

The Augustanan

SURVEYING THE MINISTRY IN OUR LIVES

December 2006

Go in Peace, Serve the Lord. Thanks Be to God!

Mission Statement

It is the purpose of Augustana Lutheran Church to engage as many persons as will share its confession of faith in fellowship of worship, learning, witness, and service that the Word of God in Jesus Christ may become effective in our lives together and individually, and relate effectively in Christian concern and love to the geographic community within which the church is located.

A "Reconciled in Christ" congregation that has been racially diverse since 1954 and a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Inside This Issue:

- 2 From The Pastor
- 3 Mortgage Madness
- 6 Meet A Member
- 10 Celebrating Advent with Children
- 12 Mailbag



From The Pastor's Desk

By The Rev. Norm Theiss



Jesus is "the reason for the season" of Christmas, as the slogan goes, but much that we do to celebrate it is about family. Some travel to be with family. Many will have Christmas dinner at a family gathering. Most will at least phone family

members on Christmas Day.

But many will not be with or contact family at Christmas, not because family has no meaning or importance for them, but because some important family ties are broken and painful. Christmas may be a time they dread, because it will show them once again that they do not have the warm family ties they ache for. Their dread demonstrates the importance of family in celebrating Christmas.

This should give all of us sufficient reason to ask about the relation between Christmas and family, whether our family ties are good or bad. Do our family ties give us Christmas, or does Christmas give us our family ties? Must we have a loving family before we can celebrate Christmas, or can Christmas heal a broken family? When we put it that way, the answer is obvious.

Christmas heals family by putting us in God's family. The father and mother, the head, of this family, is the One who formed us and calls us the children of God.

We are the brothers and sisters of the Christ Child. He was born as God's child, so we would know that we are God's children. From our place in God's family we are able to see our place in our human families differently. We are not just the children of our parents or the brothers and sisters of our siblings. We have been greatly influenced by our human family members, but we do not need to be defined by them. We need to be defined by the One who brings all of us together in the family of the Christ Child. That divine family both lifts us out of our human families and then brings us back into them in a new way. Christmas teaches us to approach our human families with the confidence and self-understanding that we have as brothers and sisters of the Christ Child.

Experiencing the health and vitality of our life in the family of God with the Christ Child, will give us the stability, confidence, and sensitivity to bring a healing gift to our families at Christmas.

Schedule of Christmas Services

Sunday, December 24th
Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Sunday, December 24th
Christmas Eve Service at 10:00 p.m.
Lessons & Carols, Holy Eucharist

Monday, December 25th
Christmas Day Service at 10:30 a.m.
"Come as you are"
Celebration with Holy Eucharist
for children of all ages

Please support these services to enjoy
and enhance the beauty of Christmas

Mortgage Madness

MORTGAGE MADNESS - OR HOW TO MANAGE AUGUSTANA'S MONTHLY MORTGAGE WITHOUT MELODRAMA!

Our accessibility renovations are complete, but like many a homeowner, we must make monthly mortgage payments to cover the cost of borrowing for the renovations. In Augustana's case, those payments amount to roughly **\$10,000 a month** (\$9,899 to be precise).

Fortunately for Augustana, we have a creative and generous member who not only came up with an ingenious plan to pay the monthly mortgage - namely, to get members to "sponsor" the mortgage - but who also agreed to "sponsor" the mortgage for one month and then promptly persuaded a second member to cover a second month of mortgage payments. So, before even launching a campaign to cover mortgage payments for the next year we have pledges to cover two months out of the twelve.

We decided to launch this **Mortgage Madness** campaign with Advent, the beginning of the church year. We hope to find "sponsors" for our mortgage for the months of December 2006 through November 2007. The more \$10,000 sponsors we can find of course, the quicker we can be assured that the funds will be available to cover our payments and the easier it will be to avoid the melodrama of figuring out how to pay the next month's mortgage. At the same time, we recognize that only a limited number of people have the resources to cover a whole month's mortgage payment. So, if you cannot pledge a whole month, you have the option of pledging a shorter time period, for instance:

Three weeks = \$7,500,

Two weeks = \$5,000,

One week = \$2,500,

One day or more = \$333 per day.

Moreover, some of us have already pledged through 2007, in which case we can apply our pledged amount to the Mortgage Madness campaign, or if we wish to increase the amount to meet one of the above time-frames, we can revise our pledge. Pledge cards are available in the church office and are also being sent out in a special mailing. Return them to the church office or place them in the offering plate.

So that we can all measure the progress toward meeting our goal of covering mortgage payments for a year, Eric Luttamus has designed a visual for the narthex showing the months of December 2006 through November 2007. As months and days are covered by pledges, those time-frames will be shaded in on the calendar in the appropriate colors of the church year, reminding us that renovations to make our building accessible are not just physical changes but are closely connected with our spiritual ministry at Augustana and our desire to open our doors to everyone.

Please consider prayerfully what you can contribute to Augustana's Mortgage Madness campaign and help us manage our monthly mortgage payments without melodrama! If you have questions about the campaign, contact Carol Capps, Tom VandenBosch, or Elizabeth Bruening.

Carol Capps

on behalf of the Stewardship Committee

November Council Highlights

In the pastor's report . . .

Four new members were received on Reformation Sunday. This year's joint Thanksgiving service will be held at St. Augustine's instead of New Bethel Baptist, as the latter is in the midst of renovation. Father Smith will preach. The choir will sing at the National Lutheran Home in December. The Santa Lucia celebration has been moved to December 17th, at 6:30 PM. Augustana will have a Christmas Day service, at 10:30.

Pastor Theiss met on Nov 12th with nursery school parents and teachers and members of the Christian Education Committee, to discuss nursery operations and ways to focus on children and families. Jennifer Nordin recommended revisiting the Sunday School issue after the release of the final report from the Visioning Task Force. Council discussed various options to prioritize youth outreach.

Council welcomed Pastor Phil Anderson, interim pastor at Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria, and Santa Maria council members Hortensia Ruiz, Nohemy Chavez, and Manuel Ochoa. Pr. Anderson described the recent history of Santa Maria, the hopes for their future, and noted that SM and ALC may wish to reinstate their previous MOU. Pr. Theiss expressed hope that the ALC members who attended the Sept meeting with the ELCA representatives will also be available for the Nov 29th followup meeting. The SM council members expressed their hopes for greater interaction and participation in joint events, and described their difficulties in working without a full-time pastor.

Due to Pastor Theiss's previous commitments, the annual meeting was rescheduled to January 28th, with the January Council meeting moved to the 3rd, and submissions for the annual

report due on January 12th.

On behalf of the Personnel Committee, Kaia Lenhart presented recommendations for pastoral and lay salaries, which were approved unanimously. She expressed thanks to Pr. Theiss for completing the staff evaluations and providing input to the committee.

Following up on the previous discussion with Peggy Treadwell, Kaia Lenhart and Tom Vandenbosch presented "Stone Soup," a draft plan for congregational healing and growth. Council discussion followed, with further comments to be collected in the coming weeks, in order to have a second draft for discussion at the December meeting.

Patricia Richter



December Birthdays

- 1 Alexandria Brown**
- 2 Peter Berube**
- 3 Carol Kraemer**
- 4 Astri Sorenson**
- 8 Brian Danaher**
- 13 Madeline Matson**
- 14 Grace Morgan**
- 15 Carroll Schipp**
- 17 Rebecca Roth**
- 18 Novella Bradley**
- 24 Mike Olson**
- 28 Kevin Canfield, Helen Watt**
- 30 Deborah Johnson**

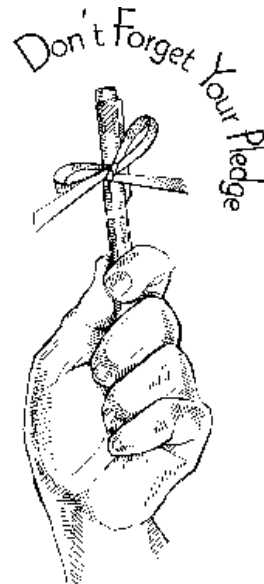
Beginning in January, once a month at the hospitality hour, we will have a cake for all the Augustana members with a birthday during the month. Check the Augustanan and the Sunday bulletin for the date each month.

2007 Monthly Birthday Sundays

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| January 21 | July 22 |
| February 25 | August 26 |
| March 18 | September 16 |
| April 22 | October 21 |
| May 20 | November 18 |
| June 24 | December 16 |

Accessibility and Renovation Reminder

Our accessibility renovations are now virtually complete but paying for them is not - we have monthly mortgage payments of \$9,899 to cover far into the future. Please keep your pledge payments current and continue to honor and memorialize friends and family with contributions to the Accessibility and Renovation Fund. Thank you for your past generosity.



Meet A Member

MEET A MEMBER

By Barbara E Solt

When a scientist sets out to analyze and describe a set of data (s)he looks at what phenomena and trends are clearly visible, for example statistically significant variables, trend lines, themes in a narrative, and the like. But in order to fully get a picture of the situation, the scientist also looks at what's NOT there. It's kind of like the exception that proves the rule. But it's more than that, in order to get a sense of what something IS, it's also important to know what it's NOT.

When people lose a limb or even a finger, whether through trauma or amputation, they experience what is commonly called "phantom pain." While it may not be pain, exactly, it's a sensation of that limb still being present. Pain is felt, sometimes an itch, there is a desire to "move it" but it's not there. This is a very difficult part of recovery and though diminished in time, can last a lifetime.

On All Saints Sunday we remember those saints who have departed, but whom we still feel are part of us, who have made us what we are as a community. Through ritual remembrance we call them closer to us. We remind ourselves that when we are gone we will be remembered by those we leave behind.

Gathering groups of Augustanans have also discussed over the years and in recent months those who have left us not through death, but by moving away or staying away. As with phantom pain, we miss those who moved away and rejoice when they return for

a visit. But those who stay away are like that phantom pain, we want them to be there, we want to feel their presence, we want to touch them.

Modern medicine can now perform what many would call miracles. Severed limbs can be re-attached through micro-surgery which re-connects even down to the finest nerve endings so that not only appearance but function can be restored. But even this happy event requires a period of recovery, patience, and learning how to "work that body" in new ways.

So, by now dear reader, you probably have gathered that this column is not about a particular member of Augustana, but those phantom members we have not seen in a while. We wonder if they can be re-attached, will they return and re-integrate into our community making us feel not their absence but their presence. Or we wonder if we will need to find ways to move on without that cherished part of us, to compensate, to learn to use prostheses, or remind ourselves to look forward to when the body is whole again in heaven.

Recovery and regeneration takes many forms in nature and in communities. New seeds are planted, skin is grafted to another part of the body, transplanted parts of one person's liver can grow to be a fully functional liver in a recipient. Plants sprout new shoots. Congregations welcome new members. Congregations welcome new Pastors.

cont. on p. 7

Where You Put Your Treasure.... That's Where Your Heart Will Go

Jesus tells us, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be" (Matthew 6:21). Many people seem to hear what Jesus said backward. They think he said, "Where your heart is, that's where your treasure will end up."

I've heard sermons about this that go something like this:

People spend their money on the things they truly care about.

If you look back over your check register, you will see what is most important to you.

Do you spend more money on sporting events than on giving to the church? Then, that is where your heart is.

Well, that might all be true, but it isn't what Jesus said. He didn't say: "Where your heart is, there your treasure will be." Listen, he said it the other way around: Where you put your treasure, that is where your heart will go.

Most people know there is a close connection between generous giving and spiritual devotion. They know that the latter can motivate the former: People who are spiritually mature often give generously of their time and talents and money.

But the good news is that Jesus said it can work the other way around: Generous giving affects us spiritually. When we give more generously of our time and talents and money, we become more spiritually mature

people. This is one reason that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Generous giving is the pathway to a deeper, more meaningful spiritual life.

The point, then, is not that how we spend our money reveals what sort of people we are but that how we spend our money determines what sort of people we become. This sounds kind of threatening, but actually it's very good news.

We can become the sort of people we want to be. We can decide what sort of people we would like to be and then give generously of our treasure—our time, our money and our talents—to those things that will change us within.

"Give from your heart," I hear people say. That sounds nice, and it would work fine if my heart were where I wanted it to be. If I were "pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8), it would work quite nicely. But what if the whole problem is that my heart is not where it should be?

Awaken caring

Then the best advice might not be "give from your heart" but "give from where you want your heart to be." Give to things that you should care about, and your generosity will awaken the caring in your heart that you hope to find there.

Spiritual leaders know this to be true: It's often easier to act oneself into a new way of

cont. on p. 9

cont. from p. 8

thinking than to think oneself into a new way of acting. Our behavior determines who we become. We give of our treasure and trust that our hearts will follow.

This has proved true in the lives of people I know:

- A couple decided to use the money they had saved for a vacation to buy a van for missionaries.
- A woman decided (at the store) to forego the purchase of a new home-theater system and donate the money to a seminary scholarship fund.
- A college student asked his family and friends to make gifts to Lutheran World Relief instead of buying him Christmas presents.

These are deliberate acts, motivated by a sincere commitment to care more deeply about God's work in our world. The people who

**For
where your
treasure is,

there your
heart will
be also.**

showed such generosity all say the same thing today: What I did changed me inside and helped me become the person I want to be, the person I think God wants me to be.

We will never be free of the stain of sin—not in this life—but we can become better people. We can certainly

become more spiritual people. And it's just not that difficult.

Spirituality and self-improvement are hot topics. Bookstores have shelves filled with volumes that promote various ways of deepening our spiritual lives and helping us to become the people we would like to be. I'm sure many of these books have much to offer, but we shouldn't neglect what saints and pilgrims throughout the ages have had to say about spiritual growth and personal transformation.

They encourage prayer, Bible reading and regular worship. They also encourage generous giving. Martin Luther is quoted as saying that everyone needs to experience three conversions "of heart, and mind and purse."

Evangelist Billy Graham said, "When people get their attitude toward money right, it seems to straighten out every other area of their lives."

Neither Luther nor Graham said these things to get people to donate more money to their cause. They spoke not as fundraisers but as pastors who knew what Jesus said to be true. Generous giving affects us. It transforms us. It facilitates spiritual growth. And brings us closer to God.

Where our treasure is, there our heart will be—good news, indeed.

*The Lutheran
November 2006*

Celebrating Advent with Children

Is there any more anticipated day in the minds of children than Christmas Day? For many children, celebrating with family and friends on Christmas Day is the highlight of the year, even more so than their birthday! But it is during Advent, the days leading into the true season of Christmas, days of anticipation, planning, surprises, and waiting, that the excitement builds.

Waiting is never easy, for children or adults. As adults, we may find it easier to wait for something because we have experienced it before and know the wait is worth it! But for children, especially the youngest children in our congregations, waiting can be excruciating. How do those of us who work with children find ways to make the anticipation, waiting, and preparation during the season of Advent more meaningful for children and youth of all ages?

As you plan, prepare, and pray for the Advent experiences you will incorporate into your congregation's life this year, take a moment and close your eyes. Think back to your own memories of Advent and Christmas, of the anticipation and activities that were part of the season for you. Which memories stand out in your mind? Was it the smell of candles, cinnamon, or a fresh-cut evergreen tree? Do you remember the sight of lights rimming the roofline of your house? Did you think of the soft woolly coat of a baby lamb in the living nativity? Was it the taste of candy canes, shaped like a shepherd's crook, sticking out of a Christmas stocking? Or the sound of jingle bells rung in time to a favorite Christmas song?

Children use all of their senses as they learn and grow. The experiences offered in worship services and church events that include a variety of sensory stimulation are the experiences that will be the stepping stones to a child's growing faith. When we engage all of our senses, everything around us takes on new meaning, and is integrated into our lives of faith in unforgettable ways.

The Advent wreath is often used as part of the worship service as a way of counting the weeks until the festival day of Christmas. Include the counting and lighting of the candles as a visible part of the service. This ritual action might be accompanied by a younger child's Bible reading, a song or refrain led by a group of young singers, or a special prayer offered by a teenager.

Ideas for Advent

- Host an Advent wreath making party for families! Include simple background information about the history of the wreath, and several options for creating one: a purchased wreath form decorated with greenery, a wooden round cut from a tree trunk with candle holes drilled in it, or even a ball of play dough or clay with candles and other decorations inserted into it and left to dry.
- Make a huge version of a paper chain to hang in the gathering space, counting down and removing links together as you count the days of Advent. Suggest that families create their own paper chains to use at home, using blue paper for the weekdays and gold or silver for the Sundays.

cont. on p. 11

cont. from p. 10

- Ask children to draw, paint, or write about the Advent season. They might include the things they do to prepare for Christmas, or scenes from the biblical Christmas story. Frame their work in simple black frames and hang them in a hall or entryway “gallery” at church, adding to the display each week.
- Encourage children and their families to share a daily or weekly time of devotions during the season of Advent. Prepare a reading or activity card for families to use that focuses on the lectionary reading or another Advent theme. Consider activities such as an ornament to represent the theme, an Advent banner that each family adds to each week, or “question cards” that foster family conversations.
- Here are some tips for successful family devotion times:
 - Choose a regular time and place to meet
 - Involve children in planning and leading
 - Use a story, Bible story, song, and prayer that are tangible to children and include use of the senses.

*Reprinted from Sundays and Seasons, copyright
2006 Augsburg Fortress.
Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress.*

Saturday High School Confirmation Class with Cooking

This winter and spring Augustana Lutheran Church is providing a Confirmation Class for our high school students who have not been confirmed. The sessions will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., on the first Saturday of the month from February through June. We will begin on these Saturdays by making breakfast. After the morning session, we will make lunch and watch a movie related to the day’s topic. The movie will provide the basis for a discussion in the afternoon. The topics for each month will be:

February 3	The Ten Commandments
March 3	The Apostles’ Creed
April 7	The Lord’s Prayer
May 5	Baptism
June 2	Holy Communion

Dax and Terri Jordan will lead the group.

Dax will teach the classes. He is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and is currently taking courses at Gettysburg Theological Seminary in preparation for a pastoral internship in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Terri will help with the breakfasts and lunches and participate in the discussions. For questions or schedule conflicts please call Dax at 609 273 8442. We would like to discuss any scheduling difficulties these students might have.

By Dax Jordan and Norm Theiss

Concerns of the People, Thank You, Mail Bag, Etc...

+ Members: Mary Beth Blegen, Ardelle Burton, Jay Castaño and his family, Herman Davis, Sr., Dorothy Gladney, Susan Nash, Bill Reid, Carroll Schipp, Dorothy Schipp.

+ Friends and Family: Stacey Aus (Knauff); Roseanne Baird (Bucci); Chris Balsam (Bucci); the Bagwell family (Bowers); Trudy Bliss (Hunter); Judy Cashner (Cashner); Wendy Davis (Berube); Robert Kyle Evans (Schipp); Eddie Faust (Roth/Renne); Patricia Franks (Knauff); Pat Frohman (Hunter); Andrew Griffin (Waidler); Mary Hancock (Knauff); Leona Harper (Knauff); Danny Hartman (Knauff); Russell Jackson (Burton); Burdell Jones (Burton); Sara Kepple (Richter); John Larson (Kahler-Larson); Celeste Lotz (Knauff); Jacqueline Lindberg (Berube); Carol Lucas (Richter); Sean McAlister (Isbell); Sally Markle (Markle-Elder); Wendy Matlock (Lenhart-Ray); Doris Matthews (Margrave); Bruno Muzzi (Markle-Elder); Donna Peer (Anderson-Bowell); Jennifer & Joe Reed (Roth/Renne); Ian Renne & Laura Martin (Roth/Renne); Veronica Richardson (Knauff); Caleb Richter; Sarah Richter; Odell Scott (Burton); Ruth & Earl Telfair (Smith); The family of Charles Wagley (Capps); Nellikan Wernicke (Baerwald); Cole Whiting (Bowers), Kay Wickre (Margrave); Pamela Wilson (Markle-Elder).

+ In Christian Sympathy with Dorothy Smith on the death of her sister Catherine Telfair on Tuesday, November 21st.

+ Augustana and our vision for the future.

+ Thank you to all who have donated to our food pantry and Thanksgiving baskets for the needy. A special thanks also to Celia Davenport, Judy Floy, Brian Shannon, Lynn Fischer-Fox and Brian Danaher who helped organize the baskets this year.

+ Thanks to the Augustana Team of N Street Village/Luther Place Women's shelter volun-

teers who cooked and/or served our quarterly dinner for the residents on November 18th; Kathryn Baerwald, Judi Bucci, Kane and Caroline Borders, LeeAnn Hart, Betsy Knauff, Grace Morgan, Isaac Sorenson and Alyssa Puritz.

+ A special thank you to Carol Capps, Eileen Crawford, Pearl Cox, George Krafthofer, Chuck Leath and Carol Vezzetti for getting the November issue of the Augustanan into the mail.

+ A special thank you to the congregational council for sending "college care packages" to all of Augustana's members who are in college. Care packages included a variety of snacks, supplies, and devotionals. We look forward to see them back home over the holidays.

+ Thank you to Kelly Bowers, Jeff Teitel and Judy Floy for volunteering at Martha's Table in November.

+ Thank You to the following people who assisted in the office this past month: Josephine Allen, Novella Bradley, Salome Burton, Carol Capps, Pearl Cox, Eileen Crawford, Dax Jordan, Betsy Knauff, George Krafthofer, Chuck Leath and Ingrid Margrave. They gave us over 50 hours of their time and talent. What a wonderful gift!

+ The Lutheran Lay Fellowship and Louise Anderson would like to thank the following Augustana members and friends for assisting as ushers at the Reformation Service at Washington National Cathedral on October 29, 2006: Robert Luoma, Brian Shannon, Craig Shireman, Katherine Telleen, and Paul Telleen,

MAILBAG

We are currently in Otavalo, Ecuador after having spent six weeks in Mexico, mostly Guanajuato. We are loving the trip so far. We've climbed pyramids, swam in the ocean, mountain biked at 10,000 feet and eaten a lot of ice cream....The boys are even speaking pretty good Spanish (including Jamie). Next week we go to the Galapagos Islands and then head to Buenos Aires for Christmas.

Please send my love to all my friends at Augustana.

*Con carino,
Jennifer*

On October 1, 2006, Social Ministries' Augustana Movie Night presented a special screening of the film, An Inconvenient Truth, as part of a week-long "Spotlight on Global Warming" sponsored by the Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light's. We received the following thank you letter from GWIPL:

Dear Augustana Lutheran Church:

Thank you for a job well done. Together we have had over 180 successful screenings of An Inconvenient Truth and over 5,400 participants. ...It is now up to us to seize this opportunity by taking action to fight global warming. There is so much that we can do together to have a big impact:

Energy Efficiency: The EPA states that if all congregations in the US increased their energy efficiency by 25% it would be the same as removing 1 million cars from the road and would collectively save congregations \$500 million. We can assist your congregation reduce its use of energy by helping you have an energy audit and installing compact florescent light bulbs,

light emitting diodes exit signs, and programmable thermostats.

Clean Energy: Congregations and members can purchase clean energy through Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light. If two million households purchase clean energy, it would drastically change the entire energy market....

Social Action: Since the poor will suffer the most because of the effects of global warming and cannot afford the up front costs of making changes that will reduce energy use, please consider distributing compact florescent light bulbs to low income families with which you already work.

I look forward to working with your congregation in the future. Please consider becoming a partner church with us!

*All the best,
Allison Fischer
Greater Washington Interfaith
Power and Light
Allison@gwipl.org
http://www.gwipl.org/save_energy.asp*



Presenting the ONE Campaign to Congress

The Congressional recess found most members of Congress back in their home districts. Bread for the World and ONE activists took advantage of this opportunity to meet with their senators and representatives and urge them to do more to reduce global hunger and poverty.

Among the many successful events was a meeting between the youth group at Good Shepherd Church in Cincinnati and Rep. Jean Schmidt. It was scheduled after several members of the youth group met with Schmidt's office to follow up on the church's letter-writing campaign and to discuss their work with the ONE campaign. The students used this year's BFW video (filmed in the Congo) and other visual materials to show the realities of hunger, poverty and U.S. development assistance, and what people working as ONE can do to help.

Students talked about their personal reasons for supporting the ONE campaign. For example, an elementary school student told Rep. Schmidt about becoming friends with a boy from Bolivia who was undergoing burn treatment at local Childrens Hospital. Rep. Schmidt mentioned her previous involvement with Bread for the World and encouraged the church youth group to stay politically involved.

"The students did a wonderful job and really knew their stuff," said BFW Faith Outreach Organizer Abby Jensen. "This was even more evident during the question and answer period. They asked respectful, upfront questions that pushed the Representative to respond

directly."

For more information about meeting with members of Congress to discuss the ONE campaign, contact the Bread for the World ONE faith outreach organizer through www.bread.org [-- or contact Social Ministries at Augustana!!]

What's the ONE Campaign? The ONE Campaign is an effort to unite people in the United States, ONE by ONE, to fight the emergencies of extreme poverty, hunger and HIV/AIDS in the developing world. ONE mobilizes citizens to make hungry and poor people a priority in the policies of the United States government. Bread for the World, CARE, DATA, Oxfam, World Vision and other organizations were among the founding members of the campaign that now counts more than 30 partners.

The ONE Campaign, part of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty, presses the United States to fulfill the commitments it made to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—eight measurable and achievable goals to cut global poverty in half by 2015. ONE has committed itself to create the political will to hold America accountable to the MDGs and international development as a whole.

Reprinted from "Bread," the Bread for the World Newsletter, Oct.-Nov. 2006, and the www.bread.org

ELCA Presiding Bishop's 2006 Christmas Message

ELCA NEWS SERVICE
December 2006

"The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory..." (John 1:14). We live in a visited world. On that holy night twenty centuries ago, God visited the world in the miracle of Bethlehem. Held in Mary's arms that night was the revelation of steadfast, unbounded love for all humanity. The birth of Jesus disclosed God's saving will and eternal desire for reconciliation and peace.

In this season of Christmas, we encounter again Jesus, sent from God for our salvation. As the Word is proclaimed in both simple buildings and cathedrals of grandeur, we receive the good news of God's love in Christ Jesus for the whole earth. We witness the mystery of rebirth in the waters of Baptism and rejoice as new ones are embraced by the community of faith. As bread is broken and wine poured in the Eucharist, we give thanks for the real presence of Christ in our midst.

We gather with the whole Church for the celebration of our Lord's Nativity. In our gather-

ing, however, we hear the sounds of discord throughout the world. From divisions caused by walls of separation, from the struggles of many for survival from disasters, devastation, hunger, and poverty, from the dread of rampant disease and the spread of HIV and AIDS, from war and the threat of war, even with nuclear weapons, from broken relationships in homes and hostilities within communities and countries, we seek rescue. We yearn for the gracious, healing, and reconciling Word of the Prince of Peace.

We hear the angel say, "Do not be afraid." With that message of courage, we realize as believers that we are never alone. We have been claimed by God and made a part of the household of faith.

So we join with the whole Church on earth, lifting our voices with renewed hope. In so doing, we join the grand anthem: Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king....

*The Rev. Mark S. Hanson_Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

The Synod Prayer Resources Group will host a Winter Retreat on Mon.-Wed., Jan. 15-17, at a Jesuit Retreat Center in Faulkner, Md. A retreat leader, Mai Abdul Rahman, will lead the retreat with a focus on "Christians and Muslims Praying Together." Cost is \$195 including lodging and meals.

For more information, call the Rev. Bill Wegener at 703-790-1469 or elliewegener@yahoo.com.

Calendar Observances - Advent

Sunday, December 03

Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia (1506-1552)

Francis Xavier (SAVY-yehr) was born in the Basque region of northern Spain. Francis's native Basque language is unrelated to any other, and Francis admitted that learning languages was difficult for him. Despite this obstacle he became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. At each point he learned the local language and, like Martin Luther, wrote catechisms for the instruction of new converts. Another obstacle Francis overcame to accomplish his mission work was a propensity to seasickness. All his travels to the Far East were by boat. Together with Ignatius Loyola and five others, Francis formed the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Francis spoke out against the Spanish and Portuguese colonists when he discovered their oppression of the indigenous people to whom he was sent as a missionary.

Monday, December 04

John of Damascus, theologian and hymn-writer (c. 676-c. 749)

Born to a wealthy family in Damascus and well educated, John left a career in finance and government to become a monk in an abbey near Jerusalem. He wrote many hymns as well as theological works. Foremost among the latter is a work called *The Fount of Wisdom*, which touches on philosophy, heresy, and the orthodox faith. This summary of patristic theology remained influential for centuries.

Wednesday, December 06

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (died c. 342)

Though Nicholas is one of the church's most beloved saints, little is known about his life. In the fourth century he was a bishop in what is

now Turkey. Legends that surround Nicholas tell of his love for God and neighbor, especially the poor. One famous story tells of Nicholas secretly giving bags of gold to the three daughters of a father who was going to sell them into prostitution because he could not provide dowries for them. Nicholas has become a symbol of anonymous gift giving.

Thursday, December 07

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (c. 339-397)

Ambrose was a governor of northern Italy and a catechumen when he was elected bishop of Milan. He was baptized, ordained, and consecrated a bishop all on the same day. While bishop he gave away his wealth and lived in simplicity. He was a famous preacher and is largely responsible for the conversion of Augustine. He is also well known for writing hymns. On one occasion, Ambrose led people in a hymn he wrote while the church in which they were secluded was threatened by attack from Gothic soldiers. The soldiers turned away, unwilling to attack a congregation that was singing a hymn. Ambrose's hymn "Savior of the nations, come" (ELW 263) could be sung during these first weeks of Advent when the apocalyptic readings on Sundays encourage believers to stand firm in their faith.

Wednesday, December 13

Lucy, martyr (d. 304)

Lucy was a young Christian of Sicily who was martyred during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. Apparently she had decided to devote her life to God and her possessions to the poor. Beyond that, however, little is known for certain about Lucy. However, her celebration became particularly important in Sweden and Norway, perhaps because the feast of Lucia (the name means "light") origi-

cont. from p. 16

nally fell on the shortest day of the year. A tradition arose of a girl in the household, wearing a crown of candles, bringing saffron rolls to her family early in the morning on the day of Lucia.

Thursday, December 14

John of the Cross, renewer of the church (1542-1591)

John was a monk of the Carmelite religious order who met Teresa of Ávila when she was working to reform the Carmelite Order and return it to a stricter observance of its rules. He followed Teresa's lead and encouraged others to follow her reform. He was imprisoned when he encountered opposition to the reform. His writings, like Teresa's, reflect a deep interest in mystical thought and meditation. In one of John's poems, "The Spiritual Canticle," he cried, "Oh, that my griefs would end! Come, grant me thy fruition full and free!"

Wednesday, December 20

Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church (1499-1552)

Born to an impoverished nobleman, when Katharina (Katie) was five her mother died and she was sent to live in a convent. She later took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin. Though initially Luther felt little affection for Katie, she proved herself a gifted household manager and became a trusted partner. She was so influential that Luther took to calling her "my lord Katie."

Thursday, December 21

Thomas, Apostle

Evangelical Lutheran Worship moves the festival of St. Thomas to July 03 in agreement with other Western calendars.

Reprinted from Sundays and Seasons, copyright 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress.

Images and Words of The Season - Advent

You can tell it is Advent when it is blue in church. Dressing the altar, pulpit, and the pastor's neck in green would be as big a fashion faux pas as wearing yellow seersucker in a Minnesota winter. We begin the year not with New Year's resolutions or talk of a fresh start disconnected from the past. We begin the year by talking about endings. So in Advent not only do we wear blue, but we also sing the blues. The blues are about endings. Bobby "Blue" Bland sings, "Without a warning, you broke my heart. You took it, shook it; you tore it apart. You left me sitting in the dark crying. You said your love for me was dying." The blues are about endings.

The Advent blues are about an ending: a big implosion to match the big bang by which the creation began. That theme sounds in the Advent readings. It is also a day of reckoning when the Son of Man comes with the clouds to settle all accounts. It is a day such as the day would be if all the credit offers we've accepted were to come due on the same day. Think of the offers advertised on TV. Buy rooms full of furniture, no payments until June of 2006. Throw in some new carpet and window treatments. Buy now; pay later. Low-interest student loan. Repayment deferred until you get that big-paying job after graduation. A zero-interest new car loan.

cont. on p.18

cont. from p. 17

There will never be a deal like this again. It's a steal. You need it now. Do you feel a blues song coming on? "I took it on credit. I lived without a care. I had coins in my pocket, money to spare. But now all those loans have come due. What am I gonna do?" So will be the day of reckoning when the Son of Man comes with the clouds. What are we gonna do?

This whole analogy is built on the notion that it is God who extends us credit. Indeed, we are indebted to God, but not because God has given us "credit" for sinning. Credit is essentially what faith is. The Latin word is *credo*. It means "I believe." From *credo* we get both *creed* and *credit*. Someone extends credit to us based on that person's faith in us that we will pay up.

In the Advent 2002 "Crossings" newsletter, Todd Murken adopted the language of the marketplace to talk about Jesus' IPO, his initial public offering of resurrection. Based on that IPO, Murken says, we have extended credit to Jesus. We have placed our faith in him. We have his word that he will make good on his promise. He also knows us, how our willingness to extend credit might depend on something tangible, so he gives us baptism and eucharist as promissory notes. Paul talks about them as down payments, some earnest money that Jesus will fulfill his promise. So, when this Son of Man comes with the clouds, "stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

The Advent blues are about endings. They are also about hope. Bobby Bland changes key and from "your love for me was dying" he launches into a song of hopeful yearning: "Turn on your light. Turn on your love light. Let it shine, shine, shine on me." The Advent blues are about endings and hopeful yearning. When the Son of Man comes with the clouds, stand up, lift up your heads, your redemption is at hand.

On that day we either rise from the grave or push open our screen door and step

out on our front porch to meet him, depending on what time of year he makes his advent. That we begin a new year talking about endings provides a clue about our attitude toward the end. We are looking at an ending that is a new beginning. In this new creation all our losses are made good: the loss of those we love, the time that is closing in on us, the loss that comes with illness--you name it, whatever is behind the empty feeling that comes upon you that has you singing the blues.

Jesus' crucifixion, that ending, is the winnowing in which the stuff of our lives is lifted by the harvester's pitchfork so that the wind might blow away the chaff and the grain fall back to the ground to be saved. Jesus' crucifixion is the refiner's fire burning away the dross of our lives. His crucifixion is the farmer's harrow breaking up the hard soil of our hearts to make them hospitable places for Jesus. He makes us fitting dance partners so we follow his lead into the new creation.

Singing the Advent blues moves us to dance the Advent two-step of yearning and hope. They orient us toward the coming kingdom of God. Practice the rhythm we hear in sacred story, baptism, and eucharist. Stick with your dance partners in the community of faith. And do your part to help one another stay in step with the new creation dance. Dance it in the midst of a world bent on other rhythms, mostly of destruction. Show them new possibilities, the new creation promise. Lead them to make the investment, and extend the credit that is faith in Jesus, who at his advent makes good on all our losses.

*Reprinted from Sundays and Seasons, copyright 2005
Augsburg Fortress.*

Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress.

News Around Augustana

+ International Adoptions -- Augustana has received an offer from the Adoptive Service Information Agency to visit us and talk about the needs of children, especially many overseas, who are seeking adoption. ASIA is a nonprofit child welfare agency, an affiliate of Childrens Home Society and Family Services. Contact Social Ministries for more information.

+ Martyrs in El Salvador - On Sunday evening, November 12, the members of Santa Maria held a memorial service for two Lutheran pastors, Francisco and Jesus Carillo (husband and wife) in El Salvador who were assassinated outside their church on November 4. The murderers were reputedly 3 young men and the motive may have been extortion. Pastor Theiss and Pastor Anderson were among the clergy participating in the service.

A number of the people attending the memorial service were from El Salvador and knew the two pastors personally, as well as their son, who is a student Lutheran pastor in El Salvador.

+ On November 12, it was Bread for the World Sunday at Augustana. We wrote over 50 letters to our members of Congress in support of efforts relieve hunger around the world. Augustana is a Covenant Church with Bread for the World. Celebrating 33 years of seeking justice, Bread for the World is a Christian voice for ending hunger. It's a nonpartisan citizens' movement with more than 56,000 members, including churches from 45 Christian denominations. We are people of faith and conscience who help hungry people by writing, calling and visiting our nation's decision-makers to advance legislation that addresses hunger in our communities and around the world. Together our actions help achieve justice for hungry people, make vital policy improvements, and secure hundreds of million of dollars each year for anti-poverty efforts.

NORDIC CHOIR TO PERFORM AT LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REFORMATION IN WASHINGTON, DC

The Luther College Nordic Choir - Craig Arnold, conductor, will present a concert of sacred music at Lutheran Church of the Reformation (betw. 2nd and 3rd Streets, across from the Folger Shakespeare Library) in Washington, DC on Thursday, January 18, 2007, at 8:00 p.m. This performance will feature works by Tallis; Finzi; Clausen; F.M. Christiansen; Bach; Durufland Brahms. For tickets and additional information, visit <http://music.luther.edu> or call TicketWorks.com at 1-866-420-1234.

The Augustanan

Surveying the Ministry
in Our Lives



Non-profit organization
US POSTAGE PAID
Washington, DC
Permit No. 8708

Augustana Lutheran Church
2100 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009-6507

office phone: 202-234-5315
voicemail: 202-234-5312
fax: 202-234-5724
email: office@augustanadc.org
www.augustanadc.org

The Augustanan is published by Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church once a month. All correspondence should be addressed to The Rev. Norm Theiss, 2100 New Hampshire Ave. NW Washington, DC 20009-6507

Copyright © 2006 Augustana Evangelical
Lutheran Church

Newsletter Editors
The Rev. Norm Theiss
Rebecca Roth

Assistant Editor
Bill Riggs

Web Design &
Production
Betsy Miller

