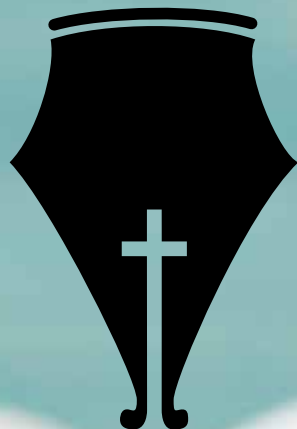


THE 

AUGUST 2016

LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR



It is written

[THE 2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE]



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

AUGUST 2016
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EDITOR

Pastor Robert L. Lee
rlee@aflc.org

MANAGING EDITOR

Ruth Gunderson
ruthg@aflc.org

CIRCULATION

Charlotte Fruehauf
charlotte@aflc.org

EDITORIAL BOARD

Oryen Benrud
Pastor Jerry Moan
Pastor James L. Johnson

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Phone (763) 545-5631;
fax 763-545-0079.

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

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THE NEED FOR FORGIVENESS

BY PASTOR TOM PARRISH

One of the hallmarks of the early Christian church was their ability to love one another in practical ways. Tertullian (160-220 AD) was a Christian theologian in a pagan society of great sensuality. As he compared the love of Christians with the love of pagans, he reported that even the pagans were astounded at the depth of love and sacrifice the Christians had for one another. In fact he reports the pagans saying with admiration, "See how these Christians love one another!" It is a powerful statement.

What is going to make unbelievers of our day sit up and notice the reality of Jesus among us? One of the major ways we can express genuine love is when we openly confess our sins and seek forgiveness from one another. I recently asked several older Christians to add up the number of times Christians in their church openly admitted their sin and asked for forgiveness. Not one of them ever recalled that happening. This is to our shame.

When my son, Tim, was 10 years old I blamed him for a lamp being broken in the living room and sent him to his room. Further investigation revealed that it was not Tim who broke the lamp but one of his brothers. I went to Tim's room, opened the door and sat on the bed next to him. "Tim," I said, "I was wrong about the lamp. I sinned against you and against Jesus by not having all the facts. Please forgive me." Tim threw himself into my arms and said that it was okay. "No Tim,"

I said, "it is not okay. You need to forgive me for Jesus' sake and say so." A little bewildered Tim said, "Dad I forgive you, for Jesus sake." It was a powerful lesson.

Years later Tim and his wife were at our house and got into an argument. I could hear them in the other room. Finally Tim said, "Kelly, forgive me, I was wrong. I sinned against you and against the Lord Jesus." Kelly, being the gracious forgiving person she is, quickly said, "Oh, Tim I love you." Tim wasted no time. "No, I sinned. You need to say to me, 'I forgive you for Jesus sake.'" This she did.

Their willingness to recognize that sin is a two-way street, with the person we have sinned against and against Jesus, has sustained them through 15 years of marriage and raising three boys. Verbalizing our sin, asking for forgiveness, and admitting our sin is not only against another but also against Jesus, are some of the first major steps to having healthy relationships.

Try this experiment and let me know how it goes: When you sin against someone tell them, "I have sinned against you and against the Lord Jesus, forgive me." Help them to offer forgiveness for Jesus' sake. It will be a life-changing moment.

Parrish, Mendota Heights, Minn., operates Stepping Into Eternity Ministries, which develops discipleship materials and seminars (toeternity.org).

"It is written." As simple as these words are, they form one of the boldest statements ever made, especially when they are contrasted with the background of mankind's fall into sin.

—Pastor Del Palmer, director of World Missions

In a world where empty philosophies and false teachings abound, our selected conference theme, "It is written" (based on Matthew 4:4, 7 and 10), is an appropriate affirmation of the supreme importance of standing firm on the Word of God and "holding fast the word of life" (Philippians 2:16a). ... The entirety of the written Word points to Jesus the Savior of the world.

—Marian Christopherson, director of Parish Education

I hope we as the church never get confused that what the authorities of the kingdoms of this world decide does not alter in the least bit what God has written in His Word.

—Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president

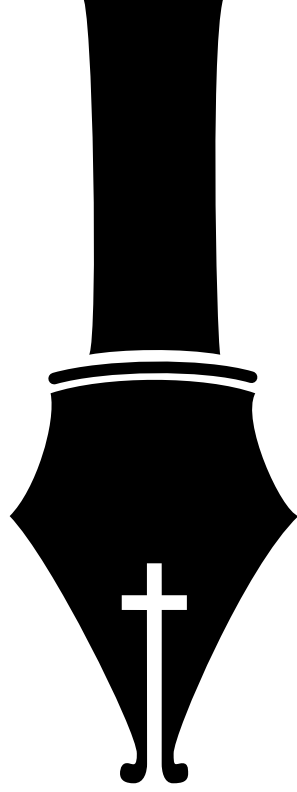
Jesus did not endure the temptations of Satan as well as the sufferings on the cross for us just to have Bible studies. Bible study is an important part of spiritual growth, but Jesus' great love for the world is calling all Christians to make disciples.

—Pastor Tim Johnson, Commission on Evangelism

AFLC Youth Ministries exists to win teenagers to Jesus, to build them up in God's Word and God's love, and to equip them to live out their faith and to share their faith with others, with the goal of multiplying maturing teen disciples of Jesus Christ. The Word of God is active in each arm of this mission.

—Pastor Jason Holt, director of Youth Ministry





It is written

BY PASTOR ROBERT LEE

“IT IS WRITTEN” (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10) was the theme of the 2016 Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC), meeting on June 14-17 at the denomination’s retreat center near Osceola, Wis., with 488 registered in attendance.

The opening service on Tuesday evening was led by Pastor Tom Gilman, Bloomington, Minn., following the traditional order of worship from the Ambassador Hymnal, and featured music by the AFLBS Ambassadors and the Haining Family. A remembrance of departed pastors and wives was read by Pastor Peter Franz, Maple Grove, Minn. The message on the conference theme text was preached by Pastor Andy Coyle, Rapid City, S.D., and the service concluded with the Lord’s Supper.

All three of the national officers were reelected on the first ballots: Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Plymouth, Minn., president; Pastor Peter Franz, vice-president; and Pastor Brian Davidson, Dickinson, N.D., secretary.

The daily prayer hours were led by Pastor Henry Mohagen, Reva, S.D.

The report of the Coordinating Committee noted that 11 pastors were added to the regular roster since the last conference, and 10 pastors

to the fellowship or licensed roster. President Korhonen noted, however, that the AFLC faces a serious clergy shortage, and called upon the conference to pray for 40 new pastors.

New congregations added to the membership roster are: Cross

and Crown, Montebello, Calif.; Shiloh, Rapid City, S.D.; Bethany, Viborg, S.D.; Stronghold, Detroit, Mich.; and Good Shepherd, China City, N.C. Four congregations disbanded and were removed from the roster, and one withdrew.

A major item of business was the consideration of a new field of world missions outreach. In his report to the conference, Director Del Palmer told the story of a request for affiliation received last year from a pastor ordained by the Brazil AFLC who was serving a Portuguese-speaking congregation in Geneva, Switzerland. Our sister association in Brazil has already made a decision to “pay, promote, and provide” for the new congregation, and now our conference was asked to decide what our involvement could be. After much discussion, the following resolution was approved:

WHEREAS, the AFLC World Missions Committee has asked us to pray about

starting mission work in Switzerland/Europe,

AND WHEREAS, we have been encouraged to help AFLC World Missions determine God’s will,

BE IT RESOLVED that AFLC World Missions continue to investigate what it will take to work with AFLC-Brazil and El-Shadai Evangelical Church and move forward as God leads in starting a mission field in Switzerland/Europe.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we celebrate what God is doing in Geneva and that we pray for God’s blessings on them.

A highlight of the conference was the introduction by the Board of Publications and Parish Education of the latest volume in the Heritage Series, a history of AFLC mission work in Brazil entitled, “Footprints of the Faithful: Fifty Years of the AFLC Mission in Brazil,” authored by Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn. This is an especially appropriate year for this book, since it is the 50th anniversary of our sister church. (The mission director’s report recognized three of our pioneer Brazil missionaries—John Abel, Alvin Grothe, and George Knapp—all of whom celebrate their 90th birthday this year.)

Reports from both the seminary and Bible school noted an encouraging increase in enrollment for the fall semester. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School (AFLBS). In his report to the conference, Pastor Joel Rolf, dean of the school, issued an invitation to come to the campus on July 28-31 for a three-day festival and all-school reunion. All costs for the event have been underwritten, and all gifts given will go toward student scholarships.

Steve Jankord, chairman of the Board of Trustees, explained a change in the by-laws of AFLC Schools that was approved by the corporation. In the future the president of the schools will be elected by the conference, but the dean of the Bible school and the dean of the





TOP: Pastor Andy Coyle, Rapid City, S.D., gave the message during the opening service of the 2016 Annual Conference. ABOVE: Members of the Haining Family, a gospel musical group from Branson, Mo., were featured during the opening service. LEFT: Pastor Connely Dyrud, Maple Grove, Minn., and Pastor Curt Emerson, Wadena, Minn., shared a hug and a laugh during a break from the business meetings. OPPOSITE PAGE: A vacation Bible school was offered for children during the daytime.



TOP: Parliamentarians Lyle Westrum and Dr. John Eidsmoe confer during the business session. ABOVE: Linda Korhonen (left), Plymouth, Minn., and Pam Kuhns, El Campo, Texas, chat during a coffee break. TOP RIGHT: Pastor Jarrod Hylden, Beresford, S.D., addresses the conference during discussion on a resolution. RIGHT: Bob Dietsche, Osceola, Wis., gives rides to kids during recreation time. OPPOSITE PAGE: (from right) Jordan Langness, Beulah, N.D., Pastor David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa., and Pastor Jason Gudim, Golden Valley, Minn., discuss the language of a resolution during a break.

theological seminary will be called by the board rather than elected.

A special opportunity to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation next year was announced. A tour group to some of Luther sites in Europe is being planned for next summer. Bill Kroll, a graduate of AFLBS, is organizing the tour, and Pastor Ken Moland will serve as a guide. Wittenberg, Leipzig, Wartburg, Worms, and Halle are some of the sites that will be visited.

The conference received greetings from representatives of the AFLC-Canada, Lutherans for Life, and East European Missions Network.

Responding to concerns over recent developments in our country, the following resolution was approved:

WHEREAS Scripture clearly teaches, and we sincerely believe that every human being has been designed with unique value and identity inherent in the image and character of God (Gen. 1:27-28; Matt. 19:4),

AND WHEREAS this image includes the unique purposes of both male and female genders,

AND WHEREAS various governmental and cultural forces are currently seeking to silence this conviction and force the adherence and promotion of anti-biblical practices of human sexuality and gender identity,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Annual conference of the AFLC stands on the Word of God and its teaching (e.g. Exodus 20 and Leviticus 18) concerning human sexuality and gender identity,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AFLC encourage all its congregations and individual members through their mission and vocations to resist these influences, and to compassionately minister to those who, being deceived by the spirit of this age, are confused about their gender, offering God-pleasing,

Word-centered remedies and assistance, and seek to reach them with the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Women's Missionary Federation (WMF), an auxiliary of the church body, conducted their annual convention during the opening day, as the various conference committees studied ministry reports and prepared resolutions. The WMF gathering included a Bible study and workshops, plus a business meeting, during which Lynn Wellumson, Williston, N.D., was reelected president; Esther Hylden, Park River, N.D., reelected first vice-president; and JoyAnn Dahl, Plummer, Minn., was reelected recording secretary.

The conference concluded with an Ordination Service, led by Pastor Steve Carlson, Bethel Park, Pa. The speaker was Pastor Tom Schierkolk, Eben Junction, Mich. The following men were ordained by AFLC President Lyndon Korhonen: Pastor Jon Langness, Ishpeming, Mich., who accepted a call to serve Abiding Word, Deshler, Neb.; Pastor Brandon Marschner, South Heart, N.D., called to Bethel, Culbertson, and Faith, Brockton, Mont.; Pastor Aaron Olson, Minneapolis, called to Calvary, Arlington, S.D.; and Pastor David Ryerson, Sioux Falls, S.D., called to Hope, Ishpeming, Mich.

The 2017 Annual Conference will meet June 13-16 on the campus of the AFLC Schools in Plymouth, Minn.

Lee, a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn., is the editor.





TOP LEFT: Pastor Sam Wellumson (from left), Pastor Lee Kuhns, and Pastor Dennis Norby catch up during a break. TOP RIGHT: Kristi Swenson gave a devotional during the WMF Day. MIDDLE RIGHT: Prayer time is a key aspect of every annual conference. RIGHT: Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, president, led the business sessions. ABOVE: Pastor Tom Schierkolk gave the message at the closing service.



TOP: Pastor Richard Erickson, Brooklyn Park, Minn., participates in the music worship during the opening service of the 2016 Annual Conference. ABOVE: Amy Dalager, Argyle, Minn., and Mary Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn., talk during the business session.



ABOVE: Former AFLC missionaries to Brazil were honored during the Mission Festival Service when a book marking 50 years of work in Brazil was presented to the conference. Pictured are (from left) Pastor George and Helen (near center) Knapp, Pastor John and Ruby Abel, and Pastor Connelly Dyrud.

RIGHT: Matthew Pillman, a student at the Free Lutheran Seminary, counted ballots during the conference business sessions.

2017 COMMITTEES

One-year terms

Committee No. 1

Pastor Ray Ballmann, Kopperl, Texas
Amy Dalager, Argyle, Minn.
Bill Fish, Everett, Wash.
Joel Erickson, Oslo, Minn.
Pastor Jim Johnson, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Committee No. 2

Pastor Ron Brubakken, Argyle, Wis.
Scott Carmichael, St. Francis, Kan.
Harold Erickson, Wadena, Minn.
John Keranen, Menahga, Minn.
Pastor Barry Nelson, Tripp, S.D.
Pastor Adam Osier, Finleyville, Pa.
Bill Sonmor, Dalton, Minn.

Committee No. 3

Don Burmeister, Mount Vernon, S.D.
Doug Hertlein, Carroll, Ohio
Pastor Micah Hjermstad, Fargo, N.D.
Ken Pederson, Fertile, Minn.
Pastor Craig Wentzel, Edmore, N.D.

Committee No. 4

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Albert Engevik, Eden, S.D.
Pastor David Franz, Radcliffe, Iowa
Pastor Les Galland, Shakopee, Minn.
Betty Luebke, Parkston, S.D.
Carol Quern, Oslo, Minn.

Committee No. 5

Wayne Gerlach, Mitchell, S.D.
Pastor David Johnson, Boyertown, Pa.
Richard Luebke, Parkston, S.D.
Edward VanScoten, Kalispell, Mont.
Victor Wieczorek, Mount Vernon, S.D.



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Eastern

Mark Riley, Bethel Park, Pa.

Eastern North Dakota

Vince Larson, Buffalo, N.D.

Illinois

Cliff Seldal, Dekalb, Ill.

Lake Superior

Phil Johnson, Esko, Minn.

Minneapolis

Kristin Fritz, Minneapolis, Minn.

Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado

Pastor Ken Hart, Fairbury, Neb.

North Central Minnesota

Pastor Alan Arneson, Fosston, Minn.

One-year terms

Northern Michigan

Guy Murray, Champion, Mich.

Northwestern Minnesota

Tim Fugleberg, Roseau, Minn.

Pacific Northwest

Pastor Cal Willard, Everett, Wash.

South Central

Pastor David Lusk, Durant, Okla.

South Dakota

Carl Buenning, Parkston, S.D.

Southwest Central Minnesota

Loren Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Southwestern

Mark Gustafson, Apache Junction, Ariz.

Western ND/Eastern Montana

Debbie Iverson, Tioga, N.D.

2016 ELECTION RESULTS

OFFICERS

President

Three-year term

Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Plymouth, Minn.

Vice President

One-year term

Pastor Peter Franz, Maple Grove, Minn.

Secretary

One-year term

Pastor Brian Davidson, Dickinson, N.D.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Coordinating Committee

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Tim Johnson, Pipestone, Minn.
- Layman, five-year term
Dr. Daniel Mundfrom, Richmond, Ky.

Schools Board of Trustees

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Martin Horn, Kenyon, Minn.
- Layman, five-year term
Gary Erickson, Dalton, Minn.

ARC Board

- Layman, five-year term
No quorum

Home Missions Committee

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Dale Finstrom, Fertile, Minn.

Bay Broadcasting

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

FLAPS Board of Managers

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Tom Tuura, Stover, Mo.
- Layman, five-year term
Joel Forness, Wahpeton, N.D.

COLLOQUY

One-year terms

Pastor Brett Boe, Shakopee, Minn.
Pastor Jason Gudim, Golden Valley, Minn.
Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.
Pastor Tim Skramstad, Eagan, Minn.
Pastor Kirk Thorson, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, Minn.

World Missions

- Layman, five-year term
Scott Erickson, Badger, Minn.
- Layman, four-year term
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn.

Commission on Evangelism

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Rich Ramsbacher, Springfield, Mo.

Board of Publications & Parish Ed.

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Dennis Norby, Enderlin, N.D.

Youth Board

- Layman, five-year term
Sharon Rykhus, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Benefits Board

- Pastor, five-year term
Pastor Brad Putnam, Ontonagon, Mich.
- Layman, four-year term
Tony Onnen, Cokato, Minn.

Budget Analysis Committee

- Layman, three-year term
Ken Penn, Piedmont, S.D.
- Layman, three-year term
Roger Benson, Minneapolis

CORPORATIONS

Five-year terms

Mission Corporation

Don Berge, Fargo, N.D.
Carl Busse, Humboldt, Tenn.
Paul Christenson, Fergus Falls, Minn.
Robert Christian, Newark, Ill.
Pastor Andy Coyle, Rapid City, S.D.
Ben Dahl, Camarillo, Calif.
Robert Dietsche, Osceola, Wis.
Scott Erickson, Badger, Minn.
Tim Erhardt, Lake Stevens, Wash.
Glenn Espe, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Pastor Dale Finstrom, Fertile, Minn.
Pastor James Fugleberg, Moorhead, Minn.
Lois Grothe, Astoria, Ore.
Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bagley, Minn.
Pastor Lynn Kinneberg, McVille, N.D.
Pastor Allen Monson, Mesa, Ariz.
Glenn Mork, Buffalo, Minn.
Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City
Eldwyn Van Bruggen, Valley City, N.D.
Jeremy Zeltinger, Valley City, N.D.

Schools Corporation

John Amdahl, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Larry Behne, Lowden, Iowa
Lyle Forde, Lake Stevens, Wash.
David Fugleberg, Lakeville, Minn.
Pastor Earl Korhonen, Radcliffe, Iowa
Karen Pederson, Tioga, N.D.
Pastor Stephen Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont.
Doug Swanson, Swanville, Minn.
John Talley, Newark, Ill.
Pastor George Winston, Bruce, S.D.

ARC Corporation

No quorum



TOP: WMF Day attendees closed the day's activities by joining hands and singing, "Bind Us Together." ABOVE: Lynn Wellumson and Barb Strand attach flowers to a cross during the memorial service. TOP LEFT: Pastor Todd Schierkolk, missionary to Mexico, was the featured speaker at the Mission Festival Service. LEFT: Volunteers count ballots during the business meeting.

Knit together in love **THROUGH CHRIST**

BY JOYANN DAHL

Nearly 200 women met June 14 at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis., for the annual Women's Missionary Federation Day under the theme "Knit Together in Love Through Christ." Lynn Wellumson, president of the national WMF, welcomed everyone, and Kristi Swenson, Wheatland, Iowa, shared in devotions with the theme, "Available to be led by the Spirit of God."

Members of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School's Ambassadors summer team led the group in praise and worship, including the theme song, "Bind Us Together," followed by a Bible study, "Baptized into Christ: The Book of Colossians Teaches us about our Baptisms," taught by Jeanette Berntson, Ulen, Minn.

Other workshops during the day included the presentation, "The Church and The Veteran ... Knit Together," from Mary Ann Ward, Pelican Rapids, Minn., and a presentation on photography and missions called "The Fundamentals of Seeing Light," by Ruth Gunderson, Plymouth, Minn., and Jon and Heidi Nelson, Golden Valley, Minn.

Our morning continued with a memorial service, which was held to remember the women who have passed on during the year. Theresa Thayer, Finleyville, Pa., led the service with a presentation entitled, "The Gift." Flowers decorated the wooden and wire cross as a reminder of what Christ has done for us.

During the noon hour, a lunch was served by the ARC staff in the Tabernacle, and the afternoon began with the AFLBS Ambassadors leading in praise and worship. Linda Mohagen, Reva, S.D., shared while illustrating with chalk, "The Living Church." The last workshop was presented

by Marian Christopherson, director of Parish Education, and Bonnie Handsaker, a member of the Board of Publications and Parish Education, titled, "What do I want for my Children?"

Throughout the day a hands-on project was offered in the form of coffee cozies, which were knit and donated by Jeannette Benson. The ladies were given opportunities throughout the day to decorate these beautiful coffee cozies with buttons and/or beads placed on pins. It was a busy table at times throughout the day.

At the close of the last session, members of the WMF National Board presided over the business meeting. President Wellumson announced the morning offering amount of \$4,626.

All reports were approved with some friendly amendments. Members of the Nominating Committee presented names for election to the positions of vice president and recording secretary, as presented by Beth Talley, Newark, Ill. By ballot election, Esther Hylden, Park River, N.D., was re-elected as vice president, and JoyAnn Dahl, Thief River Falls, Minn., was re-elected as recording secretary by a unanimous vote. A yearly budget of \$65,025 was approved for 2017, as presented by Deb Benson, WMF treasurer. Lori Willard, second vice president, read the 2016 resolutions, which included some changes. Members of the WMF Board wish to thank members of the resolutions and nominating committees for all their many hours of dedication. Esther Hylden closed in prayer, followed by small group prayer time. Members of the WMF Advisory Board met briefly following the business meeting and prayer time.

On the morning of June 15, Esther Hylden and JoyAnn Dahl hosted a program during the

WMF breakfast. Dressed in 1960s outfits, members of the WMF board reenacted the beginnings of AFLBS at a mock WMF Bible study meeting in 1966 at Bethel Free Lutheran in Grafton, N.D. Then, Liz McCarlson, the women's resident head at AFLBS, gave a presentation on "Teaching, Training, Transforming."

In the evening, the Missions Festival Service began with a prelude by Pastor Charles and Joyce Knapp featuring harps. The service was led by Pastor Sam Wellumson, East Grand Forks, Minn., and Loeil Dyrud, Thief River Falls, gave an introduction to the recently published book, "Footprints of the Faithful: Fifty Years of the AFLC Mission in Brazil." The service speaker was Pastor Todd Schierkolk, AFLC missionary to Mexico, speaking on "The Foreign Culture of Knitting." The offering for the evening was \$3,769.41.

The next WMF Day will be June 13, 2017, at the AFLC headquarters in Plymouth, Minn.

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



BUILDING

& the BUILDER

Revival: Let it begin with us

BY PASTOR FRITJOF MONSETH



ou know, it makes a big difference whether you are trying to build a congregation or an organization.” Those were the words of the late Pastor Charles Crouch to me as

we were looking over the simple facilities of the newly constructed Penn Avenue Church in Minneapolis. He and I had dropped to the rear of the line as we followed members of the Lutheran Free Church Home Mission Board on an inspection tour of mission projects in the Twin Cities area some years ago.

I have often since thought on those words and the discussion following with Pastor Crouch relative to congregational work. We were agreed that if a pastor’s goal is primarily a big, self-sustaining, smoothly running organization of people with more or less religious interest, he will employ means and methods that will achieve that goal. He may be conservative or liberal in his theological views. All his moves will be geared to build an organization. His role will, in some measure, be like that of the respected “separator-tender” on the threshing machine of about a generation ago. He must keep every moving part well-lubricated and must be on the alert to avoid “hot boxes” at whatever the cost. He will faithfully feed the ego of every member of the congregation, thinking he is justified in so doing for the sake of the organization. He will make it his aim to involve each one in some form of church activity no matter what his spiritual status might be. Unconverted men will be called Christians, some will be encouraged to preach, and all will be urged to pray, to witness, and to tithe.

If, on the other hand, a pastor’s goal is to build a living congregation, his whole approach will of necessity be radically different. His efforts will be directed toward the spiritual awakening and conversion of people for whom he is responsible and toward the true spiritual growth of believers. Pastor Crouch noted that the spiritually concerned pastor would be especially

aware of two great needs:

First, the pastor will see his crying need of the power of God. Nothing less than the power of the Holy Spirit can energize the Word preached so that spiritual life can be created in a sinner’s heart.

Private prayer and the prayer together with others who know the Lord therefore become a prime necessity in the building of a living congregation. An organization may be built without prayer, but not a congregation. I know from observation that Pastor Crouch lived out this conviction in the parishes he served.

Second, the pastor will see his great need of help from other spiritual gifts than his own which the Lord has given to His church. He will open the door for evangelists and teachers whom the Lord has called. He will by faith take the risk of an upheaval in the congregation in order that a spiritual awakening might take place. Most of us would like to have a spiritually alive congregation without any commotion whatsoever. But there is a price to pay if men and women shall be rescued from the clutches of the devil just as there is a price to pay in order to rescue a nation from bondage and tyranny. There is a price to pay when a man is born again just as there is a price to pay when a babe is born into the world.

We can choose one of the two courses in our fellowship of free Lutheran congregations. We can occupy ourselves either with building church organizations or living congregations. If we fail to work for spiritual awakening and revival, we are eventually doomed to die in spite of our principles, in spite of our orthodoxy, in spite of our zeal for numerical growth, and in spite of the open doors God is giving to us.

Monseth was x. This article was originally printed in the January 28, 1964, issue of The Lutheran Ambassador, titled, “A congregation or an organization?”

We spent awhile at our recent pastor conference in Fargo discussing spiritual awakening. We agreed, of course, that one is needed. We recognized that there may be false awakenings; that is, emotional stirrings that are more man-induced than Holy Spirit-produced. Such are to be avoided. One pastor raised the haunting question, “Do we really want revival?”

One other point of agreement in the discussion was that we must first of all be concerned about our need for awakening in the Association. Other church bodies may need reviving, but we recognized that we need it as much as anyone. Therefore, we do not feel free to point the finger at others when our own need is so great.

Again that question, “Do we really want revival?” It will cost something. It will change the lives of saved and unsaved. It will raise the kingdom of God and the will of God to their proper places. But the results, the fruit of it, will be as great treasure.

Where shall it begin? With my neighbor who has obviously been at fault? In that congregation out yonder which is so dead? No, Lord, let it begin with me.

Excerpted from the January 28, 1964, editorial.



Four men ordained at conference



Four men were ordained during the closing service of the 2016 Annual Conference. Pictured (above, from left) are Jon Langness, Brandon Marschner, Aaron Olson, and David Ryerson. Ryerson graduated from the University of Northwestern St. Paul, and the other men graduated from the Free Lutheran Seminary.



BY PASTOR TODD SCHIERKOLK

Something was going on in Luís' heart. My first glimpse of it came at our little church's Christmas dinner in Jerez, Mexico, when we were sharing about blessings we had received from God over the past year. Luís raised his hand to speak, but when he tried, no words came out. He simply put his hand over his tear-filled eyes and waved us on.

Luís is a 17-year-old who hasn't finished junior high. When he started attending our church and youth group about two years ago, he willingly went along with our Bible-reading plan for the young people, and enjoyed helping with our vacation Bible school and puppet team. In the time we've known him, however, there have been some particularly special moments that have brought insight into how the Spirit of God is working in his heart.

The first took place during our evangelistic Bible study. We were about three-quarters of the way through the 12-week study, and after finishing the lesson I was reading the follow-up questions. "Is Jesus Christ your Savior?" I asked.

Quite literally before I finished the question, Luís burst out with his answer: "¡Sí!"

Everyone in the study was so startled that Luís sheepishly looked down at his booklet, while I marveled and moved on to the next question.

Another insightful moment took place at our youth group meeting. Each week the kids would read a chapter from Genesis and comment on why a particular verse had grabbed their attention. But since Luís entered the study midstream, it surprised me when I found out that he had gone back to chapter one, caught up to us, kept reading, and was now well into Leviticus.

"What do you think of Leviticus, Luís?" I asked, delighted that he had gotten so far.

"There's a lot of blood and sacrifices," he responded.



DELIGHTING IN GOD'S WORD

"Those are pictures of Jesus and His sacrifice," I explained, and I could see that he understood.

Just before our departure for deputation this past summer, Luís mentioned that he was now reading in Numbers.

"What should I do when I finish?" he asked me.

Thinking he meant the book of Numbers, I said that he should just read the next book.

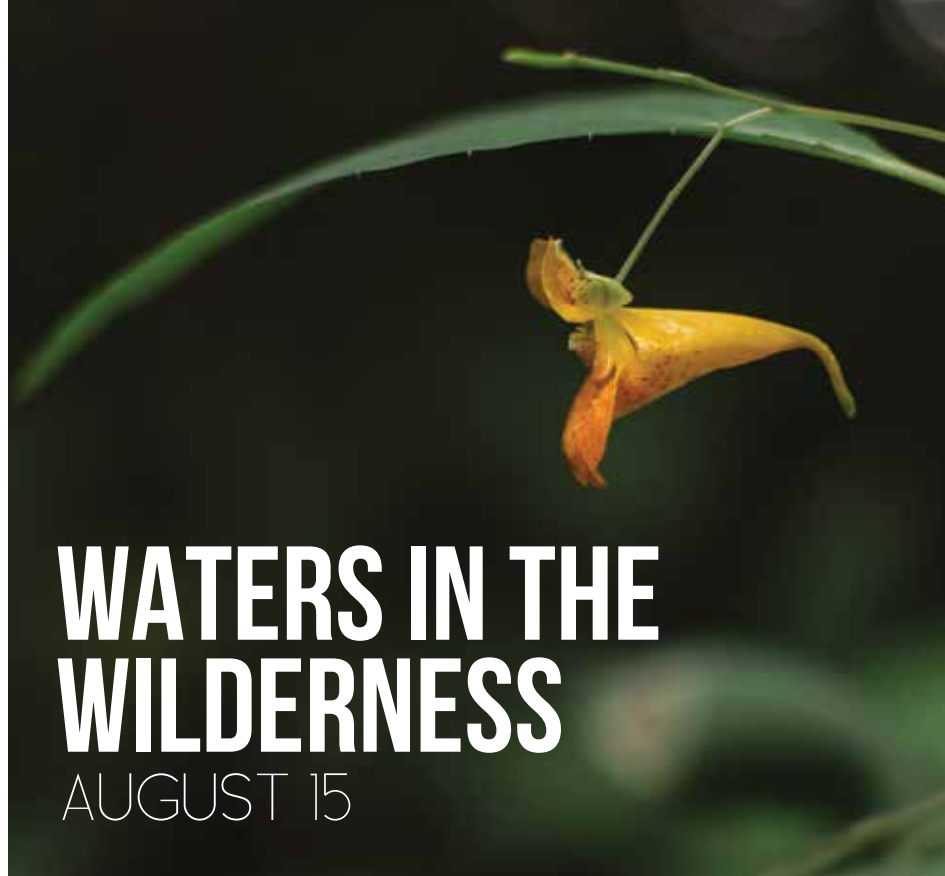
"No, I mean when I *finish*."

I was confused. "Do you mean when you finish the Old Testament?" I asked.

"No," he said. "When I finish the whole thing."

While I stood there amazed, he explained that his plan was to read the whole Bible this summer. And whether or not he actually accomplishes his goal, I have to smile when I see this desire the Holy Spirit has put in his heart as he learns to walk with His Savior. It brings to mind the wise man's words at the beginning of the book of Psalms, "Blessed is the man ... [whose] delight is in the law of the LORD."

Schierkolk is an AFLC missionary serving in Jerez, Mexico, with his wife, Barb,



WATERS IN THE WILDERNESS

AUGUST 15

"And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see" (Luke 10:23).

Is there any greater gift than sight? This question has possibly been discussed many times without any certain conclusions having been reached. Perhaps it is not the gift itself, but the use we make of it, that makes the difference. There are those who have done very well in the world without the gift of sight. Some have even put to shame the many who have sight. It is not strange that Jesus wished to imprint upon the minds of His disciples the importance of using wisely and well this gift while we still have it.

How good it is to see; but it is more important that we see the right things. The disciples had seen a good deal during the three years they walked with the Savior. We might even envy them. Yet perhaps it is we who are the fortunate ones. While we have never seen Jesus with our physical eyes, we have the privilege and invitation to see Him with the eyes of faith as He is presented to us in Scripture. The Holy Spirit has come and enlightens all whose hearts are open to His activity; He it is who directs our eyes to Jesus.

Let us take seriously the privilege we have of looking to Jesus in the Word. We have it now, and may freely make use of it; no one knows what the future has in store for us in this matter. Let us look to Jesus now.

Pastor Gene Sundby, who passed away in April, was the president of the AFLC-Canada, and also served parishes in Minnesota and Montana.

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

PEOPLE & PLACES

AFLC pastors and their wives will gather Sept. 13-15 at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis., for a retreat. Speakers include Dr. Andrew Chiu, and pastor Michael Brandt, Robert Lee, James Molstre, Henry Mohagen and Joel Rolf.

Pastor Brad Putnam has resigned from serving in Ontonagon, Mich., to accept a call to serve Augustana Lutheran, rural Duluth, Minn.

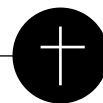
Pastor Leroy Flickinger has accepted a call to serve Abundant Life, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Pastor Al Bedard has resigned from Timberland Ringbu Free Lutheran, Barronett, Wis.

Two AFLC congregations have recently closed: **Zoar Free Lutheran**, Hatton, N.D., was among the founding members of the AFLC. **Grace Covenant Church**, Aberdeen, S.D.

Members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee have removed **Acts 2 Lutheran Church**, Delafield, Wis., from the congregational roster.

A request from members of **Stronghold Lutheran**, Detroit, Mich., to affiliate with the AFLC was approved by members of the Coordinating Committee. The congregation is served by Pastor Chad Forman.



In Memoriam

Melvin Fischer, 74, of Shakopee, Minn., died July 10 in Shakopee. He served for x years on the AFLC's Coordinating Committee.

Born in 1942 in Echo, Minn., he was the son of Melvin and Evelyn (Just) Fischer. He married Beth Torke in November 1963, in Hanley Falls, Minn. He graduated from Wahpeton State School of Science, Wahpeton, N.D., in 1962, and worked for more than 40 years as an underwriter in St. Louis Park, Minn. In 1965, he was drafted into the U.S. Army serving three years at the Nike-Hercules missile sites in Anchorage, Alaska. He was a member of King of Glory Lutheran, Shakopee.

Surviving are his wife, Beth, Shakopee; son, Troy (Ingrid) Fischer, Novi, Mich.; daughter, Heidi (Chris) Cianflone, Shakopee, Minn.; one sister, Lavonne (Floyd) Kreft, Baxter, Minn.; one brother, Charles (Karen) Fischer, Wood Lake, Minn.; and five grandchildren.

The service was July 15 at King of Glory Lutheran, with pastors Brett Boe, Del Palmer, Walt Johnson, and Les Galland officiating.

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ver the course of my 27 years in the military I had the opportunity to go to basic training

as an enlisted soldier and seven years later to Chaplain Officer Basic Training. At each of these schools I was taught how to dress, act, and march like a soldier. Every branch of military service has similar schools.

Soldiers are taught the proper wear of the military uniform. Every patch, insignia, and military achievement has a very specific placement on the uniform. There can be deviation. General officers can make a few changes to their uniform, but these changes must be within military specifications. When changes to uniform wear take place it is a very big deal. Instruction on uniform change is handed down to every level. Perfection in uniformity is a must. There is no compromise in wearing the uniform.

God calls his children to walk in perfection. The Lord Jesus Christ is not only our example of perfection, but He makes it possible to be made like Him. Hebrews 10:14 relates

HE HAS MADE PERFECT

BY PASTOR MARK ANTAL

the means of this perfection, "... because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy." Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross is more than enough for our salvation. We cannot add any goodness to what God has already made perfect.

Many believers get caught up on Jesus' words from Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the understanding of the perfect sacrifice for our sin, we will fail. Matthew 5:48 becomes law. Our Lord Jesus came to bring us freedom, joy, and rest. I cannot be perfect. But with Jesus living in me, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the love of the Father, I am being made perfect. I return often to those precious words of Hebrews 10:14.

How can I know if I am on track with God? How can I know if I am doing the right things? Galatians 5 is a wonderful passage to check our actions and words. As a soldier checks his/her uniform for proper wear, so the child of God

checks their attitudes with the Word of God. Galatians 5:19-21a says, "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like." But God has something far better for you. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23). Read all of Galatians 5 to put it in perspective.

I am thankful for the dedicated drill instructors and teachers I had in the military. I am eternally thankful for my teachers in Sunday school, AFLBS, and AFLTS who taught me the Word and lived out Jesus in their daily lives.

Antal, an AFLC chaplain, serves Victory Free Lutheran, Park River, N.D.

Journey Missions team begins travels to Brazil

A team of 15 students and adults traveled to the AFLC Brazil mission field on July 14 as they began a two-week short term mission trip serving with AFLC missionaries. Members include (from left) Heidi Nelson, Rebekah Olson, Teyha Craig, Justin Nelson, Emma Hornby, Jon Nelson, Hallie Nikunen, Tyler Richardson, Emily Herset, Gunnar Tangen, Avery Anderson, Wilson Bernards, Julia Nelson, Kory Rachac, and Jessica Green.



AFLBS establishes new transfer agreement

The Association Free Lutheran Bible School has recently established a credit transfer agreement with John Witherspoon College of Rapid City, S.D.

John Witherspoon College is a Christian college with a mission to build a community of Christ-centered, classics-based education for service to the church and the world. It is a member of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) and has been awarded Candidate Status as a Category II institution by the TRACS Accreditation Commission.

The purpose of this transfer agreement

is to foster the kingdom work of Christ by giving students an opportunity for expedited transfer of credits and degree completion, in recognition of the quality of academic work completed at AFLBS and the compatibility of that work with programs offered by John Witherspoon.

John Witherspoon College has agreed to admit qualified students who have completed a two-year diploma program at AFLBS into a bachelor degree program. Qualified AFLBS graduates would be required to complete an additional 65 credit hours, which would include 47 credit hours of humanities courses, 6 credit hours

of leadership courses, 6 credit hours of language courses (Greek or Hebrew), and 6 credit hours of senior thesis in the Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies program. The Bachelor of Arts in Humanities program and the Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership program may require additional courses of completion.

Other colleges establishing a credit transfer agreement with AFLBS include: University of Northwestern (St. Paul, Minn.), Crown College (St. Bonifacious, Minn.), Oak Hills Christian College (Bemidji, Minn.), and Montana Bible College (Bozeman, MT).

JUNE MEMORIALS

AFLBS

Kenneth Rolf
Ruth Claus
Deloris Mickelson
Luther and Ingvald
Berdal Scholarship
(13)
Haugen Scholarship

AFLTS

Gerald Skovlund

Evangelism

Debbie Emerson
Helen Mickelson
Beverly Lyons

FLAPS

Robert Kimble

General Fund

Sandy DeBoer
Betty Lou Strand
Dave Faust

Home Missions

Ernest Nash

... in honor of

AFLBS

Myron and Irmay
Haugen

AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-June 30, 2016

FUND	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$24,594	\$179,352	\$172,296
Evangelism	10,679	57,880	72,760
Youth Ministries	7,425	57,697	54,700
Parish Education	26,900	79,768	62,486
Seminary	14,148	108,466	138,850
Bible School	39,674	255,691	251,038
Home Missions	36,788	223,558	215,506
World Missions	34,751	267,559	194,424
Personal Support	42,577	306,583	249,568
TOTALS	\$237,536	\$1,536,553	\$1,411,628

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

CONFERENCE THOUGHTS

The 2016 Annual Conference may have set a new high level of service. In fact, one could call it the “Volunteers Conference.” Coordinated by Stan and Viviann Christenson, an army of ARC Board and Corporation members and families, as well as others, seemed to be almost everywhere, ready to serve with a smile. (Someone even came to the tables during the pastors’ and wives’ banquet to offer us toothpicks!) Thank you, friends. You made our time there very special, as well as helping the ARC’s budget. It’s always good to come home to our retreat center, and we look forward to meeting there again, the Lord willing, in four years.

It was another streamlined conference, with a consolidated schedule that kept business flowing smoothly. Streamlining doesn’t mean railroad-ing, as there seemed to be adequate time for discussion and debate when needed. Since the presentations from the boards and directors are much abbreviated, those who attend continue to be reminded of the need to read the complete reports prior to the sessions.

It was a conference marked by unity in every respect. Many describe our annual meetings as family reunions, with old and new friends happy to be together. President Lyndon Korhonen was elected on the first ballot, and the only question might have been his willingness to serve a second term. In his report he described the amount of traveling as “taxing,” and we are reminded to keep him in our prayers. Our two other national officers were also reelected on the first ballots, receiving more than the required 75 percent of votes cast.

Prior to the conference we were called to pray about the possibility of a new missionary venture in Switzerland, as a request was received by a former pastor of the Brazil AFLC who is serving a new

Portuguese-speaking congregation there. “Is this our generation’s Brazil?” asked World Missions Director Del Palmer. Guidance was sought from the conference, but after some discussion no firm decision was made, other than to continue to prayerfully investigate the possibility.

We heard some good preaching. The opening message on the conference theme by Pastor Andy Coyle and the WMF Mission Night message by Pastor Todd Schierkolk were well-balanced and exegetical, as was the message by Pastor Tom Schierkolk for the ordination service. Two of our licensed pastors also ministered to the conference: Pastor Henry Mohagen, who delivered fine devotionals for the daily prayer times, and Pastor Don Norr, who inspired the pastors and wives with an account of his years of service in Virginia, Minn. (I did not attend the lay service, but heard that those in attendance were also well fed by the preaching of Erling Langness.)

A more formal order of worship was used during the mission service—which has always been quite informal—including a “definitive” or “indicative” absolution (for example, “as a called and ordained servant of the Word, I forgive you all your sins”). Those AFLC congregations that include an absolution after the confession of sins generally use a “declarative” one (for example, “I declare to you that your sins are forgiven”) or a “conditional” one (“if you truly repent ...”), and there are several optional Declarations of Grace in our Ambassador Hymnal. Perhaps this is a topic that needs further discussion among us.

Why can’t members of the Nominating Committee come up with two names for each board vacancy? This should not be impossible, for it is difficult to try to name nominees cold from the conference floor.

This was especially evident in the voting for a pastor’s position on the Board of Publications and Parish Education, when some necessary time was spent explaining the commitment of time involved in serving on this board. The active members of the current committee worked hard, but once again there were some who simply did not serve. Should there be a better method of

... a worthy goal would be for every AFLC congregation to be represented by both pastor and lay people.

electing this committee, contacting people beforehand who indicate their willingness to serve?

Conference attendance totaled nearly 500, which may be average for the Midwestern area. It was encouraging to see the auditorium full for the evening services, and it seemed that attendance was strong for the business sessions, as well. It is not encouraging to note that many AFLC pastors were absent, and many of our congregations were not represented. Other congregations were lacking lay representation, with only the pastor and spouse attending.

Strong lay participation is vital for the health of a fellowship like the AFLC. The 2017 Annual Conference will meet on the campus of our schools in Plymouth, Minn., June 13-16, with an emphasis on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Now is the time to start planning to attend, and a worthy goal would be for every AFLC congregation to be represented by both pastor and lay people.



Pastor Robert Lee

building the base

FAITH AND BAPTISM

BY PASTOR JEREMY VANCE

In the summer, some families utilize the time by remodeling. They may get their roofs done or replace old cabinets, or repaint rooms in their homes.

In each of these instances, there are tools that are needed to complete the job. We could not imagine doing such things without the necessary tools; the task would be nigh impossible without them.

In the same manner, God has given us the means of grace to build our spiritual lives, helping our faith to grow and become stronger. In the last installment of *Building the Base*, I dug into the purpose of God's Word, specifically the gospel. This time, we'll study baptism. Why might baptism be necessary for the building of our spiritual lives? For this answer, we must turn to Christ and His words in two of the Gospels. First in Matthew 28:19 Jesus commands believers in Him to go into all the world, making disciples through baptism and instruction in the Word. Congregations baptize because Christ has made it foundational to disciple-making. Baptism cannot be divorced from Christ's command. Yet there are those who either may not know this or

even ignore it, putting off their own baptism or the baptism of their children. We must not turn from the Lord's command but obediently yield to what our Savior has asked of us. For in our baptism, we are brought into God's family and made one of Christ's disciples, having gone through the "washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). All of this has been made possible through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ on the cross, where He made sufficient payment for our sins. Jesus gives us access to God, and by faith in Christ, which is created in baptism, we come to the Father. Baptism is not simply a church ritual that we can do without, but a necessity as commanded by Christ and the means to become His disciple.

Not only is baptism commanded by Christ, but also He enjoins it with faith unto our salvation. In Mark 16:16, Jesus says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved and he who does not believe will be condemned." Now notice that this is also placed in Mark as one of Christ's last words to His disciples before His ascension, like the previously quoted Matthew passage. Christ connects faith with baptism and says

the result will be salvation. Once someone comes to faith in Christ, it should be natural to want baptism, and so that desire should be fulfilled. As believing parents, we should also purpose to bring our children to God in baptism not as some way to escape hell, but to bring them into relationship with God through Jesus Christ, starting them prayerfully on a lifelong journey with the Lord.

For those of us who are trusting in Christ, having been baptized, our baptism is something to which we can always refer. As Luther shows in the Large Catechism, it is our means for daily putting away our sins and living the new life the Spirit has created within us. We must not think baptism is some past means, but it is presently working as we are trusting in Christ. Thanks be to God for this means by which we can build our spiritual lives. Let us all make use of this means of grace since Christ has commanded it and has connected it to faith, resulting in our salvation.

Vance serves Sunnyside Lutheran, Stacy, Minn.