tongue," was used by God to free the children of Israel from slavery and lead them to the Promised Land (Exodus 4:10). Paul shares in II Corinthians 12:9 that God said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." If you think of God as an employer who chooses whom to "hire" for His kingdom work, from our perspective, He often employed the most unqualified people. Indeed, He often used, and still chooses to use, those unqualified and weak to show His greatness

working through them.

Throughout my growing up years and training in the God's Word, I have gained tools for sharing the gospel—things like sharing my testimony, knowing Scripture passages to share the message of salvation, and being a living witness. Sometimes I focus too much on *how* to do witnessing correctly that I lose sight of the One who changes people's hearts—Jesus Himself. There is only one way of salvation (John 14:6), but God uses friendships, chance encounters, Scripture, and many other ways to reveal Himself.

A few months back, my pastor reminded me of a beautiful reality: the key to sharing the gospel is personally delighting in it. If we aren't basking in the reality of the glory of the gospel each day for ourselves, why would we care to share it? We can delight in the fact that God has saved us and now equips and uses us despite our weaknesses. When we savor the gospel, it overflows from our hearts as living water for others. We live in this paradox of living as free and redeemed children of God and in a state of being refined and sanctified (Galatians 3:26). Just like God used Peter, Gideon, Moses, and other Christians in the past and present, He can use you and me.

*Crestik, a 2016 graduate of AFLBS, is a member of St. Paul's Lutheran, Cloquet, Minn.*



Holy Scripture is the highest authority for every believer, the standard of faith and the foundation for reform.

—John Wycliffe

Therefore, faithful Christian, seek the truth, listen to the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, tell the truth even unto death.

—Jan Hus

The Law says, Where is your righteousness, goodness, and satisfaction? The Gospel says, Christ is your righteousness, goodness, and satisfaction.

—Patrick Hamilton

For where God is not recognized and obedience to Him is not required before all things, there peace is not peace, justice is not justice, and that which should be profitable brings injury instead.

—Martin Bucer

The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.

—Martin Luther



# Come Alive

The AFLBS Concert Choir toured  
Europe March 23 to April 12

By Seth Skogerboe

Trees flashed by my window as our bus pulled away from Buchenwald, a concentration camp 20 minutes' drive from the hostel where we spent our second-to-last night in Germany. They've shed their leaves for the winter in order to look even more skeletal and ominous in the dim gray of the morning, bony fingers stretching to a cloudy sky. They're so dense in this part of the woods, and our bus is moving quickly enough, that I can hardly focus my eyes on one before it's gone ... dead-looking, once-living things flying past and out of sight.

There was so much there, in Buchenwald—years of history of pain, and living, and escapes, and poetry—and we had 20 minutes. Twenty spare minutes in our morning schedule to walk around and try to see and begin to feel, and then to rush back to the bus so we could catch our ride to Berlin. Earlier in our trip, in Wittenberg, we had one day to see Martin Luther's family home, and the Philip Melanchthon house (that is, after a brief vespers service in the Latin school behind the church where Luther was married and baptized his children). We sang by his grave the night before.

This was often the feeling I had, as we bussed from place to place. We had hours and days to attempt to comprehend entire lives, and eras. Each time our bus stopped, an ocean of history lapped at its doors: the lives of Luther, Melanchthon, Jan Hus, Count Zinzendorf, Johann Bach ... and we could only skim the surface. Places and dates flashed past like trees in the windows. It was all good, what we skimmed, but I knew every

time that there was so much more to be known.

Another memory stands out from the rush of the last three weeks. It's a memory from a huge, cold chapel in Czechia. "*Otče náš, ktorý si na nebesách ...*" Hundreds of voices spoke the words around me, and it probably doesn't mean much to you at a glance, but it struck a chord in me immediately; students on either side of me murmured in recognition. The rhythm is drummed into us. You'd have known it when you heard it, too: "Our Father, who art in heaven ..." I can't tell you what it feels like to be surrounded for two hours by people who, for the most part, have no idea what you're saying or singing—and then, in a moment, to suddenly, completely understand one another.

The past is deep, and dead. It takes years to plumb to any noteworthy depth; and even then, students devote their lives to begin to understand one branch of it in a hundred thousand. People, however, are *alive*, and *deeper still*. They may be known so







much more quickly, and deeply, for history as far back as it stretches is finitely knowable, and men, by their Creator, have been and will be eternally known. Consider God's Word, spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you ..." (Jeremiah 1:5).

We encountered a living Church in Bystré, Slovakia. After our first full concert, members of the congregation there stayed late into the night, expressing heartfelt thanks in few words, many fervent handshakes, and a couple of watery-eyed grins. Some of them took us back to their own homes, grappling with our awkward language and feasting us like visiting royalty. We were treated and spoken to like family by people we did not know and whose language we could not speak.

And in the Czech Republic, we were welcomed with unearned enthusiasm and extravagant grace. A youth group-hosted evening early in our time there stands as one of the most memorable nights of my entire trip, largely due to the handful of conversations I had with students who sought *me* out, wondering about what God had been doing in our travels thus far. When I could get them to talk about themselves, they expressed a desire for their peers and neighbors to come to faith, and real interest and concern for the ministries of their congregations.

I remember watching the passing trees in Germany in the same way I remember standing by the graves: not as an exercise in morbidity, but in order to remind myself of the hope that

lies behind dead, dry things. It's hope in a change of seasons, when life will flow into limbs again, and people again, and churches again. And life will spark fire in *me* again—and I'm excited. Because the Church is alive, and dead things are coming to life. I'm coming to life.

Come with me.

*Skogerboe, a member of St. Olaf Lutheran, Montgomery, Ill., graduated from AFLBS in May.*









# The nations

By Grace Gunderson

**I**f I remember anything from our week in Slovakia 50 years from now, I hope it's *čučoriedky*. *Čučoriedky* is the Slovak word for blueberries. It's not a very useful word or easy to pronounce, but I doubt if I'll ever forget it.

Bystré, Slovakia, is a small town. From our first minutes there, when Pastor Marek Ivan came riding to the rescue of our very lost bus on his bicycle and guided us through the winding dirt roads to the church whose steeple could be seen from almost anywhere in town, I felt like I was in a fairy tale. But this quaint little town, which hadn't seen Americans for 15 years so the rumor goes, is very real. For our two nights there we stayed with host families. During our time with Josef and Magda, I don't think we ever had a conversation where we completely understood one another. There was plenty of Google translating, slow repeated sentences, and lots of laughing at the obvious lack of communication. And yet they were patient with us.

Magda seemed genuinely happy to see us when we got back each day, and I can't help but smile when I think about Josef pulling out jar after jar of home-preserved berries and teas and teaching us the names. As he opened up the jar of blueberries he kept repeating, "*čučoriedky, čučoriedky*." At last this was something we could recognize and repeat.

This little experience meant so much to me. Josef and Magda were willing to try to communicate, showing us so much love. Not only did they open their home to us, but they were willing to invest in us, as well. They loved us by feeding us—and feeding us a lot—by driving us to and from the church, and even by letting us all use the bathroom at night before they got ready for bed. It didn't seem to matter that we were only there for a couple of days, they invested in us like old friends. They made the language barrier seem truly small.

There's a line in one of our songs that defines Jesus as Lord of the nations. The truth of these words was revealed to me over and over again in Slovakia. It wasn't because of our mutual love of *čučoriedky* that we were able to bond so well with our hosts, it was our mutual identity in Jesus. As we traveled from place to place, we, the concert choir from

the Association Free Lutheran Bible School, represented just one small part of one of the many nations of God. It's a humbling experience to be so blatantly presented with your own smallness in light of the hugeness of the God we serve. Josef and Magda were able to love us so personally because they were reflecting the love of our beautiful Savior.

When we left our host homes and the charming town of Bystré, it was hard to believe any experience was going to be able to compare. But then we came to Liptovský Mikuláš. I was curious to see what this place was going to be like, because in the days leading up to it, multiple Slovaks had listed this place as the most beautiful in their country, the place where many of them visit on vacations to ski and hike the mountains. I was not disappointed. Another line in the same song goes, "fair are the meadows, fairer the woodlands, robed in flowers of blooming spring." I would believe it if someone told me the author of this song lived in Slovakia. The majesty and beauty of the hills, the forests, and the mountains was awe-inspiring. The ending lyrics to that verse are, "Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer, he makes our sorrowing spirit sing." Knowing that none of the places we saw come anywhere close to the beauty of our Savior is incredible. As people have asked me what stood out on our trip, I think this is it.

I can testify that the world is a big place. We traveled far and only barely caught a glimpse of the diversity that's out there. I can also testify that God is at work throughout all of it. He is a personal God who is at work in the hearts and lives of so many people, like Josef and Magda from Bystré. And the work He's doing is beautiful. The mountains and trees are nothing compared to the salvation He has authored for each of us.

Please pray for Slovakia, for the people. There are many who know the Lord but there are many who do not. We prayed that as we brought God's Word through song, seeds might be planted in new hearts. I may never go back and see the harvest, but I believe that God is ready for it.

*Gunderson, of Brush Prairie, Wash., graduated from AFLBS in May.*

# Holy week

By Pastor Michal Klus

**S**ilesia is a region which is divided today into two countries: the Czech Republic and Poland. The Czech Republic is among the most secular countries in the world. Roman Catholicism is very widespread in Poland. By the grace of God our congregation in Třinec, Czech Republic, is slowly growing. On the other hand we still see that there are less of those who come to services on Christian holidays.

The first service during Holy Week is traditionally on Thursday. We have a simple service paying special attention to the Lord's Supper. Before communion we have a special act of confession of sins following the sermon and it usually starts with a time of quiet, personal prayers of repentance. Then we pray out loud the repentance prayer of Martin Luther. The pastor asks the worshipers three questions. The first is whether they acknowledge that they are sinners and repent of their sins. If so, the people respond by saying, "I repent." The second is about having faith in Jesus Christ who removes all sins. The people respond by saying, "I believe." The last asks whether they desire to be led by the Holy Spirit and follow Jesus. The people respond, "I desire to with the help of God." Those who respond to these questions in faith are assured of the forgiveness of their sins, and after reading or singing the Words of Institution they are invited to communion.

Good Friday has been a national holiday in our country since 2016. Strangely enough, it probably happened because of the fear of Muslim migrants. Nevertheless, we have had morning worship services on Good Friday for years. Since we are a bilingual church (Czech and Polish), we have one service in the morning and another one in the afternoon—both with communion. After the morning worship service, we traditionally have a special prayer meeting in the fellowship hall.

Nothing happens in the church on Saturday of Holy Week, but this year we had a busy day as the AFLBS choir came from Slovakia. It was so nice to welcome them at the train station. They were tired, many fighting colds, but they were all smiles and eager to fulfill the purpose of their visit. With great thankfulness, they settled in our retreat center called Karmel. After lunch and a few minutes of rest they were on their way to see our church. Then we went to a smaller church in the nearby village of Oldřichovice, where they had their full concert. The local pastor was thrilled that the church was full. They had many guests from the local community who got to hear some beautiful liturgical music. After the concert, there was a dinner and fellowship with the local youth. It was so interesting to

observe how few barriers there were. Many of our youth nowadays feel comfortable communicating in English, and so the fellowship was great. That did not happen as much during the previous choir tours to Central Europe. There was time for some sharing, activities, and singing. The youth were very encouraged.

On Easter Sunday, we also had two services. The choir sang during the second service, which was in Czech. They sang six songs—the first and second songs from the balcony with the accompaniment of our organ, and four more songs in the front. Pastor Joel Rolf shared an Easter greeting. Due to the presence of the choir we simplified the service, but it still went on for an hour and forty-five minutes. And we were blessed.

Following the service, we all had a lunch with our youth and a time of fellowship and getting to know each other. Our youth listened to an excellent presentation about AFLBS and we had a great time of sharing, laughter, and Easter celebration. In the evening there was another traditional Easter worship service for people from a broader region. The goal was to encourage the youth to live a life of service for the risen Christ. Pastor Rolf was the main speaker and he emphasized the idea that in order to be resurrected with Christ, you have to die with Him. Then you are ready to serve Him. The choir sang again.

Easter is one of three holidays we celebrate for a duration of two days. The others are Christmas and Pentecost. So on Easter Monday we had another morning worship service in Třinec. However, we allowed the choir to visit our neighboring congregation in Bystřice, whose church was dedicated in 1811. They sang during the worship service. The choir spent the rest of the day in Cracow and Cieszyn, Poland, where they visited the largest Lutheran church in Central Europe, which was established in 1709 after a period of strong persecution of Lutherans.

On Tuesday we returned to our normal schedule. People went to work and to school and the choir began doing some ministry at various high schools in Havířov, but that would be another story.

Dear friends from the AFLC, thank you for sending your choir to our country, thank you for supporting them, and thank you for praying for them and for us. We were blessed far more than we expected. The Lord is risen indeed!

*Klus, a 2003 graduate of the Free Lutheran Seminary, serves the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran) in Třinec, Czech Republic.*







# Moments to remember



## PEOPLE AND HISTORY

I adore learning about the past and treasuring history. Traveling to Europe, I was thrilled to experience the rich history in the places we had the privilege of visiting through the lives of the people we met. Remarkably planned out, our tour took us on a journey of seeing the roots of our faith. At each stop, I was amazed and encouraged by the personal stories of my brothers and sisters in Christ, present and past, who have given everything to follow Jesus. It astounds me that all these beautiful stories would not be possible without the greatest moment in history—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel that ties all believers' stories together.

*Madi Greven, North Pole, Alaska, graduated from AFLBS in May.*

## GOD'S POWER IN MUSIC

The Lord was faithful and encouraged us through the ministry of many individuals as we traveled. The most treasured moments for me included the opportunities I had in the Czech Republic to reconnect with some of my relatives. They enjoyed the songs in our concerts. After attending one of our concerts, one of my relatives found herself singing the lyrics of the song, *Witness*. This is an example of how music is a powerful and universal language that breaks down barriers. Please pray that the truth of Scripture present in each one of our songs will continue to impact hearts in Europe and that those who are lost will turn to Christ.

*Olivia Pavlish, Rogers, Minn., graduated from AFLBS in May.*



## PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

The blessings of being a part of the Companion Tour with the AFLBS choir began the first day in Prague. After the choir sang *Beautiful Savior*, I knew this was going to be a rich experience. The chorus of *Grace Alone*, which says, "Saved by grace alone, this is all my plea. Jesus died for all mankind, And Jesus died for me," is still in my mind and heart! In Germany we visited churches and museums to learn about the Reformation and Martin Luther. The churches were so grand and beautiful. Walking into the magnificent Berlin Cathedral with its beauty caused me to just stop. The Lord impressed upon my heart to sit down and pray. Pray for the people in Germany. Pray for people to hear the Word, the message of Christ in the Bible as Luther taught 500 years ago—the Word alone. His grace alone. And faith alone.

*Sue Eberth lives in Arden Hills, Minn.*



## GOD'S GRACE FOR ME

The strongest memory I have is of the vesper service at the Old Latin School in Wittenberg. Pastor Sam Wellumson spoke on the theme, “deliver us from evil.” The service was sung with psalms and hymns. The choir stood where they were, with members of the Companion Tour amongst them, and sang of God’s grace. They also sang, “I believe in God, even when he is silent.” That message, and God’s grace returned to me throughout the remainder of the trip. Though I saw much that was memorable, my greatest memory is of the repeated message of God’s grace for me.

*Mary Rolf is a member of Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glydon, Minn.*



## TO MAGNIFY THE LORD

During our time in Europe we were privileged to see and experience many incredible things—the timeworn streets of Budapest, the mountainous terrain of Slovakia, the wonders of Prague, the historic sites of Poland and Germany. But nothing was as beautiful as coming together with our brothers and sisters from many nations to magnify our Lord. Everywhere we went, we were accompanied by members of the local congregation and joined them in their labors to share the love and mercy of God through the proclamation of Christ crucified.

*Andrew Odhiambo, South St. Paul, Minn., graduated from AFLBS in May.*



## ONE LORD, ONE FAITH

As I reflect on our recent choir tour to Europe, many highlights come to mind. We saw the burial sites of Martin Luther and J.S. Bach, sang in front of the 95 Theses door, and had a surprise trip to an awesome water park. While I went into the trip thinking about how Europe would be different from America, I was struck by the many ways in which they are alike. We met many fellow believers who spoke different languages, but we worship the same God. As Ephesians 4:5 puts it, there is “one Lord, one faith ...” It was a great privilege to be a part of sharing the gospel with lost souls, but I was also encouraged by the Church as we shared the same message with them.

*Stephen Moan, Corcoran, Minn., graduated from AFLBS in May.*



## ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT

What a pleasure to trade Afghanistan’s dust for the company of adventurers (including my folks) and sit once again under the tutelage of Pastor Robert Lee. I was struck by the theme of God’s faithfulness running throughout our time together, especially watching multiple generations of believers as grandparents and parents supported their progeny while they ministered to choir audiences. God’s faithfulness over the centuries was also strongly apparent at each of our stops. Standing in the places where reformers lived and learned, navigating the divine calling on their lives and the often-severe earthly consequences, was certainly intense.

*David Larson graduated from AFLBS in 2001.*

## COMMITTED TO JESUS

AFLBS students laughing and bouncing around in front of an aged brick church standing proudly in the infamous neighborhood of Leipzig, Germany. It wasn’t a tourist-sight, yet it was picture-worthy because the presence of the choir made this place sparkle. It seemed surreal to be visiting with former coworkers and friends, students that I have only seen at Campus Days before, now singing hymns and giving an echoing testimony to their love for Christ. One student struck me in particular as he delivered his testimony entirely in the German language. It was close to perfection. Not only the students’ musical (and linguistic) talents became apparent, but also their heavenly heart attitudes. Their commitment to Jesus is a sure reality and a blessing to me. Thank you, dear choir members, for your encouragement.

*Anja Kingh, Leipzig, Germany, is a 2015 graduate of AFLBS.*





# Luther's

**W** By Pastor Rick Larson

hat a great adventure! Last fall our five children and their three spouses (each one an AFLBS graduate) decided to send us on the Companion Tour April 5-15. The adventure began with a two-night stay in Prague, Czech Republic. Prague has been permanently settled since the ninth century. Jan Hus was appointed a preacher at Bethlehem Chapel in Prague and was burned at the stake for opposing church teaching in 1415, just 100 years prior to Martin Luther's nailing the 95 Theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany.

It was enjoyable to hear and see the choir sing in ten different locations, ranging from a restaurant to the historic Castle Church. The music selections were excellent, particularly those dealing with the Five Solas of the Reformation. One of the blessings for me was enjoying Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* being sung. Following the evening prayer service at the Augustinerkloster, members of the AFLBS choir, some of those on the Companion Tour, and a few others who had been in attendance broke out in singing of the chorus. In a visit with a faculty member there, she commented that the choir was the "best singing yet" in the 25 years she had been there and wanted to know more about AFLBS.

Another enjoyable time was watching Pastor Robert Lee direct the choir in singing near the location where Luther had nailed the 95 Theses 500 years ago. Pastor Lee's "Church History Talks" added to the Reformation stops and tours.

A quick visit to Buchenwald Concentration Camp Memorial and some time in Berlin and seeing the Holocaust Memorial, East Side Gallery (a mural created on a portion of the Berlin Wall which fell in 1989), served as a reminder of the fallen nature of man and the need for the redeeming work of Jesus.

As other events of the Reformation reach their 500th anniversaries, the area would beckon other visitors to head there to gain knowledge and insight as to why we who follow Jesus Christ would bear the name Lutheran. The work of Adam Lee to coordinate and guide the tour was very much appreciated. Thanks also to Sherry Mork for her stateside coordination. Again, what a great adventure!

*Larson serves Abiding Faith Free Lutheran, Ortonville, Minn., and Elim Lutheran, Clinton, Minn.*



The Companion T







Choir Tour traveled to Prague and Germany



# Legacy

By Deanna Larson

When I first saw the opportunity to travel with the AFLBS choir, I thought it would be a great tour especially in light of the celebrations around the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation. And the privilege to tour with our AFLBS choir, director, faculty and friends. I set the thought of going aside, but our wonderful sons and daughters gifted us the trip.

I appreciate my Lutheran heritage! This heritage gives us the precious truth of God's Word preached to all peoples of all generations in their own language. We also have the wonderful music to help us express our worship of the Almighty Lord God, plus the serving of one another in light of God's grace, gifting, and sanctifying work in and through all believers. We have the living hope of eternal life, forgiveness of sin, and joy now through faith alone in Jesus Christ.

Our adventure walking through the streets and buildings where Luther wrestled with God's call to love Him and love one another was fantastic and surreal. At times we stopped to grasp the reality of where we were, and the powerful, wonderful way God worked in and through people to bring His Word to us today. The devotions shared by choir and companion tour members alike were a wonderful time in God's Word. I thank each of you.

Each day was begun with a unique and delightful breakfast. We'd hop on the bus for conversation (or a nap) to join the choir at churches to hear their beautiful singing and worship together. We were working with other languages, so we appreciated our guides, translators, and technology which helped, too. Being a choir "groupie" was a blessing and delight. The music preparations and selections of AFLBS choir and Director Andrew Hanson along with his beautiful and talented family were phenomenal and dynamic for this tour. Sherry Mork, Adam Lee, and Pastor Lee took very excellent care of us with grace, humor, and sincerity. Thank you.

We had a little time to get acquainted with tour members as the days flew by. What a great group with whom to tour, fly over the ocean, climb towers, trek through airports, hunt for great food, sing in amazing places, and celebrate history the of Luther. To God be the glory.

*Larson is a member of Abiding Faith Free Lutheran, Ortonville, Minn., and Elim Lutheran, Clinton, Minn.*









# The Boss

By Cindy Alpert

I was excited and blessed to be able to participate in the recent companion tour with the Bible school choir on their spring tour of Europe. They were there a couple weeks before we joined them. Our time there was spent touring sites of the Reformation.

Wartburg Castle up on a hill was a sight to behold. It was here that Martin Luther stayed for protection in 1521 and 1522. During his stay here, he worked on the translation of the Bible into German. In the Middle Ages there was a real fear of the devil and evil spirits. Legend says that as Luther translated the Bible into the common language of the people he thought the devil was disturbing him and keeping him from his work. Upon hearing some noise behind him, he turned and threw his ink pot at the devil. In the many writings by Luther he did not mention this incident, but he did say that he “had driven the devil away with ink.”

By translating the Word into the language of the people the devil was being driven away. As the hymn says, “God’s Word is our great heritage.” I like to think that as Luther worked he asked himself: “Who’s the boss around here?” The answer is Jesus Christ. No evil spirits had a chance with Luther.

As a confirmation student many years ago, I witnessed a very short sermon that had a big impact which I will not forget. Reverend Emil Greften was close to 80 years old and held confirmation classes every Saturday morning for two years at our church. We students sat in the first pew of the sanctuary and he sat in front of us as he quizzed us on the lesson and memory work. We memorized Luther’s *Small Catechism*. “This is most certainly true.” Pastor Greften even handed out report cards on our progress and behavior. This too, is most certainly true.

One Saturday morning he asked me and another girl to go downstairs in the church to retrieve something for him. As we ran down the steps, there at the bottom of the stairs were three or four garter snakes. We, being girls, did what girls do. We screamed. Pastor Greften and the other three members of the class came to see what the commotion was about. Upon seeing the snakes Pastor Greften proceeded to stomp on them.

I can still see him with his tufts of white hair flying, in his suit and bow tie, as he stomped, repeating over and over, “Who’s the boss around here? I ask you, who’s the boss around here?”

Christ was the boss around there and no serpent had a chance with Pastor Greften.

It was wonderful to experience the sights, sounds, food, and culture of Germany. It was amazing to see the church door where Luther’s 95 Theses were nailed. It was also exciting to visit the many places where Luther and others strived to bring the Word of God to the people. The choir was a joy to hear and to interact with. A favorite song for many of us was about grace. The song ended with the words: “Jesus died for all mankind and Jesus died for me.”

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of our faith, for it is by the Word alone, faith alone, and grace alone that are we saved. This is most certainly true.

*Alpert, AFLBS 1977-78, attends Calvary Free Lutheran in Bismark, N.D.*



# The 2018 Annual Conference

Let me welcome you to the “Wild West!” Well, it isn’t so wild anymore, except that wherever we go, people need Jesus: Dickinson, N.D., included. When we meet together June 12-15 at the Ramada Grand Dakota Lodge in Dickinson, we will come together to encourage one another in the work of the Lord. Will you come join us for even a couple of days? If you do, you will hear firsthand what God is doing in and through all areas of your AFLC. We are attempting to keep reports concise and have major budget discussions completed prior to the conference so that more time may be devoted to fellowship, prayer, worship, and even electives that will help you in your congregations. Please come and help us as a conference as we work to meet the needs of your local congregations.



Pastor Lyndon  
Korhonen

Though these are not easy days to do God’s work, He is still taking wild lives and taming them for His greater eternal purposes. Our theme this year is from I John 5:13, “That You May Know.” What a great message we have to proclaim to our communities and the world. We can know the living God through His Son Jesus Christ. His finished work on Calvary is the basis of our “knowing” where we stand with Him.

*Korhonen, Plymouth, Minn., is the president of the AFLC.*



## 2018 Annual Conference

June 12-15

Ramada Grand Dakota Lodge,  
Dickinson, N.D.

**Host:** Our Saviour’s Lutheran, Dickinson

**Theme:** “That You May Know” (I John 5:13)

Online registration, housing information,  
and conference schedule can be found at:

**[aflc.org/conferences](http://aflc.org/conferences)**

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\*Pastor David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.  
\*\*Dr. Steve Johnson, Upsala, Minn.  
Tim Jordan, Valley City, N.D.  
Dean Marshall, Eagan, Minn.  
\*Pastor Shane McLoughlin, Minot, N.D.  
\*\*Chad Rieschl, Brooklyn Park, Minn.  
Bruce Sellent, Almena, Wis.  
\*Roger VanSomeran, Amery, Wis.  
Eight more names needed

## Schools Corporation

(10 terms of five years each)

Michael Anderson, Bagley, Minn.  
\*\*Don Balmer, Thief River Falls, Minn.  
Angie Berg, Bemidji, Minn.  
\*Arne Berge, Binford, N.D.  
Tim Berntson, Buffalo, N.D.  
\*Pastor Bill Buck, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
Pastor Luke Emerson, Lake Stevens, Wash.  
\*\*Pastor Todd Erickson, Roseau, Minn.  
\*Pastor Jason Gudim, Golden Valley, Minn.

Ralph Hansen, Ashby, Minn.

\*Steve Jankord, Fort Mill, S.C.  
Pastor Gideon Johnson, Kenyon, Minn.  
Josh Johnson, Minneapolis, Minn.  
\*Pastor Paul Kneeland, Dayton, Minn.  
Kurt Mortenson, Underwood, Minn.  
Jeffrey Nikunen, Richfield, Minn.  
Dr. Nathan Olson, Savage, Minn.  
Tom Propst, Stover, Mo.  
Pastor Ron Smith, Bruce, S.D.  
\*Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, Moorhead, Minn.  
Pastor Cal Willard, Everett, Wash.

## Missions Corporation

(20 terms of five years each,  
one unexpired term of one year)

\*Pastor John Abel, Hitterdahl, Minn.  
\*\*Pastor Mark Antal, Park River, N.D.  
\*Duane Burchill, Valley City, N.D.  
\*\*Tom Caouette, Brainerd, Minn.  
\*\*Pastor Brian Davidson, Dickinson, N.D.  
Pastor Connely Dyrud, Maple Grove, Minn.  
Pastor Rob Edwards, Dassel, Minn.  
\*Pastor Eugene Enderlein, Plymouth, Minn.  
\*Dean Feistner, Madison, S.D.  
Christie Friestad, Crystal, Minn.  
\*Tom Fugleberg, Badger, Minn.  
\*\*Charles Gray, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Matthew Green, Greenbush, Minn.

\*Pastor Gary Haug, Brooklyn Park, Minn.  
Iver Heier, Prairie City, S.D.  
Pastor Jarrod Hylden, Beresford, S.D.  
Mary Jo Jackson, Stover, Mo.  
Michael Jackson, Stover, Mo.  
Pastor Joel Kangas, Erskine, Minn.  
\*Pastor Leslie Johnson, Wilson, Wis.  
Pastor Charles Knapp, Mason, Wis.  
Joyce Knapp, Mason, Wis.  
\*Pastor George Lautner, Larimore, N.D.  
Pastor Jerry Nelson, LaCrosse, Wis.  
Pastor David Olson, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
\*\*Pastor Thomas Olson, Farmington, Minn.  
Bob Penegor, Mason, Wis.  
Ruth Penegor, Mason, Wis.  
Vernon Russum, Fargo, N.D.  
Pastor David Ryerson, Ishpeming, Mich.  
Rod Scheel, Fergus Falls, Minn.  
Pastor Irv Schmitke, Thief River Falls, Minn.  
\*Cheryl Skordahl, Rogers, Minn.  
Jessica Smith, Brookings, S.D.  
\*\*Pastor Kent Sperry, Beulah, N.D.  
Nancy Staudinger, Tamarack, Minn.  
David Strand, Kindred, N.D.  
\*Kristen Tanner, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
\*\*Pastor Thomas Tuura, Stover, Mo.  
Shane Voxland, McIntosh, Minn.



# BOARD NOMINEES

## ARC Board

*Voted on by corporation members*

(One layman, five-year term)

Ernie Hilbert, Wheatland, Iowa  
X

## Bay Broadcasting

*Voted on by corporation members*

(One layman, three-year term)

\*Paul Christenson, Fergus Falls, Minn.  
X

## Board of Publications & Parish Education

(One layman, five-year term)

Suzanne Tietjen, Wetmore, Mich.  
X

## FLAPS Board of Managers

*Voted on by corporation members*

(One layman, five-year term)

\*David Handsaker, Plymouth, Minn.  
X

## World Missions Committee

*Voted on by corporation members*

(One pastor, five-year term)

Pastor George Lautner, Larimore, N.D.  
\*Pastor Craig Johnson, Astoria, Ore.  
Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt, Sparta, Wis.

(One layman, five-year term)

\*Paul Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa  
X

## Youth Board

(One layman, five-year term)

\*Andrew Benson, Janesville, Wis.  
Michelle Olson, Arlington, S.D.  
Michele Smith, Brookings, S.D.

\* Incumbents

\*\* Must be elected to corporation to remain on/be elected to committee or board

X Nominations not named by press deadline

## Benefits Board

(One layman, five-year term)

Ron Orf, South St. Paul, Minn.  
\*James Rolf, Moorhead, Minn.

## Budget Analysis Committee

(One layman, three-year term)

\*Cory Buck, Sioux Falls, S.D.  
X

## Commission on Evangelism

(One layman, five-year term)

\*Kevin Hoops, Byron, Neb.  
Robin Pelehos, Cannon Falls, Minn.

## Coordinating Committee

(One pastor, five-year term)

\*Pastor Tom Schierkolk, Eben Junction,  
Mich.  
Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, N.D.

## Home Missions Committee

*Voted on by corporation members*

(One layman, five-year term)

\*\*Tom Caouette, Brainerd, Minn.  
X

(One layman, five-year term)

\*\*Charles Gray, Oklahoma City, Okla.  
X

## Schools Board of Trustees

*Voted on by corporation members*

(One pastor, four-year term)

\*Pastor Todd Erickson, Roseau, Minn.  
\*\*Pastor Ron Smith, Bruce, S.D.  
Pastor Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont.

(One layman, five-year term)

Lyle Forde, Arlington, Wash.  
Dean Nelson, Vergas, Minn.

## Nominees to serve at the 2018 conference

### Committee No. 1

(Administration)

Glenn Moser, Barto, Pa.  
Frank Dutcher, Boyertown, Pa.  
Pastor Brandon Marschner, Culbertson,  
Mont.  
Pastor Les Johnson, Wilson, Wis.  
X

### Committee No. 2

(Schools)

Pastor Ryan Tonneson, Mesa, Ariz.  
Pastor Mark Richardson, Faith, S.D.  
JoAnne Salvetti, Bethel Park, Pa.  
Gary Yerger, Leesport, Pa.  
X

### Committee No. 3

(Missions)

Pastor Michael Flechsig, Blackduck, Minn.  
Bill Fish, Everett, Wash.  
Dr. Nathan Olson, Savage, Minn.  
Steve Deysher, Fleetwood, Pa.  
X

### Committee No. 4

(Publications and Parish Education)

Bruce Stoudt, Bechtelsville, Pa.  
Pastor Richard Long, Arlington, Wash.  
Rebecca Moan, Corcoran, Minn.  
Pastor Adam Osier, Finleyville, Pa.  
X

### Committee No. 5

(Evangelism and Benefits)

Pastor Allan Monson, Mesa, Ariz.  
Pastor David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.  
X  
X  
X



# YOUTH MINISTRY ODDS

BY PASTOR JASON HOLT

**F**rom April 7-11, AFLBS sponsored a youth ministry travel class. It was a terrific way to provide interested students both the content of healthy youth ministry and the context of congregational efforts. Through scriptural discussions, personal interviews, and assigned readings, the crew involved received a firsthand perspective on bringing the unchanging Word to reach a changing world.

As the AFLC director of Youth Ministries, I found it wonderful to interact with the caring adult leaders—the youth workers, parents of teens, and pastors—as well as to reflect alongside of these growing AFLBS students. Two themes sprung from the visits with our congregations: teens are hurting in a culture that uses them; and caring, believing people bringing God's truth and love are making a difference.

## Hurting Teens

Next year, 2019, will mark three decades for me of being involved in youth ministry. The cries of youth have regularly been there (Merton Strommen published *Five Cries of Youth* in 1974), but the depth of the cries seem to continue to grow in intensity. Whether elevated by an individualistic-focused nature or by an economic-driven culture, these cries show that today's teens are hurting. Ephesians 4:14 warns about people who are being “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”



The world's empty messages and the advertisers' targeted appeals are tearing away at American adolescents.

## Helping Adults & Teens

Ephesians 4:15-16 goes on to point to the remedy: “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body ... builds itself up in love.” It is the love of Christ and the truth of Christ brought by the people of Christ which do the work of Christ. It was so refreshing to see youth workers, parents of teenagers, veteran pastors, and maturing teens extending genuine compassion and powerful truth during the trip.

The youth culture will continue to spin and shift, but the odd thing about youth ministry is, even with so much cultural change, the involvement of caring people never changes. Adults and teenagers taking God's unchanging Word and God's unrelenting heart to youths will continue to advance Christ's kingdom.



## Youth Ministry Travel Class

- ♦ 11 congregational visits
- ♦ 9 meals on the road
- ♦ 7 votes needed for a survey
- ♦ 5 continuous days of travel
  - ♦ 3 AFLBS students
- ♦ 1 unique class experience

FLY Beyond is the national youth equipping week held July 16-20, 2018. For information including registration, please visit:

**[aflc.org/youth](http://aflc.org/youth)**

*Holt, St. Michael, Minn., is the director of AFLC Youth Ministries.*





WMF

WOMEN'S  
MISSIONARY  
FEDERATION

BY MARTHA PETSINGER

'N

o! No! No! No!"  
My very thoughts  
as a friend was  
nominating me  
for the office of

president of the Eastern North  
Dakota District WMF. As you  
probably know, if you are a  
candidate you will be elected  
because no one else runs.

"No! I cannot do this, I  
am not an eloquent speaker," I  
thought.

*I will help.*

"No! I do not have time."

*I will give it to you.*

"No! I am not qualified, I  
have nothing to offer."

*I AM with you always.*

The Lord is true to His  
promises. He is faithful.  
Although I am not an eloquent  
speaker, He has given me the  
courage to get up and run the  
business meetings. Somehow  
time has not been an issue,  
and if I can't be at a meeting,  
God has provided someone

## THE LORD, MY HELPER

else to lead. He has sent willing workers. He has  
provided a wonderful board to work alongside  
me, host churches for the rallies, musicians  
to play piano and organ and lead the worship  
praises. He didn't stop there, He sent women  
to lead devotions, serve on the registration  
committees, help as ushers, and, of course, hands  
to serve. The Lord provides.

I am in my second term and am so thankful  
for the opportunity to get to know people through  
this office. I have talked on the phone with people  
I wouldn't have normally met. I even went on a  
short-term mission trip to Brazil.

Our district WMF rally attendance has  
declined in the last 20 years, which is sad because  
we still have so much to do. When I was in Brazil,  
the women on the team attended a Bible study  
with Becky Abel. With the help of a translator,  
we spent the afternoon sharing testimonies. The  
stories of hardships and abuse were eye opening.  
Yet these same people seemed so happy and had

taken time out of their day to come to Bible study.  
We seem to come up with so many reasons why  
we don't have time, don't qualify, or have nothing  
to offer. Just come. You will be blessed.

Our spring rally was held April 28 at Trinity  
Bergen Free Lutheran, Starkweather, N.D. It is a  
small, somewhat remote church. There are a lot of  
elderly women in the WMF but they still wanted  
to help and host. Our theme was "Jesus Christ:  
the same yesterday, today and forever." Our theme  
Bible verse was Psalm 100:5, "For the Lord is good  
and His love endures forever; His faithfulness  
continues through all generations." This verse is  
a reminder to me that I am not qualified for this  
position, but because of His promises and love, I  
can do it.

*Petsinger is a member of Living Faith Free Lutheran,  
Larimore, N.D.*

### 2018 WMF Convention • June 12 • Dickinson, N.D.

Please use this form to register for the WMF Convention and luncheon on Tuesday, June 12, and for the WMF breakfast on June 13.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Cost	#	Total
*Registration	\$20		\$
Luncheon: Meat & cheese sandwich, pickle, coffee, water	\$15		\$
Breakfast: Donuts, muffins, fruit, juice, coffee	\$10		\$
(Special diets can be ordered off the menu of the house grill)		<b>Total</b>	\$

*\*The registration fee is required for all attending the convention and is separate from the AFLC Annual Conference registration.*

**Make checks payable to "WMF of AFLC" and mail to: WMF Treasurer, Deb Benson, 39694 SD Hwy 44, Armour, SD 57313.**



## Subscription rates to increase

To meet the rising printing and postage costs, members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee voted to increase the yearly subscription rates for *The Lutheran Ambassador*. These rates will go into effect beginning July 1. The new rates include:

- Individual: \$25
- Group (5 or more): \$24/each
- Bulk (10 or more): \$20
- International: \$27

The Committee also asked for prayer for the financial challenges faced by our publication.

## AFLC to visit Mongolian church

The AFLC has accepted an invitation to visit the Mongolian Evangelical Lutheran Church (MELC), a newly formed church association. Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, president of the AFLC, and Pastor Craig Johnson, chairman of the AFLC World Missions Committee, will travel to Mongolia Sept. 24 through Oct. 2. The purpose of the trip, according to Korhonen, is both for fact finding and exploring possibilities for fellowship with the MELC.

The invitation came from Pastor Puje Jamsran, president of the MELC. The AFLC has several connections with the MELC. David Olson, a 1997 graduate of AFLBS, is returning to Mongolia to work with the Norwegian Lutheran Mission. In addition, Pastor Puje's son-in-law, Enkhjargal Ganzorig Purevdorj, is a student at the Free Lutheran Seminary.



## APRIL MEMORIALS

### AFLBS

Pastor Les & Jan  
Galland

Chuck Schmidt  
Ruth Claus

Gordon B. & Carley  
Olson

Pastor Steve  
Papillon (2)

### AFLTS

Leonard Osland  
Gordon B. & Carley  
Olson

Florence Grebel  
Pastor Steve  
Papillon

**Evangelism**  
Norman Dahl

Pastor Steve  
Papillon

### General Fund

Gordon B. & Carley  
Olson

### Home Missions

Gordon B. & Carley  
Olson

### World Missions

Leonard Osland  
Jim Walker  
Myron Kaster  
Dee Polson  
Arthur Grove  
Gordon B. & Carley  
Olson

## Touring historically Lutheran sites

At the front of the Wittenberg Castle Church sanctuary, just to the right and under the pulpit, you will find the final resting place of Dr. Martin Luther, reformer. Across from him lies Philip Melancthon, his partner in reform and author of the Augsburg Confession. Between them sing 32 members of the AFLBS Concert Choir, their director, accompanist, and violinist. This is just a taste of the sites visited during the Central Europe tour March 23-April 12. They were joined by 25 members of the Companion Tour who traveled to sites in Prague, Czech Republic, and Germany April 5-15.





**T**he apostle Paul said, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (I Corinthians 3:6). “And herein is that true saying, ‘One sows, and another reaps’” (John 4:37).

We live in an ever changing world. We see geological changes, we see changes in nature due to aging, disease and natural calamities such as storms, fires, flooding, drought, winds, tides etc. I personally don’t like change, but it is a reality of life.

In my life, Maringá is the city in which I have been most stable, living here for 14 years with only three local moves. Prior to moving here, I had moved 40 times in my life, with the longest time living in a place being six years. Even then, I had moved to many different homes. At my age, I don’t look forward to moving anymore, but I may have to move a few times yet since I don’t own anything but my old car.

My life is not different from many others in this world. Much of the world’s population is a migrating one. People are forced to move because of war, disease, financial reasons, work transfers, or education. These changes also affect ministry.

When the AFLC started the ministry in Brazil, the goal was

# PLANT, WATER, REAP

BY PASTOR JONATHAN ABEL

to target the country through planting churches among the population which was migrating to the interior of this great country as it was in its developing stages. This went well for a while, but in the 1980s we saw a great turn around where people started migrating back to the great commercial centers. Because of this exodus of people from many of our churches in the interior, we had to change our strategy and start establishing churches in the large cities.

As Christians, we can view the displacement of people as a positive thing. As God’s people go to different places they have new opportunities to share the gospel and build the kingdom of God in this world. That is what happened in the early church. Acts 8:4 says: “But those that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word of the gospel.”

On the flip side, it makes church planting harder. I experience this all the time. Recently we took in four new members at our congregation. A week later, one of them passed away at the age of 67. Two weeks later, two others from this group moved away because of work, leaving only one new member.

For years now as I have been ministering and discipling God’s people, I have a keen awareness that I am not just trying to build a local church, but also training these children of His kingdom to be global Christians—people who will stand for Christ and follow Him no matter where He takes them. I am part of the process of planting, watering, and reaping. Some I have planted, some I have watered, and some I have reaped. But seldom have I had the privilege of doing all three with an individual. All God expects of me is that I do my best to invest spiritual blessings into the lives of those He brings to me so that they become stronger Christians in this journey of life. And if He moves me or them, we will go on to build His kingdom wherever He sends us.

That is what His disciples are to do. That is what His church is to do. That is what Paul and Apollos were doing. Are you doing your part in the planting, watering, and reaping?

*Abel is an AFLC missionary serving in Maringá, Brazil, with his wife, Tamba, and their daughter, Michelle.*



## PEOPLE &amp; PLACES

The **International Orality Institute** recently installed new board members Pastor Paul Kneeland, Pastor Wayne Hjermsstad, Pastor Peter Ward, and Wayne Floan. The new board was elected by the previous Ambassador Institute Board members.

**Pastor Clayton Wilfer** has accepted a call to Joy Christian Community Church, Fountain Hills, Ariz. Wilfer leaves Word of Life Free Lutheran, Upsala, Minn.

The **East European Mission Network** (EEMN) held their annual banquet at the AFLC Schools Heritage Hall on April 27, and Pastor Don and Mavis Richman were honored for their years of service. The founder of EEMN in 1992, Richman will no longer be an official staff member, but continues to serve in an advisory capacity and to do occasional international ministry. The keynote speaker for the event was Pastor Raimonds Mezins from Latvia, and a group of AFLBS students sang and spoke about their recent Central European choir tour.

An open house was held May 20 at Grace Lutheran, Morris, Ill., in honor of **Pastor Steve Heilmann**, who has announced his retirement from parish ministry.

**Gary Maxwell** joined the staff of Helmar Lutheran, Newark, Ill., in June, and will be assisting Pastor Steve Lombardo, with whom he served as youth pastor in Gifford, Ill.

Members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee have removed **St. John's Lutheran**, Ambridge, Pa., from the AFLC congregational roster at their request.

**Pastor Tim Hinrichs** has resigned from his call to serve Word of Life Free Lutheran, Mankato, Minn., and has accepted a call to serve a LCMC church in Marshfield, Wis.

Members of the **Home Missions Committee** have announced plans to begin the process of finding a new director of Home Missions. Pastor Paul Nash has served in the position for more than 22 years. Earlier this year, he asked members of the committee to begin the process for finding his replacement. In a letter to members of the AFLC Missions Corporation, members of the committee asked for prayer for the process, as well as a transition period, both of which will take an undetermined amount of time. They also asked prayer "for financial provision for compensating two 'directors' simultaneously during the training period ..."

**Pastor Steve Papillon**

Pastor Stephen John Papillon, 67, of Grand Forks, N.D., entered into the presence of Jesus on April 17, 2018, in Grand Forks.

Born Feb. 28, 1951, he was the son of James and Bernace Papillon in Minneapolis, Minn. He married Linda Anderson in 1977 at Borgund Lutheran, Madison, Minn.

He grew up in Columbia Heights, Minn., and was baptized into Christ on Feb. 21, 1960, at First Lutheran Church of Columbia Heights. As a young adult, he rejected Christ as an atheist. But as he realized the truth of the gospel and his need of it, he was powerfully converted to Christ on March 25, 1974. After graduating from Columbia Heights High School in 1969, he attended the University of Minnesota from 1969 to 1973. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Christian education from Lutheran Bible Institute of Seattle in 1980. Steve continued his education throughout pastoral ministry at the AFLTS Summer Institute Training program. Early in his ministry, he fell in love with the Church and was a true shepherd of the body of Christ. Throughout his entire life, he gave himself to helping the Church grow through discipleship and the teaching of God's Word. He claimed Titus 1:1 as the theme of his life, seeking to "further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness." He served as director of discipleship and evangelism at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church (ALC) in Minneapolis from 1980-1987. He then became director of family ministries at Emmaus Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minn. ('89-'97). In 1997, Steve accepted a call to pastor Zion Free Lutheran Church in Wadena, Minn., which then became a two-point parish with Bethany Free Lutheran Church in 2001 ('97-'08). He accepted a call as an associate pastor at Fox River Luther Church of Sheridan, Ill. ('08-'15). Finally, in 2016, Steve accepted his final call as pastor of West Prairie Free Lutheran Church, Leonard, N.D., before retiring December 2017 because of health concerns.

Surviving are his wife; four sons, David (Serena) Papillon, Daniel Papillon, Timothy (Lydia) Papillon, and Christopher Papillon, four daughters, Nicole (Christian) Talley, Naomi (Paul) Hensrud, Rachel Papillon, and Bethany (Luke) Temte. He also is survived by 14 grandchildren. He was preceded in death by one son, Drew (Amy) Papillon.

A worship service celebrating his life was held April 20 at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School, Plymouth, Minn., with Pastor Christian Andrews officiating. Burial was in Borgund Cemetery, Madison, Minn.

Memorials may be designated to "The Steve Papillon Memorial Fund" established for the AFLC Schools Scholarships. Make checks payable to AFLC Schools, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.

**AFLC BENEVOLENCES April 1-30, 2018**

FUND	REC'D IN APRIL	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$32,885	\$163,848	\$160,434
Evangelism	7,411	36,625	38,645
Youth Ministries	8,727	44,491	29,556
Parish Education	9,114	59,788	59,042
Seminary	19,840	102,806	86,440
Bible School	53,858	196,846	192,396
Home Missions	34,905	156,888	165,340
World Missions	31,482	153,021	142,771
Personal Support	66,169	261,025	206,275
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$264,390</b>	<b>\$1,175,239</b>	<b>\$1,080,898</b>

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



# GERMANY, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

**W**hat a privilege for your editor to visit Reformation lands last summer during the 500th anniversary year, and then to return in April with the Bible school concert choir and a companion tour! This issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* provides our readers with a sampling of photos, impressions, and insights from those who were there, with the goal of allowing you to share in our grand adventure.

The land of Luther honors the past.



Pastor Robert Lee

Older buildings, especially those with historic significance, are often restored instead of demolished, and the work is done so carefully that at times it's difficult to know whether a particular structure is the original or not. History almost

seems to come alive as one walks on the narrow cobblestone streets between houses and churches ... yes, especially the churches ... memorializing the life and ministry of the reformer and which are often older than our country.

It was memorable to worship at Herrnhut, where Count Zinzendorf inaugurated a prayer meeting that endured for more than 100 years and the great Moravian world missionary movement was born. The old Wartburg castle, where Luther translated the New Testament into German, still towers over the city of Eisenach, where he lived as a young student and where Johann Sebastian Bach was born. The choir sang for a prayer service in the chapel of the former Augustinian monastery in Erfurt, and after the service congregation and choir spontaneously sang the *Hallelujah Chorus* accompanied by Rachel Papillon on the massive pipe organ. Both Eiseleben, where Luther was born and where he died, and Wittenberg, the city most closely associated with the career of the reformer, have officially added "Lutherstadt" (Luther city) to their names.

Past and present Bible school students even sang our traditional Reformation song ("Papal bulls, indulgences, and transubstantiation") before the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. And there was gelato almost everywhere.

Members of the companion tour also traveled to Mansfeld, home to the Luther family, and learned how archeology has uncovered interesting insights into their prosperous upper middle-class lifestyle. A brief bus ride took our group to Halle, where Luther's death mask was displayed, and an opportunity was also provided for a visit to the Francke Institute, central to the history of Lutheran pietism.

What about Germany today? Our Bible school choir sang in historic churches and chapels to 21st century people of all ages, to crowds large and small. "Other choirs have sung to us," a pastor said, "but this choir has proclaimed the gospel to us." And the gospel is still God's power for salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16) as it was 500 years ago.

The call to remember is a frequent one in Holy Scripture, and one of our guides noted that the country is starting to remember her history. Believers might prayerfully hope that the recollection of past seasons of refreshing would spark new life in the old churches. But C.S. Lewis once wrote that "manna kept is worms," reminding us that reformation and revival usually last for only a generation or so if they are not renewed. New days bring new challenges, and the immigrant population of Germany is rapidly growing. So it was a great encouragement to learn after a choir concert in an old church building in Leipzig that the congregation has a significant outreach to the Muslim community. The pastor told us that today half of his congregation is Iranian!

Old and new came together in the city of Berlin. A memorial has been dedicated near the Reichstag (Parliament) building in honor of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The famous Kaiser Wilhelm



Church was seriously damaged by British bombing during World War II, and its gaping, ruined tower was left standing for future generations as a witness to the horrors of war. A modern new chapel with thousands of small stained glass windows was constructed alongside of the old wreckage in 1961, as testimony to the truth that the church still lives in spite of crumbling spires and falling steeples.

The history of our church fellowship is quite new compared to what was seen in Germany, and our church buildings are not nearly as old. But the lessons which we might learn from believers there facing the opportunities and challenges of the present certainly apply to us, as well. God still calls us to remember with gratitude the blessings of the past and to pass on to new generations the good news that has been entrusted to us, looking to the present fields that are now white for harvest.



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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR  
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

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Periodicals

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*something to share*

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# TRUST THE CAPTAIN, JESUS

BY AILA FOLTZ

**F**rom the early days of Christianity, the Church has been pictured as a ship that carries believers in Christ through the often treacherous oceans of this world to the safe harbor, heaven. Here we have fellowship with our fellow travelers, other believers in Christ. Here we have an abundant table offering spiritual nourishment through the reading and preaching of the Word of God.

Sailing on luxurious cruise ships has become a popular mode of vacation travel. Years ago, I had the opportunity of visiting the Queen Mary docked in Long Beach, Calif., where this former Queen of the Seas had been turned into a hotel and tourist attraction. When I sailed on her in 1939, she was the largest and fastest passenger ship on the seven seas. The wealthy and famous booked first-class accommodations on the Queen Mary. They dined sumptuously in the elegant first-class dining room and shopped in the exclusive shopping arcade. A few of the more notable were accorded

the privilege of sitting with the captain at dinner. Even those of us who traveled third class enjoyed four-course dinners every day. There were foods that were never served in the small-town parsonage in Finland where I spent my earliest years—things like eel, tongue, artichokes, Baked Alaska, and all manner of fruits and vegetables.

The story is told of a Welshman who had an overwhelming desire to sail to America on the Queen Mary. He took his life's savings and bought passage in the most expensive first-class suite on the ship. The captain of the ship, curious to meet the lone occupant of the ship's finest suite, decided to invite him to sit at his table. The Welshman looked at the engraved invitation reading "The Captain of the Queen Mary requests the honour of your presence at his table today." He angrily tore up the invitation declaring, "I did not spend my life's savings to eat my meals with the crew!"

On this voyage of life, Jesus is our Captain. It is He who is in charge of the ship. We need only trust Him to guide us

over the oceans of life through calm and storm. He is the supreme navigator who knows where we are and where we are going. Our present and future are in His hands. He will pilot us to the safe harbor, our heavenly home. Our ticket has been purchased by the Captain Himself through His atoning sacrifice on the cross. He invites us to sit at His table to enjoy His company and nourish ourselves with the special dishes offered there. Do we, like the Welshman, disdain this offer, or do we accept with joy? Do we trust Him to be our Captain and Pilot, giving our lives into His keeping?

When at last I near the shore,  
And the fearful breakers roar  
'Twixt me and the peaceful rest,  
Then, while leaning on Thy breast,  
May I hear Thee say to me,  
"Fear not, I will pilot thee."

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