

Augustinian

Augustus Lutheran Church

An Historic Church for Today's People

AUGUST 2020

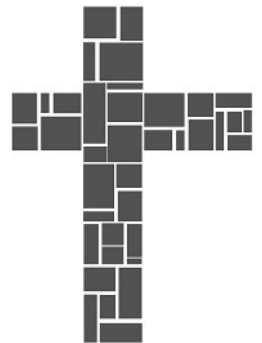
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As I write this letter in mid-July, we still have no clear idea of what the fall will look like at Augustus. Re-opening for in person worship has gone well, in spite of the changes that we have had to make to our services. Our members and friends have been wonderfully good natured about the alterations to our customary routine. Although I am now able to make hospital visits for parishioners, we have not resumed visits to our shut-ins out of an abundance of caution for their health. More information about fall activities will appear in the September *Augustinian*.



Because of the generosity of our members and friends, we have been able to maintain our efforts to help our neighbors in need. We continue to supply 150 meals to the Soup Kitchen at St. John's in Norristown each month. We have been able to help our friends at the Outreach House at St. James in Evansburg by providing money so they can buy food for those who need it. Before Covid-19, the Outreach House helped about 60 families per month. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 and the increase in unemployment, they are now assisting 200 families per month.

Elsewhere you will read about Dr. and Mrs. Swanson, our medical missionaries in Tanzania, and their decision to remain there to support the patients and staff at the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center. At the outbreak of Covid-19, our national church decided to evacuate all personnel from Tanzania. Dr. and Mrs. Swanson decided to stay, in spite of the risks, to help the most vulnerable of us all, infants and children. Because of Covid-19, we are unable to have our principal fundraisers to support our missionaries, the Annual Turkey Dinner. However, you will be delighted to learn that our own Women of the ELCA group has created an opportunity for people to contribute financially to support these dedicated missionaries. They have even arranged for \$2,000 in matching funds for our contributions. Thank you to Dale O'Hara and her co-workers.



We live in a strange period of time. Yet God is still working through the Holy Spirit to give us strength and comfort to overcome the challenges we face. His love continues to surround us and his face still shines upon us. We are not alone, even as we engage in social distancing. And that is Good News.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Weleck

On behalf of the Vestry, Rector, Wardens of St. James Episcopal church and the entire volunteer staff at the Outreach House, I wish to thank you for your very generous gift made to the Outreach House for food. In this very trying time, we are having an incredible increase in demand for food for many clients enrolled in our program. In addition, we are not turning away others who are in need—who may have lost their jobs in this pandemic.

Please know that we so appreciate your gift. You make our mission “to know and serve God by serving others” a reality.

Blessings and may God bless you all and keep you safe and healthy.

Patty Earhart



From the Bench

August 2020

This month, I'm so grateful and happy to be back "on the bench" at Augustus. But like many of you, I find I'm still covid19 weary. Weary of all the sad news, the long days, the physical disconnection from people, and the lack of "normalcy" as I used to know it. So I've decided to share a hymn text with you. This hymn can be found in our hymnal, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, number 722. God loves us – not from afar, but as Christ in our midst. We may feel lonely, but we're not alone! May this good news inspire us to be Christ to others even now.

O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate

- 1 O Christ, your heart, compassionate, bore ev'ry human pain.
Its beating was the pulse of God; its breadth, God's vast domain.
The heart of God, the heart of Christ combined in perfect rhyme
to write God's love in human deeds, eternity in time.
- 2 As once you welcomed those cast down and healed the sick, the blind,
so may all bruised and broken lives through us your help still find.
Lord, join our hearts with those who weep that none may weep alone,
and help us bear another's pain as though it were our own.
- 3 O Christ, create new hearts in us that beat in time with yours,
that, joined by faith with your great heart, become love's open doors.
We are your body, risen Christ; our hearts, our hands we yield
that through our life and ministry your love may be revealed.
- 4 O Love that made the distant stars, yet marks the sparrow's fall,
whose arms stretched wide upon a cross embrace and bear us all:
come, make your church a servant church that walks your servant ways,
whose deeds of love rise up to you, a sacrifice of praise!

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923

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~Laurie Mueller

Augustus Book Club

The next "official" meeting of the Augustus Book Club will be held on August 17, 2020.

We'll Discuss Winter Garden by Kristin Hannah

New members are always welcome. Come to discuss the book and get to know some new folks! We're currently meeting via ZOOM.

Questions? Contact Karen McClain

610-489-9625 or office@augustustrappe.org

Coordinator of Faith Development

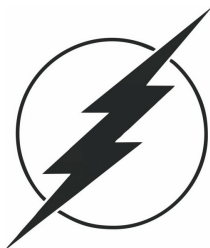
Twenty-one children participated in our Zoom Vacation Bible School which began on June 22nd. Many thanks to Laurie Mueller, Jeanne Halteman, Pastor Weleck, and Karen McClain for their assistance. We once again found a way to do the ministry of Augustus a little differently in these challenging times. I'm especially thankful for Laurie and Jeanne's skills and willingness to find a way to love and teach our children however we can. I really enjoyed seeing all the kids every day, especially those who do not attend Augustus but faithfully attend our Vacation Bible School every year.

Now I am prayerfully planning for the start of Sunday school, which begins September 13th. I am reviewing all the guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Montgomery County and am hoping we'll be able to meet in person at that time. If that's not possible, we will be online again.

God bless you all—stay well!

Sonya Sowards

Coordinator of Faith Development



Money Matters

Personal Financial Stewardship

Are You Saving Enough for Retirement?

From the wisdom of Solomon, God shows us the wisdom of ants that save their provisions (Proverbs 6:6). With our anemic personal savings rate in this country of approximately 1.5 percent, we may be showing less wisdom than the ants. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that, in twenty years, there will be a \$45 billion retirement income shortfall. Four out of five Americans do not have enough retirement savings.

One of our top financial goals should be a comfortable retirement. To live comfortably during retirement, we can project that we will need about 80-90 of our pre-retirement income. This income will come from Social Security, pensions, and private savings. For most people Social Security benefits will provide approximately one-third of their retirement needs. If you subtract your expected social security benefits from our desired annual retirement income, the result will be the annual income gap that will have to be covered by your pension income or savings.



Desired Annual Retirement Income:

\$50,000
75,000

Annual Social Security Benefits

\$12,500
15,000

Annual Income Gap

\$37,500
60,000

One of the greatest obstacles to a savings program for retirement is procrastination!



We fall into the trap of telling ourselves that retirement is a long way off, so we will start saving next month. The problem is that next month never comes. Procrastination is detrimental, because it eats up the time that money can be put to work for us.

As a general rule of thumb, if we start saving for retirement in our early 20's, we can set aside close to 10 percent of our incomes and have sufficient funds for retirement. As Solomon wrote, "*... he who gathers money little by little makes it grow*" (Proverbs 13:11). However, if we wait till we are in our 40's, our saving rate will have to increase to 30 percent or more.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Linda Linsenbigler	4 Amanda Scholl	5 Kathryn Robinson	6 Michaela DeCarlo Ashley Interrante Cathie Van Alstine	7 Jim Cunningham Emerson Smith	8
9 Kimberlee Davis	10 Dottie Luft Dennis Oscapinski	11 Gary Long	12 Stan Lienthal Timothy Stalker	13 David Ivarson	14 Christopher DeCarlo Jr.	15 Alex Dogonniuck
16 Richard Allebach Landon Watts	17 Skylar Althouse	18 Penelope Balzereit Gail Bischoff	19 Amy Sellman Kathleen Wilkins	20	21 Connor Elison Debbie Hoffman Bruce Jennings Nathan Kerr	22 Ralph Kibblehouse Madison Kuklentz David Schweitzer
23 Andrew Meeley Marjorie Price	24	25 Blair Booth-Glacken Eric Linsenbigler Kimberly Lumley Krista Oscapinski Rachel Oscapinski	26 Susan Millheim	27	28 Stephanie Frazier	29 Ellie Hernandez Karen McCrea
30 Andrea Jaggers/Brown Cayla Schulz Corrine Schulz R. Scott Young	31 Katie Kerr Cynthia Rauch					

August Birthdays



Daily Bread Community Food Pantry

While at this point no one knows what going back to school in the fall will look like, one thing we do know is the children of our clients will continue to learn and to do so will need school supplies. We will be collecting school supplies and backpacks again this year for the children of our clients. **Last year we distributed grade-appropriate school supplies and backpacks to 345 children.**

Our biggest needs this year include:

24 count packs of crayons	Fiskar children's scissors	backpacks: small, med & especially large
plastic pencil boxes	red pens	packs of 3x5 index cards
packs of dividers for binders	1" three-ring binders	folders with prongs
three-ring loose leaf filler paper	black dry erase markers	highlighters of any color
mechanical pencils	Sharpie markers	small pencil sharpeners
packs of Post-It notes	flash drives	pencil cases with 3 holes to go into binders
4-color packs of dry erase markers	composition books	boxes of 24 colored pencils

We will be distributing backpacks and school supplies at the food pantry throughout the month of August and will gladly accept donations through the month of August. **All donations can be delivered to the Daily Bread Community Food Pantry.** There is someone there to receive donations Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. until Noon. Since we distribute food to clients on Wednesday mornings from 9 to 11 A.M. you might want to avoid those times. You can also drop off school supplies at any time in the beige bin near the garage doors on the side of the food pantry. This bin is checked each morning by our volunteers. Thank you so very much for your dedicated and generous support of this project! We sincerely appreciate it!

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

- Nelson Mandela



The Gifts of Cain and Abel

The first gifts that we read about in Scripture are the offerings made by Cain and Abel who were the sons of Adam and Eve. In Genesis 4:2-4 we read, “. . . Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.” Cain and Abel, having been in-

structed by Adam in the knowledge of the Lord, brought offerings or gifts for the Lord. Because one worked the land and the other raised animals, their gifts were different. We read that Cain “brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering,” whereas Abel “brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.”

Between the two brothers there is also an indication of a difference in the attitudes of their hearts. While Cain wasn’t concerned about giving the first or best of his crop, Abel brought in his best. God looked with favor upon Abel’s offering. God looked into the hearts of both Cain and Abel as he looks into our hearts. He saw Abel’s humble faith. In his gift, Abel showed his sincere gratitude for all that God had done for him.

We need to understand that it’s not the size of our gifts and offerings which makes them acceptable to the Lord, but rather it is the attitude of our hearts and minds toward God. God wants our gifts to be an expression of our love for him. He wants us to give cheerfully rather than grudgingly. He wants us to give out of love through faith. We are told by the writer in Hebrews that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

May this story of giving by Cain and Abel help us to examine our attitude toward giving. If we are not giving our first and best out of faith and love to the Lord, God does not look with favor upon our giving. May God grant us all faithful, loving, and giving hearts.

To show great love for God and our neighbor, we need not do great things. It is how much love we put in the doing that makes our offering something beautiful for God.

- Mother Theresa

Make a Difference Day

In Ephesians 5:15-17 Paul advises us to spend our time in ways that are pleasing to God. Families can work together to make the world a better place. Look around your community. There are sure to be many needs, perhaps in your own congregation. Is there a local food bank or soup kitchen which needs volunteers? Many hospitals need people to rock babies in their nurseries. Others need people to visit with older hospitalized children. Family members with sewing talents may wish to make quilts for chemotherapy patients or at-risk babies hospitalized with fetal alcohol syndrome or complications from crack cocaine.

Does the thought of organizing a big repair project or fund-raiser overwhelm you? Start smaller! Consider how Jesus ministered not only to large groups, but also one-on-one. For example, two retired teachers in Selma, Alabama provided a day of fellowship and house-cleaning for an elderly widow. They fixed several of her favorite recipes and spent time talking about growing up in the country. They ended the day singing hymns and reading Bible passages. Whatever you choose, pick a project in which all family members, no matter what their ages, can be involved. Select something of genuine interest, not just a project you feel you “should” do.

Ask for God’s guidance in finding an area of service which would not only help others, but enrich your family as well. Thank God for the blessings your family enjoys.

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Sharing God's Bounty

God Calls Us to be His Workers

In spite of our foolish and sinful ways, God calls us to be his workers. Scripture tells us that Jesus did not pick people from society's elite when he chose his workers. Jesus' disciples were peasants, fishermen, and even a tax collector. Paul wrote, *"Brothers, think of what you when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things . . ."* (1 Corinthians 1:26-28). The majority of God's work was done and continues to be done by the lowly and oppressed people.

Certainly, God can use celebrities and very successful people in his work. However, we need to remember that, even though we may not have accomplished anything of worldly significance, broken any records, or won any awards, God can use and transform us into effective workers in his kingdom. *"I can do everything through him who gives me strength"* (Philippians 4:13). Society gives many accolades to those who succeed, but there is no greater honor or privilege than to be chosen as God's vehicle to spread the Gospel. As John states in his Gospel, it is Jesus who does the choosing. *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit"* (John 15:16).

So why does God elevate the foolish and the lowly to be his workers? A reason may be found in 1 Corinthians 1:29: *"so that no one may boast before him."* It is only by God's grace that we are saved, called, and equipped to be in his service. If we come into God's work with impressive credentials, we risk taking the glory and credit for ourselves. God desires the weak and the lowly. As Paul said, *"Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). God uses ordinary people to do extra-ordinary things. Are you ready for duty?



"Charge them to do good, to be rich in good works and generous, sharing what they have." (1 Timothy 6:18) May Timothy's letter move us to better see how we are using all that the Lord has entrusted to us; our income, our talents. This sense of stewardship will help us grow in faith and concern one for another. That's what faith community is all about."

Evening Prayer

The sun has just gone down behind the hill, and you must hurry to get home before dark to say prayers with your family and to eat your supper. If you lived when Jesus lived, that's what you would do in the evening. In ancient times, morning and evening were important times to pray. In the morning people thanked God for keeping them safe during the night and asked God to guide them during the day. In the evening people gave thanks for the day and asked for protection during the night. When they prayed in the evening they also lighted candles and oil lamps. There were no other lights except the stars and the moon!

Prayers offered near sunset are called Vespers, Evensong, or Evening Prayer. We light one big candle because it reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world, and he has come to save everyone. Before your evening meal, darken the room and put a big candle on the table. Then light it and read the following sentences, letting everyone take a turn being the leader. (Then light other candles near the big one and eat dinner by candlelight.)

Leader: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

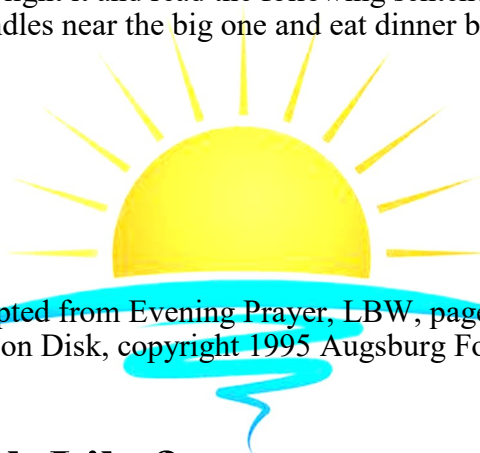
Group: The light no darkness can overcome.

Leader: Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening.

Group: And the day is almost over.

Leader: Let your light scatter the darkness.

Group: And shine on your people.



(Permission—This prayer has been adapted from Evening Prayer, LBW, page 142.)
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What Does God Look Like?

Invite everyone in your family to draw what they think God looks like. Stress that no one knows for sure, so there is no “right” answer. Have each person explain what he or she draws. Do some family members view God as happy and loving, while others have a more stern notion of God? Discuss where these notions may have originated.

Invite everyone to brainstorm more ideas about what God might look like. With these ideas in mind, read aloud these Bible verses about the images of God:

Numbers 11:10-13 describes God as mother;

Deuteronomy 4:24 describes God as fire;

Deuteronomy 32:11-12 and Exodus 19:4 describe God as an eagle;

Psalms 18:13 describes God as thunder;

Psalms 91:4 describes God as a protective bird;

Jeremiah 17:13 describes God as water;

Luke 15:37 and John 10:27 describes God as a shepherd;

John 3:8 and Acts 2:2 describe God as wind;

John 8:12 and Isaiah 60:2 describe God as light;

John 15:1 describes Jesus as a vine and God as the grower.



Did any of the verses use images that were the same or similar to those chosen by your family members? Did anyone's ideas about God change after hearing these verses? Ask each family member to draw or create another image of God, choosing from the images above. Family members can draw pictures or they can create something that they think describes God, such as:

a sand candle—to describe God as light;

a felt or paper banner with tongues of fire glued on it—to describe the Holy Spirit;

a wreath made of dried grape vines from your garden—to describe God as peace.

Note the related Bible reference with each creation. Point out that these images are not God, but that they serve to remind us of the greatness of God.

Ask each person to give thanks for one of God's images during a group prayer.

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