

# Augustana Lutheran Church

2100 New Hampshire Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20009

## TIME AFTER PENTECOST LECTIONARY 9

June 1, 2008

10:30 a.m.

We welcome all friends and visitors this morning to Augustana Lutheran Church, a congregation "Reconciled in Christ" that has been racially integrated since 1954. Please sign the guest register in the narthex and fill out the attendance registration booklet located in the pews. Join us for hospitality in the Parish Hall following the service.

### THE PREPARATION AND ENTRANCE RITE

**Welcome and Greeting of the New Pastor** – *see back page*

**Voluntary** Praise to the Lord, the Almighty J. S. Bach

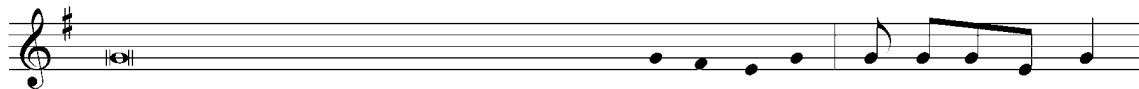
*As the bells are rung, the Congregation stands and turns to face the Baptismal Font.*

**Confession and Forgiveness** – page 95

**Hymn, No. 859** Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

*Stanza 2 sung by the Choir.*

**Apostolic Greeting**



The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,

be with you all. **And al - so with you.**

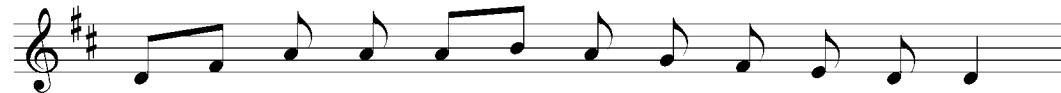
## Kyrie

*Sung by the Choir.*

## Gloria



*Cantor:* 1. All glo - ry be to God in high - est heav'n.  
2. Lord Je - sus Christ, the on - ly Son of God,  
3. For you a - lone are Lord, the Ho - ly One,



And peace un - to all peo - ple of good will.  
O Lamb of God, be mer - ci - ful to us.  
For you a - lone are Most High, Je - sus Christ,



We praise, we bless, we glo - ri - fy your Name:  
You sit at God's right hand, re - ceive our prayer.  
Now with the Ho - ly Spir - it to be praised,



Lord God, al - might - y Fa - ther, heav'n - ly King.  
Son of the Fa - ther, Sa - vior of the world.  
Hon - ored and glo - ri - fied for ev - er - more. A - men.

## Salutation and Prayer of the Day



*The Lord be with you. And al - so with you. Let us pray ... A - men.*

O God, our rock, you offer us a covenant of mercy, and you provide the foundation of our lives. Ground us in your word, and strengthen our resolve to be your disciples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

*The Congregation is seated.*

# THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

## First Lesson

Deuteronomy 11:18-21, 26-28

**Psalm 46** – Antiphon, sung by all when introduced by the Cantor



A might-y for - tress is our God, A sword and shield vic - to - rious.

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,  
and though the mountains be toppled into the depths of the sea;  
though its waters rage and foam,  
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *[Antiphon]*

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;  
God shall help it at the break of day.

The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;  
God speaks, and the earth melts away. *[Antiphon]*

Come, and regard the works of the Lord;  
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;  
Behold the One who makes war to cease in all the world;  
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

“Be still, then, and know that I am God:  
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in all the earth.” *[Antiphon]*

## Second Lesson

Romans 1:16-17; 3:22b-31

## Gradual

*The Alleluias are sung twice: first by the Cantor and then by the Congregation.*

*The Choir sings the Verse, and the Alleluias are repeated by the Congregation.*




Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia.

## Holy Gospel

Matthew 7:21-29

The Gospel is announced:



The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the \_\_\_ chap-ter. Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

After the Gospel is read:



The Gos-pel of the Lord. Praise \_\_\_ to you, O Christ.

## Sermon

*The Congregation stands.*

## Hymn of the Day *(facing page)*

How Firm a Foundation

## Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen**

## Prayers of the People

*Each petition concludes with one of the following responses:*

Hear us, O God; **Your mercy is great.**

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## How Firm a Foundation



1. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
2. "Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed!  
3. "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
4. "When through fier-y tri-als thy path-way shall lie,  
5. "The soul that to Je-sus hath fled for re- pose,



is laid for your faith in his ex-cel-lent word!  
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
the riv-ers of woe shall not thee o-ver-flow;  
my grace, all suf-fi-cient, shall be thy sup-ply;  
I will not, I will not de- sert to its foes;



What more can he say than to you he hath said,  
I'll strength-en thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
for I will be with thee, thy trou-bles to bless,  
the flame shall not hurt thee; I on-ly de-sign  
that soul, though all hell shall en-deav-or to shake,



to you that for ref-uge to Je-sus have fled?  
up-held by my right-eous, om-nip-o-tent hand.  
and sanc-ti-fy to thee thy deep-est dis-tress.  
thy dross to con-sume, and thy gold to re-fine.  
I'll nev-er, no, nev-er, no, nev-er for-sake."

## THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

### Sharing of Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The Congregation is seated.*

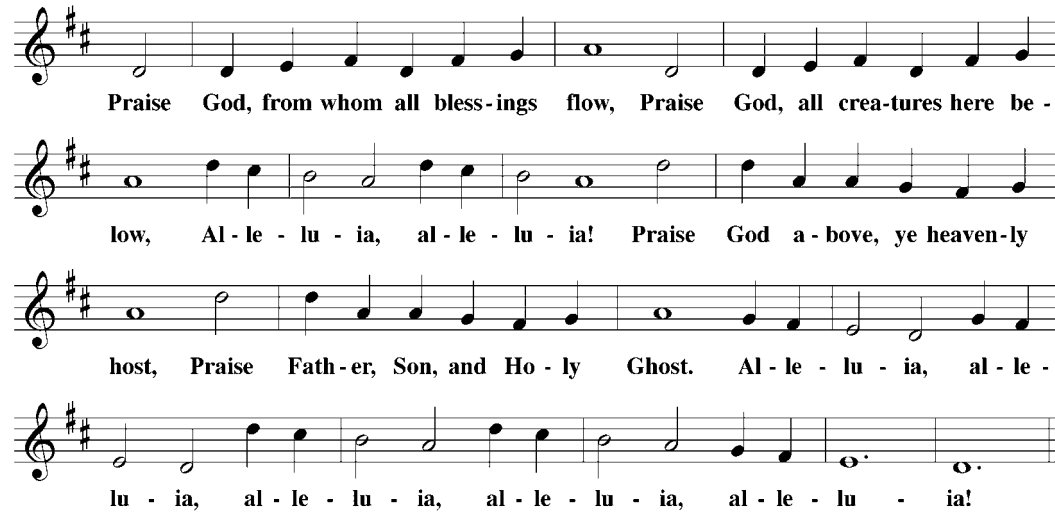
### Anthem

If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee

arr. Jody W. Lindh

*The Congregation stands.*

## Offertory Hymn



Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise God, all creatures here be -  
low, Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise God a - bove, ye heaven - ly  
host, Praise Fath - er, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le -  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

## Offertory Verse and Prayer

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

God of all creation, **all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen**

## The Great Thanksgiving

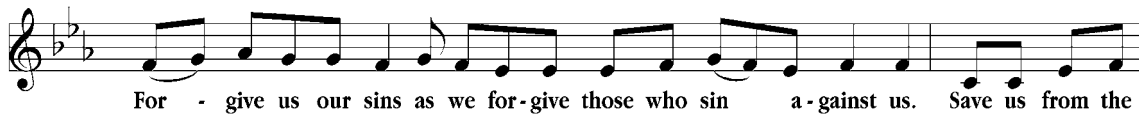
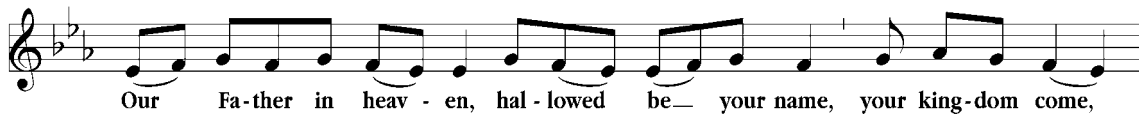


*The Lord be with you. And also with you.*  
*Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.*  
*Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give God thanks and praise.*

## Preface and Sanctus - No. 190

## Eucharistic Prayer, Acclamations, Doxology and Amen

### The Lord's Prayer



### Agnus Dei

*Sung in canon: first the Choir, then the Pulpit side, then the Lectern side.*



## The Distribution of the Blessed Sacrament

*All Christians are invited to receive the Sacrament.*

*Non-communicants are invited to come forward to receive a blessing*

### Hymn

*Sung by the Choir.*

All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly

### Hymn, No. 733

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

## THE POST-COMMUNION

*The Congregation stands.*

### Eucharistic Blessing

#### Nunc dimittis



1. Lord, bid Your ser - vant go in peace, your word is now ful - filled.  
2. This is the Sav - ior of the world, the Gen - tiles' prom - ised light,



These eyes have seen sal - va - tion's dawn, this child so long fore - told.  
God's glo - ry dwell - ing in our midst, the joy of Is - ra - el.

### Post Communion Prayer

O God, our provider, you nourish us with holy food and drink, and you open our hearts to the needs of others. Refresh us with your Spirit, that our words and deeds may proclaim your creative and life-giving Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Benediction

### Hymn, No. 597

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

### Dismissal

Go in peace. Welcome others as Christ has welcomed you.

**Thanks be to God.**

### Voluntary

Toccata on "Praise to the Lord"

H.-F. Micheelsen

## *Servants at God's Altar*

<b>Celebrant and Preacher</b>	The Rev. John S. Kidd
<b>Deacon I</b>	Kelly Bowers
<b>Deacon II</b>	John Shutt
<b>Lector</b>	Alan Sutherland
<b>Organist and Choirmaster</b>	Dr. J. Thomas Mitts
<b>The Parish Choir</b>	
<b>Cantor</b>	RuthAnn Reshan
<b>Crucifer</b>	Doug Anderson
<b>Bookbearer</b>	Grace Fenton
<b>Torchbearers</b>	Isaac Sorenson, Lars Sorenson
<b>Ushers</b>	
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Judi Bucci
<b>Tellers</b>	Kevin Horsted, Todd Johnson, Salome Burton

## *Concerns of the People*

### **In our prayers, let us include the following:**

+ **Members:** Josephine Allen; Louise Anderson; Celia Davenport; Herman Davis, Sr.; Dorothy Gladney; Ingrid Margrave, Craig Shireman, Don Werner.

+ **Friends and Family:** Julio Azpuru-Bernhard (Azpuru); Jeffrey Berry (Bob & Alice Anderson); Connie Boorer (Hunter); Ruby Brooks (Anthony); Melissa & Kevin Brown (Larisch); Judy Cashner (Cashner); Sean Castilla (Laughlin); (Teresa Cross (Knauff); Jerry Custer (Bowers); Mindy Davis (Isbell); Beverly Anderson Fauser (Louise Anderson; Patricia Franks (Knauff); Pat Frohman (Hunter); Betty Grady (Werner); Keeva Harmon (Burton); Leona Harper (Knauff); The Rev. Jane Henderson (Schilke); Irma Holderbein (Heinemeier; Guy Jacobs (Berube); Denise Kellam (Bucci); Sara Kepple (Richter); Jennifer Kileo (Hart); Kate and the Rev. Merlin Knauff (Knauff); Richard Larisch (Larisch); Otelia Leath (Leath); Ann Lockwood (Werner); Samantha Lopez (Kahler-Larson); Celeste Lotz (Knauff); Adelaide Lusambilli (Markle-Elder); Jan McGurty (Larisch); Ken Merritt (Hunter); William Moon (Wassum); Bruno Muzzi (Markle-Elder); Chris Nelson (Burch-Nelson); Grace Patterson (Burton); Josephine Pizza (Pizza); Carrie Reynolds (Knauff); Veronica Richardson (Knauff); Marvin Safrit (Anderson/Bowell); The Rev. Frank Senger (Kidd); The Sharp family (Hart); Janet Spleen (Jaeger); Caleb Richter-Tate (Richter); Diana Tate (Richter); Jim Tate (Richter); Nancy Telford (Richter); Cay and John Wiant (Larisch); Joleita Yurchak (Roth-Renne).

*Names remain on the prayer list for four weeks and may be renewed by notifying the office.*

+ **In Christian Sympathy** with the family and friends of Isaac Lawson, especially his long time companion, Deborah Johnson on his death on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Dorothy Johnson Schipp and Ashley McClane and her sons also are among those who mourn his death.

+ **In Christian Sympathy** with Matt Larson and Sonja Kahler on the death of his grandfather, John Victor Larson on Monday in Rockford, IL. He was 87. Sonja and Matt played for the funeral on Saturday.

+ **In Christian Sympathy** with the family and friends of Lilian Malloy, especially her good friend Tom Mitts. Ms. Malloy passed away in New Orleans last Sunday. Dr. Mitts traveled to New Orleans to play for her funeral service this week.

**Gifts to the Glory of God:** Today's Flowers, candle, bread and wine are given to the Glory of God by Alan Sutherland in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his confirmation

**Congratulations** to Nelson LePard Reed who was featured on the Memorial Day PBS Concert Broadcast last Sunday, singing "Pie Jesu" with Sarah Brightman.

**Congratulations** to Pearl Cox's granddaughter Cherisse Ferrier, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science with honors in Physics from Morgan State University on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Congratulations** to Walter S. Knauff, son of Betsy and Walt Knauff who received his Masters degree in Clinical Social Work from the University of Maryland-Baltimore on May 16<sup>th</sup>. He'll complete his internship in July. While attending the University of Maryland, he continued working as a special education teacher in the Montgomery County school system.

**Mortgage Madness Update:** Thanks to all members and friends who have continued supporting our Accessibility Fund, from the beginning of Advent in December through the end of May we received \$80,280 in Accessibility contributions –two-thirds of the way to our "necessary" goal of \$120,000 to cover a year's mortgage payments! Anything we raise above that amount between now and Advent 2008 can be used to pay off principal. During the past year we were able to pay off \$50,000 in principal. Any amount – small or large – can be contributed, designated for Accessibility. Some benchmarks: \$10,000 = one month's mortgage payment; \$7,500 = three weeks; \$5,000 = two weeks; \$2500 = one week; \$333 = one day. Received last Sunday -- \$ 1,105

*– Today, May 25, 2008– Pentecost 2 –*

**Nursery Program:** 10:30 – Noon – Nursery

**Worship Service:** 10:30 a.m.

**ELCA World Hunger Sunday** – See the pink insert and the enclosed offering envelope

**Today we will celebrate the end of our Sunday School year with a picnic** as our hospitality hour. Co-chaired by Esther Rege and Sonvy Waidler today's event will feature fun, refreshments, and games. Please plan to join in the celebration.

**In deference to the Sunday School Picnic, none of the standing committees will meet this Sunday.**

*– Next Sunday, June 8, 2008– Pentecost 4 –*

**Nursery Program:** 10:30 – Noon – Nursery

**Worship Service:** 10:30 a.m.

**Lessons:** Hosea 5:15—6:6; Psalm 50:7-15; Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

**Social Ministries Committee Meeting** – Room 118 – Noon

**Stewardship Committee and the Green Team** – Joint meeting – Room 302 – Noon

*– Upcoming Events and Misc. Announcements –*

**CARDS AND GIFTS  
FOR THE  
MILITARY**



**Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup>:** Fathers Day Phone cards and Gifts for U.S. Soldiers in Iraq/Afghanistan: The Social Ministries Committee is taking donations to provide phone cards to enable U.S. soldiers to call home on Father's Day and provide a small gift for fathers who are posted in the war zones. If you would like to contribute to this

important program of ensuring that our soldiers are connected to home, please contact Brian Danaher at [danaherb@hotmail.com](mailto:danaherb@hotmail.com) by June 8th.

**Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>: Celebrate World Refugee Day with Lutheran Social Services** -- Passport to the World 2008: Honoring the Refugee Experience. Join Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSS) for their second annual Passport to the World gala to celebrate World Refugee Day and benefit the Refugee and Immigration Services (RIS) program. To be held at the Fannie Mae Great Hall, 3900 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Washington, DC starting at 7 p.m. -- Black-tie optional

Experience the cultures of Burma, Cameroon, Colombia, Iran, and Somalia. Talk with refugees who have been resettled in our area through the RIS program, and enjoy the music of Nigerian singer Kuku among other international entertainers. Commemorate your evening with an item from the silent auction, such as one-of-a-kind artwork by an Iraqi refugee who will be creating the piece at the gala.

Tickets are on sale now: \$75 for individuals/\$125 for couples. Tickets must be purchased in advance and are expected to sell out...get yours today! Visit

<http://ent.groundspring.org/EmailNow/pub.php?module=URLTracker&cmd=track&j=212234144&u=2186257>

and click Donate Now or call Emily Moore at (301) 562-8633, ext 234.



**June 1, 2008**

**TIME AFTER PENTECOST — LECTIONARY 9**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*In Deuteronomy Moses tells the people not only to bind the words of God on their heart and soul, but also to obey the commandments of the Lord. In the gospel Jesus challenges his disciples not only to hear his words but to act on them. We ground our lives on the good news that we are justified by faith, and we respond with works of love for the sake of the world. From the Lord's table we go forth to build our faith on the firm foundation of God's grace and mercy for all the human family. ... Today we commemorate Justin (c. 165), martyr at Rome, an important thinker and teacher in the early church.*

### **FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 11:18–21, 26–28**

*Moses invites Israel to respond to God's grace with a way of life characterized by obedience and to pass that way of life on from parent to child. Writing the commandments on the doorpost of one's house (mezuzah) is observed by Jews even today. Living the life of faith has profound consequences for the well-being of the human family.*

[Moses said to all Israel:] You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. <sup>19</sup>Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. <sup>20</sup>Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, <sup>21</sup>so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

<sup>26</sup>See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: <sup>27</sup>the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today; <sup>28</sup>and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn from the way that I am commanding you today, to follow other gods that you have not known.

### **SECOND READING: Romans 1:16–17; 3:22b–28 [29–31]**

*The heart of Romans is set forth in these verses. The gospel is God's power at work for the salvation of people who come to faith. It restores us to righteousness and right relationships. Humans were united in sin but are now united in divine liberation from sin accomplished in the faithful death of Jesus Christ, to which we respond with faith.*

I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew

first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

<sup>3:22b</sup>For there is no distinction, <sup>23</sup>since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup>they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup>it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. <sup>27</sup>Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

[<sup>29</sup>Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. <sup>31</sup>Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.]

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 7:21–29**

*Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with harsh words for those who call him Lord but do not do the will of his Father. The wise person hears his words and acts on them.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup>On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' <sup>23</sup>Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'

<sup>24</sup>"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup>The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. <sup>26</sup>And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup>The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!"

<sup>28</sup>Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, <sup>29</sup>for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.



## Augustana Lutheran Church

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

### Augustana Lutheran Church

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Washington, D.C. 20009-6507

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<http://www.Augustanadc.org>

[Office@Augustanadc.org](mailto:Office@Augustanadc.org) (email)

The Rev. John S. Kidd, Pastor

Dr. J. Thomas Mitts, Organist and Choir Director

William R. Riggs, Administrative Officer

Marcial Pacheco, Building Maintenance Supervisor

Deborah Young, Nursery Attendant

### 2008 Congregational Council

Larry Anthony, Evangelism Liaison	202/462-2977	<a href="mailto:l-anthony@earthlink.net">l-anthony@earthlink.net</a>
Paul Beddoe, Stewardship Liaison	202/550-8946	<a href="mailto:pbeddoe@naco.org">pbeddoe@naco.org</a>
Kelly Bowers, Property Liaison	202/388-1989	<a href="mailto:documama@yahoo.com">documama@yahoo.com</a>
Carol Capps, Stewardship Liaison	301/229-2745	<a href="mailto:cj5615@verizon.net">cj5615@verizon.net</a>
Irene Heinemeier, Worship & Music Liaison	301/605-7050	<a href="mailto:ishjth@hotmail.com">ishjth@hotmail.com</a>
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John McKirgan, Finance Liaison	301/762-1879	<a href="mailto:mckirganjb@yahoo.com">mckirganjb@yahoo.com</a>
Rebecca Roth, Vice President	240-463-6493	<a href="mailto:rebecca.roth@mac.com">rebecca.roth@mac.com</a>
Barbara Solt, Secretary	301/773-7963	<a href="mailto:besol@aol.com">besol@aol.com</a>
Arne Sorenson, Finance Liaison	301/907-7993	<a href="mailto:rutharne@gmail.com">rutharne@gmail.com</a>

### Committee Chairs

Evangelism	Jim Heinemeier	301/605-7050	<a href="mailto:ishjth@hotmail.com">ishjth@hotmail.com</a>
Stewardship	Carol Capps	301/229-2745	<a href="mailto:cj5615@verizon.net">cj5615@verizon.net</a>
Property	Jim Lewis	301/292-9229	<a href="mailto:prospect552@cs.com">prospect552@cs.com</a>
Worship & Music	Rich Gillam	703/327-4285	<a href="mailto:rtgillam@concentric.net">rtgillam@concentric.net</a>
Social Ministries	Brian Danaher	202/518-0935	<a href="mailto:danaherb@hotmail.com">danaherb@hotmail.com</a>
Christian Ed	Bob Luoma	202/546-1324	<a href="mailto:gluoma@boo.net">gluoma@boo.net</a>
Finance	Greg Roemer	202/249-9886	<a href="mailto:greg.roemer@thrivent.com">greg.roemer@thrivent.com</a>

## **Welcome and Greeting of the New Pastor**

**Vice President of Council:** On behalf of the Church Council and the people of Augustana, I am pleased to formally welcome you Pastor Kidd. You have accepted our call to exercise among us the ministry of word and sacrament that God establishes and the Holy Spirit empowers. As we welcome you we also pledge to you our prayers, love, esteem and personal support to you. We do this for the sake of the ministry entrusted to you by God and for our ministry together in Christ's name. May God bless your ministry among us as we look forward to your being publicly installed as Augustana's Senior Pastor on the afternoon of Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Pastor:** I give thanks to the people of Augustana. You have called me to serve as Senior Pastor. You have pledged your support to me for the sake of this ministry. It gives me great pleasure to greet you. In turn, I pledge to you my diligence in the study of Holy Scripture, the use of the means of grace, in prayer, in faithful service and in holy living. And I pray that God bless my every effort to advance the mission and ministry of this congregation.

As we have committed our prayers to one another, let us join in saying:

**All: We give you thanks O God for the blessings and faithful companionship with which you embrace us. You bless us with the bounty of your creation. You bless us with the self-sacrificing love of your Christ. You bless us with the holy breath of your Spirit. As you so blessed us, grant that, as people and pastor, we prove to be a blessing for one another...and that as your people together, this church may prove to be your living blessing for this community where we gather and for your world. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**