

THE LUTHERAN 

MAY 2012

AMBASSADOR

vision

*As the AFLC celebrates
50 years, we look forward
to what God will do in
the next half century.*



Vision &

BY CHRISTINA OSTHUS

Reflection and vision really are two sides to the same coin—that of knowing oneself. But it is a coin that many people either do not possess or never handle. In every single role I play—teacher, daughter, friend, and servant of God—I need to not only have this coin in my pocket, but also to take it out often and make good use of it. If I never once question my motives or approach in a situation, I may never allow the Holy Spirit to take control and mend my flaws. If I never think ahead to what God may want to accomplish through me, my church, and my family, I may miss a beautiful opportunity for ministry.

Although *It's a Wonderful Life* is not a Christian movie, it prompts me to examine my life to see if I am living for God. In this film, Jimmy Stewart's character wishes that he had never been born. By getting a glimpse of the world without him, he begins to comprehend the extraordinary purpose of his life.

If I were not a member of my family, my school district, my community, or my church, how might these places be different? If I can think of no difference, why am I here? I know God did not place me here so that I could simply live an unexceptional life and then be peacefully ushered into glory. What has He called me to do right here, right now?

There are some Christians who really stand out to us as being inspirational and strong in the faith. Why might this be? Do they pray more? Do they spend more time in His Word? Do they share the gospel more? Or were they simply born with an extra measure of grace? If we let ourselves get hung up on these questions, we will always look with envy upon some Christians, with contempt upon others, and with confusion upon ourselves. When we are



reflection

“doing well,” we will struggle to give all the glory to God. And when we fail, all the work God has given us to do could be lost in personal defeat.

These thoughts lead me to the Apostle Paul, whose sharp criticism regarding spiritual life both annoys and refreshes me. When he is forced to defend himself on charges of duplicity or laziness, such as in II Corinthians 11 and 12, he strongly vouches for his own conduct and position in Christ's service, which seems uncom-

fortable, but is apparently necessary. However, at other moments he calls himself the worst of sinners and speaks vulnerably of his frustrations along the road to sanctification, such as in Romans 7:15, 24: “For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do ... Who will rescue me from this body of death?”

I can rejoice with Paul that I know my Savior and Redeemer, and I can also take Paul's advice when he tells us in Romans 12:3 to “think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.” This reminds me that sensible reflection walks the middle line between pride and self-deprecation, and opens the door for godly vision into the future.

Is it true that “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18)? While we might not physically die from a want of reflection on the past and a vision for God's future plans, we will certainly experience a kind of soul death. If our faith does not influence the way we meditate on both the past and the future, what kind of impact will our lives make on the world around us? And for what can God use us?

Osthus is from Eagle Butte, S.D., and serves on the 2013 Free Lutheran Youth Committee.

May 2012 >>

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR vol. 50, no. 5

Editor Pastor Robert L. Lee
rlee@aflc.org

Managing Editor Ruth Gunderson
ruthg@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.

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

Subscription rates:
\$19 a year, Group Rate, 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.

Give us clear vision that we may know where to stand and what to stand for—because unless we stand for something we shall fall for anything.

—Peter Marshall

Vision is not enough. It must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps, we must step up the stairs.

—Vaclav Havel

[It is very dangerous to go into eternity with possibilities which one has oneself prevented from becoming realities. A possibility is a hint from God. One must follow it.]

—Søren Kierkegaard

Look behind you: What have you learned?
Look around you: What is happening to others?
Look above you: What does God expect of you?
Look besides you: What resources are available to you?

—John C. Maxwell

But I look up—into the face of Jesus, for there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled; and there is joy, and love, and light for darkness, and perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled.

—Author unknown



vision



Fifty years & counting

By Pastor Michael Brandt

The countdown celebrating the AFLC's 50th anniversary is exciting. And when we think about the possibility of the next 50 years, it is inspiring.

The love of Christ for His Church, which 50 years ago compelled a small group of individuals and congregations to hold true to God's Word as they pressed on in faith, is the very resolve the AFLC needs today. Comparatively speaking, we are still a rather small church body. The culture we live in is even more saturated with a post-Christian view. Yet the same Almighty God is on the throne and calls us to a Luther-like, visionary stand and march—the Word alone, Christ alone, faith alone!

As followers of Christ, none of us know what tomorrow will bring. However, we do know Who holds our tomorrow. And the God of all our tomorrows has given us an advantage in having vision. He has given us His prophetic Word of insight and promise. Under His guidance, our AFLC forefathers had vision for churches, schools, and missions. And now we are privileged to do the same.

While holding to our *Fundamental Principles*, the Spirit of God enlightens us to press on. In an increasingly dysfunctional society, the Church of Christ must envision new ways to proclaim the saving gospel of Christ. Instead of isolating itself, the Church will need to creatively step outside its walls to engage people and society at large with God's inerrant truth.

The Old Testament heroes Daniel and Joseph serve as our visionary models. As captives in very hostile environments, they remained faithful. Two boys became men of faith. God not only protected them, He allowed them to have great influence. Two seemingly hopeless situations became seedbeds of opportunity. This vision clearly reveals that making a difference is not dependent upon size, but being available to God. Pastors and lay leaders should diligently prepare their people with the same thought. The prophecies and promises of Scripture tell us so.

Remaining on the cutting edge of technology is a vision the church must seize. Prayerfully using every resource available is and will be essential. As social media continues to surge, personal evangelism and discipleship efforts will need to keep pace. The apostle Paul's I Corinthians 9:22b testimony, "I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some," is relevant to these endeavors. The spiritual impact of our Bible school, seminary, missions, publications, and youth work, as well as our local congregations, must envision every avenue possible in using these technological gateways to proclaim the gospel and nurture souls.

Fifty years and counting ... counting on our same Almighty God to do marvelous things in our eyes for His glory.

Brandt, vice president of the AFLC, lives in Rapid City, S.D. He is the founder of Shepherding the Shepherds.

Teaching the next generation

By Pastor Seth Forness

I remember as a boy attending Sunday school and Luther League at Bethany Free Lutheran near my hometown of Abercrombie, N.D. As a child I soaked up the knowledge shared by men like Ron Strand, Charles Strand, and Brent Peterson. I never thought to question that what they taught me might be false. But for many of our youths, this is a very real question in their minds.

From the time I started elementary school in 1985 until I graduated from high school in 1998, I only had to deal with questions like: Should I drink? Should I sleep around? Should I cheat on my homework? These issues were answered for me in the Bible. However, the youth of today are being brainwashed—from the first day they set foot in school until they graduate from college—to believe that the Bible is outdated and unreliable. Without foundational beliefs they are then asked to deal with questions like: Should I accept homosexual marriage as normal? Should I accept the free condoms they give out at school without my parents knowing? Should I accept evolution as fact even though it is called a theory?

When I began serving as the youth and young adult pastor at Maranatha Free Lutheran in Glyndon, Minn., nearly three years ago, I assumed that the church youths shared my unques-

tioning belief that the Bible is completely accurate and infallible. However, I soon found out that while many of the youths came from families who believed the Bible to be true, others came from homes that were either hostile or apathetic to the Bible's accuracy. Also, some of the young adults had begun to listen to questionable Christian speakers and writers who challenged certain portions of the Bible, saying Scripture is only culturally relevant to the time of the writing and not to our modern era.

I soon realized that I needed to change the way that I taught. Rather than simply tell them the Bible is reliable, I found I needed to show them. I began using apologetics materials like those provided by Faith Search and Focus on the Family's Truth Project and True-U to help youths and young adults see that more evidence exists to establish the Bible's reliability than to count it as myth and legend. I found that once they started to accept the Bible as accurate and infallible, they began to find it easier to answer the hard questions they face every day at school and work.

As one who is passionate about my generation of young adults and the emerging generation of youth, I believe that we need to take a look at how we teach. God has given us many excellent apologetics tools. We



would be foolish if we didn't use them in our congregations, Bible school, and seminary to prepare our current and next generation of church leaders to answer the questions that the world throws at them every day.

I am not saying that we should pull our kids out of the public education system, that every teacher is out to brainwash your children, or that we lack good teaching in our congregations, Bible school, and seminary. I am saying that Satan is working very hard to get this generation to doubt the Bible through teachers and professors who sound intelligent and informed. This generation needs more concrete answers than, "It says so." They need evidence.

We can look around us and see other church bodies that have succumbed to those who teach the Bible as fallible. Fifty years ago, who would have thought that we would see things we see today? Fifty years from now, I hope that the AFLC is not only still around, but leading the charge in teaching God's Word as inerrant and infallible. If we are willing to tackle questions from our youth and young adults today, we can help establish them in the faith so they can be the leaders we will need in the AFLC tomorrow.

Forness, a 2009 graduate of AFLTS, is the youth and young adult pastor at Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon, Minn.

WELL DONE OR SO WHAT

By Cheri Russum

“We need to quit living as though the purpose in life is to arrive safely in death.”

Wild Goose Chase
By Mark Batterson

Reading this quote on my daughter’s Facebook page shook me to my core. Am I living too safely? Have I become complacent? Are the angels yawning as I live out my days? How about you?

The truth is we’re in a battle—now more than ever. If

the AFLC is to survive until 2062, each of us needs to wake up and see the forces of darkness battling for our families, our churches, our communities, and our nation. Speaking to women, we can’t just leave the battle to the men and hide demurely under the banner of submissiveness. Ephesians 6:11 calls us to put on the full armor of God so that we can take our stand against the devil’s schemes. This verse calls all believers to become warriors, and it’s not gender specific. Like Deborah in Judges and Queen Esther, we need to seek the courage to use the Sword of the Spirit and the breastplate of righteousness to face the enemy.

Women, we need to worry less about our dress size and more about our eternal destiny. We

need to focus less on our children’s athletic acumen or grade-point averages and focus more on helping them fulfill their life’s calling. We need to care less about decorating our homes and care more about ministering to the homeless. We need to challenge the world’s view with God’s view by studying His Word. We need to worry less about saving for retirement and care more about the Holy Spirit saving souls. We need to pray more, and more, and more because the battle is raging all around us.

Jesus told the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. To those servants who multiplied their talents, the master said, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord.” To

the servant who was afraid and hid the talent, the master called him wicked and lazy. Are you multiplying the talents God has given you? Are you using them to serve others and lead them to Jesus? What will our Master, Jesus, say to you when you meet Him in eternity and give account of your life? “Well done!” or, “So what?” Because what’s done for Christ is all that really matters.

Are you in the battle, preserving the faith? In 2062 will the generations to come say, “Well done!” about us when the AFLC turns 100?

Russum is a member of Elim Free Lutheran, Lake Stevens, Wash.

VISION

Toward simple discipleship

By Hans Tanner

Addition or multiplication. Which is better? You would likely say that depends on what we're adding to or multiplying. I'm sure you wouldn't want problems to multiply in your life. But what if we were talking about the kingdom of God? Or the people who make up Christ's Church? Addition is good. But wouldn't we all agree that multiplication is better? Are not we who are a part of God's church interested in seeing it grow in the fastest way possible?

In its first 50 years of existence, the AFLC has grown to include about 275 local congregations dispersed across the breadth of the United States (with an estimated membership around 40-50,000). Let's say the AFLC had an incredible year of growth in 2012 and that each congregation added 50 new members by year's end, and five new congregations

were started. That kind of amazing growth would result in about 14,000 new members being added to the AFLC in one year. I'm sure that kind of growth would be readily accepted by just about everyone in the AFLC. Undeniably, this kind of growth would be good. But would it be best?

My hope—my radical hope—is that the people of the AFLC would wholeheartedly pursue discipleship that multiplies and simple church in the next 50 years and beyond.

Discipleship at its core and in its simplest meaning is “to follow.” Discipleship in relation to the kingdom of God is one person intentionally following another as they both follow Christ. It is modeling a God-honoring life. It is pouring one's life into another Christ-follower (not meeting for coffee for an hour once a week).

Church at its core and in

its simplest form is a gathering or group of believers. It doesn't require a salary-paid pastor, a worship team, or a decked-out youth group room.

If the AFLC maintained the same incredible rate of growth I mentioned earlier, it would grow by about 70,000 members in five years. But if just one man reproduced himself (discipleship) in the lives of five other men—with each new disciple also reproducing himself by a factor of five in a span of six months (this must be stressed)—the church would grow by almost 10 million disciples in just five years. No denomination in the world is set up for this kind of movement. Church buildings cannot and should not be built to try and keep up with the growth. This kind of mighty movement of

God requires a return to the model we see in the Book of Acts. People would need to meet in homes. When the group gets too big to fit in the home, someone would

It is pouring one's life into another Christ-follower.

volunteer to start another church in his or her own home.

Simple church and discipleship. In the next 50 years, will we keep doing what is good? Or will we radically pursue what is best?

Tanner, a 2011 graduate of AFLBS from Sioux Falls, S.D., has spent the last year serving with AFLC missionary Pastor Nate Jore in Uganda.

Holding unswervingly to God's Word

By Paula Nyman

My husband and I have only been part of the AFLC for a mere eight years, so I do not have all 50 of the past years of the AFLC's history to draw from. However, what drew us to the AFLC was its strong stand on God's Word—the true, inerrant Word of God. In the quickly changing world that we live in today, there has to be one constant that we as children of God can cling to, devote our lives to, and proclaim with all of our heart. That is the Word of God. And if the AFLC is to continue strongly into the next 50 years, we must continue to hold unswervingly to that Word. Remember

how Paul exhorted the Ephesians to be careful to not be “tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming...” (Ephesians 3:14).

Perhaps we need to read again and heed Paul's warning to his son in the faith, Timothy:

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great

patience and instruction. 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. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry (II Timothy 4: 1-5).

So how can we heed these words? I think we have to continue to have a strong Bible school and seminary in our AFLC that

will produce disciples, teachers, and preachers who will not stand for tickling people's ears. In our congregations, we will need to make sure our children know of the heritage of the AFLC from the past 50 years so that we can continue to stand strongly on God's Word in the next 50 years. All of this needs to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. May we be bathed in persevering, faithful prayer.

Nyman, Beulah, N.D., is the wife of Pastor Kris Nyman, who serves Prince of Peace Lutheran, Beulah.

God will do the unexpected

By Pastor Oliver Olson

My orientation into Lutheran evangelism was not in the AFLC, but in the early days of Augustana Lutheran. Many godly men were involved in groups like the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement and other ministries like the Lutheran Bible Institute. There were some outstanding Swedish Lutheran men of God in those days who influenced all of Lutheranism, men such as Samuel Miller, Maynard Force, Evald Conrad, and Oscar Hanson.

It is sad to note that in the passing of these men, they were

not replaced by others of like passion and dedication to the Lord. It was the AFLC, in its early beginnings in the 1960s, that purposed to not compromise on biblical truth, becoming the foundation for others who were like-minded.

So now, reflecting on the 50th anniversary of the AFLC, a question is legitimately posed: What next?

If we look carefully at the movements of history, we will find that God often did the unexpected. If you check a concordance and research the word “suddenly” as it applies to God, it is amazing

how often it is used. When God acts, He often does so suddenly, in an unexpected way, sometimes with a new thing, and with no earlier precedent, as at Pentecost when the Church was born.

So in 2012, what the future holds is uncertain. What next, that is, in the program of God? We don’t know—sometimes we don’t even have a clue—but we do know this: He is still King of kings and Lord of lords. And our accountability before God is to continue to do those things that honor the Father. As Jesus said in Luke 12:37, “Blessed are those servants whom

the Master finds awake when He comes.” That is our greatest opportunity as we face the future—keep on keeping on. When this is so, the promise of the Father will be consistently ours. As noted in Luke 12:32, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Olson, a retired pastor and former Bible school instructor, is a member of Reformation Lutheran, El Cajon, Calif., is from Spring Valley, Calif.

Restore, redeem & make new

By Elizabeth Johnson

I’m 23 years old—not even half as old as the AFLC. I’m young, but I’ve genuinely experienced God restoring, redeeming and making all things new. Even in the past five years, God has completely transformed, renewed and re-created my life, my attitude and my goals. This is His nature; it’s who He is. If He stays the same—and He promises that He will (Hebrews 13:8)—just imagine how He plans to transform our church family in the next 50 years!

God will prove faithful to pour out His Spirit on the AFLC in new and surprising ways in these next decades. I pray that He takes what and who we are now and shapes us into a body of believers who experience the love of Christ and spread His fame in ways that stretch beyond the limits of our imagination.

As we grow and mature, we will see and experience transformation. As followers of Christ, we should beg for this change, for this growth. Growing and thriving ministry proclaims Christ and resonates His love within each community and beyond national borders. I pray that as we grow, God would cause our churches to mirror the demographics of the communities surrounding them, becoming multicultural, multilingual and multigen-

“... He will restore and strengthen us to reach out to the needy, hopeless and broken beyond our sanctuaries.”

(Isaiah 58:6-12)

erational—always seeking out the lost and welcoming in the weak. I pray that our Sunday morning service would become an oasis each week, a place where our family of believers can be refreshed in worship, bathed in prayer, and renewed through the Word.

God will re-create us, He will refresh us. As we follow His call to action, He will restore and strengthen us to reach out to the needy, hopeless and broken beyond our sanctuar-

ies (Isaiah 58:6-12). May we build on the rich heritage we hold now, but refuse to cling to it, instead allowing the Holy Spirit to drive us into becoming more active, mission-minded, and Christ-centered than our church bodies have ever been in the past.

When I’m 73 and mention the AFLC, I pray that instead of ever carrying connotations of closed-off congregations, the people of the AFLC would be instantly associated with the living, moving, exciting love of Christ. In transforming us and our family of believers, God equips us to embrace His Spirit in radical ways—proclaiming His glory through art and music, through academics and athletics, through business, through cross-cultural missions, and through every gift, passion and dream that the Holy Spirit has instilled in our hearts and minds. Join me in asking God to drive out any fears of Him shaping, changing, and renewing us. Above all, pray for His continued presence and life in our midst—today, tomorrow and for the next 50 years.

Johnson is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif. She is finishing up an education degree at Northwestern College, St. Paul, Minn. She is a 2009 graduate of AFLBS.



Expecting great things

By Pastor Tonnes Pollestad

Let's look to the future and dream big with Him

For the past 50 years we in the AFLC have proceeded by faith, looking at where we have come from or out of, praying that we would not fall into the same deception as some other church bodies.

Have we spent too much time looking at the past that we have not spent time looking at where God may be leading us? Do not misunderstand me, the past is very important and critical for us to consider and learn from as we move forward. However,

in order to be aware of new and exciting opportunities the Lord may have for the AFLC, we need to be watching and planning now. We need to be looking at what God may want the AFLC to be doing to expand His kingdom over the next 50, 75, 100 or even 300 years from now. We need to allow God to chart our future days with His guidance as He uses us as His hands, feet, eyes, and mouth, always remembering that all our plans are dependent upon Him alone to carry them out.

Sometimes we forget what our God can do! We are the Body of Christ, His body, so why do we think so small? Why do we lack faith in asking God to do big things through us? Why do we fail to dream impossible dreams in order to see God do what only God can do? I wonder if it is because we think that we are too small. Do we believe that God can work through such a small church body as ours, or do we think that big work is just for "those big churches"?

We are here for just this time in church history to make a difference and to impact our world. Our world needs a church body like ours to stand up for God and not be afraid to expect and to try great things. What we accomplish

will depend upon Him. It is not we who do the work, but God working through us, if we are willing to be used.

Let us chart a course for our AFLC over the next 50 years filled with great events, endeavors, dreams, and plans for the expansion of God's kingdom like never before, basing it all upon the foundation that has been already laid for us through the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God. Let's not look back but look forward to where He is leading our AFLC.

Pollestad, Andover, Minn., is the director of development for the AFLC.

The privileges of chaplaincy

BY PASTOR DON VOORHEES

When people hear that I work as a hospital chaplain they often reply, “That must be very hard.” Of course it sometimes is, but most of the time it is a great and rewarding privilege. In fact there are a number of wonderful privileges that come with the job.

The first and greatest privilege is that I get to represent God to those suffering. People come to the hospital in physical weakness and pain. Often they and their loved ones are experiencing emotional and spiritual turmoil. At such times the chaplain brings God into the situation. People look to the chaplain for strength, guidance, peace and hope. Often I don’t do much. It is just my presence or a touch or a simple prayer which tells a person that they are not alone—God is with them. This is very humbling because I certainly do not deserve to represent God. It is an honor, which when done in a spirit of humility and awe brings me also into the presence of the Holy One.

Another wonderful yet humbling privilege is that of receiving people’s almost immediate trust. People are not only very vulnerable when in the hospital but often they are very open. They don’t pretend that everything is okay, because obviously it isn’t. Often, as soon as they meet me, they begin to tell me their deepest concerns and needs. Within 15 minutes I can reach a level of sacred trust that it can take the parish pastor years to reach.

I also count it a privilege to be with people in their “sacred moments.” These are the times when God meets man’s need. It may be in the situations I have already described. Other times it is when most people would not expect, such as when a family decides to let their loved one go, or when a person comes to accept their prognosis. These are sacred moments because God is present to guide and to comfort. The most sacred moment is at a death. While not all deaths are peaceful, all are holy because every life is from God and is therefore sacred. It is a privilege to be allowed to be with someone at this sacred moment.

Not everyone is happy to see the chaplain. Some people have experienced painful events in their lives and for whatever reason have turned away from God rather than to Him. They are often angry at God or at the Church. In their mind the chaplain represents both. Yet I still consider it a privilege to represent God to them. By treating them graciously and respectfully, I

may gain an opening and be allowed to listen to the cause of their anger. And, just perhaps, I may have the privilege of being used by God to bring them some measure of healing and reconciliation.

Voorhees, a member of AFLC Institutional Chaplaincy, is a chaplain at Saint Francis Medical Center, Grand Island, Neb.



2012 annual conference WELCOME

June 12-15, Lincoln High School, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Jubilee!

*“This is the Lord’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice
and be glad in it.”*

(Psalm 118:23-24)

Welcome to the upcoming 50th annual conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Fifty years ago, 278 people from seven states and two Canadian provinces gathered in Thief River Falls, Minn., on October 25-28 for the organizational conference of the AFLC. There were a lot of unknowns and uncertainties, and I am certain that all of those present were wondering who would be in attendance and what would be discussed and decided. Many of those first attendees had been through difficult days of seeing their Lutheran Free Church congregation becoming a part of the newly organizing American Lutheran Church. Skeptics made remarks such as, “We will give them no more than six months.” But a burning desire to be true to their Lutheran heritage and to stand firm on the Word of God encouraged and motivated them to pack their bags and head to Thief River Falls.



Pastor Elden Nelson

Now, 50 years later, the AFLC is alive and well and we are preparing to return for a fourth time to Thief River Falls for an annual conference. We will celebrate our 50th year under the theme of “Jubilee,” from Psalm 118:23-24. It will be a great time to review our past, give thanks to God for His faithfulness, and look forward to new days of opportunities and possibilities of growing in number and spirit.

Our privilege will be as it has been for the past 50 years. There will be reports and discussions on all aspects of the work, and resolutions written and passed. There will also be the delight of meeting again those with whom we have fellowshiped in years gone by, as well as getting acquainted and fellowshiping with folks who are new to our AFLC. Times of prayer and gatherings of worship will bring refreshment and renewal.

Ask anyone who has attended an annual conference in the past and you will likely hear how much they have enjoyed their time spent with AFLC brothers and sisters in Christ. I encourage you to be a part of this conference, not just because of its historical significance, but because it is an opportunity to celebrate the faithfulness and goodness of a Holy God who has blessed us in so many powerful ways, has promised us His continued love, and has commissioned us to carry on the work to which He has called us.

I look forward to seeing you in Thief River Falls and welcome you to participate with many others in worship and praise of Him who has given His best for us.

Nelson is the president of the Association Free Lutheran Congregations.

2012 annual conference AGENDA

“This is the Lord’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:23-24).

DATES: June 12-15

SITE: Lincoln High School,
101 Knight Ave. S., Thief River Falls, Minn.

HOSTS: Our Saviour’s Lutheran

TUESDAY, JUNE 12

9 a.m.

The conference committees meet for devotions, instructions and room assignments.

7:30 p.m.

The opening service of the conference with Communion.

Leader: Pastor Greg Schram, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Speaker: Pastor Robert L. Lee, Crystal, Minn.

AFLC President Pastor Elden Nelson will open the conference and appoint necessary committees.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

9 a.m.

Devotions: Barry Nelson, Glyndon, Minn.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Adoption of the Conference Agenda

Approval of 2011 Annual Conference Report

Election of the Nominating Committee for the 2013 Conference

The President’s Report

Report of the Chairman of the Coordinating Committee,

Pastor Timothy Skramstad, Eagan, Minn.

Report of the Director of Development,

Pastor Tonnes Pollestad, Andover, Minn.

Report of the Chairman of the AFLC Foundation,

Kevin O’Neil, Minneapolis, Minn.

Reports of Chaplaincy Ministries

Institutional: Pastor Kerwin Sletto, Grand Forks, N.D.

Military: Pastor Mark Antal, Park River, N.D.

Report of the Director of the ARC,

Pat Flanders, Osceola, Wis.

AFLC Financial Report,

Cory Buck, New Hope, Minn.

Report of the Family Bible Camps

• Lake Bronson: Treasurer, Sonia Balmer, Thief River Falls, Minn.

• Wilderness: Treasurer, Jon Dryburgh, Grafton, N.D.

Report of the Budget Analysis Committee,
Kevin O’Neil, Minneapolis, Minn.

Report of the Nominating Committee, always in order
Selection of nominees for the Missions, Schools and ARC
Corporations

11:30 a.m.

Prayer Hour—Pastor Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, Minn.

Noon

Home Missions Lunch

Chaplains Lunch

1:30 p.m.

Devotions: Adam Osier, Plymouth, Minn.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Election Procedures

Elections: (all terms five years unless noted)

• Vice President—one-year term

• Secretary—one-year term

Selection of nominees to the:

• Home Missions Committee—one layman;

• Bay Broadcasting Committee—one layman (three-year term);

• FLAPS Board of Managers—one pastor, one layman;

• World Missions Committee—one pastor;

• Board of Trustees—one layman;

• ARC Board—one pastor

Report of Committee No. 1 (Administration)

Selection of nominees to the Coordinating Committee—
two laymen

Election of Committee No. 1 for the 2013 Conference

5:30 p.m.

Schools Corporation Annual Meeting

7 p.m.

The Mission Festival Service conducted by the WMF
Speaker: Pastor Nate Jore, AFLC missionary to Uganda

THURSDAY, JUNE 14

7 a.m.

Mission Corporation Annual Meeting

9 a.m.

Devotions: George Lautner, Deshler, Neb.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Report of the Stewardship Board

Report of the Chairman of the Benefits Board,

Jordan Volk, Brandon, S.D.

Report of Committee No. 5 (Stewardship and Pensions)

Election of member to the Stewardship Board—

one layman and one pastor (three-year term);

Election of member to the Benefits Board—one layman;

Election of Committee No. 5 for the 2013 conference

Report of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees,

Pastor Martin Horn, Kenyon, Minn.

Report of the Dean of the Seminary,

Dr. Francis Monseth, Rogers, Minn.

Report of the Dean of the Bible School,

Pastor Joel Rolf, Plymouth, Minn.

Report from Vision

Steve Jankord, Surprise, Ariz.

Report of Committee No. 2 (Schools)

11:30 a.m.

Prayer Hour—Pastor Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, Minn.

Noon

The ARC Corporation Annual Meeting

1:30 p.m.

Devotions: Pastor Scott Stroud, Salinas, Calif.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Continuing discussion on Committee No. 2

Election of Committee No. 2 for the 2013 Conference

Report of the Schools Corporation Annual Meeting

Report of the Chairman and Director of the World Missions

Committee, Pastor Del Palmer, Shakopee, Minn.

Report of Partners in Mission Outreach Board President,

Ken Sletten, Duluth, Minn.

Report of the Chairman of the Home Missions Committee,

Pastor Richard Long, Arlington, Wash.

Report of the Director of Home Missions,

Pastor Paul Nash, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

Report of FLAPS Executive Director,

Lavon Bohling, Inman, Kan.

Report of WMF President,

Lorilee Mundfrom, Beresford, S.D.

Report of the Chairman of the Commission on Evangelism,

Pastor Tim Johnson, Pipestone, Minn.

Report of the Director of Evangelism,

Pastor James Rasmussen, Maple Grove, Minn.

5:30 p.m.

Pastors' Banquet

Speaker: Wayne Floan, Plymouth, Minn.

Laymen's Banquet

8:15 p.m.

Youth Service

Speaker: Nathan Olson, Plymouth, Minn.

FRIDAY, JUNE 15

7 a.m.

FLAPS informational breakfast

9 a.m.

Devotions: Pastor Rob Buechler, Starkweather, N.D.

Report of the Credentials Committee

Report of Committee No. 3 (Missions and Evangelism)

Report of the Missions Corporation Annual Meeting

Selection of nominees to the Commission on Evangelism—

one layman;

Election of Committee No. 3 for the 2013 Conference

Report of the Chairman of the Board of Publications and Parish

Education, Pastor John Mundfrom, Beresford, S.D.

Report of the Director of Parish Education,

Marian Christopherson, McVile, N.D.

11:30 a.m.

Prayer Hour—Pastor Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, Minn.

Noon

AFLC Foundation Lunch

1:30 p.m.

Devotions: Pastor Marlin Harris, Mora, Minn.

Report of Credentials Committee

Report of the Chairman of the Youth Board,

Pastor Mark Johnson, Dalton, Minn.

Report of the President of the Free Lutheran Youth,

Pastor Brett Boe, Dalton, Minn.

Report of Youth Ministries Director,

Pastor Jason Holt, St. Michael, Minn.

Report of Committee No. 4

(Publications, Parish Education and Youth Work)

Selection of nominees to:

Board of Publications and Parish Education—one layman

Youth Board—one pastor

Election of Committee No. 4 for the 2013 Conference

Report of the Chairman of the Colloquy Committee,

Pastor James R. Johnson, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Election of Colloquy Committee for the 2013 Conference

Report of special committees

Election of Budget Analysis Committee:

one layman (three-year term), one layman (two-year term)

Report of Committee No. 1 as the Committee on General

Resolutions

Other Reports

7:30 p.m.

Ordination/Closing Service

Leader: Pastor Wes Langaas, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Speaker: Pastor Elden Nelson

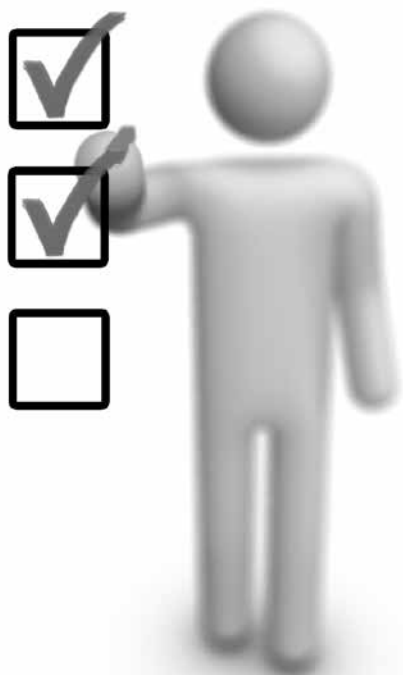
Conference Committee

Pastor Elden Nelson, President

Pastor Brian Davidson, Secretary

50th annual conference

NOMINEES



Coordinating Committee

(One layman, five-year term)

*Vint Bruflat, Mesa, Ariz.

X

(One layman, five-year term)

X

X

Schools Board of Trustees

Voted on by corporation members

(One layman, five-year term)

Joel Erickson, Oslo, Minn.

Ken Loken, Fargo, N.D.

World Missions Committee

Voted on by corporation members

(One pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Ray Ballmann, Glen Rose, Texas

Pastor David Nelson, Ontonagon, Mich.

Home Missions Committee

Voted on by corporation members

(One layman, five-year term)

Robert Christian, Newark, Ill.

Ron Jorgenson, Beulah, N.D.

Bay Broadcasting

Voted on by corporation members

(One layman, three-year term)

Tim Erhardt, Lake Stevens, Wash.

X

ARC Board

Voted on by corporation members

(One pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Karl Anderson, Bagley, Minn.

*Pastor Eric Westlake, Zumbrota, Minn.

FLAPS Board of Managers

Voted on by corporation members

(One layman, five-year term)

David Mattson, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Dan Rugroden, Hickson, N.D.

(One pastor, five-year term)

Pastor Mark Antal, Park River, N.D.

Pastor Allen Monson, Mesa, Ariz.

Stewardship Board

(One layman, five-year term)

*Ruth Antal, Park River, N.D.

Gary Buentemeier, Albertville, Minn.

(One pastor, three-year term)

X

X

Board of Publications & Parish Education

(One layman, five-year term)

Scott Ducote, Mead, Okla.

*Candice Johnson, Stanley, N.D.

Youth Board

(One pastor, five-year term)

Pastor David Franz, Radcliffe, Iowa

*Pastor Mark Johnson, Dalton, Minn.

Benefits Board

(One layman, five-year term)

X

X

Commission on Evangelism

(One layman, five-year term)

*Eldon Hesterberg, Gifford, Ill.

X

* Incumbents

** Must be re-elected to corporation to remain on committee or board

X Nominations not named by press deadline

ARC Corporation

(10 terms of five years each)

Shawn Adrian, Binford, N.D.
 Scott Bellefy, Wallace, S.D.
 Andy Benson, Upsala, Minn.
 Harold Erickson, Wadena, Minn.
 Marcus Erickson, Maple Grove, Minn.
 Ernie Hilbert, Wheatland, Iowa
 Kevin Hooper, Ishpeming, Mich.
 Pastor David Keippela, Wyoming, Minn.
 *Jared Langness, Camarillo, Calif.
 Ken Lehmann, Onarga, Ill.
 **Steve Lehmann, Milford, Ill.
 *Sam Nash, Maple Grove, Minn.
 *Kevin O'Neil, Minneapolis, Minn.
 Chad Rieschl, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
 *Pastor Cal Willard, Everett, Wash.

X
X
X
X
X

Schools Corporation

(10 terms of five years each)

*David Borg, Maple Grove, Minn.
 Corbin Corson, Starbuck, Minn.
 **Pastor Dana Coyle, Sheridan, Ill.
 Mark Fagerstrom, DeKalb, Ill.
 **Pastor Martin Horn, Kenyon, Minn.
 *Wanda Jacobson, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
 Philip Johnson, Esko, Minn.
 Paul Kylo, Byron, Minn.
 *Erling Langness, Ishpeming, Mich.
 *Dr. Daniel Mundfrom, Richmond, Ken.
 Brenda Nelson, Saint Francis, Kan.
 *Pastor Mark Olson, Farmington, Minn.
 *John Presteng, Grafton, N.D.
 *Pastor Eric Rasmussen, Fergus Falls, Minn.
 *James Rolf, Brandon, Minn.
 Mark Sivertson, Sioux Falls, S.D.
 Bill Sonmor, Dalton, Minn.
 Pastor Kent Sperry, Northwood, N.D.
 Gary Stegman, Crookston, Minn.

X

Missions Corporation

(20 terms of five years each)

*Pastor Steve Carlson, Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Pastor Terry Culler, Hagerstown, Md.
 Jane Emerson, Canal Winchester, Ohio
 Bill Fish, Everett, Wash.
 Pastor Michael Flechsig, Pleasanton, Texas
 **Joel Forness, Wahpeton, N.D.
 **Kenneth Graham, Camarillo, Calif.
 *Pastor Richard Gunderson, Cambridge, Minn.
 *Barbara Gustafson, Apache Junction, Ariz.
 *David Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa
 Brian Henderson, Ellsworth, Iowa
 Pastor Tim Hinrichs, Mankato, Minn.
 **Kevin Hoops, Byron, Neb.
 *Steve Jameson, Earlville, Ill.
 Jan Johnson, Durant, Okla.
 *Pastor Tim Johnson, Pipestone, Minn.
 Chris Kiefer, Ontonagon, Mich.
 Rod Kjersten, Roseau, Minn.
 *Dr. Robert Kohl, Brookings, S.D.
 *Pastor Richard Larson, Ortonville, Minn.
 Lois Losse, Roseau, Minn.
 **David Mattson, Sioux Falls, S.D.
 *Pastor Jerry Moan, Corcoran, Minn.
 **Pastor Henry Mohagen, Reva, S.D.
 Guy Murray, Champion, Mich.
 *Marlow Nash, Colfax, N.D.
 Lou Niedens, Durant, Okla.
 Terry Park, Kirkland, Wash.
 Pastor LeRoy Petersen, Greenbush, Minn.
 *Tim Rolf, McIntosh, Minn.
 **Vernon Russum, Grafton, N.D.
 Pastor Craig Scavo, Durant, Okla.
 Dean Skoglund, Bruce, S.D.
 Nancy Staudinger, Mass City, Mich.
 Ron Staudinger, Mass City, Mich.
 *Pastor Tony Stockman, Madison, S.D.
 Elsie Whitestar, Bethany, Okla.

X
X
X

Nominees to serve at the 2013 conference

Committee No. 1

(Administration)

Pastor Todd Erickson, Maple Grove, Minn.
 Pastor John Brennan, Melvin, Ill.
 Joel Erickson, Oslo, Minn.
 Scott Ducote, Mead, Okla.
 X

Committee No. 2

(Schools)

Pastor Jason Gudim, Crystal, Minn.
 Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.
 David Haugen, Pelican Rapids, Minn.
 Brian Henderson, Ellsworth, Iowa
 Joel Nash, Waconia, Minn.

Committee No. 3

(Missions and Evangelism)

Ed Cafoncelli, Reading, Pa.
 Mark Keller, Saint Francis, Kan.
 Glen Larson, Fosston, Minn.
 Pastor John Amundson, New Leipzig, N.D.
 Pastor Joe Faldet, Saint James, Minn.

Committee No. 4

(Publications and Parish Education)

Matt Olson, Crystal, Minn.
 Pastor Paul Kneeland, Sahuarita, Ariz.
 Erling Langness, Ishpeming, Mich.
 Matt Rieniets, Tioga, N.D.
 X

Committee No. 5

(Stewardship and Pensions)

Pastor Marc Rakow, Laurel, Neb.
 Nathan Dalager, Argyle, Minn.
 Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, Okla.
 X
X

REGISTRATION

June 12-15, 2012, at Lincoln High School, 101 Knight Ave. S., Thief River Falls, Minn.

For a downloadable form, and for more information, visit our [Facebook](#) page or go to www.aflc.org and click on "conferences"

First name: _____ Spouse (if attending): _____

Last name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

AFLC Congregation: _____

Other Congregation: _____

Membership (Check one)

You: _____ Rostered AFLC Pastor or serving AFLC church _____ Visiting Pastor _____ Lay Member _____ Lay Visitor

Spouse: _____ Rostered AFLC Pastor or serving AFLC church _____ Visiting Pastor _____ Lay Member _____ Lay Visitor

Children and youth: VBS for children ages 5-12 and activities for youths ages 13-17 are planned (for a fee) for the week. See the AFLC Web site for information and downloadable registration forms (www.aflc.org). Click on "conferences."

Meals and banquets: A general conference meal is only being offered at noon Wednesday through Friday. All other meals are on your own. Board and committee members must register for applicable meals. **Meal registration must be received by May 31.**

Meal	Cost	#	Total
Tuesday lunch (for those serving on committees)	\$10		\$
Wednesday Conference lunch (children and adults)	\$10		\$
Wednesday Chaplains lunch	\$10		\$
Wednesday Home Missions lunch	\$10		\$
Wednesday Schools Corporation dinner	\$15		\$
Thursday Missions Corporation breakfast	\$8		\$
Thursday Conference lunch (children and adults)	\$10		\$
Thursday ARC Corporation lunch	\$10		\$
Thursday Pastors' banquet	\$20		\$
Thursday Laymen's banquet (adult)	\$10		\$
Thursday Laymen's banquet (child)	\$7		
Friday FLAPS breakfast	\$6.5		\$
Friday Conference lunch (children and adults)	\$10		\$
Friday AFLC Foundation lunch	\$10		\$
Total meals			\$
*Conference registration fee (\$35 single/\$50 couple)			\$
Total registration and meals			\$

*The registration fee is required for all attending the AFLC Conference. **Make checks payable to "AFLC" and mail to: AFLC, c/o Conference Registrations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.** Registrations must be received by May 31.

Thus far has the Lord helped us

Join us as we celebrate 50 years in the AFLC: 1962-2012

BY SARAH NELSON

Women, will you join us at the 50th Annual Conference? I hope so! What a joy it will be to come together with other believers and remember what God has done and look forward to all He will do within our church body. The Women's Missionary Federation day is the perfect time to remember and celebrate our theme for the day, "Thus far has the Lord helped us," from I Samuel 7:12.

We will have several workshops to encourage us in our walk with the Lord. I am blessed to be able to lead one of these sessions. As I share how and when the Lord has helped me through times of health concerns, building our family, and times of transition, I pray you will be encouraged to remember His faithfulness and goodness to you.

In our workshops we will look at our God's timing vs. our timing, His ways vs. our expectations, and His answers vs. our demands. Together I pray we will be challenged to thank the Lord for helping us thus far, and to continue to listen and wait for His help today and tomorrow. I'm looking forward to this family reunion with so many dear sisters in Christ. See you at the coffee pot in June.

Nelson, who lives in Ontonagon, Mich., is the wife of Pastor David Nelson, who serves Redeemer Free Lutheran, Ontonagon.

2012 WMF Convention • June 12 • Sioux Falls, S.D.

Please use this form to register for the WMF Convention, luncheon and banquet on Tuesday, June 12, and for the WMF leadership breakfast on Wednesday, June 13 (held at Our Saviour's Lutheran). The convention will be held at the Evangelical Free Church, 211 Arnold Ave. N., Thief River Falls, Minn.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home congregation: _____

Address: _____

Item	Cost	#	Total
*Registration	\$7.50		\$
Tuesday luncheon	\$8.50		\$
Tuesday banquet	\$11.50		\$
Wednesday breakfast (Our Saviour's Lutheran)	\$6.50		\$
Total			\$

The registration fee is required for all attending the convention. **Make checks payable to "WMF of AFLC" and mail to: WMF Treasurer, Lois Grothe, 3745 Franklin Ave., Astoria, OR 97103. Registrations must be postmarked by May 31. Preregistration is required to attend luncheon and banquet. Childcare and VBS will be provided.*

Free Lutheran Seminary graduates

Scott Stroud

Scott Kenneth Stroud was born on Nov. 16, 1968, in Owatonna, Minn., to Barb and Kenneth Stroud.

Having been exposed to the gospel at an early age he came to Christ through a Bible camp in Wisconsin.

Scott's mom and dad divorced when he was 4, which caused many problems in his family's life. Even

though Scott had been baptized in grade school, he wandered from God in his teens. Scott ran to the military after he graduated from high school, but he eventually fell into the alcoholic tendencies of his biological father.

After leaving the Army his drinking got worse and theft became a regular part of life. The climax came when Scott decided to rob a restaurant. By God's grace he was caught immediately and was sentenced to four years in prison. While in prison he came into contact with Christian inmates who shared the gospel with him and began to challenge his life's direction. Jesus reached out through these men and extended His forgiveness to Scott.

After he was released from prison, a man named Pete Lundin invited him to live with him and his wife, Sandy. They introduced him to Mary Ederer, whom he married, and they have been blessed with four beautiful children: Peter (13), Elijah (12), Cassie (9), and Seth (7).

It has been 20 years since he was saved in that prison cell. A pastor at Hope Lutheran in Minneapolis challenged him to consider seminary, so he and his wife prayed about this and felt that this was the Lord's call. He enrolled at the Free Lutheran Seminary at the age of 39 and received extensive training in the Word. Scott now serves St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church in Salinas, Calif., as family and youth pastor.



Adam Osier

I was born and raised in Valley City, N.D. God used several circumstances in my life to bring my mother and me to Grace Free Lutheran Church, where I began to

hear the Word of God preached and taught clearly. During the ensuing years, I have had the privilege of seeing the Lord work saving miracles in the lives of my parents, Greg Osier and Pat Hansen, my stepmother,

Dee, and my half-siblings, Cameron (21), Josh (14), and Alison (11).

After high school and one year at Valley City State University, I attended the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in Minneapolis, from which I graduated in 2005. In 2008, I received my Bachelor of Science degree in the field of Social Studies Education from Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minn. It was here, in my last semester of student teaching, that the Lord confirmed in me a call to full-time ministry. Following my graduation from Northwestern in the fall of 2008, I began my studies at the AFLC seminary.

On June 28, 2008, shortly after my graduation from Northwestern, I married Courtney Jacobi. On Jan. 2, 2011, we were blessed with our first child, Jacobi James. We have enjoyed him very much. We are looking forward to the birth of our second child in late October 2012.

Most recently I have been enjoying my seminary internship in Bethel Park, Pa. It has provided various opportunities for ministry during my time of training here. A strong emphasis is placed on visitation due to the size of the congregation. I have also enjoyed my opportunities to teach both adults and youth and to share in the preaching ministry with Pastor James Molstre and Pastor Steve Carlson.



Barry Nelson

On Feb. 21, 1976, I was born to Dean and Linda Nelson in Detroit Lakes, Minn. I grew up near Glyndon, Minn., where we attended Maranatha Free

Lutheran. I am thankful for both my parents and this wonderful body of believers and for the great encouragement in the faith that they have been throughout the years.

In 1994, I left Glyndon to attend the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. God used those two years to lay a solid foundation for my faith by providing a deeper understanding of the scriptural basis of our Lutheran distinctives. Following my graduation from AFLBS, I attended Northwestern College (St. Paul, Minn.), where I graduated in 2000 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history. In 2002, I joined the U.S. Army Reserves, and it was during a deployment to Afghanistan in 2007 that the Lord called me to seminary. At that time I had been attending a non-Lutheran church for several years, but when it came time to choose a school, I found that Lutheran foundation still standing strong.

When I returned home I enrolled in the AFLC seminary. Just prior to the start of my first year, on Aug. 2, 2008, Kyrie (Coleman) and I were married. Midway through my second year, we became the proud parents of Gabriel Steven (2).

We are currently nearing completion of our internship year at Emmanuel and Beaver Creek Free Lutheran churches in Williston, N.D., under the direction of Pastor Jon Wellumson. My time in seminary and now on internship has really been a time of stretching and growth. It has helped me to become even more dependent on the power of His Word that I am so blessed to spread to others.



I was born Aug. 3, 1964, to George and Elsie Lautner in Pittsburgh, Pa. I lived in Pittsburgh until the summer of 2008 when I began to attend the Free Lutheran



Theological Seminary in Plymouth, Minn. I am a member of the Ruthfred Evangelical Lutheran, Bethel Park, Pa., where I was mentored by Pastor John Dennis, Dr. James Molstre, and Pastor Brent

Olson. Through the love of God expressed in their lives, I acknowledged God's call on my life to serve Him in the ministry of His Word.

Prior to the call into ministry, I worked in the mechanical construction industry as an estimator and project manager. During this time, I completed my undergraduate degree at the Center for Urban Biblical Ministry and Geneva College, graduating with an Associate of Arts degree in Christian ministries and a Bachelor of Science degree in community ministry.

I married Christine in August 1988 and we have two children, Andrew (18) and Hannah (16). Andrew was recently diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma and is currently undergoing treatment. We expect victory, as the battle is not his but it belongs to God.

The time spent in seminary solidified my understanding of God's will as it is revealed through the proper understanding and teaching of God's inerrant Word. The last year of training has been filled with challenges and victories during my internship. Under the tutelage of Pastor Kirk Flaa and Pastor Wade Mobley, I served my internship at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran in Sioux Falls, S.D.

To be called in my imperfection to serve and guide God's people means that I must always depend on the power that only exists in God. I Corinthians 2:1-5 provides a clear understanding of my position before Christ as He has called me to shepherd His flock. I used these verses to accept a call to serve Abiding Word Lutheran, Deshler, Neb.

Terry Kruger, a retired Navy officer, is a special student who is looking forward to a ministry of evangelism and outreach. He and his wife, Diane, are the parents of two sons, Shane (21) and Zackery (15). Ephesians 4:7 and 5:1-2 are Scripture passages that are especially mean-



ingful to Terry. After studying at AFLTS for three years, he has accepted a position at Vision of Glory Lutheran, Plymouth, Minn.

Jerry Nelson, a marriage and family therapist, is serving as associate pastor at Christ is Lord Lutheran, Onalaska, Wis. He has completed a 12-year study through the Free Lutheran Seminary's Summer Institute of Theology and will receive a certificate of pastoral studies. He says that Romans 12:1-2 are foundational verses in his ministry.

Douglas Mmari is a special student who has been engaged in gospel ministry for many years. After three years at AFLTS, Douglas will return to serve in his native Tanzania following graduation. His wife, Upendo, has studied at the Association Free Lutheran Bible



School for two years. They have five children, two of whom have lived with them on campus for the last two years: Neema (17) and Amani (14). Douglas finds special promise in Psalm 32:8.

Roger David, Armington, Ill., will receive his certificate of pastoral studies through the Summer Institute of Theology. He has served AFLC congregations in Illinois and Tennessee. For many years he has conducted a gospel music ministry with his wife, Rose. He chose I Corinthians 3:11 as his testimony verse.



Dr. James Lamb, executive director of Lutherans for Life, was a special speaker on March 23 at the Free Lutheran Seminary.

AFLC memorials: March

AFLBS

Ernie Miedema
Vi Melvie
Ruth Claus
Stephanie Dalsing
Lindgren

Eddie Osland
Delores Perkins

Home Missions

James Tostrup
Phyllis Lee
Olive Peterson

AFLTS

Ernie Miedema (3)
Kathleen Olson
Lloyd Johnson

World Missions

Allan Ensrud
Pastor Merle Knutson

ARC hosts camps, retreats

A look at upcoming AFLC retreats and camps at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis.

• ARC Family weekend

Dates: May 25-27

Enjoy the ARC grounds and help us get ready for a busy summer of camps and retreats.

• Fire Up Youth Camp

Ages: Grades 4-7

Dates: June 24-29

Cost: \$190*

Theme: Follow Me

Leaders: Pastor Eric Westlake, Our Savior's Free Lutheran, Zumbrota, Minn.

• Kid's Camp

Ages: Grades 1-3

Dates: June 29-July 1

Cost: \$75*

• Family Camp

Dates: July 29-August 4

Cost: Family rates apply

*Must be postmarked by June 14. Add another \$20 if mailing registrations after June 14.

For more information on these camps, contact the ARC by e-mail at arcregistration@centurytel.net or call 800-294-2877. You can also visit the ARC Web site at www.arc-aflc.org for more information.

Conference information online

Information and registration forms for the AFLC's 50th annual conference are now available online (www.aflc.org). The conference will be held June 12-15 at Lincoln High School, 101 Knight Ave. S., Thief River Falls, Minn., and hosted by Our Saviour's Lutheran in Thief River Falls.

Congregation celebrates centennial

Members of Spruce Free Lutheran, Salol, Minn., will celebrate the congregation's centennial anniversary on July 15. A celebratory worship service will be held at 10 a.m., followed by a noon meal and fellowship.

People and Places

An informational meeting was held March 13 at **St. Paul Lutheran**, Dodge, N.D., to address needs raised by the increasing population in Western North Dakota. Ten pastors, one intern and two youth workers were in attendance. Evangelism Director Pastor Jim Rasmussen, Home Missions Director Paul Nash, Loren Tungseth and President Elden Nelson represented the AFLC and offered help in reaching out to the booming population.

Two senior seminarians have been given internship assignments for the 2012-2013 school year. **Sam Menge** will serve Our Savior's Free Lutheran, Stanley, N.D., under the supervision of Pastor Rodney Johnson. **Luke Emerson** will serve St. John's Lutheran, Newark, Ohio, under the supervision of Pastor Tom Olson.

Graduating seminarian **George Lautner** has accepted a call to serve Abiding Word Lutheran, Deshler, Neb. Lautner served his internship year at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Pastor Wes Langaas has announced his retirement from Abundant Life Church, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Pastor Rodger Olson has announced his retirement from Zion Lutheran and Norman Lutheran, Tioga, N.D.

Pastor Jon Benson, Upsala, Minn., has accepted a call to serve Trinity Free Lutheran, Janesville, Wis.

Conference choir registration

The AFLC's 50th anniversary conference will be held June 12-15 in Thief River Falls, Minn. The conference theme is "Jubilee," taken from Psalm 118:23-24.

The conference opening service will be Tuesday evening at 7:30 p.m. A special effort is being made to have a conference choir to sing at the opening service. The choir will be directed under the leadership of Andrew Hanson, music director at the AFLC Schools. Music is available ahead of time to be sent to those interested, and a practice session will be held sometime Tuesday before the evening service.

If interested in singing with the choir, please contact Hanson by e-mail at ahanson@aflc.org or write to AFLC Schools, 3134 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. A registration form is available at aflc.org.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1-March 31, 2011

FUND	REC'D IN MARCH	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$20,541	\$69,086	\$74,558
Evangelism	13,658	40,689	25,871
Youth Ministries	7,719	22,565	45,934
Parish Education	6,851	24,269	26,535
Seminary	20,154	58,458	59,964
Bible School	28,840	77,867	99,299
Home Missions	33,610	140,999	104,630
World Missions	30,970	100,486	137,605
Personal Support	38,830	133,304	99,392
TOTALS	\$201,173	\$667,723	\$673,787
Contact the individual departments for further information about specific financial needs.			

Pressing on

The theme for the 1962 organizational meeting of the AFLC was: Press On Toward the Goal (Philippians 3:14). Yes, there certainly was an emphasis on a beloved heritage that deserved to be preserved, yet the planners of the conference seemed to have deliberately selected a theme that looked beyond the past and the present to the future.

The goal needed to be clearly defined. It is true, as John Maxwell writes, that we won't know where we are going until we know where we've been, and so the past must be remembered. Our predecessor church association, the Lutheran Free



Pastor Robert Lee

Church (LFC), was born in the fires of strife and spiritual awakening, out of which a vision for free and living congregations arose.

One might conclude that the heart of this

heritage was a distinctive polity, or form of church government, yet within a generation the goal was challenged and thus needed to be clarified. The freedom of the local congregation was not an end in itself, insisted the pioneers of the free Lutheran movement, but the means toward reaching a greater goal, which was *life*, life in Jesus Christ, experienced and nurtured within the fellowship of a congregation.

The theme of this issue is "vision," and various writers representing different ages and aspects of our common life have been asked to reflect on the questions of where the AFLC is going and how are we going to get there. None of them to our knowledge possess a crystal ball or a special prophetic gift, and so one should not expect very specific details but rather insightful and hopefully inspiring observations from their unique perspectives. Perhaps their

thoughts will encourage our readers to ponder the same questions during this anniversary year.

The AFLC has changed in 50 years, of course, perhaps leading a few to lament in the words of the old hymn, "Change and decay in all around I see." We are less of a rural church body than we were, and much more of a national one than the LFC ever was. Congregations represent different traditions, ethnic backgrounds are extremely varied, and our first African-American congregation has been welcomed. There is a wide range of worship styles among us, from the more formal to the contemporary, with a considerable amount of blending, and it's exciting to note that our largest gatherings numerically speaking are the national youth conventions.

Who would have ever imagined the changes and developments of the past 50 years! A spacious campus with a theological seminary and Bible school faithfully committed to stand on God's inspired and inerrant Scriptures and to serve our congregations, pressing on toward accreditation ... world and home missions, the Ambassador Institute, evangelism and youth ministries, a department of parish education offering solid resources as well as a growing and improving curriculum, the publication of a national magazine, all headquartered in a spacious administration building. Many of our Bible school students are the children of those who attended two or three decades ago, and the first third-generation student may enroll in a couple of years.

The number of those who were with us in 1962 continues to shrink; the young have become the old guard, and the Lord is preparing a new generation to serve in their place.

So we press on to meet new challenges with an old vision that must be renewed if it is to be preserved. The secularizing of society that has occurred during the past half century seems almost unbelievable to those of us who lived through it, and some churches have responded by accommodation, becoming more secularized themselves in the process. If any of us had dared suggest 50 years ago, for example, that the

day would come when the merged churches would accept a new definition of marriage as being something other than the union of one man and one woman, we would have been recommended for

The freedom of the local congregation was not an end in itself ... but the means toward reaching a greater goal, which was *life*, life in Jesus Christ ...

padded cells.

Our vision must be a thoroughly biblical one, not merely the preservation of tradition, to be worthy of commitment for the generation of the 21st century. The message remains unchanged ... "Thus says the Lord" ... but the methods will change. The statement, "We have never done it that way before," is still the seven last words of the church. The goal toward which we press on continues to be the upbuilding of New Testament congregations, because this is central to our Lord's goal for the creating and sustaining of life in Jesus Christ. It rightfully demands our allegiance, our prayers, and our resources. May those who follow us find us faithful.

building the base

What is your vision?

BY JOAN CULLER

Why have a vision statement? Is it really important? The answer is YES. A good vision can inspire and motivate. It gives us a picture of what we want to become. Martin Luther King Jr., for example, was a man with a vision and spoke about it in his famous “I have a dream” speech in 1963. Dr. King envisioned a different America, one where his children would not be judged by the color of their skin. He imagined “little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls as brothers and sisters.” Because Dr. King articulated his vision, others were encouraged to get involved. Many people sacrificed money, safety—even their lives—to see this vision realized. Almost 50 years later we can see that life is different because one man had a vision and followed it.

In 1826 some folks in the small village of Leitersburg came together to establish St. Paul’s Lutheran Church. We know very little about the founders of our church except their names. They were probably second- or third-generation German immigrants, mostly farmers. They had no special education or amazing gifts. Yet God used them to build a church which has survived for more than 185 years. What they did have was a vision: a community church which would spread the gospel of Christ. No doubt over the years there were hard times when it was necessary to make sacrifices to maintain the facility, welcome in the neighbors, and serve the needy. Their vision kept them going. The original Declaration of Principles stated (among other things):

We take Heaven and Earth as witnesses of our attachment to Evangelical Christianity and that its extension is

our most ardent desire, that it is our wish that the doctrine of Christ’s atonement may be proclaimed to destitute souls here in this place, that we expect our children and our children’s children never to forsake their church but to be true to it, that it is our wish that here old and young may be edified, animated, encouraged and prepared for eternity.

A few years ago, when members of the church council contemplated what our vision was today, we realized that nothing substantial had changed. So we took our vision directly out of this founding statement: “it is our wish that here old and young may be edified, animated, encouraged and prepared for eternity.” We affirmed that the extension of evangelical Christianity is still our most ardent desire.

Like the AFLC, St. Paul’s is building on a firm foundation: the faith of our founders, the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions and ultimately Jesus Christ. We have inherited a wonderful legacy. How will we build upon it? What will we leave behind for the generations that follow?

“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 3:10).

Culler is a member of St. Paul’s Lutheran, Leitersburg, Md., where her husband, Pastor Terry Culler, serves.