

The Augustanan

September 2009

From the Pastor

John S Kidd

Dear Friends:

I am grieving the end of summer but celebrating the arrival of fall.

Labor Day announced summer's end and this Holy Cross Sunday proclaims the new beginning of activity at Augustana. We are timing this to arrive in your mail basket on the cusp – the time in between – to help you plan for this Holy Cross Sunday.

The Adult Forum and Sunday School are back in session. We will celebrate the Eucharist after installing and blessing those who lead and energize our Christian formation and worship activities. Refreshments in the social hall will take on the character of a reunion among those who have been living in summer

mode. An orientation for individuals considering membership in Augustana will follow in the chapel while the book group meets in the library.

September is busy as activity accelerates. But best of all, this is the month when we celebrate the renewal of friendships, focus our efforts to do good works, and give thanks to God for the recreation we enjoy and the new creation in which we participate.

I look forward to seeing you this Sunday!

Pax,

John

From The Council President

Carol Capps, Vice

Have you ever wondered how your Congregation Council operates? Each monthly Council meeting opens with devotions by a Council member and ends with chanting the Lord's Prayer. Council discussions are based on an agenda, shared in advance, that includes review of the minutes from the previous meeting, Pastor's report, Treasurer's report, reports on committee activities, and any additional items needing Council attention referred by the Pastor, a committee, or a Council member.

A key agenda item this year was the Welcoming Place Appeal to raise funds for replacing the roof and other repairs, paying six months' mortgage, and providing a tithe for social ministries. After unanimously endorsing the Appeal, Council members set an example by personally committing financially to the Appeal before asking the congregation for support. Council members also made follow-up phone calls to the Appeal letter sent to the congregation. The

Council is pleased that over 100 individuals and families responded with financial commitments and that by July we had exceeded our revised goal of \$120,000, illustrating once again that when we work together we can accomplish whatever we set out to do. All the repairs, including replacing the roof, should be completed before the end of September.

Another issue occupying the attention of Council this spring was the proposed ELCA Social Statement on Human Sexuality that was considered at the Metro DC Synod Assembly in May and the ELCA church-wide Assembly in August. A Council member briefed Augustana's Metro DC Synod delegates prior to the local Assembly. In a breakthrough that Augustana has long hoped for, first our local Synod Assembly and then the church-wide Assembly (in a two-thirds vote) adopted the Social Statement, along with important implementing resolutions. The resolutions reflected positions Augustana has long

advocated, namely that the ELCA 1) commit itself to develop liturgical resources for blessing same-sex unions, and 2) allow clergy in same-sex committed relationships to be rostered clergy in the ELCA. The Council will now turn its attention to monitoring and promoting implementation of these resolutions.

Other recent activities of the Council included organizing a successful Augustana-sponsored Habitat for Humanity work day at a Habitat house under construction in DC and discussions of the future of Santa Maria. At its May meeting, the Council voted to invite a representative of Santa Maria to attend future Council meetings, with voice but not vote, and endorsed a funding proposal by Pastor Kidd to Synod for continuing the Santa Maria ministry. Another issue on the Council's agenda is the use of building space. At its July meeting Council

voted to engage a realty firm with experience working with non-profits to help find a tenant to replace the child care center that moved out at the end of August. Also on a continuing basis, Council votes on accepting new members, as proposed by the Pastor, and at its May meeting endorsed for confirmation three young people – Chantelle Agbro, Nelson Reed, and Lars Sorenson.

This is just a sample of the many issues your busy Congregation Council deals with monthly. It is a hard-working group of people that invite your ideas and comments at any time. In mid-September Council will meet in a day-long retreat to brainstorm about future directions in Augustana's ministry based on our core values of openness, diversity, embrace of liturgical worship, social ministry outreach, and commitment to place at the crossroads of New Hampshire and V.

Vital Statistics

Bill Riggs, Parish Administrator

Births and Adoptions: Adoption by Kaia Lenhart and Jen Ray of Jayla Marie Lenhart-Ray, born July 23, 2009.

Baptisms: In August Rhianna Nissen and Isaiah Yoseph Stancil were baptized

Confirmations: In June Chantelle Agbro, Nelson Reed and Lars Sorenson affirmed their baptisms in a service of confirmation.

Marriages: This summer parishioners Mari Dorn Lopez and Franklin Turner were married in Saint Thomas, Joyce Waguti and Reginald Sapp were married at Augustana; and Zaneta Tutuh and Greg Hamlin were married at Virginia Beach.

Ordination: Drew Genszler, 8/8

Upcoming Birthdays:

September

3 Kevin Horsted

8 Don Werner

11 Martin Stancil,

12 Ruth Sorenson

13 Eric Luttamus, Tom Mitts

16 Ashley McClane

19 Alex Nash,

19 Lydia Waidler McKirgan,

19 Duncan Waidler McKirgan

21 Marsha Jones,

24 Sally Larisch,

26 Douglas Anderson,

26 Judith Bucci

October

3 Richard Hancock

4 Isaac Sorenson

11 Jocelyn Mushala

12 Pearl Cox

13 Arne Sorenson

14 Isaac Sorenson

15 Kupewa Mushala

18 Larry Anthony

19 Charles Leath

22 Mary Beth Blegen

29 Anna Bavier

Mission Augustana

La Comunidad de Santa Maria

A year ago the ELCA and the Synod approached the Congregational Council with the request that Augustana provide leadership for sustaining Latino Ministry through Santa Maria. The Council agreed to take this on until September

when the work would be evaluated. Here are some highlights.

Pastor Kidd conducts a service in Spanish at 5:00 PM. Weekly attendance has increased from 6-8 to

an average of 15. About 100 individuals have

indicated desire to be affiliated. *continues on p 7.*

Special Insert

2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Notes

*In adopting a social statement on human sexuality and implementing resolutions, the ELCA has moved in a direction that Augustana has long endorsed in relation to the church blessing couples in committed, same gender relationships and ordaining qualified individuals who are partnered in committed, same gender relationships. The following letter from Bishop Hanson was written at the conclusion of the assembly. A memo from Bishop Graham reports the impact of the Assembly's actions on the synod. It is followed by Pastor's Kidd's reflections on how this impacts Augustana which conclude with **an invitation for you to join him for soup and conversation at 6:30 on Tuesday, September 22 in the Social Hall. Tommie Robinson will share what he saw, heard and felt as a delegate to the Assembly.***

Letter from ELCA Presiding Bishop Hanson

August 22, 2009

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. -- Colossians 3:14-15

I write to you from the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis with official information about the actions of this assembly related to human sexuality. I am grateful for the manner in which this church has engaged in this conversation. The way this assembly has discussed these questions is a continuation of the way this church has deliberated: with deep and heartfelt respect for each other, engaging with Scripture, listening to the faith stories and experiences of one another, and through worship and prayer seeking the discernment of the Spirit.

In my response to the voting members on Friday, August 21, I made this request: we need one another. We need time. We need the voices of those who lament and those who rejoice over these actions, for together we have been called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and engage in God's mission for the life of the world.

The assembly adopted 676-338 -- precisely two-thirds of those voting -- "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," the ELCA's 10th social statement, with minor editorial amendments. It also adopted a series of implementing resolutions with amendments. This theological and teaching document builds on the key Lutheran principles of justification by grace and Christian freedom to serve the neighbor. It emphasizes that central to our vocation, in relation to human sexuality, is the building and protection of trust in relationships. It therefore affirms that we are called to be

trustworthy in our human sexuality and to build social institutions and practices where trust and trustworthy relationships can thrive. The social statement addresses marriage, same-gender relationships, families, protecting children, friendships, commitment, social responsibility and moral discernment. Regarding same-gender committed relationships, the social statement says that this church is not in agreement and recognizes the different perspectives which are present among us.

Our assembly also adopted resolutions proposed by the Church Council based on those contained in a "Report and Recommendation on Ministry Policies." The actions direct that changes be made to churchwide policy documents to make it possible for those in committed same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders in the ELCA. There were amendments to two of the proposals. The assembly adopted the resolutions in the following order, beginning with a strong statement about how we will live together in the face of our disagreements:

Resolution 3: "RESOLVED, that in the implementation of any resolutions on ministry policies, the ELCA commit itself to bear one another's burdens, love the neighbor, and respect the bound consciences of all." (Adopted 771-230 as amended)

Resolution 1: "RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships." (Adopted 619-402)

Resolution 2: "RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church." (Adopted 559-451)

Resolution 4: This resolution called upon members to respect the bound consciences of those with whom they disagree; declared intent to allow structured flexibility in decision-making about candidacy and the call process; eliminated the prohibition of rostered service by members in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous same-gender relationships; recognized and committed to respect the conviction of members who believe that the ELCA should not call or roster people in committed same-gender relationships; called for development of accountability guidelines; directed that amendments to ministry policy documents be drafted and approved; and stated that this church continue to trust congregations, bishops, synods and others responsible for determining who should be called into public ministry. (Adopted 667-307 as amended)

I invite you into important, thoughtful, prayerful conversation about what all of this means for our life in mission together. What is absolutely important for me is that we have this conversation together.

We meet one another finally -- not in our agreements or our disagreements -- but at the foot of the cross, where God is faithful, where Christ is present with us, and where, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are one in Christ.

In Christ,
The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
ELCA Presiding Bishop

To Leaders of the ELCA Today

From the Bishop's Desk

September 2, 2009

Dear friends,

Thanks for reading this letter, which I'm sending today to all our synod's rostered leaders. It will reach you during a time that always seems like the calm before the storm. By this time next week most of our ministries will be running at full speed. This week, with the Labor Day weekend, comes to many of us as the last relatively calm period between now and New Year's Day.

But I want you to know a couple of things about the life of our synod in the aftermath of the Churchwide Assembly. By and large, the votes on the human sexuality social statement and on the ministry recommendations have been received in much the same way everywhere.

Everywhere, some people are happy with what happened and most people seem not to be too unhappy. But everywhere among us, a few people have become very upset and angry. Some people have threatened to leave some of our congregations. A very few people have been loud and abrasive in their distress.

So I write just to remind you not to take anything too personally right now. I know that when people leave us it can hurt. I know how sad it feels when people are in distress. I know (oh, how I know) what a temptation it is to try to fix things for everybody. But people who are angry are not angry at us, or not just at us. This is the very best time for us to model the non-anxious leadership we read about, and to remind people that this is still a church in which differences of opinion are tolerated and even welcomed.

This would be the best time of all for us to encourage the people around us to talk to one another. One of the things that constantly surprises most Lutherans is that other Lutherans disagree with them. We are generally accustomed to believing that we know what's right, and we are generally unaccustomed to having serious conversations with others, and sometimes we are stunned to find that people we respect and admire don't see things the way we do. (In one of our congregations, people who wanted to restrict a new call process to "straight" candidates were stunned to learn that they had elected a partnered lesbian as chair of their call committee.) Try to get people into discussion. Invite me, or someone else from the office here, to be part of the discussions if you think that would be helpful.

Above all, let us remember that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a real part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church which belongs to Jesus Christ for now and for all time. In Minneapolis we made decisions which seemed to the appropriate majorities to be in keeping with God's will. Whether we were right or wrong will be made clear to us in God's good time. Meanwhile, our responsibilities to raise up the name of Jesus and to serve our neighbors for Jesus's sake have not changed at all. While we are rejoicing with those who rejoice over the churchwide assembly's actions, and mourning with those who mourn, may we also be calling everybody to join us in work that brings honor to Jesus. What else were we baptized for, anyway?

May the busy, challenging days ahead be rich in blessing, and may the peace that passes understanding be among us all.

In Jesus,

Dick Graham

The Rev. Richard H. Graham, Bishop

Pastoral Reflections

Over the years, Augustana, in collaboration with Lutherans Concerned, has repeatedly submitted resolutions to the Synod Assembly that are now realized in the following resolutions that the Churchwide Assembly adopted in Minneapolis last month:

Resolution 1: "RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships." (Adopted 619-402)

Resolution 2: "RESOLVED, that the ELCA commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church." (Adopted 559-451)

The people of Augustana should take satisfaction in seeing its advocacy bore fruit. In side bar conversations I have heard this satisfaction expressed. At the same time, comments by some Augustanans indicate that attention is already shifting from the substance of the policy to how it will be implemented. I have not heard any of the anger Bishop Graham has noted.

Implementation of the ordination related irresolution is likely to trickle down through the Conference of Bishops and Synods to individuals and congregations involved in the call process. On the other hand, the second resolution calls for the ELCA to "allow congregations... to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships." This encourages Augustana and other congregations to begin planning initiatives for which they can ask and expect support from the larger church. The alternative to initiative taking is waiting for the ELCA, the Conference of Bishops, and our Bishop to expand on and clarify the intentions of the ELCA here.

The Assembly's actions can shift Augustana from a position of simply advocating policy changes to one of identifying actions which we locally desire to take. It is noteworthy but not surprising that no one has called me to ask, "Since the ELCA has adopted this resolution, would Augustana bless my partner and me in our 'publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationship'?"

I will welcome this call when it comes. It will push our community forward in publicly finding language and rites that celebrate the God given, God blessed lives we live together.

As we find language and ritual acts that recognize and affirm God's presence in relationships, we will have something new to contribute to discussions about how the ELCA should to "allow congregations... to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationships." In my experience, the best advocacy speaks from the experience of concrete engagement and care for those who are directly impacted.

I am eager to hear the thoughts and reflections of Augustanans and invite you to join me for soup and conversation at 6:30 on Tuesday September 22 in the Social Hall. To help plan this or to volunteer soup, please contact the church office (office@augustanadc.org) to indicate your intentions.

*Pastor John Kidd
September 2, 2009*

Keyla Baltodano assists Pastor Kidd with services and during the week with visiting and activities of the community including Bible study, crafts activity, and preparing for special rites and services. Special rites include baptisms, first communions, *quincinieras*, house blessings and affirmation of baptism and membership in the church

Most participants come from a neighborhood bounded by 16th St., T St., Georgia Ave. and

Irving St. As with the morning congregation, however, the congregation attracts people from the rest of DC and Maryland.

This ministry relies on financial support from the Synod, the ELCA and gifts from other congregations and individuals. Synod leadership indicates strong commitment to this ministry. Augustana contributes Pastor Kidd's time, space and administrative support.

SUBJECT: Our visit to your church

The Pastor received the following message from a family that visited Augustana on August 9. Members of the Congregational Council asked that it be shared with the congregation.

Our family had the pleasure of visiting your church while we were on vacation last week. We found your church by looking on the elca.org website under D.C. churches and noted that it was within 20 minutes walking distance of our hotel. So not a lot of scientific research or recommendations from others helped to point us to you. But what a blessing it was to have found you!

We were warmly greeted at the door where it was obvious, I guess, that we were visitors. Our 12-year old son happened to be the only young person there between the age of the crying baby and the college-bound girl getting baptized. Nevertheless, we heartily appreciated the worship service and felt right at home.

What set your congregation apart from others was what came after the church service. I believe it was "Barbara" who invited us to the fellowship time after church after she noticed we were beginning to walk back to the hotel. She said it was as good as brunch, and she was right!

But besides the food, there was the fellowship. We've never felt so warmly welcomed and immediately part of a brand new group. Folks made sure we had plenty to eat, a place to sit, made conversation with our son, and introduced themselves to us like we were at a family reunion. We met Simone, Eileen, Barbara, Jim, a lady going to Australia and several others

whose names we can't recollect. It was like we'd always been a part of your church.

In addition, Jim volunteered to drive us to see the National Cathedral and then drove us around other sites in D.C. that we might have ordinarily missed. That's going above and beyond, in anyone's book!

Someone mentioned that you were relatively new at this church. We wanted to make sure that you know what kind of a congregation you have. Here in Minneapolis, with the convention going on this week, we're not always hearing the best news about the ELCA. What your congregation shows, however, is what the fellowship of believers should be about. You're blessed to be surrounded with these folks week after week, all doing your ministry together.

If we're ever in Washington again, or have the chance to recommend a church, "Augustana" will be the name rolling off our tongues. Thanks to you all for starting our vacation out in such a great way; you were indeed a blessing to us.

On the September Calendar

9.18 & 19: Congregational Council Retreat

9.20 at 12:45: Worship a la Augustana –

Dr. Mitts and Pr. Kidd on why we do what we do in worship in the Sanctuary.

9.20 at 12:30: Borg Book Group

Jim Hafner facilitates discussion of The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus' Birth.

9.26 Synod Assembly

Summer Highlights

Welcoming Place Projects got underway with new flooring in the eastern apse of the sanctuary and replacing the sanctuary roof. The roof installation came in time for Labor Day although clean up continues into September. Over 100 individuals and households have made gifts. A final appeal report will soon be made... **ELCA Churchwide Assembly** adopted a social statement on human sexuality and implementing resolutions that commit the church to supporting committed, life long same gender relationships and the ordination individuals in such relationships for ministry. *Dr. Tommie Robinson* was a delegate to the assembly for the Metro DC Synod... **Home Fellowship Ministry** to those who for reason of health, work schedules, care giving requirements etc. cannot attend Sunday services has extended its reach as George Krafthofer, Doris Lewis, and Ruth Sorenson received training as Pastoral Deacons to carry communion to people in their homes... **Barbara Chambers Child Development Center** returned to their newly remodeled facilities on Irving St. after completing an eight month lease agreement for the use of space at Augustana... An Agent has been contracted to help Augustana seek a new tenant **Tom Mitts** performed an organ recital in Russia to add an international dimension to his reputation as an outstanding church musician...

Augustana Lutheran Church
2100 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009