



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.



Because It is Important!

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, NKJV

Christ died for our sins, and rose again. The Holy Apostle St. Paul explains that this is all “according to the Scriptures.” That would be the Old Testament Scriptures, of course...the New Testament was not yet completed or canonized when St. Paul wrote these words. Rather, he was telling the church (us!) that the implicit, and sometimes explicit (see Isaiah 53) teaching of the Old Testament was that the Christ would come, and die for our sins, and rise again.

This message is what St. Paul, and the whole apostolic Church, delivers to us “first of all,” as being of first importance...it is the thing that matters most.

Is it true that the death and resurrection of Jesus is all that matters, and nothing else really does? Well, no. That’s why 1 Corinthians has 15 chapters instead of just one. But the death of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and His subsequent resurrection is the “first of all” thing, the most important thing, and everything else we believe flows out of that.

As I write this letter, we are in the season of Lent. It is my privilege to be catechizing four people in the Holy Faith: one man of Jewish descent, his wife who is a former Jehovah’s Witness, a lady who was formerly a Wiccan priestess, and a young man of Baptist background. I have never had new member instruction like this before! And yet what a joy it is to start with the “first of all” thing, the death of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and His resurrection on the third day, and to go from there to the other basics of the Holy Faith. By the time you are reading this, the church will have rejoiced in her annual celebration of the

Resurrection of our Lord, and these people will likely have been received into the communion of the church.

But why do we do it? I suppose it seems obvious: because the message matters. And when I say the message matters, I do not mean that abstractly...the message just floating around out there or something...the message matters as it is spoken into the ears of sinners unto the regeneration of their souls.

Dear ones in Christ, that is the same reason the work of The Augustana Ministerium matters: because this is an organization that helps fund men who have been called and ordained to speak the “first of all” message of the sin forgiving death and resurrection of Jesus, and who then unpack that message into the “all the rest of it”...the doctrine and, yes, practice to which the sin forgiving death and resurrection of Christ leads us.



Confessional Lutheran Laity Supporting Confessional Pastors

We’d love to have whatever help you could be in seeing that these men continue to have their daily bread, and continue to be able to devote themselves to the speaking of the message of salvation in Christ Jesus. To this end, we certainly solicit your prayers, but we are bold to solicit donations as well. We solicit them, because they are important! We have had men tell

us they no longer need our help. That’s the kind of men they are...men who use what they need, and then when the help is no longer needed, they tell us,

so that we can send help to others who do need it. Alas, the need always exceeds the help we can provide. So I encourage you: support as best you can these men who know what should be “first of all.”

Most of all, may the “first of all” be “last of all” among you, dear ones for whom Christ Jesus has died. In Him, you have the forgiveness of your sins. Be confident that His sacrifice is accepted by God the Father, for “Christ is Risen!” (He is risen indeed!). Alleluia, alleluia, for the resurrection unto life everlasting is ours, on account of the

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Thankfulness and Praise for both Obvious and Subtle!

Christ's Church has called me to be a missionary-at-large, and sometimes the result all seems so very, very small. I feel small because I'm trying to teach and bear witness to holy wisdom amidst a "big city" culture that's antagonistic to such things. Our gathering is small, so if just a few folks get sick or tied up with other matters, corporate worship becomes more like a family devotion. But in spite of my little faith, God continues to bless our hearers, my family, and myself through His truth and wisdom in Jesus Christ.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

(Colossians 3:15-17)

St. Philip Evangelical Lutheran Mission began meeting for formal worship services at the beginning of the 2008–2009 church year; this past Advent marked our first anniversary. And among all the various sized blessings the Lord has given us, the focus on His Word has, of course, been the greatest. To some people our situation seems unorthodox and less than ideal, but

even that is a blessing because it reflects and emphasizes the fact that the Word of God in Jesus Christ is the most important thing. Comfortable buildings, bigger groups of people, and familiar organizations can be wonderful, but when those particular blessings are absent, the Word of Christ can still dwell richly among us!

We proclaim Christ crucified, and we strive to observe all that He commands us. We have peace in the forgiveness that He gives us from His cross. We also have peace in the purpose and identity that He gives us as He places His cross on us. And thanks be to God for all of it! Teaching this peace and thanksgiving is very much a part of our witness, because in our current times there is much confusion about peace and priorities. People lament over political news as if there were no hope for Christians in America. But as long as we have Christ and His Word there is plenty of hope, and peace...as well as a wake-up call for Christians to consider the times and do more to fulfill their vocations as God-fearing citizens. Even among Christians—even Lutherans who value sound teaching—there are times of confusion and misplaced priorities. I receive contacts from people who are interested in our mission effort, often to be resented or treated rudely because we practice closed communion or don't have a "typical" worship situation. It's tempting to get frustrated by these instances, but instead it usually serves as another blessing. The more I'm called on to explain our mission's sufficiency in the Word, even though we lack other amenities, I'm also reminded and

strengthened myself. Again, thanks be to God for that peace that comes through His Word!

Thankfully, there are blessings that are more immediately pleasant as well. Our mission has faithful attendees who are not only zealous in hearing and studying God's Word, but also providing for needs of the mission. We're also blessed by the support and encouragement that comes from the fellowship of the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America, with which we're affiliated. Also the Augustana Ministerium has been a tremendous blessing, through the study and camaraderie that its membership provides, and through the financial gifts that I personally receive, for which I'm very grateful! And it must be pointed out that the thing that makes all these the blessings that they are is their own focus and reliance on the Word of God in Christ!

So thanks be to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, for all His blessings, be they obvious or subtle. And I pray that He always keep us mindful of the fact that His blessings should ultimately bring our thoughts back the life and forgiveness that He has given us in His own death and crucifixion. May that always be our true focus and priority in all things.

Rev. Deacon Anthony Oncken
St. Philip Ev. Lutheran Mission
<http://LakeCountyLutheran.com>

[Please Note: *Deacon* is used in the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America (ELDoNA) in the way orthodox Lutherans have historically used it: to denote an ordained pastor serving under the supervision of another pastor]

Making a Difference, cont. from back

causes him to declare bankruptcy to save his family from starvation.)

In this respect, we acknowledge (and always have) that The Augustana Ministerium should never have become necessary (just as our over-burdening taxation for social programs in the United States shouldn't have), because the church bodies should have been taking care of their pastors. Since that has not happened, since some in authority in the various bodies have acted in ways that harm, rather than help, those in Christ's Office, The Augustana Ministerium was formed.

When you send *offerings* to us, that is where they go: 100% to the aid of pastors. When you become a member of The Augustana Confraternity, you can even choose to have up to 85% of your *membership dues* go to the aid fund, and pastors joining the Ministerium can designate up to 50% of their *dues* to that fund, as well. The rest of the dues money goes to our Theological Conference and publicity. Your *non-dues offerings*, though, are used 100% for the purpose of supporting those 'unknown' pastors 'at home', and we thank God that He has blessed you to enable us to help so many.

Because It's Important!, cont.

resurrection of Jesus. Amen.

Your unworthy servant in Christ Jesus,

Rev. Kent A. Heimbigner, Ph.D.
Legate of The Augustana Ministerium
Pastor, Charity, Burleson, Texas
<http://ConfessionalLutheran.org>

5th Annual Theological Conference

The Fifth Annual Theological Conference and Plenary Session of The Augustana Ministerium will be held May 17–19, 2010, hosted by Charity Lutheran Church, 1101 S.W. Wilshire Blvd., Burleson, TX and her pastor, the Rev. Dr. Kent Heimbigner.

This year's conference theme, "Lives in the Balance," focuses on how Confessional Lutherans go about equipping people for the world's fight and the soul's salvation. From education to citizenship, apologetics to proper use of the Law and the Gospel to steer people away from both boredom and despair, the shape of the enemy's weapons and our response to them will be brought into view.

The theological portion of the program is open to members and non-members, clergy and laity alike. The Plenary Session of the Ministerium will be open to all attendees, except during an executive session, should one be called. The cost of the conference will be \$30. That cost is included in the paid 2010 dues for Ministerium and Confraternity members.

To prepare yourself for the papers and discussion at this year's conference, we provide the following set of reading lists:

Reclaiming the Old Lutheran Axiom: We Teach Our Own—To Keep our Baptized Children Alive; Rev. J. Richard Sawyer

- Luther, Martin, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," *Luther's Works*, American Edition, vol. 44, section 25, and the Prefaces to the Large and Small Catechisms
- Sayers, Dorothy L., "The Lost Tools of Learning" (available in Wilson's book or for free on the web, along with other resources at The Well-Trained Mind)
- Wilson, Douglas, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education*
- Hicks, David V., *Norms and Nobility: A Treatise on Education*
- Spitz, Lewis W., and Tinsley, Barbara, *Johann Sturm on Education*

Nurturing the Foundations of Faith: Equipping God's People to Defend Against the Reasoned Arguments of Unbelief; Rev. Anthony Oncken

- James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door* (Intervarsity Press), Chapters 3–6, 9

The Balanced Spiritual Diet of Full-Strength Law and Gospel, and the Deadly Signs of Imbalance (Boredom and Despair); Rev. Michael Henson

- Walther, C.F.W., *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (especially Thesis XXVI)
- Forde, Gerhard, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross*

Instilling Christian Citizenship: The Freedom of Grace and the Bondage of the Neighbor; Rev. Dr. Steven Hein

- Luther, Martin, "Freedom of the Christian," *Luther's Works*, American Edition, vol. 31

The Seven Deadly Values of Contemporary Culture: The Shape of the Enemy's Weapons against Our People Today; Rt. Rev. James Heiser

In descending order of priority:

- Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago, 2008)
- Douglas V. Porpora, *Landscapes of the Soul—The Loss of Moral Meaning in American Life* (Oxford, 2001)
- A. J. Conyers, *The Long Truce—How Toleration Made the World Safe for Power and Profit* (Spence, 2001)
- John Lukacs, *Democracy and Populism—Fear and Hatred* (Yale, 2005)
- Loren J. Samons II, *What's Wrong with Democracy?—From Athenian Practice to American Worship* (California, 2004)
- Mark Bauerlein, *The Dumbest Generation* (Tarcher, 2008)
- Barry Alan Shain, *The Myth of American Individualism—The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton, 1994)

We have a fine slate of speakers for this conference and we are certain that you will find these presentations a blessing regardless of your vocation(s). Please plan on joining us in Burleson!

(If you don't have access to our website so that you can register there, please call our Recording Secretary, the Rev. Drew Newman, to register: (816) 628-6644.

Making a Difference at Home and to the Unknown

Recent events throughout the world have presented us all with many opportunities to give. From the tsunami in South Asia to Hurricane Katrina to the unjust removal of a Confessional Lutheran radio show host to the recent earthquake damage in Haiti and Chile, there have been many excellent reasons to send money to assist those whom 'everyone' can see are suffering.

Sometimes we're asked whether The Augustana Ministerium is planning to take care of people in such need, as well. The short answer is, "No, that's not what we're set up to do." In fact, since we were established after 9/11, since we're not affiliated with any church body, and since we have no paid staff, just jumping through the regulatory hoops to do that sort of work would be beyond our scope.

Moreover, since there are other organizations that are doing a good job in those areas, we generally commend your giving to them to accomplish such work.

What The Augustana Ministerium and Confraternity is set up to do is to help those whose suffering is *not* generally known...to help pastors survive unjust removal from a parish, or times when they just can't cover their medical co-pays or other emergency debt, or to supplement the income of a pastor when his parish can't pay him in full, so that he is still able to accomplish the work that the Lord of the Church has Called him to do.

This is our *niche*: caring for the servants of Christ's Church so that parishes are not deprived of pastors and so that pastors' families suffer only the *usual* burdens of being a pastor's family, and not the sort of deprivation that some church bodies seem to find acceptable. (Indeed, some of those bodies will even remove a pastor if, for example, his health-related debt

Donation Info

Make checks payable to:

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c/o The Rev. Gregory J. Schultz, Bursar
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<http://www.augustanaministerium.org>

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Supporting Confessional Lutheran Pastors



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