

The Augustana Ministerium

A pastoral association formed to preserve and promote Lutheran pastors and a distinctively Lutheran Ministry of Word and Sacrament to Lutheran congregations.



Why a Confraternity?

Simply put, “*But when He saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and downcast, like sheep having no shepherd*” (Matt. 9:36).

“*Sheep having no shepherd*” is anything but desirable when viewed through Jesus’ eyes. Indeed, He likens such to a multitude that is “*harassed and downcast.*” Imagine a multitude in your own community, victims of evil spiritual forces around them that are beyond their control. Now imagine that same scene duplicated in cities and towns all across America and you begin to appreciate Jesus’ deep felt compassion for the people in His day. And as Jesus alludes, the deplorable spiritual condition of His own people was caused in part by the failure of their spiritual leaders. Not to say the people themselves were without sin, but the point at issue is the devastating condition that results from “*sheep having no shepherd.*”

Never, in recent history, have the sheep in this country found themselves in such a leaderless and vulnerable condition in Protestantism in general and Lutheranism in particular. Today, we see repeatedly in church bodies, everything from the hire and fire mentality, to the starving out of faithful shepherds, to the closing of the doors of small parishes as so-called church leaders promote burgeoning staffs over subsidizing them. Such shameless treatment of God’s shepherds, coupled with such faithless disregard for His sheep, makes this a critical time in America.

When St. Paul addressed, for the last time, those occupying the Office of the Holy Ministry in Ephesus, he offered wise and important council regarding their work as shepherds: “*Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you*

overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). God’s Word is not the least bit hazy about what His shepherds are to do: “*take heed*” (pay attention) “*to yourselves and to all the flock*”—namely, pay attention to that which constitutes “*the church of God*”—because it is very, very valuable, having been purchased with God’s own blood!

The Augustana Ministerium (TAM) was formed in 2005 as “a pastoral association” to do, in part, those things formerly and routinely done by synods, districts, and circuits. Among our most important purposes, there are three that moved the Administrative Council in 2008 to form The Augustana Confraternity—“an organization of confessional Lutheran lay-people who support the work of The Augustana Ministerium.” Namely:

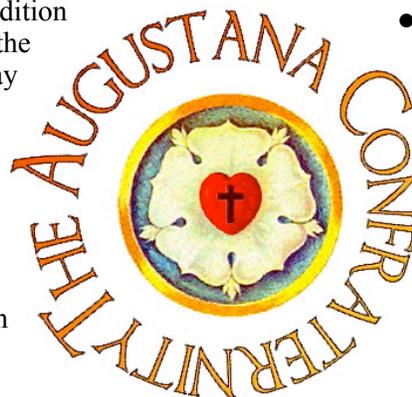
- to provide emergency relief for pastors in crisis and need.
- to help small congregations keep their faithful pastors.
- to help plant new mission congregations and preaching stations.

Elsewhere in this maiden issue of *The Confraternity Newsletter* is information about how you can help in this critical time and need for both the shepherds and the flocks.

As the newly elected Superintendent of TAM, and on behalf of the entire Administrative Council,

welcome to The Confraternity. May the Lord richly bless you as we, together, “*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” ... “*no longer liv[ing] for [our]selves, but for Him who died for [us] and rose again*” (Jude 3; 2 Cor. 5:15).

The Reverend Bruce G. Ley
Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Albany, OR
Superintendent of The Augustana Ministerium
2 Corinthians 5:14-15



**Confessional Lutheran Laity
Supporting Confessional Pastors**

Running From Law To Gospel In The Mission Field

It runs from Law to Gospel.

And so do I.

The right preaching of the Word of God and administration of the Sacraments follows a clear and certain pattern. It runs from Law to Gospel. In preaching it is first the Law, “the thunderbolt of God by which He strikes in a heap both manifest sinners and false saints, and suffers no one to be in the right, but drives them all together to terror and despair,” so that we “might thus be prepared for the Lord, to receive grace, and to expect and accept from Him the remission of sins” in the Gospel (Smalcald Articles III.iii, 2–4). In Holy Baptism, the old Adam is first drowned in the water and crucified with Christ under the Law, and then the new Man is raised up from the life-giving water, resurrected with Christ through the Gospel (Romans 6). In Holy Communion, the sinner kneels before Christ Jesus in humble contrition over his sin, and then rises to depart from the altar in peace, having received the very Body and Blood of Jesus and, together with them, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation (Small Catechism, The Sacrament of the Altar). In everything pertaining to the Christian life, it is a flow from Law to Gospel.

So, perhaps I should not be overly surprised by my life in the mission field, where I run from Law to Gospel quite literally.

In the Spring of 2007, I was called by our Lord, through Salem Lutheran Church of Malone, Texas, to the position of Deacon (Assistant Pastor). The Lord through His Church then sent me to Northern Wisconsin, to serve as a Mission Pastor. By God’s grace, the preaching and teaching of His Word has resulted in the planting of three mission sites. Every weekend, I preside over a service at each one of these three sites, as well as teach two different Bible studies for the faithful People of God who have continued to gather at these sites. Christ has blessed us richly by His Gospel.

But before the Gospel comes the Law. In this case, that law arises out of a law office. Since I am not paid for my services as a Mission Pastor, Our Father provides my daily bread through my employment as a part-time paralegal in a small law firm. I had labored in the legal field for a number of years prior to entering the seminary, even spending a few of those years with the very same firm for which I am presently working, and had not imagined that my transition from the law to the Gospel would bring me back to the law—just like true Christian preaching, which always ends with the Gospel. Yet, by the Lord’s providence, I am putting those all of those old legal skills back to

work in service to my neighbor throughout the week, so that I am able to self-finance my weekend work, thus running from Law to Gospel, in a most Lutheran fashion!

I am thankful for the assistance provided by The Augustana Ministerium, and now by The Augustana Confraternity, in my weekly run from the law to the Gospel. The support I have received—by way of prayers, encouraging words, and a monthly financial stipend of \$300—has made it possible for me to continue the 250-mile round trip each weekend in service of the Lord, the Church, and the communities served by these new missions. I know this same support is also enjoyed and appreciated by my brethren who are serving in similar bivocational situations, serving in worldly labors throughout the week and undertaking divine service each weekend. The Blessed Holy Trinity continue to bless you while you likewise serve in your vocations, ever having the burdens of your labors under the Law eased through your enduring faith in His liberating Gospel!

The Reverend Jeffrey A. Ahonen
Deacon, Salem Lutheran Church,
Malone, Texas
Mission Pastor, Saint Henry
Lutheran Mission, Montreal,
Wisconsin
Dean of Pastoral Recruitment, The
Augustana Ministerium
<http://sainthentry.info>

Starting From Scratch

I had no idea what I was doing!

In October, 2004, I was elected to serve on the steering committee which would explore and pursue the founding of a ministerium for confessional Lutheran pastors. The Augustana Ministerium was founded in 2005, and the assembly elected me to serve as the Dean of Pastoral Care. At that time, while the idea of “pastoral care” itself left little mystery, the extent to which it would require my attention was yet unknown. There was no operation manual. There was no “previous Dean” with whom I could confer. I simply had to give attention to whatever situation was put before me, and serve in the best way possible.

The ministerium would receive numerous requests for aid in one form or another. At times a pastor simply needed encouragement or counsel; other times the pastor was facing a crisis and needed emergency financial assistance. On occasion a request would come from a congregation asking for a list of confessional pastors they could place on a Call list. I would attend to each request as best I could, gathering as much information as possible, and report the request to the Administrative Council. Together, we would determine what assistance could be given. Since the election of the Steering Committee in 2004 when I began working for the care of pastors, over 50 requests for aid have been received, some of which received “one-time” gifts, some receiving “ongoing” assistance. (cont. on Page 3)

Scratch cont.

The aid that The Augustana Ministerium can render depends solely upon the resources at its disposal. We need an increasing number of people who are aware of the work carried out by the ministerium and who are willing to make contributions to that work.

In the much publicized dismissal of Issues, Etc.'s Rev. Todd Wilken and Mr. Jeff Schwarz, an online petition was created in a show of support for the duo. Financial contributions were also received for their ongoing support. It was at that time that I sent out a message by email in the hope that the work of this ministerium might receive some needed publicity. I have included a portion of that message below (originally sent 03/08). It offers a picture of a small part of the work carried out by The Augustana Ministerium.

At the time of this note being written, the petition supporting Issues, Etc.'s Wilken & Schwarz numbers over 4800. It is commendable that good people should stand up against an injustice committed against these fine servants.

But let us not forget the one....

He is:

...the one whom you have never met... of whom you have never heard.... the one whom you will only meet before our Saviour's throne.

...the one who returns home after the threat has been uttered by a congregational leadership that is intent on destroying his work in the Gospel and removing the means whereby he feeds his bride and child.

...the one who is denied Due Process from a district president and suffers humiliation -- the under-shepherd beaten in front of an unjust and unruly flock.

...the one who does not know how he will be able to meet the costs of daily living because the flock he dutifully serves is unable or unwilling to supply him the minimum funds needed, and district officials do not work to help and support this neighbor in bodily need...

...the one who thinks himself abandoned - he doesn't know that God's people out there are ready to stand with him in support.

...the one who utters a quiet, solitary prayer to our Saviour for strength and peace

Too often.... of the one.... the masses remain unaware. The officials remain conveniently absent/quiet until the one is no more.

*Let us not forget the one.... but **work** to help and support our neighbor in every bodily need.*

The Augustana Ministerium (TAM) receives contacts from pastors who need help. The requests come from all over the country--from confessional pastors in a variety of circumstances. The ministerium strives to help as it can.

The ministerium has received contacts, some of which include:

A confessional pastor who was placed in a congregation in which he was immediately dealing with: blatant open communion; some in congregational leadership who were rejecting the Word of God; laity who composed/ preached sermons without pastoral supervision; Freemasons; and upset laity when the pastor would not commune children of the congregation who left the synod altogether. His District President has demonstrated little to no supervision in support of the pastor.

A confessional pastor who was placed as an associate to a senior pastor who operated under a less-than-orthodox communion practice, mixed with contemporary worship. When this associate questioned the practice and worship, the senior pastor and congregational leadership (female chairman) went to war against him. The District President became involved, due process was ignored, and the associate was pressured to resign. Now on CRM status, he and his wife are also trying to care for her parents.

A confessional pastor who is struggling within a congregation that is on the verge of throwing him out. His salary has been cut, his health insurance is threatened, and he has a child with an extreme medical condition that requires considerable medical attention and ongoing treatment.

A confessional pastor who was unjustly removed from his Call. He was afforded no due process. He was suddenly without Call, income, or home.

Half of the above contacts were recently received - and we have yet to assist them. We need help with resources so these men do not have to go without aid.

Aid Given to date: (TAM has assisted pastors in various ways, including the donations of an automobile, clothing, food, financial gifts, counsel and general support) The amount of the financial assistance given to pastors in need (numbering over 50) exceeds \$25,000. This amount does not include regular monthly gifts to mission endeavors (which have exceeded \$12,000).

We need your help so that the assistance we desire to render can be ongoing.

It has been my privilege to serve The Augustana Ministerium for the last 4½ years as the Dean of Pastoral Care. As I pray that the Lord will continue to bless the efforts of all who continue to serve, I also thank Him for the faithful members of the Confraternity who stand with the members of the ministerium.

Pr. Michael Liese
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Brimfield, IL
Former Dean of Pastoral Care

Welcome!

Welcome to the premiere issue of the newsletter of The Augustana Confraternity! Inside, you will find information about what The Augustana Ministerium has done, is doing, and hopes to do with your prayers and assistance. As those who seek to teach God's Word faithfully continue to undergo persecution, Christ our Lord gives us the opportunity to rejoice in His gifts by supporting His servants. Thereby, as our Superintendent, the Rev. Bruce Ley, points out, in keeping with the compassion of our Lord Jesus displayed in St. Matthew 9, we seek the good of the sheep of the Christ's flock, that they might be served by shepherds who are faithful to the Good Shepherd.

Mark your calendars!

Save the week of May 11th–13th for travel to and from and attendance at the Fourth Annual Theological Conference and Plenary of The Augustana Ministerium! Our program will consider Ecclesiastical Supervision in a 'Post-Synodical' Age...that is, how pastors may be prepared for service, kept fit for service through mutual accountability, and cared for in such a way that they are best able to care for the household of God, even as the Holy Spirit charges them through St. Paul. Plan to join us in the Kansas City area for a wonderful time of learning and of rejoicing in our mutual endeavor to *Preserve and Promote Lutheran Pastors and a Distinctively Lutheran Ministry of Word and Sacrament to Lutheran Congregations!*

Donation Info

Make checks payable to:

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<http://www.augustanaministerium.org>

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The Augustana Ministerium

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Supporting Confessional Pastors