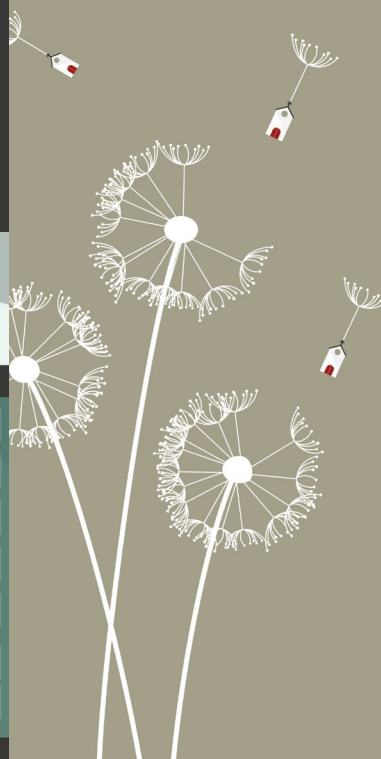


# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

OCTOBER 2018



## OUR AFLC HERITAGE





## THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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## ENCOURAGING WORD

# A WOMAN'S HALL OF FAITH

BY CHRISTINA OSTHUS

I must confess, being a woman is an important part of my identity. I have to remind myself that God is the main character in the Bible so that I don't get too caught up looking for important women in the Bible. That being said, I always appreciate stories of godly, intrepid women from the past. So here is my own female version of Hebrews 11, including some women from the original list and a few New Testament additions.

By faith Sarah submitted to her husband and to her God, after a lifetime of disappointment and dreams deferred (I Peter 3). By faith Leah trusted God in a very difficult family situation. She was sharing a husband with her younger, more beautiful sister, but we still see her seeking God's help and blessing, and praising Him when He blesses her. In fact, her fourth son's name, Judah, means "praise" (Genesis 29:35).

By faith two women, Deborah and Jael, worked in tandem to win a battle for Israel in the Book of Judges. Deborah was a leader of Israel, the only female judge, who accompanied General Barak into battle at his request. Jael, a woman who lived nearby, received the general of the enemy army into her tent and assassinated him as soon as he fell asleep (Judges 4-5).

By faith Ruth followed her mother-in-law to Israel after leaving her home country of Moab, and most specifically exhibited faith by choosing to make Yahweh her God. God in His riches gave her all of her desires, sheltering her under His wings (Ruth 2:12), providing for her and her mother-in-law, and bringing her a godly second husband. By faith Jehosheba hid Joash, the prince of Judah, until his murderous grandmother Athaliah was deposed (II Kings 11). By faith

Huldah prophesied peace, redemption, and restoration to King Josiah in the midst of many dangers (II Chronicles 34).

By faith Mary stated that she was the handmaiden of the Lord, accepted God's calling on her life, and treasured all the events of Jesus' life in her heart (Luke 2:19). By faith the Canaanite woman asked Jesus to heal her child, though she was not a Jew (Matthew 15). By faith Mary of Bethany presented her precious ointment to Jesus's feet, though others at the gathering mocked her (John 12). By faith Mary Magdalene ran to the Eleven to tell them that Jesus was alive after the resurrection (John 20).

By faith Tabitha cared for the sick, becoming sick and dying herself. God had mercy on the community she was serving and empowered Peter to raise her from the dead (Acts 9). By faith Lydia invited missionaries into her home and accepted their message (Acts 16). By faith Priscilla corrected errors and taught other evangelists the full way of God (Acts 18). By faith Lois and Eunice taught their son and grandson Timothy to love the Word of God, preparing him for his ministry as a missionary and pastor (II Timothy 3).

As the writer of Hebrews wrote, I could have included more godly women from the Scriptures in this list. I could have included some wonderful ladies from the AFLC in this list, in fact. However, the women included in this list serve to remind us of the basics: trust God, fear no one but Him, and teach the truth.

*Osthus, a 2006 graduate of AFLBS, works in youth and family ministry on the Cheyenne River Reservation, Eagle Butte, S.D.*

It is a miracle of grace when a lost sinner comes to salvation. A miracle of grace approaching this one is the establishment and continuing ministry of the AFLC. To this grace we must continually look.

—John Strand

We can only say “Great is the Lord.” His Hand has been in this. The Lord has handled every problem more wisely and more effectively than any of us could have imagined it to be done.

—Fritjof Monseth

A free congregation is meant to be a living congregation. It is to be one where the Holy Spirit freely carries on His five-fold work of calling, gathering, enlightening, sanctifying, and preserving human souls, all by and through the Word of God.

—Raynard Huglen

Our burden to build free and living congregations is a biblical mandate, not merely a tradition or a slogan.

—Robert L. Lee

Our founding fathers believed that the course of this new church that was developing must have its roots firmly planted in the Word of God. From that Word came the direction for a fresh start, and from that Word we continue to take our marching orders.

—Elden Nelson

# FOR





# SUCH A TIME

BY PASTOR JOHN RIETH

**W**hen asked to compose an article that spoke to our heritage in the AFLC, Esther 4:14 came to mind, “And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” I love the book of Esther and this verse specifically as it lends itself to the many chapters of our AFLC history. And, it is true for me.

My earliest memories of going to church were at Zion Lutheran Free Church, rural Valley City, N.D. While my parents were Christians and lived in the community, it wasn’t until 1954 that we truly called this congregation home. That was the year pastor Fritjof Monseth began his 12 years with us. I was 10 years old. My brother recalls the Scripture from Isaiah which Pastor Monseth shared the first time he visited our home. He prayed with our family. He went on to visit many other families, and during that year four of my parent’s siblings and their families joined us, received instruction, and joined the congregation. His was the first visit any of our families had received from a pastor. Many, but not all, were Christians.

In 1962, the members at Zion voted unanimously to retain their identity as a Lutheran Free Church and remain outside the merger with The American Lutheran Church. The vote in town left the congregation there divided. As the court proceedings at the time concluded, we could no longer call ourselves a Lutheran Free Church. By that time I was in college and attending church in town. A new congregation had formed and a new chapter began.

During my college years there was a strong emphasis on youth outreach and evangelism. This spilled over into the family Bible camp at Lake Geneva in Alexandria, Minn., as well as in numerous other district Bible camps. Our seminary opened its doors in 1964. Home and world missions, as well as our Bible school, were graciously provided by the Lord.

Pastor Monseth continued as our pastor. As our parish developed our new identity as now Free Lutheran churches, we became aware of our heritage, our legacy. What do we keep? What can change? We never changed the message. We enjoyed discovering new ways to make it

known. Evangelism was the life breath. Many experienced new life in Christ. We learned the importance of letting go of the hurts and heartaches of the past and instead focusing on God’s future. There was the need to forgive and be forgiven.

I began serving as a lay pastor in the summer of 1967 while in college and during the two years I taught school. Out of that, God called me into parish ministry. Most of the seminarians at that time served a congregation somewhere on the weekend and attended seminary during the week. Ordained in 1973, I had the privilege of serving as parish pastor for 26 years and as a chaplain for 23. The message remained the same—the Word of God is central, framing our confessions. The Fundamental Principles have always been an important source that identifies who we are and what we believe. I believe that to be true still today.

What are some of the challenges and opportunities ahead of us? A once fairly biblically literate America is no longer. Post-modern America does not know the Bible, the verbiage, stories, characters, or most important of all, the Savior of the Bible. That said, He has not changed. The Word remains the same. It is His work to convince of sin and bestow grace, as it has always been. Now nearly 60 years of history is behind us. One could argue that the church as we know and love it is not seen as relevant in society today. Technology is advancing and changing at a breathtaking pace. Only God knows what another year will reveal. This I know, God’s promises to us and to the world have not and will not ever change. Matthew 16:18 reminds us that He builds His church. It is His work.

For such a time as this, pray for wisdom to release the things we should not keep while holding fast to the things we cannot afford to lose. Methods change. Ministry evolves to meet needs. But God’s faithfulness in it all will remain the same. For such a time as this.

*Rieth is a member of Christ the King Free Lutheran, Grand Forks, N.D.*

# THE GOSPEL IN A **CHANGING** AMERICA

BY JIM & CINDY LILLY



**T**he America of our youth was very different from the America of our grandchildren's youth. Now multilingual and multicultural, our world has changed. Cindy's home town was almost entirely Scandinavian in her youth. Today in downtown Willmar you will hear Spanish and Somali. A mosque occupies what was formerly a department store and an indoor Somali mall is adjacent to it.

We have been members of Hope Lutheran in Minneapolis since 1990. As the changes have come to Willmar, they have come with even more diversity to the neighborhood around our church: Latinos, Hmong, Liberians, Buddhists, Muslim, etc. It is not the German-Scandinavian working-class neighborhood that it once was. The gospel is even more needed, but the packaging that worked in the past does not seem to work as well today.

Hope Lutheran began as a Sunday school program for neighborhood children in the 1950s. Parents sent their children to learn about Jesus and soon the church was started. Today things are a little different. Our vacation Bible school program, Summer Splash, has been popular since its inception many years ago. Parents are still comfortable with sending their children to our church programs, but they do not follow. Being a member of a church has little appeal to most of our church neighbors. In some cases, there is a language or cultural divide to consider. More often than not, there is little familiarity with Christian culture, certainly not with Lutheran culture.

Have we met the challenge? Our elders and pastors are trying to engage our neighbors in more effective ways. In addition to our VBS program, we have added a neighborhood parking lot party. Earlier this summer we organized an outreach to identify specific needs of our neighbors such as painting, yard work, and minor household repairs. For several years the members of Hope have sponsored Celebrate Recovery meetings. We have sent out door-to-door evangelism and prayer teams.

Have we been successful? A little. There are a few new families and individuals who now attend services and a few of those have joined our congregation. However, in large part the "come and join" formula does not seem to be attracting significant numbers. America has changed. The expectations and desires of our neighbors have changed. Do they even want to know about God? Are they interested in the Bible? When visiting with a few of these parents, most of them said they would like to have a Bible study in their home and some emphatically said, "please."

Come to church? No! Study the Bible in their home? Yes! But we have not yet followed up.

What can we learn from this? Is there a different approach to helping people become followers of Jesus that doesn't require them to come to our building?

In addition to being members of Hope Lutheran, we are involved in a ministry that trains people in Bible-based disciple-making. We have trained people in Minneapolis and in India, Africa, Haiti, and South America. We do one simple thing: we show individuals how to sit down with their family or group of friends and neighbors, open the Bible, and earn a passage of Scripture and what it tells them about God and people. Then we challenge them to do two things. First, apply it to their lives. Second, share it with other people every week. Change happens. Lives change, neighbors tell neighbors.

In the last 20 years more than 50 million Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, animists, atheists, and others have become followers and disciples of Jesus using this simple process of inductive Bible study and personal application. Neighbors have reached other neighbors who have replicated the same process in their homes. Churches have grown out of these family groups. The ministry we are affiliated with has seen about 10,000 new churches and fellowships started in Honduras and adjoining countries in the last 10 years. Another colleague has seen more than 10,000 family fellowships started in two years in Cuba.

If you look at the apostle Paul's outreach in Acts, you can see that he also established new believers in their homes, which over time became churches, like those of Ephesus and Corinth. Can we learn from what Paul did? Can we learn from the way Jesus disciplined His followers?

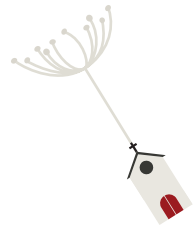
We have been involved in this long enough, and with many others who have seen whole towns and regions impacted, that we know that these biblical models work repeatedly. How the models are applied has to be varied in every place, but the principles of the Scriptures are always the same.

Yes, there is a different approach to reaching our neighborhoods. It starts with Jesus, believing and doing what He said. And it means looking at how Paul modeled this in his first couple of missionary journeys. We may live in a changing culture, but the same gospel and old biblical model still work.

*Jim and Cindy Lilly are members of Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis, Minn.*

# AN ANSWER FOR THE AILING

BY PASTOR CRAIG JOHNSON



**A**s a kid, if I showed any sign of sickness coming on, my mom would bring out the Vicks. The slimy stuff would get spread all over me. She would also have me inhale its healing vapors. Mom would put a towel over my head, and I'd lean over a pan and breathe in the trusted and powerful Vicks. It seems as though the prevailing belief was, "Whatever ails you, Vicks is the answer."

In the Lutheran Free Church movement, our heritage gives us a different motto—For whatever ails a community and the world, the answer is the same: plant a new church. My mom would bring out Vicks and say, "This is what you need." We look at the spiritual sickness of the world and the problems in communities and our response is: "They need a free and living Lutheran congregation."

Georg Sverdrup, the founder of the Lutheran Free Church movement, continually pointed to the congregation as the answer to the illnesses of the world. He was a seminary professor who came to the U.S. from Norway in the 1800s. He saw an opportunity for "a free church in a free land." His idea for a free church, however, was not that of a denomination but of local congregations. The

movement began as a church planting movement, with a vision of planting free and living Lutheran congregations throughout the world.

A crucial part of people getting spiritually healthy is being a part of a local congregation where God's Word is proclaimed, the means of grace are shared, and people build each other up in Christ. Some people have faith in Christ but they've had some bad experiences in churches. They give up being a part of a congregation. They try to maintain spiritual health by reading the Bible on their own, watching a worship service on the internet or TV, or listening to Christian radio. Those things can be good, but it's not enough. I have known people who were unchurched Christians. They admitted their spiritual health suffered when they were not part of a local congregation.

In all the different areas of the work of God's kingdom, the answer to spiritual health is getting people to be part of a local congregation. The best program for evangelism and discipleship is planting a new congregation. When a new congregation begins there is usually a special passion for getting out into the community and sharing Christ. Often it is a new congregation that does the best job of reaching new people. Sadly, that passion sometimes fades when a congregation has been around for a number of years. But a new congregation's heart for evangelism can spread to and inspire well-established congregations.

Teaching people God's Word and training them to be servants of Christ happens best in a local congregation. A person can get great teaching in a Bible school and a seminary, but to be truly trained and prepared to serve God and His people a person needs to spend time as part of a congregation. Many people throughout the world have very little knowledge of God's Word. Internet courses and all kinds of other

good instructional means are available. Still, the best way for people to learn God's Word is for new congregations to be planted so that they can become a part of a body of believers and in which they can be taught the Scriptures.

Sverdrup had a great passion for world missions, and much of his writing is about missions. He saw planting free and living congregations as the best way of doing missions and reaching people in other parts of the world for Christ. The importance of congregations is not a cultural concept but the example we are given from the New Testament. As the apostle Paul traveled from place to place on his missionary journeys, he planted congregations. The importance of congregations is transferable to all cultures. All people throughout the world, no matter the country they live in or the language they speak, need to be part of a local congregation. The ways the local congregations do things in different parts of the world will vary greatly, but the need still exists for all people to be in a congregation where God's Word is proclaimed and people get introduced to Jesus and grow together in Him.

When a health crisis hits a part of the world, like the Ebola virus outbreak in Africa a few years ago, the call goes out for more doctors and health care workers to serve the people in need. In the same way, we see much spiritual sickness throughout the world. The call goes out for more free and living congregations to be planted. No more powerful force for spiritual healing exists than a local congregation where God's Word and Spirit are present.

*Johnson, who serves Bethany Free Lutheran, Astoria, Ore., is the chairman of the AFLC's World Missions Committee.*





# THE CALL TO PLANT CHURCHES



## BY PASTOR JIM JOHNSON

**T**he most significant events of my life came after God sent a church planter.

A man named Chet Blake knocked on the door of a young couple in Bloomington, Minn. The wife was 29, and the husband 30.

"We're starting a new church," said the church planter.

"We've been praying for you," said the woman, pregnant with her second child. She and her husband were actively following Christ but had not yet found a church in the neighborhood, sprawling with new two-bedroom homes. "We knew there was a new church for us in this neighborhood," my mother told the young pastor.

Pastor Chet and his wife were living in a refurbished garage on Second Avenue. The Home Missions department of the Lutheran Free Church had given the Blakes a choice. "They asked us, 'Which do you want first, a house or a church building?'" Mrs. Blake once told us. They chose the church.

From that humble dwelling, the church planters on Second Avenue loved on the families in the neighborhood. My mother and father, Lyell and Lois Johnson, had invested 40 percent of my father's monthly salary in a new house on Stevens Avenue. After Pastor Chet's visit, they soon became charter members of Emmaus Lutheran Church. Mom and Dad watched the church grow from 20 people to 500 people on a Sunday. I grew up in that church. My parents stayed there for more than 60 years. Their funerals were held in the church building.

The garage remains on the property to this day.

\* \* \*

My father told me about the day he first met a church planter.

He was 12 years old. His parents bought a new house near the airport and became charter members a new church start in Minneapolis' Minnehaha Falls neighborhood in 1923. He was standing by his neighbor's garage door when his father, then 44, introduced him to a young man in his late 20s.

"This is our new pastor," my grandfather told his only son. That joyful new church planter, Evald Conrad, 28, became my father's cherished friend.

Soon a "little home-like church" was established among the new families moving near Minnehaha Falls. The young church planter used home visits, a radio broadcast (WDGY, 4:30 p.m. on Sundays), and a solid gospel-centered preaching ministry to build the little church into

a congregation with more than 1,000 members.

"Pastor Conrad loved everybody," Dad would tell me.

Mom was from a non-churched family. She rode the trolley by herself to the growing church plant every Sunday. My parents met at youth group. She enjoyed her new friends, but she especially relished the preaching of Pastor Conrad. "I had never heard anyone preach the gospel like that," she said. "Maybe Billy Graham," she said. Maybe.

\* \* \*

I became a follower of Jesus in an AFLC Home Mission church in 1977.

I was 14. My sister Jeannie had married a Home Missions pastor named Mike Brandt. They finished seminary and left to help a new church in Lake Stevens, Wash. My Mom read Jeannie's weekly letters with pleasure.

"A couple named Jim and Sherri have started coming to church," Jeannie wrote.

Every letter told about a new family coming to church. Those stories fascinated me. She described how the church grew from 30 attenders to 200 in five years. When Jeannie's family came home to visit, Mike regaled us with stories of the new Christians. "I want to be a part of a new church," I thought.

I lived with Mike and Jeannie for two summers. I went to the AFLC Bible camp, filled with new Christians. At one camp, I heard John Strand, the AFLC president, preaching every night. I can still remember his message about the rewards of those who give up "house and land" for Christ's sake. It feels like yesterday.

I attended my first Free Lutheran Youth Convention in Kirkland, Wash., the city where Pastor Blake moved 20 years before, in 1977. The sessions were held at Our Redeemer Free Lutheran, the first AFLC Home Missions congregation. It was a beautiful church building, and there were 250 students registered, lodging in homes in the neighborhood, sleeping on the floor in sleeping bags at night. I was housed with eight boys. I attended morning studies with a Bible teacher, a man in his late 20s, named Phil Haugen. Little did I know I would take at least 15 classes from him over six years at seminary and Bible school. During the evening sessions, I heard an evangelist named Ralph Bell invite sinners to repent.

I was one of them.

See **CALL**, page 16



## A VISION FOR CHURCH PLANTING

### BY PASTOR KIRK FLAA

**O**ur family has always struggled with being able to differentiate between two simple words: “optional” and “necessary.” I am thankful that most of the evidences of this have been in relatively humorous and harmless ways, such as when our boys were growing up and we would say “time for bed.” Now, to the boys this instruction was optional, and in fact contingent upon finishing up at least one or two more races on Mario Kart. But differentiating between these two words is not limited to the children, for it extends to adults, as well. Just a few weeks back my wife, Gloria, observed a large weed growing in our shrubbery in the front yard. As I sat peacefully in my

chair sipping on my coffee, I did not realize that for her this was not an optional observation, but rather, something that would require my necessary and immediate attention.

The church planting conversation bears resemblance in that far too often we view it as an optional activity when in reality it is a necessary activity. Not only are we to be motivated at the most basic level by the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and the Great Assurance (Matthew 16:18), but let us further be stirred by data that is both heart-breaking and eye-opening.

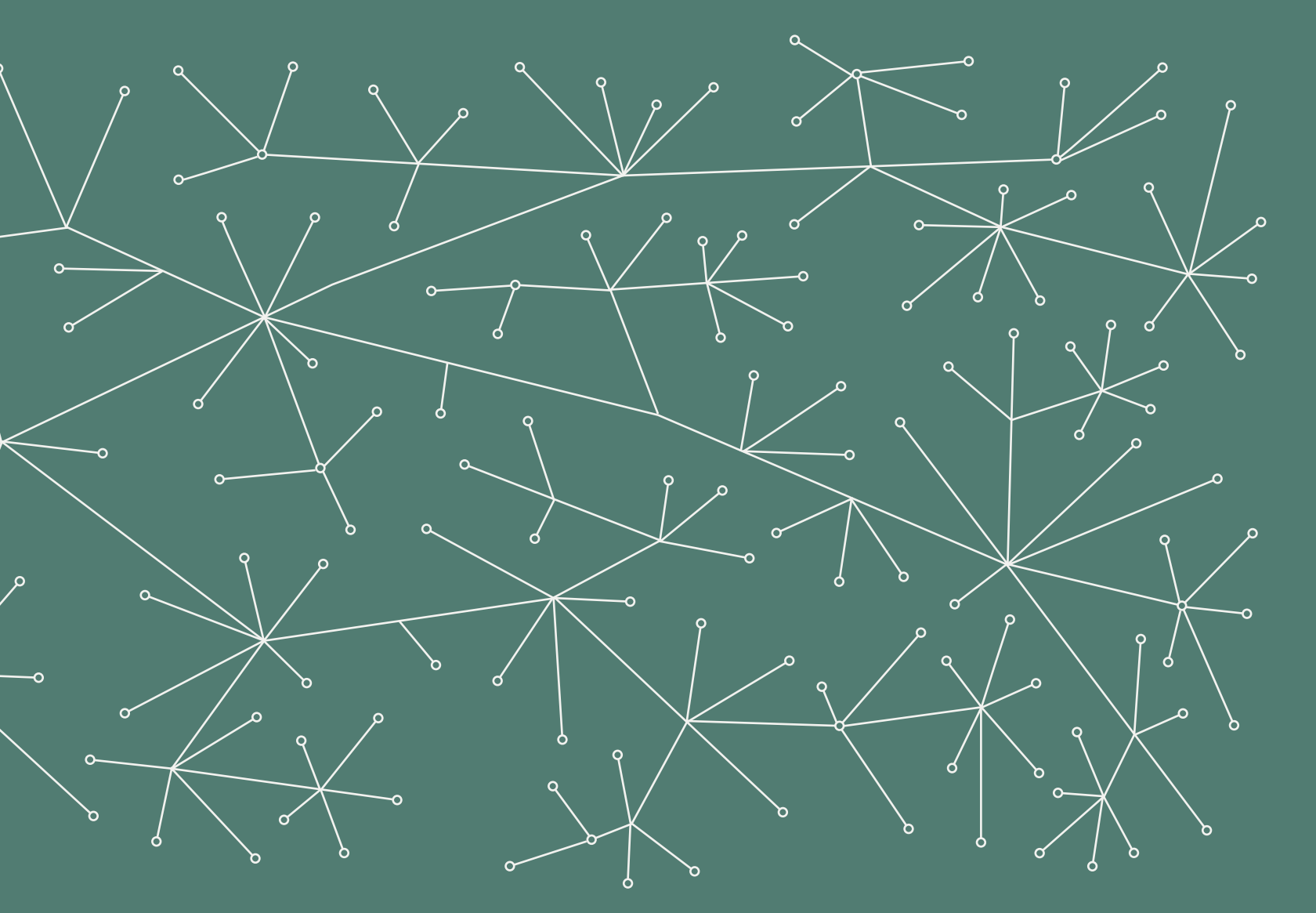
First, of the evangelical church body in America as a whole, there are some 4,000 churches planted annually. Yet, there are also 3,700 that close their doors, which shows a net of a mere 300 churches, with statistics calling forth the need to plant some 8,000 churches a year to keep up with the need.

Second, author and consultant Bill Easum corroborates the essential nature of church planting and gospel growth with this observation: “Studies show that if a denomination wishes to reach more people, the number of new churches it begins each year must equal at least 3 percent of the denomination’s existing churches” (Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply*, Kindle Locations 339-341).

Third, and perhaps most significantly, the majority of church growth in established churches comes from “transfers”—those unhappy with things in another church congregation—while the great majority (some 65 percent) of members of church plants originate from “transformations”—that is, people coming to repentance and faith for the first time.

I am thankful to serve a congregation which early on in its existence took





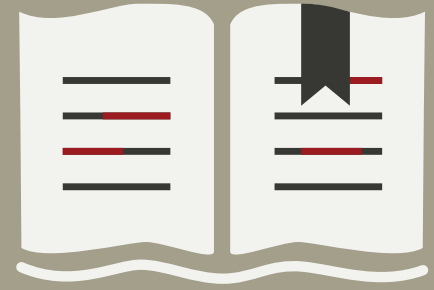
a prayerful inventory of what we called “non-compromisable principles” which essentially summarized four bedrock pillars of our ministry. One of those pillars was church planting, and although the outcome today looks a little different than originally envisioned, by God’s grace an attitude of necessity regarding church planting has been fostered in our congregation. Our congregation has an understanding that reaching more people with the gospel does not necessarily mean a bigger footprint, that is, building a bigger facility. Rather, expansion of reach is more effectively realized by providing additional places for evangelical, Christ-centered, Lutheran community and worship. God’s faithfulness in this endeavor is reflected in the vibrant and living sister churches of Living Word in Sioux Falls, Shiloh in Rapid City, and last month’s official launch of Trinity in San Antonio, Texas, with boots on the ground under the pastoral care of Pastor Matthew and Natalie Ballmann. Praise be to God!

Although church planting is necessary work, it is by no means easy work. It is both a human and congregational nature to fall into a path of complacency and ease, and the work of church planting is completely the opposite. It calls for sacrifices and investments in labor and finances, and as we have experienced in each church plant, the necessity of sending people and/or a pastor, which involves changed relationships and often even good-byes. It calls all of us to draw our attention off of ourselves and invest in the needs of others we have never met, and may never meet. Yet, it is so worth it. Of several significant ministry highlights of this past year, two involved preaching opportunities at our church plants. As I shared with the congregations of Shiloh and Living Word, I could not help but see God’s good and gracious work continuing on through the efforts of church planting. In the midst of this I praised

our Lord for moving our hearts toward the planting of sister congregations.

Your congregation’s investment in the work of church planting may not look like ours, but regardless of size or composition, God would call us all to be involved in this work. We do so through a number of means, including praying, sending, giving, or sponsoring. And these means are available to greater or lesser degrees to all congregations. May the Spirit lead us to recognize that church planting is not optional, rather, it is necessary.

*Flaa is the senior pastor at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, S.D.*



Founded in 1883, Holmes Evangelical Lutheran's first church building was built in 1893. It was severely damaged by a tornado in 1931, and was then destroyed by a fire in 1985, two years after the congregation celebrated its centennial. The new church building, above, was dedicated in 1986.

# HOLMES EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN

BY PASTOR RICHARD TAYLOR

**H**olmes Evangelical Lutheran Church is located in Holmes, Iowa, which is about five miles west of Clarion (25 miles west of Interstate 35) just north of Highway 3 (60 miles north of Ames).

While being new to the AFLC, Holmes Evangelical Lutheran Church has a history that dates back to 1883, when God began His work among the Norwegian residents of the area. The 12 charter members began meeting in country schools for the first years. The congregation's first pastor was Rev. H.C. Holm who began in 1885 while also serving Evangelical Lutheran Church in Eagle Grove, located 8 miles southwest of Holmes. In 1887 the two congregations separated, and our congregation was then called North Prairie Lutheran Church. Interestingly, Pastor Holm's grandson, Gifford Holm, a member of our congregation, died in February 2018.

For a time, our congregation along with Evangelical Lutheran and Lake Lutheran in Humboldt County were served by the same pastor. In 1892 the church name was changed to Holmes Norwegian Lutheran Church. The congregation joined the United Church Synod in 1902. A second Lutheran church, Bethlehem Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran, was begun in Holmes which was a part of the Hauge Synod. During 1916 the two Lutheran congregations in Holmes voted to withdraw from their respective synods and become free congregations. It was decided that when the three synods—Synoden, United Church and the Hauge—would merge, these two congregations would join the new church organization. The name of the congregation became Holmes Evangelical Lutheran in 1917.

A tornado struck the community of Holmes in 1931, doing much damage to the church building. The Lord enabled the congregation to repair their facility and even make some improvements. Eight services per year were conducted in Norwegian and 44 in English in 1940. Two years after the congregation celebrated their centennial in 1983, a fire broke out, destroying the building in 1985. Again, the Lord inspired the congregation to rebuild and the beautiful, one level structure used today was dedicated in 1986.

The congregation has shared a pastor with the Samuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eagle Grove for many years. Presently the Samuel congregation is a member of the NALC (National American Lutheran Church) while Holmes recently joined the AFLC. The congregations are served by Pastor Richard Taylor who is on the AFLC Fellowship Roster.

The ministry of the congregation emphasizes the body of Christ's involvement on Sunday mornings as well as throughout the week. Though a tornado and a building fire could have ended the work, God's Word is yet proclaimed and His people are encouraged in His faith to bring Jesus glory and honor.

*Taylor, Eagle Grove, Iowa, is a member of the AFLC Fellowship Roster. He serves the congregations of Holmes Evangelical Lutheran (AFLC) and Samuel Evangelical Lutheran (NALC).*





# STRONGHOLD CHURCH

BY PASTOR CHAD FORMAN

**H**indsight is 20/20. “God works in mysterious ways.” “We can’t see the forest for the trees.” These are just a few ways of saying that when it comes to God’s plan for our life and His church, sometimes we miss the bigger picture. We need to look back to see how far He has taken us.

In seminary my fellow classmates and I were asked to develop a five-year plan for ministry. I can say with a good deal of confidence that starting a church was not in my plan. But as God’s Word tells us, “Many plans are in a man’s heart, but the purpose of the Lord will prevail” (Proverbs 19:21). A perfect example of this idea is our story at Stronghold Church.

On February 14, 2016, a small group of people gathered together in my living room for a time of Bible study and prayer. Somehow by the end of that meeting, which I can only credit to the Holy Spirit moving in our hearts, we resolved to plant a church. Now all we needed was a building, Bibles, chairs, a sound system, musicians, etc. You get the picture. All we could say was, “The Lord will provide.”

And He sure did. Seven days later, on February 21, we had secured a fully furnished building—rent free. Our new worship area came with chairs, a public address system, and a coffee maker. Through the grace of God, we were able to hold our first service together the following Sunday.

The Lord continued to bless us in ways we could not have imagined. Three weeks later we had outgrown the building and needed to relocate. Once again, God provided for us. The week before Easter we were offered a newly remodeled, larger meeting area, at no cost. God truly is amazing.

Six months after our first service it was time to move again. God brought us to a new building in the heart of Trenton, Mich., a community in which we have been uniquely situated to minister. Only God knows where He will take our congregation of Stronghold Church next, but wherever that happens to be, we are confident He will provide.

*Forman, who is a member of the AFLC Fellowship Roster, serves Stronghold Lutheran, Trenton, Mich.*

Members of Stronghold Lutheran Church, Trenton, Mich., founded the congregation in 2016. After outgrowing their first meeting spot in the first month, and then their second one six months later, the congregation settled into their current location.



\* \* \*

My first job in ministry was as a summer youth pastor in a Home Missions church in Amery, Wis. We met in a remodeled house, then a gymnasium, and I preached my first message in that congregation. It was a sermon on James 1, and I'm certain it was one of the least impressive messages given that year from a Lutheran pulpit, but I finished it, and the people were kind enough to say they liked it.

Looking back, I'm glad they lived by the adage: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."

After two years at AFLBS, I spent 12 weeks traveling to six Home Mission churches on a Barnabas Team. It was fascinating work, service done among tiny congregations, and I liked it: We canvassed neighborhoods inviting children to Christian day camps. We led youth Bible studies and used puppets in ministry, "I'm Slick, the Muscle Man," was one of the repeated dynamic lines of

a key grumpy and boastful character in those gospel-centered puppet skits. But the people in the churches, and the pastors and wives were not grumpy people. These church planters and their wives and their kids loved us and befriended us. They taught me how normal church planters are.

I became one of them.

\* \* \*

About 15 years ago, my home church started a new AFLC church plant

in a northwest suburb of Minneapolis.

My wife, Linda, and I felt called to help start that new church. Our home church, the church with the garage for a parsonage in the 1950s, sent us out in 2002 along with Bob and Naomi Halvorson and Josh and Amy Skogerboe, veteran ministry staffers at Emmaus. In all, 40 of us felt led to plant the new church in the suburb of St. Michael. Over the next five years, we watched the church grow with new faces and new stories. These people became our long-time friends, and remain so.

About 13 years ago, the AFLC Home Missions

director phoned us while we were on vacation in northern Minnesota. He invited us to shepherd a Home Mission work started five years earlier in Camarillo, Calif. The church was a good fit, he said.

"Tell Paul Nash no way," were the immediate words out of my wife's mouth. But after we visited, God changed her mind. "I think God wants us here," she whispered in my ear during our second visit.

We have been here ever since. We have watched Good Shepherd grow from a huddle of 40 in the old newspaper office to a family of stable attenders and growing believers. Gathering in a church building we acquired in 2010, we're making disciples in the center of town. These people have become our extended family.

\* \* \*

Now I am preparing to be the new AFLC home missions director.

Paul Nash has been a true friend to us. His predecessor in the Home Missions department was my first youth pastor at Emmaus, Elden Nelson. Along with Paul and Laurie Nash, Elden and his wife Faith have been like family to us. It is a pleasure to be associated with them.

Linda and I have some great memories from our time in ministry at AFLBS, and my heart still belongs in many ways to Calvary Free Lutheran Church of Fosston, Minn., where we learned to do pastoral ministry for four years in the 1990s.

But it seems like all the other most significant ministry memories we have experienced occurred in Home Missions churches. Of all the lessons I have learned over the years about church planting, these are the primary ones: The gospel of Jesus transforms people. Church planting is worth it. It takes a team. There's nothing new under the sun. Love covers a multitude of sins. It's not a program. The harvest is plentiful. And we have so much to learn.

We are planning to live in St. Michael and take part in the work as members of Living Hope, the AFLC church we helped plant 16 years ago. I began my new work half-time on September 1 and begin full-time in the home mission office on November 1.

Called by the Lord to serve you and plant churches, Linda and I are committed to serving you with everything we have and all the Lord has called us to do. We want to help free and living Lutheran congregations plant free and living Lutheran congregations. And we want to serve and support the families, leaders, and pastors of these churches.

It's going to be a great adventure, and we invite you to join us—like the pastor who knocked on my parent's front door in 1950. God planted a seed that is still bearing fruit.

*Johnson, Camarillo, Calif., was installed as the next Home Missions director at the 2018 Annual Conference.*





A vintage Corona typewriter is positioned on the right side of the page, resting on a dark, textured wooden surface. The typewriter is black with gold-colored keys and a large gold-colored carriage return wheel. The brand name 'CORONA' is visible on the front. In the top right corner, there is a white rectangular box containing the text 'WMF' in large, bold, black letters, with 'WOMEN'S MISSIONARY FEDERATION' in smaller, black, all-caps letters below it.

# WMF

WOMEN'S  
MISSIONARY  
FEDERATION

Y

ou may wonder what the WMF Resource Manual is all about. It is a resource tool

that the Women's Missionary Federation assembled to better explain who the WMF is, what special projects we support, and potential project ideas. There are seven different divisions in the three-ring binder.

**First:** In this section you will find a general overview of the WMF and a list of our publications and communication sites. Did you know that the WMF has a special pin that you can purchase for your WMF ladies? The pin can be purchased through the WMF treasurer.

**Second:** Included in this section is a list of the specific projects that are supported by the WMF, including the yearly project/prayer calendars as well as sections for Christian education, Home Missions, World Missions, and WMF General Fund. Each subdivision explains in more detail what the WMF support goes toward. Christian Education includes these projects: Parish Education (Ambassador Publications), Association Free Lutheran Bible School (AFLBS), and Association Free Lutheran

# THE RESOURCE MANUAL

BY LYNN WELLUMSON & DAWN JOHNSON

Theological Seminary (AFLTS). Specific projects are chosen to support in these areas. The Cradle Roll comes under this section, and we strive to make this project cover the life of a child from infant to adult. The Home Missions subdivision lists Home Missions congregations, their pastors and families, parish builders, and the Alaska Mission with a birthday list for them all. In World Missions we list our AFLC missionaries who are serving in our mission fields and on-loan to other organizations. We also list their birthdays and suggest ideas for encouraging our missionaries through giving and prayer. The WMF General Fund describes the operational expenses.

**Third:** Description of the national, district, and local levels of our WMF.

**Fourth:** A description on how to develop a WMF ministry and form leadership.

**Fifth:** In this section you will find a list of the Bible studies available to use for studies as a group and possibly on an individual basis or as an in-home study group. Also included are Bible study

leader helps, ideas for the Cradle Roll program, special emphasis ideas for mission programs, in honor or memorial, and ideas and guidelines on how to create your own programs.

**Sixth:** A current list of national officers with contact information, pictures of the WMF logo that you can use (a description of the logo is found in the introduction section), and the list of approved special projects for World Missions.

**Final section:** A history of the WMF from it beginnings, officers who have served and their years of service, conference information, and Bible studies throughout the years.

**Coming this fall:** updated information on the above projects listed, including a new Christmas program idea. Remember this material is not copyrighted so you can freely use it.

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





## AFLC Schools welcomes Andrew Peterson

The AFLC Schools welcomed students back to the new school year with a special concert on Labor Day featuring Christian recording artist Andrew Peterson. It was an intimate concert with guitar and piano accompaniment. Family and friends joined returning and new students for the special concert, which was also opened to the public. Also featured was Katy Dahl, a 2012 AFLBS graduate who is working on her second album. Ninety-one Bible school students have registered for the fall semester, including an incoming junior class of 53 students. Four new students have joined the junior seminary class.



Pictured (top left) is recording artist Andrew Peterson along with his accompanist. Katy Dahl (above) opened the concert with several songs she has written and recorded. Students (left) and their families and friends filled the chapel.



*"You have given me the heritage of those who fear your name"*  
(Psalm 61:5b).

O

ur eighth grandchild was born in July, and my 87-year-old father went to

heaven in August. Reflecting on life at both ends of the spectrum causes me to rejoice in the godly heritage I have received from my parents and am now passing on to my children, grandchildren, and the people with whom we work in Brazil. I am extremely thankful for the heritage that is mine by birth, having been baptized as an infant and raised in the Christian faith. It was natural for me to pass this on to my family.

Having a great heritage to pass on, however, is not limited to those who have the privilege of growing up in a Christian family. My dad came from a dysfunctional, non-Christian home, but came to know Jesus as a teenager. He became a wonderful pastor, husband, and father. This gives me hope when I see the wounded lives of those who have not yet experienced

# MISSIONS: PASS IT ON

BY BECKY ABEL

the love of God. Most of the people who participate in our churches in Brazil came to know Jesus because missionaries and other Christians taught them truths from God's Word. As people come to Christ they inherit God's exceedingly great and precious promises (II Peter 1:4). They become heirs in the Kingdom.

In June we had a surprise visit from a young man who lived with us 26 years ago. His mother died while he was a teenager and his father was a derelict. Juarez found a home with us when his neighbor, Alvaro, introduced him to us and invited him to participate in youth activities. Both of them came from difficult non-Christian homes. Today they have their own families and are passing on a heritage much different than the one they inherited from their own parents. They thank us for modeling a new way to live and for leading them to Christ. It's our privilege as Christians to offer a godly heritage to those around us, regardless of their past.

The words of a great hymn remind us that our most important mission in life is to spread the



Juarez and Alvaro (ARCA Bible Camp president) pictured between AFLC missionaries Paul and Becky Abel.

truths taught in the Scriptures:

"God's Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever.

To spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.

Through life it guides our way, in death it is our stay.

Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure throughout all generations" (Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig).

My father lived by faith and he died with the certainty of eternal life. The heritage he has left for his family and friends and parishioners lives on. I pray that I might be faithful in passing on this inheritance through the example of my life and the pure teaching of the Word to the next generation so that they, too, may know Jesus and the power of His resurrection. This is the heart of missions—pass it on.

*Abel and her husband, Pastor Paul Abel, serve as AFLC missionaries in Curitiba, Brazil.*

## PEOPLE &amp; PLACES

The **St. Paul church plant** (Twin Cities metro area), will host a kick off with an evening Bible study scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Oct. 16 at the home of Pastor Ben and Adela Jore, 1663 Victoria Road South, Mendota Heights, Minn. All are welcome.

**Alex Woodworth**, a 2016 graduate of AFLBS, has accepted a call as a parish assistant at King of Glory Lutheran Church, Shakopee, Minn.

Missionary, Bible scholar and translator **Dr. Norvald Yri**, of Norway, died Aug. 19. A funeral service was held in Norway on Aug. 21. Dr. Yri had taught as a visiting professor at the AFLC Schools and more recently taught at Fjellhaug Bible School near Oslo.

**Chad Friestad**, New Hope, Minn., has accepted a call to serve Calvary Free Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif. A 2017 graduate of AFLTS, Friestad currently works as the communications director for the AFLC Schools in Plymouth, Minn.

**Pastor Richard Gunderson**, Alexandria, Minn., has accepted a call to serve Spencer Creek Lutheran, Eugene, Ore. Gunderson had been serving the congregation as interim pastor since April.

## Fergus Falls congregation to mark 50 years of ministry

Members of Calvary Free Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls, Minn., will celebrate the congregation's 50th anniversary Oct. 27-28. Visitors are welcome to join the church for a weekend of events.

An evening of fellowship will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. on Oct. 27, and will include a meal, open mic time, a slide show of events through the years, and the opportunity to visit with the former pastors who served the congregation.

Morning worship will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 28 with participation by former pastors David Rinden, Willmore Gundersen, Rodger Olson, and Jason Holt, and sons of the congregation Pastor Eric Christenson and Pastor Brent Olson, along with host pastors Jim Johnson and Eric Rasmussen.

A fellowship dinner will be served immediately following the worship service. Following the dinner will be a time of continued fellowship with coffee and cake.



A group of new Parish Builders joined Home Missions staff and volunteers at the end of August at the Oasis in Springfield, Mo., for a week of training. Pictured, from left, are Paul and Laurie Nash, Bryce Timmerman, Rachel Hoiland, Josiah Fagerstrom, Abby Dahl, Pastor Rich Ramsbacher, Erin Anderson, Pastor Steve and Angie Lombardo, Stephanie, Stephen and Charlie Quanbeck, Julia Prichard, Eli and Elizabeth Neufeld, and Hannah White.

## New Parish Builders attend training week

Eight recent AFLBS graduates attended a training week Aug. 20-24 at the Oasis home in Springfield, Mo., as they prepare to begin serving as parish builders with AFLC Home Missions. The training sessions were led by current Home Missions director Pastor Paul Nash and Pastor Steve Lombardo. The volunteer workers are being sent out in pairs to serve in local congregations. Here's a look at the teams and their assignments:

- Bryce Timmerman and Josiah Fagerstrom are serving New Hope Free

Lutheran in Jamestown, N.D., under Pastor Steve Berntson.

- Rachel Hoiland and Abby Dahl are serving Immanuel Lutheran in Springfield, Mo., under Pastor Rich Ramsbacher.

- Erin Anderson and Hannah White will be serving Lutheran Church of Hope in Loveland, Colo., under Pastor Greg Schram.

- Eli and Elizabeth Neufeld will be serving Calvary Free Lutheran in Mesa, Ariz., under Pastor Dan Giles after their wedding at the end of September.

## Make plans to attend 2019 annual conference

If you are planning to attend the 2019 annual conference, scheduled for June 11-14 at Spruce Lake Retreat Center in Canadensis, Pa., housing registration is now available. The conference will be hosted by the Eastern District of the AFLC under the theme taken from Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

Conference committees will meet

beginning the morning of June 11, and conference business begins on June 12 and will conclude on June 14.

Registration for both rooms and meals at the camp is now open. You will need to call the camp (800-822-7505) to reserve a room and meals, and pay the camp directly. A comprehensive list of facilities is available via the camp website at [sprucelake.org](http://sprucelake.org).



W

hen I'm flying my airplane, I need three basic things to navigate: I need to know where I

came from, where I am now, and where I'm headed.

The same principle holds for any kind of planning. You need to know the past to understand how you got to where you are, and you need to learn from the past so you don't make the same mistakes again. Sometimes you discover that your past offers solutions to present challenges.

AFLC Home Missions is applying that principle in two areas: the Parish Builders program and the concept of Gatherings. Did you know that parish building isn't a new idea? It comes from the old Lutheran Free Church. My aunt Lois (Faust) Swanson, who recently passed away, was a parish builder under Pastor John Strand (the first president of the AFLC) when he was serving in Tioga, N.D. The information we gleaned from her was a huge help in launching the Parish Building ministry.

Gatherings is a term we've been using for our new congregational plants. It may

# HERITAGE SETS THE COURSE

BY PASTOR PAUL NASH

seem like a strange term for a mission church, but it's part of our tradition, too. In the 19th century, revivals broke out in Scandinavia. The state churches had lost spiritual life, and many people were hungry for the Word and the Spirit. These people gathered in private prayer meetings, often in homes, and over time revival broke forth. When some of them immigrated to the United States, revival spirit broke out here, too, helping to launch the old Lutheran Free Church.

Our present situation calls for a return to the Gathering model. In the past, a church plant could open a bank account and start doing business without a lot of legal red tape. But in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the laws changed. Now a new church can only get a bank account after all the organizational documents and a constitution are in place. This situation has affected financial giving by members. AFLC Home Missions continues to prayerfully plant and establish free and living congregations, but now we're employing the Gathering concept, looking

back to the old, informal pietistic prayer groups from the days of the revivals. By establishing informal Gatherings and doing business through our Home Missions office, we can help Christians, laymen and women, to exercise their citizenship in the believers' priesthood. They can participate in the local ministry, even though the new mission church is technically only an informal Gathering. We help them write a constitution and learn the principles of our AFLC, that where the Spirit of God dwells, there is freedom. When the time is right, and God gives the growth, the Gathering becomes a congregation.

Please pray that the godly heritage we have inherited will continue to be a shining light to the future, as we seek God our Lord through preaching the Word and administering the sacraments in truth and purity.

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*Nash, Solid Rock Free Lutheran, Anoka, Minn., is the director of AFLC Home Missions*



### Pastor Oliver Olson

Pastor Oliver Olson, 88, of Spring Valley, Calif., died Aug. 7. Born March 6, 1930, in Eastern Township, Minn., he was the son of Oscar and Huldah Olson. He married Patricia Moyer Sept. 18, 1953.

He graduated from Parkers Prairie High School and took over the family farm in 1950. He committed his life to the Lord in 1952 and attended the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis, where he met Pat. After marriage, they farmed until he was drafted in the Army in 1954. He trained as a radio operator, but was chosen by the chaplain to be his assistant. After his discharge, he attended the University of Minnesota and managed a dairy farm in Hugo, Minn. They returned to the home farm for three years. He entered full-time church service in 1960, serving Lutheran congregations in Duluth, Minn., South Minneapolis, and Fridley, Minn. He attended Northwestern Seminary and was ordained in 1969. He accepted a call to a Lutheran congregation in Hawthorne, Calif., in 1971, and attended a graduate school of theology. He accepted a call to teach at the California Lutheran Bible School in 1975. In 1976, he established the Omaha Lutheran Bible School and was the director until it closed in 1995. They moved to Murrieta, Calif., and began a teaching ministry called Living Word Ministries. He joined the AFLC clergy roster in 1997. They moved to Mount Miguel Covenant Village, Spring Valley, in 2003, and he continued teaching until 2016.

Surviving are his wife; two sons, Paul (Deb) Olson, and Daniel (Paula) Olson; three daughters, Christine Beird, Wendy Olson, and Cindy Pierce; one sister, Ruby Westad; 14 grandchildren; and 18 grandchildren.

The service was held Aug. 27 at Mount Miguel Covenant Village, Spring Valley, Calif.



### Marion Rieth

Marion Mae (Walth) Rieth, 77, of Wishek, N.D., died Aug. 9, 2018 in Kirkland, Wash. Born July 14, 1941, in Bismark, N.D., she was the daughter of Henry and Ida (Mensing) Walth. She married Pastor Robert (Bob) Rieth.

She graduated from Valley City State University and worked in the aerospace industry at Boeing as a program manager until retiring in 2015.

Surviving are her husband; one son, Paul Rieth; one daughter, Renae (Ron) Frye; one brother, Robert Walth; and four grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Aug. 18 at Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkland, with Pastor Nick Schultz officiating. A funeral service was held Aug. 25 at Grace Free Lutheran, Valley City, N.D., with Pastor Dennis Norby and Pastor John Rieth officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorials are requested to Media Fellowship International, P.O. Box 82685, Kenmore WA 98028.

## Ohio church members volunteer at ARC

In early August a group of five volunteers from Peace Free Lutheran, Canal Winchester, Ohio, traveled to the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis., for a work week. Why? The reason is that one of our members saw an invitation in *The Lutheran Ambassador* a few months ago to go out to the ARC to volunteer time and talents to the glory of God. ARC

Executive Director Kirk Rautio and his staff were fantastic in providing a project, room and board, and wonderful fellowship for our team. Thank you for highlighting the opportunity to volunteer. We thoroughly enjoyed it, and we're looking forward to sending a team next year. (Submitted by Pastor Michael Johnson)



## AUGUST MEMORIALS

### AFLBS

Palma Johnson,  
Wayne Deubner,  
Gene Berg, Ruth  
Claus, Glennis  
Anfinson, Pastor Al  
Monson, Marion  
Rieth

### AFLTS

Mark Amiot,  
Mabel Johnson

### FLAPS

Bob Dietsche

### Evangelism

Grace Loftsgard,  
Pastor Oliver Olson

### Home Missions

Pastor Oliver Olson

### World Missions

Merry Palmer, Mabel  
Johnson, Pastor  
Richard Dahlin

... in honor of

### World Missions

Pastor Dennis Gray

## AFLC BENEVOLENCES August 1-31, 2018

FUND	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$29,286	\$283,811	\$279,332
Evangelism	19,017	81,180	94,813
Youth Ministries	15,289	102,754	73,096
Parish Education	5,772	130,913	130,066
Seminary	21,180	187,733	169,021
Bible School	43,279	391,614	394,354
Home Missions	56,954	291,438	290,005
World Missions	22,738	253,425	297,765
Personal Support	39,760	457,980	406,040
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$253,329</b>	<b>\$2,180,847</b>	<b>\$2,134,493</b>

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



# TRANSITIONS AND TRIBUTES

It's a time of transitions on the AFLC Schools campus and at the administration center. Some who have labored for the Lord on behalf of our fellowship will no longer be with us, and they merit special recognition.

**Pastor Joel Rolf**, dean of the Bible school, concluded his years of ministry on the campus in June. He was a careful administrator, and I called him our "Barnabas" for the spirit of encouragement so freely shared with students, faculty, and



Pastor Robert Lee

staff. Faculty meetings were usually opened with his request that each would share special encouragements and blessings received since the previous meeting. His concern for the struggling students and those with special needs will especially be remembered, as he sought to help each one to succeed as much as possible.

A replacement has already been installed for **Pastor Paul Nash**, our second full-time director of Home Missions, and they will be working together for some weeks of training this fall. Nash assumed the position during a time of transition, when the number of opportunities for planting new congregations was decreasing and the cost of doing it was increasing. Working with his Home Missions Committee, he sought to meet the challenges with new and creative approaches, with a significant emphasis on training. Serving with him for many years, I have always been grateful for his genuine servant spirit, and if there is a need of any kind he would usually be the first one to help in any way possible. (I've experienced several flights with him as the pilot, too, and that's another story.)

**Pastor Del Palmer**, our second full-

time director of World Missions, has announced his resignation, and currently the World Missions Committee is prayerfully seeking a new director. He will not be easy to replace, and the missionaries speak of his pastoral care for them and their families, as well as his heart for the work. I traveled with him to India and was impressed by his calm adaptability to each and every circumstance, and his traveling among our congregations to publicize and promote the cause of World Missions has made a definite impact.

Each of these men has not labored alone but has enjoyed a partnership in the gospel with a gifted and supportive wife. **Mary Ann Rolf** shares her husband's encouraging spirit, too,

and served at his side as a gracious hostess on innumerable occasions. The flower beds at the entrance to the campus, where I've seen her on her hands and knees many times, will miss her special attention. The same servant spirit that characterizes our outgoing Home Mission director also describes **Laurie Nash**,

his partner in ministry. "Open heart, open home" could well have been her motto over the years as she welcomed to their home countless guests for shorter and longer stays, and the last few years have been especially difficult as she helped care for her parents before they passed away. Our campus was also blessed with her service as an advisor and friend to our international students. The offices of the Bible school and Parish Education, as well as World Missions, all benefited from the dedicated labors over the years of **Karen Palmer**, who has also been able to share in some of her husband's international travels, ministering to the missionaries and especially to the

national women believers. She cared for Del's parents at home until his mother passed away this summer, and they are currently at home alone together for the first time in many years.

The final tribute is addressed to **Larry (Lars) Walker**, whose full-time position as AFLC Schools librarian and manager of the Book Nook has been eliminated, effective in August, by the Board of Trustees. The Parish Education department has assumed the task of handling the sale of texts for the classes, and changes in the field of library science and requirements of the accrediting agency led to the board's action. Larry first came to us as administrative assistant to the Home Missions director, and his more

*"Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to give recognition to those who labor among you and lead you in the Lord and admonish you"*  
(1 Thessalonians 5:12, CSB).

recent service as librarian seems to have been a niche that suited him well. Students speak especially of appreciating his chapel messages and his meetings as a published author with a group of aspiring writers (the "Inklings"), and hopefully there will be future opportunities for part-time service with the library and archives.

Brothers and sisters, we honor each of you, recognizing with love and appreciation your labors among us and the unique examples of godly service that you have set. May God continue to bless, keep, and use you!

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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

*association retreat center*

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# LEAVING A LEGACY OF FAITH

BY KIRK RAUTIO

**T**he blessing of heritage is incalculable in the life of an organization like the Association Retreat Center.

In particular I have had the blessing of working with those who have shaped the heritage of not only the ARC but also of the AFLC as a whole.

Over the past 18 months, I have witnessed the legacy of faith, support, tradition, and fellowship that is deeply and firmly rooted in the AFLC through the ARC—moreover in Christ, and on this we firmly stand. This year we celebrated the home going of Bob Dietsche and last year celebrated that of his wife, Carol. These two were pillars of our community who left a legacy of faith which helped establish the ARC and its ministry. They also were firm supporters of the AFLC and its ministries.

There are other countless men and women who have set foot on the ARC's property in western Wisconsin, and who have stepped through the doors of AFLC congregations, and in doing so they have left a legacy of faith.

Psalm 145:4 says, "One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts." This verse speaks to what I have learned in my time as director of the ARC. We minister to those who enter our doors that they might witness the legacy of faith that has been built from those who have gone on before and from those who continue to live out lives of faith founded on our Lord Jesus.

The AFLC's ministries and its congregations continue to cultivate a living legacy. We labor in the fields while they are "white unto harvest" so that the living

legacy of faith alone, Scripture alone, grace alone, and Christ alone will continue on for future generations to bring glory to God alone. This is what we are building together in the AFLC: a living heritage of faith. Next year the ARC will mark 40 years of ministry, and we are looking forward to celebrating our great God of wonders and the miraculous things He has done. We also look forward as the AFLC and the ARC partner together for the next 40 years of ministry, that we might leave a living legacy of faith for those who are yet to come.

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*Rautio is the executive director of the Association Retreat Center, located near Osceola, Wis.*